

“Visit Japan” Ambassadors

Fifty-five Ambassadors as of February 22, 2017  
(listed in the order of the Japanese syllabary)

Takanori ADACHI [Director, Adachi Museum of Art]

**Maintaining Japan’s finest gardens to promote the dissemination of Japanese culture; creating a welcoming environment for international visitors**

The Adachi Museum of Art in Yasugi, Shimane Prefecture, has large Japanese gardens. These perfectly designed gardens are meticulously maintained, and their beauty awes international visitors. For the 11 years from 2003\*, the museum was chosen as having the finest Japanese gardens by the U.S. magazine *The Journal of Japanese Gardening*. The gardens at the museum have been promoting the dissemination of Japanese culture as well as drawing increasing numbers of international visitors. The museum began efforts to attract more visitors from overseas earlier than other museums. In 1992, it began offering discounted admissions fees to international visitors. In 2006, it was certified by the “Visit Japan” Information Network as Japan’s first art museum to double as a tourist information center.

\*as of January 2014



Daishiro ARAMAKI [President, Kabukizabutai]

**Promoting the appeal of Japanese culture overseas through Kabuki; improving the environment for international audiences**

Kabuki is a major Japanese performing art. While serving as director of Shochiku Co., Ltd., Mr. Aramaki led a corporate effort to internationalize Kabuki by supporting Kabuki performances overseas and helping to hold Kabuki performances in English. In this endeavour, Kabuki actors have visited 108 municipalities of 35 countries, giving Kabuki performances more than 60 times to date. Each Kabuki performance attracted a large audience of several thousand to tens of thousands of people, helping to increase the number of Kabuki enthusiasts around the world. At the Kabukiza Theater, audio commentary through headsets was started in English for “single act ticket” seats, because these seats are frequently used by international audience members. Mr. Aramaki has been helping to improve the environment for non-Japanese audience members and has been taking advantage of Kabuki to actively promote and popularize Japanese culture.



Alex KERR (USA) [Researcher of Eastern Culture] [Director, Specified Nonprofit Corporation Chiiori Trust]

**Restoring *machiya* (traditional Kyoto townhouses) as tourism resources that enable tourists to experience Japanese culture firsthand**

Mr. Kerr is a researcher of Eastern culture who has been working as a writer, speaker and interpreter for the overseas promotion of Japanese culture and the beautiful landscapes of rural Japan. He restored and re-thatched an old farmhouse in Iya Valley, Tokushima Prefecture. For more than 30 years, he has been conducting programs that provide international visitors with opportunities to experience traditional Japanese culture, including tea ceremony, calligraphy, and Noh and Kyogen drama. Since promoting the Kyoto Machiya Restoration Project from 2004 through 2010, Mr. Kerr has worked as a director of the Incorporated NPO Chiiori Trust, which helps to repair and preserve traditional Japanese houses, and he has been undertaking landscape consultancy assignments at many places.



Takashi ANZAI [Chairman & Representative Director, Seven Bank, Ltd.]

**Enabling international visitors to make cash advances on credit cards issued overseas**

In 2014, Seven Bank installed about 20,000 ATMs nationwide to enable cash advances on credit cards issued abroad. This service is offered 24 hours a day, every day. At these ATMs, the screen display, audio guidance and receipts are available in English, Korean, Chinese and Portuguese. The withdrawal of cash in Japanese yen on credit cards issued overseas is possible at the ATMs located at Haneda Airport and Narita Airport as well as at 7-Eleven convenience stores throughout the country. The number of ATMs that offer this service is expected to increase. In FY2012, the service was used more than 2 million times. When he was president of Seven Bank, Mr. Anzai actively supported the development of the cash advance service.



Elizabeth ANDOH (USA) [Director, "A Taste of Culture" Culinary Arts Programs]

**Triggering a boom in Japanese cuisine by introducing it to Americans**

Ms. Andoh is a leading English-language authority on Japanese food in North America. Since publishing a book on traditional Japanese food in the U.S. in 1975, she has written regularly for *The New York Times*, published books and contributed to magazines. She ushered in the healthy Japanese food boom to the U.S. Ms. Andoh has also been helping to promote Japanese cuisine by serving as an adviser to many food writers from the U.S. She has been promoting culinary tours of Japan and has been directing the "A Taste of Culture" Culinary Arts Programs in Tokyo.



LEE Yong Sook (South Korea) [President & CEO, Rinkai Co., Ltd.] [Visiting Professor, Osaka University of Economics]

**Promoting inbound tourism from South Korea; helping to enhance mutual understanding between Japanese and Koreans without regard for profit**

Since 1995, when she established a travel agency specializing in inbound tourism from South Korea, Ms. Lee has been helping to increase the number of Korean visitors to Japan. She has held many seminars to help Japanese people deepen their understanding of the cultural differences between the two countries so that Japanese can be more welcoming of Korean visitors. In South Korea, she has published books that explain Japanese culture and customs, focusing on *sake* (rice wine), in a way that is understandable to Koreans. She has been informing Koreans of the appeal of Japanese culture in order to actively promote Japan as a tourist destination. Ms. Lee has also been serving as a member of tourism-related committees in many places. Without intending to make herself better known or to pursue profits, she has been working to promote exchanges between Japan and South Korea as well as to enhance mutual understanding. As a researcher, she wrote an article on the marketing of Japanese sake for *Service Business* (Springer), an international journal published in the U.S., thereby contributing to the international spread of information on Japanese culture.



Tomio IZUMI [Director & Head of the Secretariat, Specified Nonprofit Corporation Akihabara Tourism Promotion Association (ATPA)]

**Developing an environment in Akihabara that is welcoming to international visitors**

As the Director & Head of the Secretariat of the Incorporated NPO Akihabara Tourism Promotion Association (ATPA), Mr. Izumi has focused on improving Akihabara through tourism. (The Akihabara district is known as "electric town" and as a center of Japanese pop culture.) He has been playing a key role in holding festive events to entertain visitors to Akihabara and in conducting various activities to strengthen the Akihabara brand.

