

INTERDICTIONS OF ILLICIT DRUGS AND FIREARMS SMUGGLING IN 2002

1. Number of Interdictions

(1) Summary

With respect to illicit drugs, the number of interdiction cases in 2002 totaled 450 (108.2% compared to the previous year). The volume of seizure came to 918 kg (89.2% compared to the previous year) and 233,000 tablets (111.9% compared to the previous year). As a whole, the seizure in 2002 was less than 1 ton for the first time in four years, but the number of seizure cases was the fourth largest, showing no sign of a halt to the mass seizure trend (the amount of seized illicit drugs equals about 18,840,000 uses by abusers).

With respect to firearms, 8 smuggling cases (quadrupled from the previous year) were interdicted with the seizure of 13 pieces (61.9% compared to the previous year). In addition, there were 3 cases of firearm part smuggling, in which a total of 4 pieces were confiscated.

Major characteristics of smuggling offenses during 2002 are as follows :

Detection of large-scale stimulant smuggling cases through trafficking on the sea.

The seizure of cannabis resin and MDMA was a record high by volume.

Smugglers' modus operandi has become more malicious and sophisticated, such as involving airport employees as smugglers.

Article 109-2, Customs Law, newly established in 2000 to legalize arrest of smugglers who are in Japan only as transit passengers, was applied for the first time to heroine smugglers.

(2) Interdiction Records of Major Antisocial Goods

Category		Year					Change from the preceding year (%)
		1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	
Stimulants	Cases	37	39	57	42	20	47.6%
	kg	544	1,450	886	202	408	201.6%
Cannabis	Cases	266	255	303	214	276	129.0%
	kg	281	723	485	797	476	59.7%
(Herbal cannabis)	Cases	184	155	217	166	191	115.1%
	kg	80	529	343	744	261	35.0%
(Cannabis resin)	Cases	82	100	86	48	85	177.1%
	kg	201	193	143	53	215	404.6%
Heroin	Cases	18	13	14	11	15	136.4%
	kg	4	1	6	5	19	391.3%
Cocaine	Cases	19	10	12	7	12	171.4%
	kg	16	4	7	18	14	77.6%
Opium	Cases	11	8	5	2	3	150.0%
	kg	18	7	5	8	2	24.3%
MDMA	Cases	11	26	36	44	35	79.5%
	1000 Tablets	11	18	85	118	172	146.4%
Psychotropics	Cases	230	167	89	96	89	92.7%
	1000 Tablets	136	141	62	90	60	66.8%
Total	Cases	592	518	516	416	450	108.2%
	kg	863	2,186	1,389	1,030	918	89.2%
	1000 Tablets	147	159	147	208	233	111.9%
Reference (Number of uses)	10000 times	2,144	5,178	3,261	1,007	1,884	187.1%
Firearms	Cases	13	13	9	2	8	400.0%
	Quantity	20	40	123	21	13	61.9%
Firearms parts	Cases	4	2	0	2	3	150.0%
	Quantity	9	2	0	12	4	33.3%

Notes: 1. The figures, which are on a detection basis, include quantities seized not only in smuggling cases detected by Customs but also in smuggling cases detected by the police and other law enforcement agencies in collaboration with Customs.
 2. "Stimulants" includes its raw material.
 3. "MDMA" includes MDA.
 4. The number of psychotropics tablets seized in 2001 includes 2,031 tablets in an export case.
 5. A conversion was made for the "Number of uses" based on an average dose of abusers (stimulant: 0.03 g; herbal cannabis: 0.5 g; cannabis resin: 0.1 g; heroin: 0.01 g; cocaine: 0.03 g; opium: 0.3g; MDMA and psychotropic: 1 tablet).

2. Trends in Illicit Drug Smuggling

(1) Stimulants

Mass smuggling cases through trafficking on the sea were interdicted.
 Organized and systematic smuggling cases by workers in airports, such as security guards, were interdicted.
 Smuggling of tablet stimulants occurred in succession.

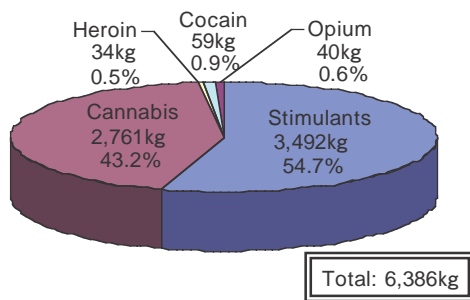
As Japan is said to be in a third period of stimulant abuse, stimulants have been the most widely abused illicit drugs in Japan, suppressing other types of drugs in quantity seized in the past five years. Stimulants and cannabis are two major kinds of illicit drugs plaguing Japan (See Chart 1).

