

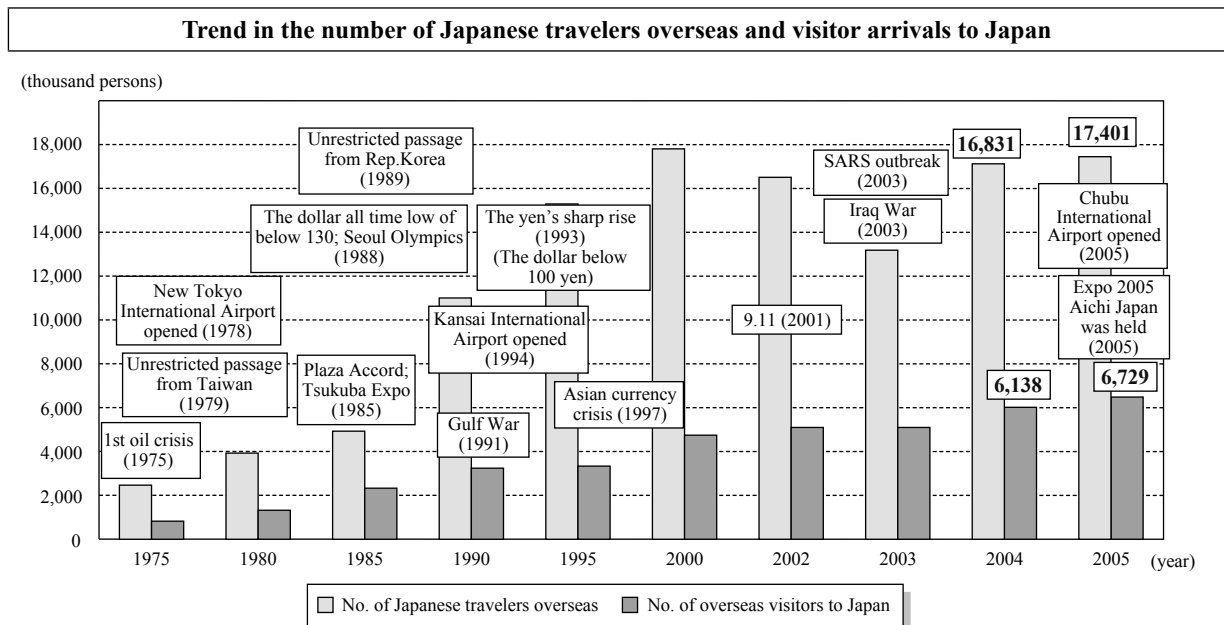
Chapter 2: Making Japan a Tourism-based Country; A beautiful country

[Trends in the realization of the Japan Tourism initiative]

Tourism not only lends relaxation and vibrancy to the lives of individual people, it also plays an important role in the economy, culture, and many other areas.

MLIT is moving forward with the Japan Tourism initiative in a two-pronged approach: “Strategic dissemination of the Japan brand overseas” through the Visit Japan Campaign ongoing since FY2003 and “Tourism destinations competitive on an international level” through programs like the Tourism Renaissance Program begun in 2005. MLIT will also begin keeping national lodging statistics in 2006 and making effective use of them. The idea is to make tourism statistics more consistent and readily comparable, leading to the formulation of better quality tourism policies.

A definite record was set in the year 2005 in the number of overseas visitors to Japan, estimated some 6.73 million, or an increase of 9.6% from the previous year. On the other hand, Japanese overseas travelers in the same year are estimated at around 17.4 million, a 3.4% increase over the previous year.



Notes: 1. “The number of overseas visitors to Japan” represents the number of foreign nationals who entered Japan in the Ministry of Justice’s statistics minus that of those residing in Japan plus that of foreign nationals who landed on Japan temporarily.