In the Akihabara Omotenashi Project, which has been implemented to introduce reliable shops and enjoyable cultural offerings to international visitors, official mascots of the project were used in the creation of an English-language map. The map is also used in various programs overseas to inform people about Akihabara.



Hiromi ICHIDA [Fashion Commentator]

### Promoting Japanese culture with a focus on kimonos

Serving as Vice President of the Kyoto City Tourism Association and President of Kyoto Okoshiyasu College, Ms. Ichida has been working to promote tourism, improve the hospitality experience, increase visitors to Kyoto and create a better environment for visitors. At the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit of 2008, she demonstrated to the spouses of the G8 leaders how one puts on the *juni-hitoe* (12-layered ceremonial kimono), contributing to cultural exchange and the promotion of Japanese culture. She has planned and appeared in kimono shows held in 106 countries, including the U.S., France, Denmark, China, Canada, Brazil, Mexico, Germany and Italy. Ms. Ichida has formed friendships with people in villages in Asia, Africa and Latin America, where she has visited to collect traditional native dress. In promoting cultural exchange and Japanese culture, she focuses on garments.



Issou UZAKI [President, Sun by Sun Works, Ltd.]

### Using film to inform people of the appeal of Japan, as well as to attract international visitors

Mr. Uzaki was a producer in Japan of the Chinese film *If You Are the One*, which screened during the 2009 Chinese New Year holidays. Eastern Hokkaido, Japan, was an important location for the film. The movie set a box-office record for Chinese New Year movies. In the past, Chinese tourists to Hokkaido chiefly visited the south-central Hokkaido areas of Sapporo, Lake Toya and Otaru. Because of the blockbuster film, other areas of Hokkaido, including the east, gained much attention. The film significantly helped to increase the number of Chinese visitors to Hokkaido, owing partly to the success of a project to attract tourists in connection with the film and to a number of package tours that have been offered. Mr. Uzaki has been using his connections with people in the Chinese entertainment industry to promote the appeal of Japan to Chinese as well as to attract international visitors to Japan.



Kenichi KAI [President, Hotel Fugetsu Hammond]

### Increasing international visitors to Beppu by making currency exchange easier and by keeping statistics on overnight stays by international visitors

The Beppu Association of Facilities Receiving International Visitors was established in 1997 as a private-sector organization. Mr. Kai has chaired this organization for 17 years, working to improve the environment for inbound tourism. Specifically, the exchange of East Asian currencies, such as the Korean won, the Taiwan dollar, the Hong Kong dollar and the Chinese yuan, became available at accommodation facilities in 2002. With the cooperation of a university, a system was established to keep statistics on overnight stays by international visitors according to their nationalities. International students have been trained as volunteer guides in English, Korean, Chinese and Thai. Thanks to his marketing visits to Southeast Asian countries, international visitors to the city of Beppu and to Oita Prefecture have been increasing. Taking advantage of his career as a teacher and his aptitude for teaching, Mr. Kai has been giving lectures throughout Japan on practical operations and hospitality for international visitors. He has been contributing to the increases in international visitors to Japan.



Hisao KAWASHIMA [President, Kawashima Associates]

### Promoting international conferences as a conference management specialist

Specializing in conference management, Mr. Kawashima has served as a lecturer and a consultant at many places over the years. He has informed a broad range of people on key points in inviting conferences and on the profit-conscious management of conferences. His activities are well known overseas, and he is the only Japanese ever to have served as a lecturer (1995-2001) with the International Association of Professional Congress Organizers (IAPCO), a global organization for conference management.

He contributed to the dissemination of specific knowledge about the invitation and organization of international conferences by helping to create a guidebook for inviting international conferences that was published by the Japan Tourism Agency. He also helped to create an international conference manual for the JNTO. For many years, he served as a lecturer at JNTO seminars on the topic of supporting international conferences and as a member of a committee that selects people to be commended on their success in attracting and organizing international conferences. Mr. Kawashima is dedicated to developing knowledge on how to attract international conferences and to educating people on this knowledge.



Kazumasa KIMURA [CEO, Kyoto Silk Co., Ltd.]

**Visualizing the appeal of Japanese culture by creating souvenirs that please international visitors**

For more than 30 years, Mr. Kimura has been helping to popularize Japanese culture by developing and selling Japanese souvenirs that appeal to international guests. Souvenirs created by Mr. Kimura were given awards in the "Visit Japan" Campaign - Japan's Attractive Souvenir Contest for the three consecutive years from 2006. He has improved the environment for receiving international visitors by addressing their needs. At the shop he runs in Kyoto, some salespeople are multilingual, and customers can make payments in several foreign currencies. He has been actively participating in travel fairs abroad in order to inform people in other countries of the appeal of Japanese culture, as well as to attract these people to Japan.



Elizabeth KIRITANI (USA) [Journalist]

**Informing people overseas, especially in the U.S., of Japan's appeal and positive aspects**

Ms. Kiritani came to Japan in 1979. Living in a traditional working-class neighborhood called Yanaka in Taito Ward, Tokyo, she wrote books by herself or in collaboration with her husband, Itsuo Kiritani, and she has written for English-language newspapers. Her writings aim at helping people overseas, particularly those in the U.S., better understand Japan's appeal and positive aspects. She has been greatly contributing to the regional promotion of international tourism by giving lectures that encourage Japanese to recognize the positive aspects of Japan--aspects that Japanese may be unaware of--and to recognize the appeal of Japan from the viewpoint of foreigners, because such recognition is important for the promotion of inbound tourism. Ms. Kiritani lives in Boston. Traveling back and forth between the U.S. and Japan, she continues her work.



Kurt Kübli GENSO (Switzerland) [Buddhist priest]

**Promoting the charm of Koyasan Shingon Buddhism globally in four languages**

Kurt Genso explains mandalas, Buddhist statues, paintings on *fusuma* sliding doors, vegetarian meals and the Buddhist events of Koyasan (the center of Shingon Buddhism) in French, German, English and Italian to international visitors as well as the media and travel companies around the world, in order to cultivate people's understanding of the charms of Koyasan. At tourism seminars in Europe, he has spoken about Koyasan on the basis of his knowledge and experience as a Buddhist priest, thus contributing to the prominence of Koyasan and Wakayama Prefecture, as well as to increases in international visitors to Koyasan. As a result of his activities, an increasing number of package tours to Japan, especially those planned in France, now include a visit to Koyasan.



