

PANYA SUKSAPHA, owner of Chaisit Ritta, shows his branded soft-flour cake, which is distributed through 2,000 7-Eleven convenience stores in the North and Central regions.



## MAKER OF SOFT-FLOUR CAKES STRIKES LUCRATIVE DEAL WITH 7-ELEVEN

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THE NATION  
Chiang Mai

By partnering with CP All, which runs more than 7,000 7-Eleven convenience stores nationwide, Panya Suksapha, the owner of Chaisit Ritta, has succeeded in making his soft flour cake business known and accessible to consumers in a short time.

"It was only me and my wife who started this business in 2000 with first-year sales of only Bt150,000," he said.

Panya, 64, and his wife, Kanpitcha, 44, established Chaisit Ritta as a limited partnership in 2009 with Bt2 million in registered capital.

He got the inspiration for his business by seeing the snack given away by local people as souvenirs from China.

Sachima, also called Shaqima, is a common pastry found in many Chinese-speaking regions. Each region has its own, slightly different version, though they all look essentially the same.

Originating in China during the

Manchu Dynasty, Sachima is a sweet snack made of flour, butter and rock sugar or rock candy that is now popular among both children and adults.

Panya calls his kind of snack "khao soy tu".

The company's factory on a three-rai plot in Sankampaeng district of this northern province can churn out 400 pieces of Sachima per minute running six hours a day with about 20 workers. It also uses about 15,000 eggs a day. The factory meets the standards of the Food and Drug Administration, good manufacturing practice and Halal foods.

The firm achieved sales of Bt39 million last year and expects Bt50 million this year.

"We approached CP All about distributing our snack at 7-Elevens early last year and the negotiations took about a year and a half. The company has sent its quality assurance staff to consult about product and packaging development to meet the requirements and tastes of consumers," he said.

The company's snack, under the "Pla Thong" (Golden Fish) brand, is

now available at 2,000 7-Elevens in the North and Central region.

Another brand of soft flour cake called "Kitti Tawan" has been developed for the traditional retail trade.

"Linking up with 7-Eleven has allowed our branded soft flour cake to be a snack that individual consumers can access anytime and anyplace," he said.

The company has opened a distribution centre in Bang Bua Thong to serve the Central region.

"We have also invested Bt20 million to set up another factory in Chon Buri with the production capacity of about 200 pieces of soft flour cake per minute. This will allow the company to cut costs for transporting ingredients such as flour and glucose syrup from Samut Prakan," he said.

The Chon Buri plant would distribute products in the East, South and Northeast.

"We are also discussing with the National Science and Technology Development Agency, which will provide technical assistance to extend the shelf life of our snacks from four months to one year. It is to meet CP All's criteria for any sup-

plier to deliver its products to any 7-Eleven within 24 hours," he said.

About Bt8 million-Bt10 million would be spent at its Chiang Mai

plant to convert it from using cooking oil to fry its snack to using a vacuum system.

A booth for demonstrating its products would be opened at Thaifex-World of Food Asia from May 22-26 at Impact Muang Thong Thani to explore foreign markets for its snack products.

Banyat Kamnoonwatana, assistant vice president of CP All, said about 600 SMEs sell products directly through 7-Eleven stores and 6,000 SMEs through its catalogue, which has about 500,000 subscribers.

"We achieved Bt4.5 billion in total sales from those SME suppliers last year, up 20 per cent over the previous year but less than the Bt100 billion total sales posted by the company," Panya said.