In 2002, 20 cases (47.6% compared to the previous year) of stimulant smuggling were interdicted with the seized quantity totaling 408 kg (201.6% compared to the previous year). Despite the halving of the number of cases, there are still large-scale trafficking cases, with the amount of seizure doubling from the previous year.

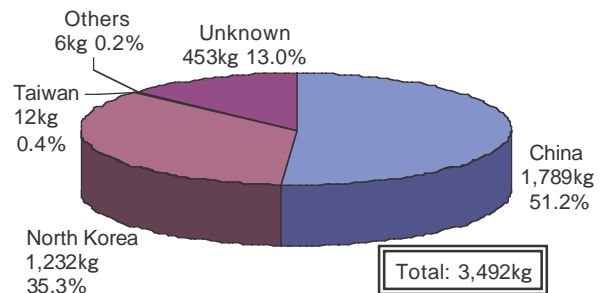
Breakdowns by sourcing country/territory show that China and North Korea occupy almost 90% of the quantity seized in the past five years. The routes through those two countries are two major sources of stimulants smuggled into Japan (See Charts 2 and 3).

Remarkable smuggling cases in 2002 were: a case in which a large amount of stimulants was smuggled through transactions on the sea; a case in which a Japanese passenger arriving at an airport in Japan from Hong Kong handed stimulant to a security guard working in the airport and later tried to smuggle through a different route; and a series of cases of smuggling tablet stimulants for oral intake were interdicted.

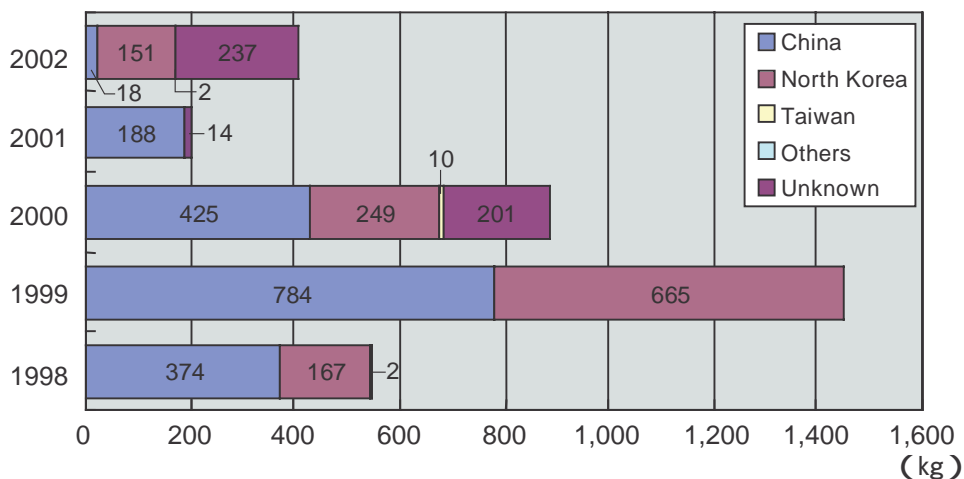
[Chart 1] Seizure of Illicit Drugs in 1998-2002



[Chart 2] Stimulants Seizure by Sourcing Countries/Territories (1998-2002)



[Chart 3] Trend of Stimulants Seizure by Sourcing Countries/Territories



(2) Cannabis

The amount of cannabis resin seized in 2002 was an all-time high.
 A series of cases in which Japanese smugglers swallowed and concealed cannabis in their stomach were interdicted.
 Large-scale smuggling cases increased.

Cannabis is said to be the world's most abused illicit drug. Also in Japan, among the illicit drugs seized in the past five years, cannabis has a dominant presence along with stimulants in terms of seized volume (See Chart 1 on the previous page).

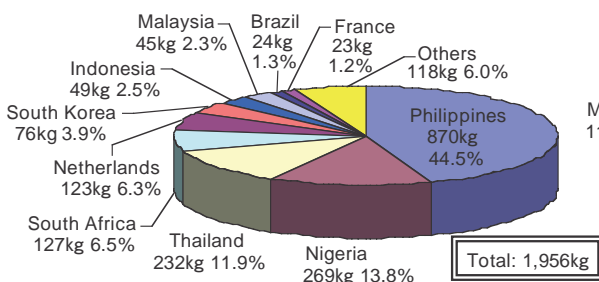
In 2002, 276 cases (129% compared to the previous year) of cannabis smuggling were reported, with a total seizure of 476 kg (59.7% compared to the previous year), which was far lower than the seizure of the previous year. However, as the amount of cannabis resin seized was the largest in history and the number of cases is increasing, cannabis smuggling is still on the rise.