KOU I (China) [President, Ten-I Corporation]  
( 訳者：株式会社天怡の正式英名表記不明 )

**Disseminating Japan's tourist information via television and radio; improving the environment for receiving Asian tourists**

Ms. Kou speaks about her experience of staying in Japan on the radio in Shanghai. She informs listeners about the Kansai district, helping to increase international visitors to Japan. At forums and seminars in the Kansai district that address preparedness to receive Asian visitors, she offers advice on the characteristics of Chinese consumers for the purpose of facilitating mutual understanding between Japan and China. She also takes part in the "Visit Japan" Campaign's regional programs for the dissemination of tourist information about Japan. At the request of the Osaka Convention & Tourism Bureau, Ms. Kou helped to create a manual on etiquette related to welcoming international visitors. In participating in a program to gauge Osaka's preparedness to welcome international tourists, she offers feedback for improvements from a non-Japanese perspective.



Junko KOSHINO [Fashion Designer]

Hiroyuki SUZUKI [CEO, Junko Koshino Inc.]

**Creating fashion designs that embody Japan's image and helping to widely spread information on Japanese culture**

Ms. Koshino, an internationally acclaimed fashion designer, has been making the appeal of Japanese culture known to the world. She has worked as a member of missions for cultural exchange dispatched by the Japanese government and as a member of the "Cool Japan" Movement Promotion Council. In Warsaw, Poland, she produced an event that introduced Japanese food to the public, working with Prime Minister Abe to publicize Japanese culinary culture. She designed uniforms for the athletes who represented Myanmar at the 2013 Southeast Asian Games and costumes for TAO, a Japanese taiko drumming group that performs worldwide.



Mr. Suzuki, Ms. Koshino's husband and the CEO of her company, is active as a photographer. He has had the following photo exhibitions: "TOKYO" at the Shanghai Art Museum, "Moments in Construction" at the KPF Gallery London and "The Next Level" at the New York Transit Museum Gallery and Store in Grand Central Station. (The first two of these exhibitions were held to express gratitude to those who offered support after the Great East Japan Earthquake.)

Tensho GOTO [Administrator, Kodaiji Temple]

**Taking the initiative in novel endeavors by temples and shrines in Kyoto; disseminating information on Japanese culture, hospitality, and the appeal of Japanese style**

As an advisor to a survey on the luxury travel market conducted by METI and the MLIT, Mr. Goto offered advice on Buddhist temples and traditional arts and crafts. At a reception for the International Luxury Travel Market Cannes 2007 in France, he presented on the appeal of Japanese culture, helping to attract international visitors to Japan. Kodaiji Temple was opened to the public for the first time in 1989. In 2007, more than 800,000 people visited the temple. Kodaiji began to use illumination at night in 1994, before other temples in Kyoto. Currently, the nighttime illumination of temples and shrines is an essential tourism resource for international visitors to Kyoto.



Jun KOYANAGI [President, Odakyu Travel Co., Ltd.]

**As a railway operator, opened an information center for international visitors and is promoting events to welcome them**

Even before the "Visit Japan" Campaign started, the Odakyu Electric Railway Co., Ltd. opened an information center for international visitors at Shinjuku Station, a key point of departure for Hakone and Kanagawa. The company developed the information center into a tourist information center designated by the JNTO as a member of the "Visit Japan" Information Network. The tourist information center has been providing information to a broad range of international visitors. Mr. Koyanagi played a leading role in that process. He also took the initiative in developing package tours for international visitors traveling by rail. With the aim of promoting tourism in the Hakone area during the Lunar New Year holidays, when many East Asians visit Japan, a campaign for welcoming visitors to Hakone was launched. Similar campaigns were also started for the Shinjuku, Enoshima and Ito areas. As the president of a travel agency, Mr. Koyanagi has been working to increase the number of inbound tourism destinations.



Hiroyasu SATO [Professor, Faculty of Comprehensive Management, Matsumoto University]

**Providing creative input for a TV show that introduces Japanese culture to young people overseas, and making appearances on that show**

Since April 2006, Prof. Sato has served as a creative consultant for a TV program titled *Cool Japan* on NHK-BS1. He has been appearing on the program to explain the culture and lifestyle of contemporary Japan as well as to introduce the appeal of tourism in Japan to young people in many countries and regions. He has worked to create a “wide-area tour route” in the Hokuriku Shin-etsu region. At Matsumoto University, Prof. Sato has been giving a course to residents of Nagano Prefecture on strategies for attracting international visitors. His activities focus on the cultivation of understanding about inbound tourism and the increase of international visitors.



Isao SAWA [Owner, Ryokan Sawanoya]

**Being well prepared to receive international visitors; offering hospitality together with local people**

Mr. Sawa has been actively accepting international visitors to his *ryokan* (Japanese inn). He has published books and spoken at various engagements to communicate his experiences to others, thereby helping to improve the environment for receiving international visitors as well as to increase their numbers. At Ryokan Sawanoya, 90% of the guests are international visitors, and the occupancy rate exceeds 90%. To date, 150,000 international guests from 100 countries have stayed at this *ryokan*. Mr. Sawa has been contributing to international exchanges in cooperation with local people. As evidenced by the fact that 30% of this inn’s guests are repeat customers, the hospitality extended to guests is highly acclaimed. Regarded as an exemplar of inns that receive international visitors, Ryokan Sawanoya was certified by the MLIT as a “charismatic contributor to tourism” in 2003 (certified as a “charismatic expert in hospitality extended to international guests staying in a traditional working-class neighborhood”).



Stefan SCHAUWECKER (Switzerland) [President, Japan Guide Co., Ltd.]

**Using a website to provide information on the positive aspects of tourism in Japan**

In 1996, Mr. Schauwecker launched japan-guide.com, an English-language website that provides tourist information on Japan. When he started the website, he did almost everything by himself, including news-gathering, photographing and writing. On the website he operates, the content is geared to the interests of international tourists and it is easy for them to use. This website has about 8 million page views per month. As one of the most visited sites for Japanese tourist information, japan-guide.com has been playing a significant role in informing international visitors of the appeal of tourism in Japan.