2. Both “No. of Japanese travelers overseas” and “No. of overseas visitors to Japan” for 2005 are estimates.

Source: Compiled from data from the Ministry of Justice

[Promoting international tourism exchange]

○ Aggressively moving forward with the Visit Japan Campaign

Japan is moving forward even more vigorously with the Visit Japan Campaign, a joint strategic drive among the central and local governments and the private sector to lure tourists from abroad. In FY2005 Australia, Canada, Thailand, and Singapore were added to the original priority markets of Rep. Korea, Taiwan, China, Hong Kong, the US, the UK, Germany, and France. Measures taken to promote public relations in these areas include: videos with Prime Minister Koizumi encouraging overseas visitors to Japan televised at airports and on airplanes, presentation at major travel exhibitions, visit Japan tour merchandising support, and the appointment of “tourism promotion ambassadors.”

○ Promoting tourism exchange

To further promote two-way tourism exchange with other countries, Japan holds bilateral consultations and tourism conferences at the ministerial level with countries that have relationships with Japan in the tourism sector. Educational visits to Japan and other youth exchange with citizens of many countries is also being promoted.

Poster for promoting the Visit Japan Campaign



[Making internationally-competitive tourism destinations]

○ Enhancing the charm of tourist resorts

MLIT has created a “Tourism Renaissance subsidy system” to provide partial financial assistance for environmental improvement programs for hosting overseas visitors and similar programs implemented by private organizations. The ministry is also promoting coordination and cooperation between regions and travel agencies on local tourism marketing, as well as opening “tourism charisma schools,” in addition to other efforts.

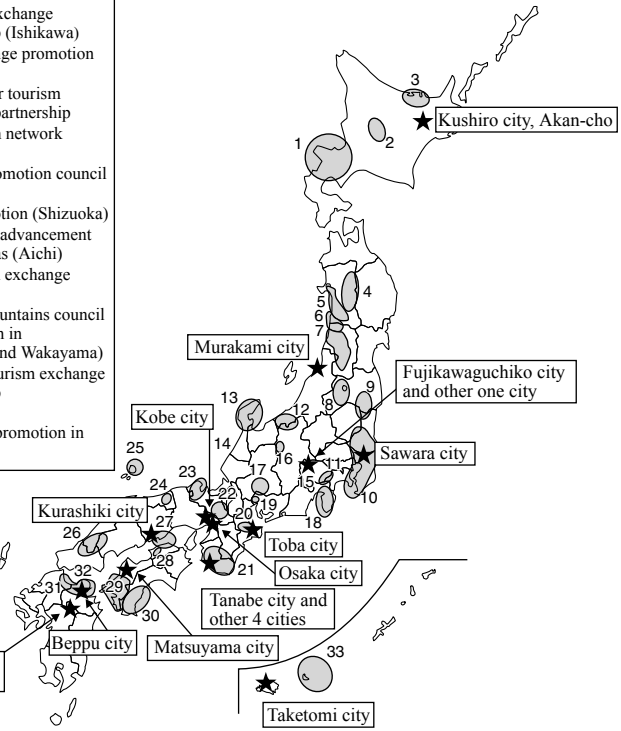
Selected Areas for the Tourism Renaissance Subsidy System and Practical Plan for Creating Tourist Destinations

1. Shiribeshi district council for tourism exchange promotion in broad-based partnership (Hokkaido)
2. Furano City council for international tourism promotion (Hokkaido)
3. Ozora town council for tourism and town development promotion (Hokkaido)
4. Akita-Iwate council for tourism exchange promotion in broad-based partnership (Akita and Iwate)
5. Omonogawa river council for tourism exchange and local revitalization (Akita)
6. Circum-Chokai region council for tourism exchange promotion (Akita and Yamagata)
7. Mogami river basin council for tourism exchange promotion (Yamagata)
8. Aizu council for tourism exchange promotion in broad-based partnership (Fukushima)
9. Iwaki-Kitaibaraki-Takahagi broad-based tourism promotion council (Fukushima and Ibaraki)
10. Hitachi and Fusa “joint-up” project promotion council (Chiba and Ibaraki)
11. West sagami district council for tourism exchange promotion (Kanagawa)
12. Shinetsu region council for tourism exchange promotion (Niigata and Nagano)
13. Noto Peninsula council for tourism exchange promotion in broad-based partnership (Ishikawa)
14. Kaga City council for tourism exchange promotion (Ishikawa)
15. Mt.Fuji Four Lakes region council for tourism exchange promotion in broad-based partnership
16. Shinshu Azumino council for tourism network promotion (Nagano)
17. Nihon Rhine broad-based tourism promotion council (Aichi and Gifu)
18. Izu district council for tourism promotion (Shizuoka)
19. Arimatsu Okehazama council for the advancement of tourism and creation of tourist areas (Aichi)
20. Ise-Futami region council for tourism exchange promotion (Mie)
21. Shrine and pilgrimage road in Kii mountains council for tourism exchange place promotion in broad-based partnership (Mie, Nara and Wakayama)
22. Kyoto-Otsu-Uji region council for tourism exchange promotion in broad-based partnership (Shiga and Kyoto)
23. Tango council for tourism exchange promotion in broad-based partnership (Kyoto)