There were four major routes of herbal cannabis smuggling, i.e., a Southeast Asian route originating mainly in the Philippines and Thailand, an African route originating in Nigeria, a European route originating in the Netherlands, and a Brazilian route (See Charts 4 and 5).

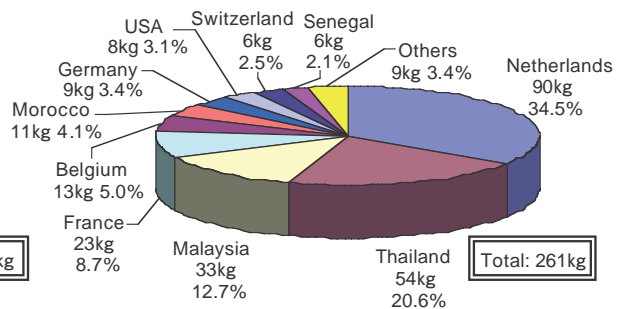
Meanwhile, cannabis resin have four major smuggling routes, i.e., a Southeast Asian route originating mainly in Thailand, a South Asian route originating in Nepal and India, a European route originating in the Netherlands, and a Russian-Far East route (See Charts 6 and 7).

Cases in 2002 are characterized by large-scale smuggling using air cargo, including one in which herbal cannabis was hidden in folk handicraft drums and one in which cannabis resin was concealed between "false" front pages of calendars. There were also cases in which Japanese smugglers swallowed cannabis resin to hide it.

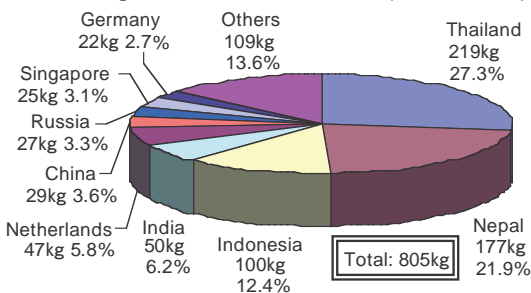
[Chart 4] Seizure of Herbal Cannabis by Sourcing Countries/Territories (1998-2002)



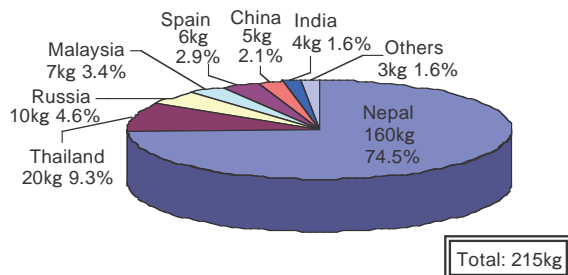
[Chart 5] Seizure of Herbal Cannabis by Sourcing Countries/Territories (2002)



[Chart 6] Seizure of Cannabis Resin by Sourcing Countries/Territories (1998-2002)



[Chart 7] Seizure of Cannabis Resin by Sourcing Countries/Territories (2002)



(3) Illicit Drugs in Tablet Form (MDMA and Psychotropics)

MDMA smuggling sharply increased with a record high quantity.

A series of large-scale cases via Southeast Asian route occurred in succession.

Smuggling of MDMA (popularly known as Ecstasy), a synthetic narcotic drug having the same kind of pharmacological effects as those of stimulants, has been on a rapid increase in recent years. Especially among the young generation, a tendency has been observed to use MDMA simply to be the fashion or as a substitute for stimulants.

In 2002, a total of 172,000 tablets (146.4% compared to the previous year) of MDMA were seized in 35 cases (79.5% compared to the previous year). Although the number of cases decreased from that of the previous year, the amount of seizure per case increased, with the seizure reaching a record level (See Chart 8).