George LIM (Singapore) [CEO, Ishikawa Communications]

**Contributing to increases in the number of visitors to Japan by publishing a free magazine**

In Singapore in September 2006, Mr. Lim launched *Go Japan*, a free magazine specializing in tours to Japan. *Go Japan* is published twice a year (a spring/summer issue and a fall/winter issue) to coincide with the National Association of Travel Agents Singapore (NATAS) Travel Fair. The magazine is distributed at cafés, retail shops and shopping centers in Singapore. In 2008, the “Go Japan” Matsuri (festival) was held at a shopping center to publicize various aspects of Japanese culture. In March 2009, a Malaysian version of *Go Japan* was launched. This version is distributed at the Malaysian Association of Tours and Travel Agents (MATTA) Fair. Mr. Lim has been expanding the range of activities for advertising tours to Japan.

He also offers platforms for increasing tours to Japan. These include the “Visit Japan” Fair held at shopping centers, DIY Japan Travel™ seminars, the *DIY Japan Travel™ Guidebook* and the *Go Japan Travelbox™*.



John GAUNTNER (USA) [President, Sake World Inc.]

**Disseminating information on Japanese culture based on sake**

Mr. Gauntner has been active in disseminating information on Japanese sake in Japan and overseas, helping to attract sake enthusiasts to Japan. He has given lectures on sake at the Japan Society, the John F. Kennedy Center, Harvard University and Columbia University, and in Hong Kong, China and the U.K. He offers the Sake Professional Course in Japan and the U.S. every year to spread knowledge about sake. In Japan and the U.S., each class is filled to capacity every year. Most of the people taking the Sake Professional Course in Japan are from outside Japan. Mr. Gauntner has planned sake brewery tours, making efforts to attract international visitors by showcasing sake.



Masami TAKAHASHI [Host, Fuji-Hakone Guest House]

**Receiving international tourists by focusing on encounters and communication with people, as well as on mutual learning**

The inn that Mr. Takahashi has been running in Hakone has received more than 120,000 international visitors from 75 countries in the past 30 years, and he has introduced these tourists to Japanese culture. He has been engaging in the education of elementary school, junior high school and high school students about tourism that values an attitude of friendliness to international visitors. He has also been promoting international, cultural and educational exchanges by offering courses to college students and adults on the topic of hospitality for international visitors. Mr. Takahashi cooperates with a university in conducting research and in giving lectures on international tourism. He also accepts university students as interns. In July 2008, a Cornell University study identified the Fuji-Hakone Guest House as a "best-practice champion" in the hospitality industry in Asia. In December 2012, Mr. Takahashi received the Third Kanagawa Tourism Award from the Governor of Kanagawa Prefecture for his contributions to tourism.



Hisao TAKI [Founder & Chairman, Gurunavi, Inc.]

**Running a multilingual website that provides information on restaurants; globally publicizing the appeal of Japanese culinary culture**

A major purpose of overseas travel is to enjoy food in different countries. Knowing the way Japanese people think of food, international visitors expect a lot from the food that they can have in Japan. Mr. Taki launched *Gurunavi*, Japan's biggest website for restaurant searches, 13 years ago. Providing detailed real-time information on restaurants, the website receives 850 million page views and 18 million unique users a month. Detailed information on 62,000 restaurants is provided. A large amount of information that *Gurunavi* keeps is used to provide information to international visitors in four languages (English, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese and Korean) on the website and in a guidebook. Gurunavi, Inc. significantly helps to disseminate information on food culture as well as to improve the environment for receiving international visitors by providing them with the culinary information that they need.



Mako TANAKA [Director, Kobe Film Office]

**Promoting the appeal of Kobe overseas by taking advantage of the activities of a film commission**

Ms. Tanaka has been using her rich experience in film production to promote the activities of the Kobe Film Office, which is a film commission. By capitalizing on a broad network of film commissioners in the U.S., Europe and Asia, as well as her networks in the entertainment industry, she has actively promoted Kobe at home and overseas as a city of many filming locations. She supports the filming of about 10 overseas movies, dramas and the like each year, helping to spread information on the appeal of Kobe and of the films that are made there. In 2001, Ms. Tanaka became the first Asian member to sit on the board of directors of the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI). In 2004, she worked to launch the Asian Film Commissions Network (AFCNet) and served as its vice-chair. She has been taking the lead in the international activities of Japanese film commissions. Because of her contributions through film to increases in international visitors to Japan, she was certified by the MLIT as a "charismatic contributor to tourism" in 2003 (certified as a "charismatic expert using film to promote tourism and regional development").



CHO Seong-Ha (South Korea) [Travel writer and Editor Responsible for Consumer Economy, Channel A, *The Dong-A Ilbo*]

**Promoting travel to Japan through the Korean media; increasing visitors who aim to enjoy skiing and cultural experiences**

Mr. Cho is a travel writer with *The Dong-A Ilbo*, a newspaper launched in 1920. A professional travel journalist since 1995, he pioneered the writing of travel stories in South Korea. He is known for contributing to the introduction of Japanese tourism resources to Koreans. These resources include ski resorts, hot springs, Japanese sake and rail travel. Mr. Cho is also known as the first journalist to inform travel agencies and skiing enthusiasts in South Korea of skiing tours to Hokkaido, which he first did in 1995. Since then, he has been visiting more than 40 ski resorts in Japan during the ski season every year in order to write stories and take photos for newspapers, magazines and his website. Many years ago, he recommended trips to hot spring areas for sake and dining at Japanese inns, as well as travel by train on rail passes. Since then, similar types of travel have become popular in South Korea. Mr. Cho publicizes tourist spots in Japan and consistently helps to bring more and more Korean visitors to Japan. He has been working exclusively for *The Dong-A Ilbo* since 1982.



CHEN Haiteng (China) [President, Towa Co., Ltd.]