24. Tottori “grand design” council for tourism strategies promotion (Tottori)
25. Oki-dougo district council for tourism exchange promotion in broad-based partnership (Shimane)
26. Hagi-Masuda-Tsuwano region council for tourism exchange promotion in broad-based partnership (Shimane and Yamaguchi)
27. East Seto inland sea council for tourism (Okayama and Kagawa)
28. Konpira region council for tourism promotion through town development (Kagawa)
29. South Iyo district council for tourism exchange promotion in broad-based partnership (Ehime)
30. Shimanto river broad-based tourism promotion council (Kouchi)
31. Nakatsu-Buzen-Chikujo prefectural border area council for tourism exchange promotion in broad-based partnership (Fukuoka and Oita)
32. Usa-Kunishaki Peninsula council for tourism exchange promotion in broad-based partnership (Oita)
33. Miyako district council for tourism exchange promotion in broad-based partnership (Okinawa)

★... Areas eligible for the Tourism Renaissance subsidy (13 areas)

○... Areas selected for the practical plan for creating tourism destinations (33 areas)



- Development of tourism resources that capitalizes on the natural environment

MLIT is taking the initiative to promote: cycle tourism that makes it possible to enjoy the local charms while cycling at a comfortable pace; the development of value-added walking trails; the utilization of waterfront resources; canoeing; rafting and river tourism.

Canoe touring along Teshio River in Hokkaido



People enjoying canoe touring



Canoe port

- Improving the tourism environment for overseas visitors to Japan

A number of arrangements are being made to welcome tourists from abroad. Among them are: developing “International Tourism Theme Areas”; improving lodging facilities; implementing train station numbering and taking other steps to improve access to train and bus services; promoting oceangoing cruises; providing tourist information services through public transportation operators and other organizations; improving the interpreter guide service system; and reviewing the system for providing tourist information system in several languages with the help of IT. In addition, efforts have been made to reduce costs of traveling Japan.

[Improving the tourism environment for the people]

MLIT implements measures to ensure safe and comfortable traveling. Such measures include encouraging the public to take more holidays, especially in off-seasons, to promote extended-stay tours.

[A beautiful country]

- Developing good landscapes

In June 2005, the “Three Laws on Landscape and Greenery” went into full force. These three laws are designed to support the development of good landscapes in an integrated and systematic manner. Of the three, the Landscape Law is the law that overhauled the basic legal structure as concerns landscapes. Also, in relation to various regulation induction measures, it is desirable that local authorities operate with consideration to developing good landscapes.

To promote infrastructure development that pays adequate attention to landscapes, MLIT is piloting a landscape assessment system for some of the projects under the ministry’s direct jurisdiction or management.

- Development of attractive landscapes the public can be proud of

As a matter of principle, MLIT ensures that projects under its jurisdiction contribute to landscape development. During 2005, the ministry formulated and announced landscape development guidelines for government buildings, urban development, roads, rivers, coasts, residences and buildings, ports, and improvement projects for aids to navigation.

MLIT is also moving forward with the cosmetic removal of power poles based on the 2004-2008 “Plan to Dispense with Power Poles.”

MLIT is furthermore promoting the “Scenic Byway Japan” project for the development of beautiful road spaces. The idea is to contribute to the effective region-centered use of each area’s unique landscape and natural assets, accommodating the features of cities and outlying areas. The project is also designed to help revitalize local communities through exchange between visitors and the welcoming area.

Examples of Scenic Byway Japan Activities