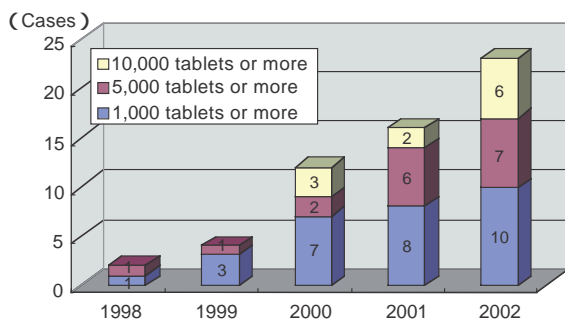
As for psychotropics, the number of cases interdicted in 2002 totaled 89 (92.7% compared to the previous year) with the seizure of 60,000 tablets (66.8% compared to the previous year), a decrease from the previous year both in the number of cases and seized quantity.

European countries, especially the Netherlands, Belgium and France, were the prime sources of MDMA. In addition, a series of large-scale MDMA cases originating in Southeast Asia, such as in Malaysia or Indonesia, have been interdicted since 2001 (See Chart 9).

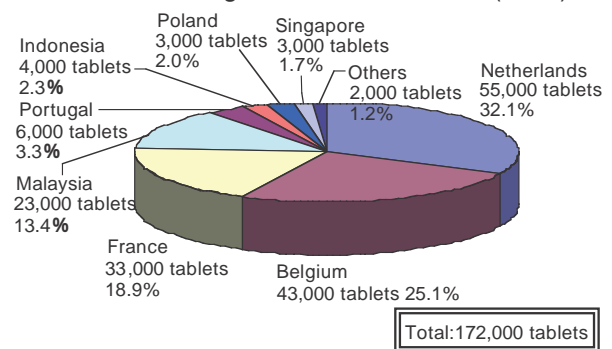
With regard to psychotropics, Thailand was the largest source in 2001, followed by China and the Philippines. Smuggling from those three countries accounted for more than 90% of all psychotropics seized during the year (See Chart 10).

As for mode of transportation, air passengers accounted for most of MDMA smuggling, and international postal mail and air passengers were frequently used to smuggle psychotropics.

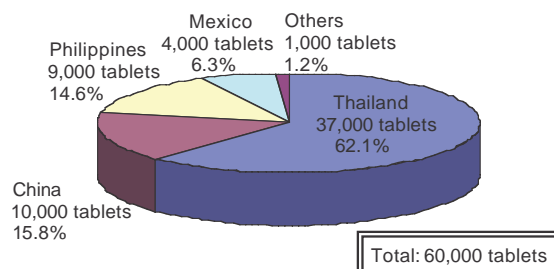
[Chart 8] Large-scale smuggling cases of MDMA



[Chart 9] MDMA Seizure by Sourcing Countries/Territories (2002)



[Chart 10] Psychotropics Seizure by Sourcing Countries/Territories (2002)



(4) Heroin and Opium

Smugglers trying to carry heroin from Southeast Asia to Canada and Australia via Japan were intercepted in succession.

The Golden Triangle, which spreads over Thailand, Laos and Myanmar, and the Golden Crescent, encompassing Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, are said to be the major producing areas of heroin. The Golden Triangle and its nearby areas have been the main source of heroin smuggled into Japan. Southeast Asia, centering on Laos and Thailand, accounts for roughly 80% of the total quantity seized in the past five years (See Chart 11).

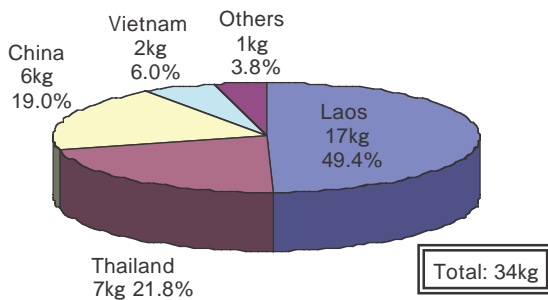
Approximately 40% of opium seized in the past five years was also sourced in the Golden Triangle and its neighboring countries, i.e. Thailand, Laos, India and Malaysia (See Chart 12).

In 2002, 15 cases (136.4% compared to the previous year) of heroin smuggling were interdicted with a total of 19 kg (4 times more than the previous year), leading to a two-digit seizure volume for the first time in 10 years. Meanwhile, 2 kg (24.3% compared to the previous year) of opium was seized in 3 cases (150% compared to the previous year), showing a tendency to decline in these years.