**Using a website to attract Chinese tourists to Japan**

Mr. Chen once served as a manager of the Japan division of a leading Chinese travel company. He leveraged his studies at Kobe University into career advancement. In his former job, he used a website to attract Chinese tourists to Japan. After adding a Simplified Chinese version to the website as part of a project connected to the "Visit Japan" Campaign, the number of page views increased dramatically. Mr. Chen offered information necessary for attracting affluent Chinese tourists after the Japanese government began to issue visas to Chinese individuals. He has given lectures across Japan on the need to make arrangements for receiving Chinese visitors. He is currently involved in online marketing for Japan and China, the search and recruitment of globally competent professionals, health tourism for men, beauty care tours for women and cultural exchange tours for students.



Koichi TSUKIHARA [Special Adviser, Sumitomo Mitsui Card Company Co., Ltd.]

**Making arrangements to help Chinese visitors shop in Japan**

Chinese are coming to Japan in increasing numbers to shop. Mr. Tsukihara has been helping to increase the number of shops that accept China UnionPay cards for payment by Chinese customers. Because restrictions are imposed on how much money Chinese tourists can take out of China, he has made arrangements so that these tourists can enjoy shopping in Japan more freely than before. In connection with the "Visit Japan" Campaign and in cooperation with shops affiliated with the UnionPay card, a sales promotion campaign was undertaken to coincide with long Chinese holidays. Mr. Tsukihara also assisted with online promotional activities and with the creation and distribution of tourist maps in Chinese to attract more Chinese visitors to Japan.



Yuka TSUJIMURA [General Manager, Tourist Information Center at Narita International Airport, International Tourism Center of Japan]

**Responding to inquiries from international visitors to create a better environment for tourists**

The Tourist Information Center (TIC) at Narita International Airport is a place where international visitors can get information about Japan immediately after their arrival. At the TIC, Ms. Tsujimura has been making efforts to create an environment in which international visitors can fully enjoy their trips, making it her motto to respond to every kind of inquiry until the inquirer is satisfied. Because she has many opportunities to talk directly with international visitors, she has learned their needs. She speaks about these needs in seminars for the future guidance of many people. Ms. Tsujimura has been active in improving the environment for receiving international visitors.



Yoshiaki TOGAWA [President, Tominoko Hotel]

**Leading the improvement of the environment for receiving international guests by creating facilities tailored to their needs**

Even before the "Visit Japan" Campaign started, Mr. Togawa was aware of the importance of accepting international visitors: the hotel he built was designed to cater to international guests by taking advantage of its location near the base of Mt. Fuji, the highest mountain in Japan. He has been a pioneer in hotel business geared to international visitors. As an executive board member of the Japan Ryokan & Hotel Association, he publicizes the efforts he has made to receive international guests at his hotel for the purpose of educating *ryokan* (Japanese inn) operators on how to improve *ryokan* management and hospitality. As a board member of the Fuji Five Lakes Tourism Federation, Mr. Togawa is working to keep Mt. Fuji worthy of its status as a "world cultural heritage site," attracting tourists to the area around the Fuji Five Lakes and contributing to hospitality.



Masao TORIMOTO [Chairman, Noto Association for Flights Chartered from Taiwan]

**Creating a wide-area tour route in and around Noto to attract visitors from Taiwan**

Since 1995, Mr. Torimoto has been working to bring more tourists from Taiwan to Noto, Ishikawa Prefecture. In 2004, he established the Noto Association for Flights Chartered from Taiwan and became its chair. He worked to develop package tours that utilize chartered flights and Noto Airport. About 60,000 Taiwanese visit Ishikawa Prefecture and the Hokuriku Shin-etsu area every year by using the services provided by that association. Attractive package tours were created by using "private lodging programs" and guest houses in several places, and by developing an excursion route across prefectural borders in order to provide tourists with opportunities to experience local festivals and the Wajima morning market. Thus, tour participants can enjoy both local tourism and wide-area tours. Stories written by Taiwanese visitors about their experiences in Japan were collated as a booklet for distribution in Taiwan. In this way, Mr. Torimoto has been constantly implementing various ideas to attract Taiwanese visitors.



Yutaka NAKAMURA [Director, Trajal Hospitality & Tourism College, Travel Journal Educational Foundation]

**Making arrangements to receive international visitors through cooperation between a hotel and local businesses; enhancing convenience for international guests**

While working at the Royal Park Hotel, Mr. Nakamura helped restaurants around the hotel in the Nihonbashi district at no charge by translating their menus into English, supporting their operations over the phone and giving them English lessons. He has worked in cooperation with local people to improve the environment for receiving international guests. He has made efforts to increase facilities that are helpful for international visitors, such as the ATMs of Seven Bank. He formed a business alliance with PIA Corporation to install machines that sell tickets for Kabuki theater performances and sumo matches. Mr. Nakamura has set a positive example for the hotel business regarding efforts to attract international guests. He also focuses on the education and development of professionals as well as on the "*Omotenashi* (hospitality)" Campaign.



Emi NAMIKI [President & CEO, Kinugawa Grand Hotel Yume no Toki]

**Actively engaging in organized activities to attract inbound tourists and increase international overnight guests**

While operating her hotel, Ms. Namiki chaired the Committee to Attract International Visitors, which was organized under the auspices of the Kinugawa-Kawaji Onsen Tourist Association in 2004. In order to attract inbound tourists, she integrated efforts that had been made individually by various hotels into the organized activities of the association. She has been participating in programs to attract international visitors in connection with national and prefectural policies. For example, she has taken part in international tourism expos and promotional tours to China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. Ms. Namiki's efforts have borne results in terms of significant increases in the number of international guests staying in the Kinugawa-Kawaji hot spring area.



Koichi NISHIMURA [Chairman, Follow Me Japan Pte. Ltd.]

**Creating booms in tours to Hokkaido and in driving in Singapore**

Mr. Nishimura has offered people in the city-state of Singapore new ideas about traveling. Singaporeans have learned how liberating it is to rent a car and drive around Hokkaido. Mr. Nishimura helped to create booms in tours to Hokkaido and in driving. To put drivers at ease, he has been developing various services that involve technologies such as car navigation systems, mobile phone access to tourist information, and GPS. He has helped to increase repeat visitors to Hokkaido by satisfying the needs of Singaporeans, who favor personal travel over group tours.



Sachiko HATTORI [President, Espace Hattori, French-Japanese Cultural Center]

**Providing information on Japanese culture at a private cultural center to help increase the number of French visitors to Japan**

France is a priority market of the "Visit Japan" Campaign (VJC). In 1993, before that campaign had even started, Ms. Hattori established a French-Japanese cultural center on her own in Paris to present Japanese culture through projects in various fields, including arts, crafts, theatrical performances and music. She has been committed to motivating French people to take an interest in Japan and to visit Japan. In 2012, she added "Espace Hattori" to the name of the cultural center. Since then, she has been focusing on providing consulting services related to the planning and implementation of French-Japanese cultural exchange programs. By capitalizing on her many years of experience and her networks of influential persons, Ms. Hattori has been helping to increase French visitors to Japan through various opportunities, such as: activities to support reconstruction after the Great East Japan Earthquake, programs to introduce local Japanese culture, French-Japanese exchanges of food culture and programs to advise employees of French companies associated with Japan on Japanese culture.



Yoshikazu HIGASHI [President, Okinawa Tourist Service Incorporated]

**Making preparations to receive increasing numbers of international visitors in Okinawa and Hokkaido**

As president of the Okinawa Tourist Service Incorporated, which was founded in 1958, Mr. Higashi has been actively working to attract international visitors to Okinawa. Recently, he opened a rental car reservation center in Taipei. He has been supporting visitors from Taiwan and Hong Kong so that they can enjoy driving rental cars safely and conveniently in Okinawa. For this purpose, Mr. Higashi has been providing these visitors with accurate information in their native languages, has introduced driving simulators for the benefit of international drivers and has made car navigation systems available to drivers in four languages (English, Chinese, Korean and Japanese). He pioneered preparations for receiving Muslim visitors and won the Tour Grand Prix 2012. In cooperation with a related travel company named Zero Planning, Inc. in Hokkaido, Mr. Higashi opened a tourist salon in Sapporo. The salon has an authentic Muslim prayer room that will hopefully help to attract visitors from Southeast Asia to Hokkaido.



Soichiro FUKUTAKE [Director & Chairman, Benesse Holdings, Inc.]

**Implementing art projects in order to globally promote the resources and appeal of the Seto Inland Sea area**

Mr. Fukutake is president of Benesse Art Site Naoshima. The Benesse House project started in 1989 and developed into a project for constructing facilities that integrate a museum with a hotel on Naoshima Island, Kagawa Prefecture. By utilizing contemporary art projects such as the Art House Project, for which old empty houses in Naoshima's Honmura district are used, and the Chichu Art Museum, designed by Tadao Ando, Mr. Fukutake has been revitalizing the community on this isolated, depopulated island for 25 years. His activities have helped local residents to smile once again. In 2010 and 2013, he produced the Setouchi Triennale. In 2013, 1.07 million people visited the island from home and abroad. In the September 2013 edition of *Lonely Planet Japan*, a global travel guide, Naoshima Island was ranked 20th in the cover story titled *Japan's Top 25*.



Beth REIBER (USA) [Freelance Travel Writer] [Author of *Frommer's Japan* and *Frommer's Tokyo*]

### **Disseminating information about Japan in a U.S. travel guide for 30 years**

For nearly 30 years Ms. Reiber has been writing about Japan, chiefly for Frommer's, the pioneering U.S. travel guide. The guide, now in its 11th edition, accurately describes tourism trends in Japan. The book is revised every two years. For each revision, Ms. Reiber visits tourist spots to gather new information. Based on her long-term observations, she provides the JNTO and local governments with information about strategies for improving the visitor experience for travelers from overseas. She has also contributed many stories about Japan to the JAL in-flight magazine *Skyward* and to *AAA Traveler*, *Destination Hyatt*, and the website and blog of the "Visit Japan" Campaign, which were launched in 2007 for North Americans. She has served as a CNN commentator, and she guest-lectured at a media event that was held by the JNTO to publicize Kyushu at the Consulate General of Japan in New York.



Tetsuya BESSHO [Actor] [President of the Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia]

### **Using short films to enhance cultural exchanges and attract international guests**

Mr. Bessho was quick to appreciate the significance of short films, thinking that they demonstrate the latent talents of young movie creators. In 1999, he started the Short Shorts Film Festival, an international festival based in Japan. Since that year, the festival has been held in 13 cities in Japan and 4 cities overseas, attracting a total audience of more than 280,000 people. The festival gained accreditation from the Academy of Motion Picture Art and Sciences in 2004. In the same year, the Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia was started in Tokyo. It has been held concurrently with the Short Shorts Film Festival, providing creators from Asian countries and other places with opportunities to make exchanges with each other. Mr. Bessho launched the tourist information site *Tabimoja* (travel+motion+Japan) on which various videos and other content related to travel and topics that interest keen travelers are collected.



Bernard DELMAS (France) [President & CEO, Nihon Michelin Tire Co., Ltd.]

### **Publishing globally famous guidebooks that help to publicize the appeal of trips to Japan**

Mr. Delmas has been playing a key role in publishing the following guidebooks in cooperation with the "Visit Japan" Campaign: *Michelin Guide Tokyo Yokohama Shonan*, a Tokyo-Yokohama-Shonan version of Michelin's restaurant and hotel guides; *Michelin Voyager Pratique Japon*, a practical travel guide written in French for international visitors to Japan; and the *Michelin Guide Vert Japon*, a travel guide that contains detailed explanations of Japanese history and helps international visitors to understand Japanese culture better. These guidebooks contain information on Japanese food, culture, lifestyle, arts and economy. He has contributed to increases in the number of international visitors to Japan. In the *Michelin Guide Vert Japon* (3rd revised edition, in French), published in February 2013, Kamakura was given three stars, meaning "highly recommended." This guidebook has had a significant positive impact on tourism: tourist spots listed in the guide have been attracting increasing numbers of international visitors.



Seiichi HOSHIKO [Chairman, JVK Inc.]