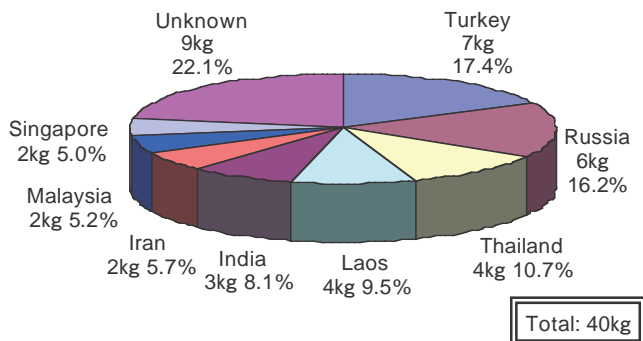
Major cases of smuggling in 2002 were one in which three Japanese passengers flying from Cambodia to Canada via Narita Airport were arrested at Customs in Canada for smuggling heroin because of our advance notification to the Canadian authority, and one in which four Japanese passengers hiding heroin who arrived at Narita Airport from Laos heading for Australia were caught during inspection.

The "transit charge" (Article 109-2 of the Customs Law) was applied to the case interdicted at Narita Airport as the first accusation by the new provision enacted in 2002.

[Chart 11] Seizure of Heroin by Sourcing Countries/Territories (1998-2002)



[Chart 12] Seizure of Opium by Sourcing Countries/Territories (1998-2002)



(5) Cocaine

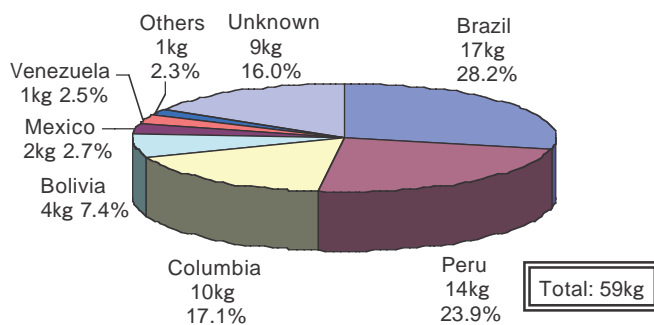
A large-scale smuggling incident by ship crew members was interdicted aboard a ship from South America as a source.

About 50 Japanese have been arrested for abuse of cocaine in Japan each year from 1998 to 2002 (40 in 2002), which is a sign of no abuse surge. However, considering that the pharmacological effect of cocaine is similar to that of stimulants and that the number of cases involving foreign residents in Japan, particularly Brazilians, is rapidly increasing, cocaine abuse could increase at any time now.

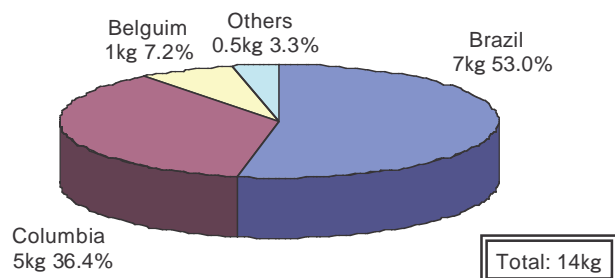
The number of cocaine smuggling incidents in 2002 was 12 (171.4% compared to the previous year) with a total of 14 kg (77.6% compared to the previous year). By sourcing country, Brazil was head of the list at 7.3 kg (accounting for 53% of the total), followed by Columbia at 5.0 kg (36.4%). The trend in the past 5 years also shows that the majority of cocaine smuggled into Japan originates in South America (See Charts 13 and 14).

Air passengers and international mail services are frequently used for smuggling. In 2002, there were also attempts to smuggle large amounts of cocaine through local airports.

[Chart 13] Cocaine Seizure by Sourcing Countries/Territories (1998-2002)



[Chart 14] Cocaine Seizure by Sourcing Countries/Territories (2002)



3. Trends in Firearms Smuggling

Firearms

Interdiction of a large amount of handguns smuggled through a Philippine route
 Interdiction of pen-type guns smuggled from South Africa

Almost all of firearms, excluding remodeled ones, those illegally possessed and used in committing crime in Japan are believed to have been smuggled from abroad. There had been a tendency for interdictions at the border to decline or level off. In contrast to 2000, in which we saw the occurrence of large-quantity smuggling cases, the interdiction in these two years was kept smaller. In 2002, there were 8 cases (four times greater than in the previous year), but only 13 guns were seized (61.9% compared to the previous year) (See Chart 15).

Major smuggling cases in 2002 include one in which a Japanese passenger arriving at Narita Airport from the Philippines tried to smuggle handguns and bullets wrapped around his lower belly and both thighs with packing tape and one in which pen-type guns hidden in international mail from Africa were interdicted.

[Chart 15] Trends of Firearms Smuggling by Year and Sourcing Country/Territory