### **Attracting international visitors by disseminating information overseas on visually striking rock bands**

JVK Inc. has been making full use of magazines, the Internet and live events to popularize visually striking Japanese rock bands overseas as part of the new pop culture of Japan. The business of this company has helped to increase international visitors. JVK Inc. has been spreading information about the music of visually striking bands through cooperation with Japan's leading music information website and by supporting these bands' performances abroad. To date, concerts organized by this company have attracted an international audience of 180,000 people, 15% of the total audience.



MAO Danqing (China) [Writer] [Professor, Kobe International University]

**Introducing his impressions of Japan to China from a Chinese point of view; cultivating cultural exchanges between the two countries**

Since coming to Japan in 1987, Prof. Mao has traveled across Japan and has written feature stories for major travel magazines in China. His stories focus on Japan through Chinese eyes. He visits universities at many places in China almost every year to lecture on "Japan and my everyday life," contributing to cultural exchanges between China and Japan. Prof. Mao was involved in the creation of a DVD film that was produced to promote tourism to Japan in the Chinese market as part of the "Visit Japan" Campaign. The stories he writes for his books and blog focus on the good things about Japan. He is a chief editor of *Zhi Japan*, a Chinese monthly that he started in 2011 as a magazine specializing in Japanese culture. Mr. Mao's writings have been significantly contributing to the enhancement of Chinese people's understanding of Japan.



Takashi MACHI [President & CEO, JR Kyushu Building Management Co., Ltd.]

**Helping to draw more Korean visitors by improving the environment for receiving Koreans in Kyushu**

When Mr. Machi was a stationmaster at Hakata station, he improved the Korean-language signs to make them more understandable to Korean visitors, before other stations did so. After becoming the president of Hotel Okura JR Huis Ten Bosch, he made arrangements to receive Korean tourists by preparing signs in Korean and employing Korean nationals. Mr. Machi took part in community planning for the hotel's environs, especially for the Town of Hasami, Nagasaki Prefecture. In cultural exchanges focusing on pottery, he served as a liaison with Gangjin-gun, a county in South Korea. JR Kyushu has been helping to enhance the convenience of international visitors on sightseeing tours in Kyushu. For example, the company started a northern-Kyushu version of the Kyushu Rail Pass, a pass that provides international visitors with unlimited travel on JR trains on the island of Kyushu. Additionally, a guidebook created by Korean writers and photographers was produced and distributed, and the JR Kyushu Jet Ferry service was started between Busan, South Korea, and Hitakatsu on Tsushima Island, Japan. Mr. Machi has served as a visiting professor specializing in tourism at five universities in Japan and South Korea, helping to promote exchanges and mutual understanding between young people in Japan and South Korea.



Daiko MATSUYAMA [Deputy Head Priest, Taizo-in (a sub-temple in the Myoshinji Temple Complex)]

**Spreading information on Japanese culture focusing on the Zen spirit; helping to improve the environment for receiving international visitors**

Mr. Matsuyama was born in Kyoto in 1978. He graduated from the University of Tokyo Graduate School of Agriculture and Life Sciences in 2003. He has been a deputy head priest at Taizo-in since 2006.

He started new initiatives by planning tours that provide international visitors with opportunities to experience Zen and projects to foster artists at traditional Zen temples.

In 2008, members of the G8 Sherpa Meeting visited Taizo-in. Mr. Matsuyama has given lectures at various places around the world, including the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan and many embassies. The information he provides about Japanese culture and the exchanges he has promoted have earned high acclaim. In 2011, he represented Japanese Zen Buddhists at an audience with the former Pope at the Vatican Palace, and he has had exchanges with various religious people and leaders around the world. In January 2014, he attended the World Economic Forum. Mr. Matsuyama is active all over the world and across religious boundaries.



Martin BARROW (UK) [Vice-Chairman, Japan Society] [Director, Jardine Matheson Holdings Ltd.]

**Helping to increase visitors to Japan by making recommendations to the government and to agencies**

Mr. Barrow lives in London. He has stayed in East Asian countries such as Japan, Hong Kong and Thailand for many years. He has been working for Jardine Matheson Holdings Ltd., a business group that opened a branch office in Japan in 1859. That branch office was known to local people as Ei-ichiban-kan. Mr. Barrow traveled in Asia for the first time between 1962 and 1964. He headed for East Asia from the U.K. by land, and took a ship bound for Japan in 1964. After staying in Japan for two months, he left Hokkaido for Canada by ship. Mr. Barrow served as president of the British Chamber of Commerce in Japan from 1979 through 1980. He was the chairman of the Hong Kong Tourist Association for eight years. He visits Japan frequently. After the Great East Japan Earthquake, he visited the Tohoku district three times. He has made recommendations to the Japan Tourism Agency, the Japan National Tourism Organization and other governmental organizations regarding a broad range of issues related to the Japan Brand and Cool Japan. Mr. Barrow is a member of the Japan Society and the UK-Japan 21<sup>st</sup> Century Group.



Toshiko MANDOKORO [President, Gen Inc.]

**Creating user-friendly guidebooks; promoting Japanese cultural workshops**

Ms. Mandokoro has been engaging in activities for accepting international students as well as for community renovation at various places over many years. In these activities, she has promoted the creation of regional brands by capitalizing on the traditional culture and crafts of each place. She has been contributing to regional revitalization as well as to information dissemination at home and abroad. Ms. Mandokoro has also been putting great effort into informing people overseas of Japanese food and culture. She has edited guidebooks on Japan under various international projects. Her past and present activities include the following: the production of a "Japan Brand," the planning and management of exhibitions abroad, the planning and implementation of workshops that introduce various aspects of Japanese culture to international students and residents and the next generation, and the creation of tours on which the participants can appreciate Japanese food and culture. She has been acting in concert with efforts for regional vitalization that are made at various places across Japan.



Masahiro MURAYAMA [President, Ginga International Co., Ltd]

**Promoting tourism by sharing knowledge acquired by attracting international visitors**

Mr. Murayama was a pioneer in attracting inbound tourism to the Tohoku region. As a hotel employee, he began his efforts to attract visitors from Taiwan and Hong Kong in the late 1990s, when businesses in the Tohoku region were not fully committed to receiving international visitors. Regarding the knowledge and experience he has acquired by attracting international guests, Mr. Murayama actively shares them with many people at various opportunities, such as workshops. As an international adviser to the Republic of China Hot Springs Tourism Association, he is also working to enhance exchanges between hot spring areas in Taiwan and Tohoku and to raise the profile of Tohoku's hot spring resorts in Taiwan.



Satoko YAHATA [President, Core S Ltd.]

**Promoting international exchanges through the media and festive events**

Ms. Yahata is president of Core S Ltd, a consulting firm that specializes in international businesses related to art, culture, tourism and food, as well as in the planning and implementation of international exchanges and cultural events. A recent example of such events is the Nippon To Asobo project, which takes place at Shinto shrines and temples in Kyoto and which celebrated its 20th anniversary this year.

Ms. Yahata is an official member of the Japan Association for UNHCR, a board member of the Metropolitan Opera and the Manhattan School of Music, a director of the Pacific Basin Economic Council, and an adviser to the Asian Film Awards presented by the Hong Kong International Film Festival. She has been promoting Japanese culture and tourism at home and abroad.



Mayumi YAMAZAKI [Writer]

**Introducing outdoor baths and Japan's onsen culture to the world**

In the belief that it is her mission to globally disseminate Japan's hot spring culture, Ms. Yamazaki published a traditional Chinese version of her book about Japanese hot spring areas in Taiwan. She says truly open relationships with strangers are possible at *onsens* (hot springs). TV programs in which she has appeared have been shown all over Taiwan, at Narita Airport and as in-flight entertainment by several international airlines. Ms. Yamazaki is helping to spread Japan's hot spring culture overseas. In 2009, she held a successful exhibition titled *Snowy Regions and Hot Springs* in Paris in cooperation with the Niigata Japanese Inn Association. Since then, she has frequently traveled to Europe to promote hot spring resorts in Japan. Embracing her role as a "Visit Japan" Ambassador, Ms. Yamazaki has energetically given lectures on hot springs to people involved in inbound tourism across Japan and has held seminars with people in hot spring areas to discuss what is necessary for receiving international visitors. In anticipation of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, she is promoting the creation of "barrier-free" hot spring facilities in Japan.



Tomonori YOKOE [Executive Managing Director, Osaka Metro Services, Co., Ltd.] [Former Vice-President & CEO, Surutto Kansai Co., Ltd.]

**Selling rail and bus passes overseas to facilitate the use of public transportation by international visitors**

Surutto Kansai Co., Ltd. formed a network of five railway operators in the Kansai area for the joint use of a rail pass in 1996. Mr. Yokoe helped to expand the network to include 59 railway and bus operators. He also helped to commercialize the Kansai Thru Pass, which is usable by international visitors for multiple days. Overseas sales of this pass started in 2000, which resulted in a new mode of sightseeing tours in which tourists use the buses, trains and subways of their choice to access various tourism resources by themselves. The Kansai Thru Pass is used by visitors from 24 countries and regions. In his current post, Mr. Yokoe is cooperating with the West Japan Railway Company and other private railways to facilitate the use of public transportation by international visitors.



Tsutomu YOSHIZAWA [Director, Regional Revitalization Division, AppGT Inc.] [Former Manager of Public Relations, Assistant to the President, Yodobashi Camera Co., Ltd.]

**Making arrangements to receive international customers at a mass retailer of consumer electronics**

When he was working for Yodobashi Camera, a mass retailer of consumer electronics, Mr. Yoshizawa made efforts to receive international customers, including Chinese, by creating signage and displays in multiple languages. His workplace was the first mass retailer in Japan to accept the UnionPay card, which is issued in China. Mr. Yoshizawa chose auspicious Chinese characters to render the company name—"Yodobashi"—in Chinese. He decided to check the adequacy of the information displayed in multiple languages from the perspective of foreign nationals and to employ staff with a good command of Chinese, Korean and English. He participated in the Travel Expo in connection with the "Visit Japan" Campaign. In seminars across industries, Mr. Yoshizawa emphasizes the importance of attracting international customers as well as of developing retail business into a world-class tourism resource. He has been helping to increase visits by international customers to retail shops. He has also been actively engaging in activities to attract visitors from Southeast Asian countries.



Luke HURFORD (Australia) [Vice President, YTL Hotels] [Former General-Manager, Niseko Village K.K.] [Former Director of Marketing, Furano Tourism Association]

**Promoting the year-round operation and internationalization of resorts in Niseko and Furano**

Mr. Hurford has made efforts to turn Furano into an internationally popular ski resort. He has helped to develop: cultural exchange programs, guided tours supported by local volunteers, multilingual services, plans for improving transportation networks, and various types of services and lift tickets for several ski resorts. He has actively spread information on the appeal of Hokkaido worldwide, and he helped to found the Kyoto-Hokkaido Association for Attracting International Visitors. As the general manager of Niseko Village, Mr. Hurford introduced diverse services and benefits for guests and focused on families in offering resort activities. He succeeded in making Niseko an attractive destination for international skiing enthusiasts, and in operating Niseko Village as a year-round resort. He is working on creating the ultimate skiing and outdoor experience by blending Japanese and Western cultures and hospitality. As a "Visit Japan" Ambassador, Mr. Hurford continues to disseminate information on the appeal of Japan as a tourist destination and as a place with world-class ski resorts.



Atsumi WATANABE [President, Joho Dentatsu Institute (JDI), Inc.]

**Contributing to the promotion of international conferences as an expert in activities for attracting conferences**

Since the early days of urban development that focused on the hosting of international conferences, Mr. Watanabe has been providing consultations and taking part in various projects. He regards international conferences as opportunities to reconsider the local communities that host these conferences. Believing that international conferences are the result of original, creative efforts that contribute to local economic development and that the development of personal networks and local human resources is important for the successful hosting of international conferences, Mr. Watanabe has been giving lectures across Japan to inform people of the significance of activities for inviting international conferences. He has served as a member of committees related to international conferences in many cities, helping regional revitalization by promoting international conferences. Mr. Watanabe teaches a university course on MICE, focusing on fostering young specialists who can help to invite international conferences to Japan in the future.

