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## *Chairman Tagawa's Hitorigoto*

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“Hitorigoto” in Japanese means “murmuring to oneself.” We have launched this new section in the hope that it will give some insights into what one of the leaders of the Japanese tourism industry has on his mind (Disclaimer: Although Mr. Tagawa is one of the most active members of the Japanese travel industry, this section might present thoughts on things which are not closely related to his work.)



With so many surprising and at times shocking happenings which the world experienced last year, I wonder what this year is going to bring. Still, as I think about it, the more important question seems to be “What year do we want it to be? What year are we going to make of it?”

As I travel around the world I see that Japan is attracting a lot of attention largely thanks to the rapid growth of foreign visitors. Yet, despite the great attention, I am not sure how well known the Japanese culture has become out of Japan. I believe that, this year, we should re-examine Japan as a place to live, a place to work, a place which has many strengths. The Japanese, Japan and its culture. We do not know yet what this year will bring but if we assess and focus on our core values, if we strengthen our heart, we will not be quiet spectators who just watch things go by. Finding the core values will help us keep growing and continue our journey as human beings.

The phrase “holiday reinvention” has been circulated a lot lately, yet, as somebody from the industry, I wonder if the people in this field can take time off to spend on relaxation. We need to think about the way we spend our time off, the way we relax our body and spirit. It seems that the Japanese are not very good at this. Taking long holidays helps cleanse both the body and the mind. Rather than “using the holidays given to us” we need to take the holidays and relax ourselves.

It is important to feel the four seasons, to experience life and the environment with our five senses. We the Japanese and the travel industry professionals in particular need to re-establish the meaning of “taking time off,” to become better at “relaxing” in order to become better able to convey our message.

(The editor could not help wondering if there are any other countries where the state and the industry ask their citizens and employees to take holidays.)

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## *σ Japan Travel Market Trends ↻*

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### *Japanese overseas travel grew by 5.6%, up to 17,116,200 travelers in 2016*

According to the Japan National Tourism Organization, 17,116,200 Japanese traveled overseas in 2016, which is 5.6% more than in 2015. The number exceeded the 17-million mark for the first time since 2013. With the exception of April 2016, when the number decreased by 2.3%, every month saw an increase on year-on-year basis, with August and November marking the highest increases of 10.0% and 10.5% respectively.

To see the latest trends in detail, please visit

[http://www.jata-net.or.jp/english/reports/2016/pdf/161228\\_markettrends.pdf](http://www.jata-net.or.jp/english/reports/2016/pdf/161228_markettrends.pdf) (English)

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## *σ JATA's New Initiative ↻*

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### *Concerted effort by the travel industry to boost outbound travel*

The Japan Association of Travel Agents (JATA) is about to launch a new initiative in its efforts to achieve 20 million overseas travelers and a greater volume of handled tours by its members in 2018. The new initiative, which under the name of Japan Outbound Tourism Council, will consist of JATA member companies, airlines, national tourism offices, embassies, tour-operators and other travel-related organizations. The council will work to facilitate the exchange of the newest travel information, expand the number of package tours handled by travel agencies, discover and promote new travel attractions in overseas tourist destinations.

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## *σ Latest Happenings & Events ↻*

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### *We Act for the Recovery of France*

JATA's Annual Overseas Executive Officers' Meeting was held in Paris in December 2016. The JATA management chose the meeting venue as the next step in their year-long efforts to support France's inbound travel recovery. During the period of January – September 2016, the number of Japanese visitors to Paris dropped by 46% (year-on-year) and the Paris Tourism Bureau, which

considers Japan an important source market, announced that it would continue to concentrate efforts for the recovery of the Japanese visitor segment. Executive officers of JATA were joined by Japanese and French travel and tourism officials, airlines and tour operators for a discussion on the actions taken so far and on how to further facilitate the full recovery of travel demand. Another step towards it will be a workshop organized for Japanese buyers who will be given the opportunity to meet French sellers during the Rendez vous en France in Rouen in March this year.

JATA revealed that sales of package tours for seniors gained momentum after October and that study tour market is expected to recover in 2017.

During the discussion, JATA Chairman Tagawa, emphasized the need of information which will enable travel agencies to create and tell a story which will help offer attractive tours to France. “While it is easy to get information on the Internet, we need detailed information to create story-telling tours for our customers.”

Mr. Schapira, Director General of the Paris Tourist Office, pointed out that his office will put efforts into offering travel products introducing architecture, cosmopolitan culture, lifestyle, crafts and local arts, etc.

#### *Stronger interest in travel promotion by the African Diplomatic Corps in Japan*

As the Ebola outbreak has become a thing of the past, ambassadors of African countries have shown interest in travel promotion. The African Diplomatic Corps in Tokyo invited Mr. Tadashi Shimura, President of JATA, to talk about the latest travel market trends and the activities of JATA on November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Mr. Shimura emphasized the importance of continued promotional activities and specifying promotion to meet the expectations of specific market segments.

#### *Familiarization tour to Far East Russia*

Fourteen representatives of travel companies and organizations took part in a familiarization tour headed by JATA Chairman Tagawa from November 1<sup>st</sup> to November 5<sup>th</sup> 2016. The tour was held by the Japan Tourism Agency as part of the “human exchange” initiative of the Japanese government, which designated 8 fields to work in in order to promote economic cooperation between Japan and Russia. The participants in the tour have formed the core of a working group which, in the span of three months, is expected to plan new tour products to the region. Continuing the activities after the end of March is currently under



consideration.

The logo mark of the project reading “The Nearest Europe” is available for use in tour brochures and web sites printed by the project-members.



#### *Study tour for the recovery of travel to South Korea*

In cooperation with the Korea Tourism Organization and Korean Air, JATA organized a study tour to South Korea. The study tour introduced three new courses. Headed by Chairman Tagawa, the board members of JATA joined representatives of the public and private sector of South Korea during the

Japan-Korea Travel Night, which was held in



Gyeongju



City.



The participants confirmed their determination to work together towards the common goal of expanding the bilateral exchange to 10 million people in the near future.

## *Lithuania travel promotion seminar*



The Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania and the Tourism Department of the Ministry of Economy invited travel industry professionals and media representatives to a tourism promotion seminar held on January 25<sup>th</sup> at the Lithuanian embassy in Tokyo. The presentations by Mr. Simonas Kairys, Deputy Mayor of the City of Kaunas, Dr. Renaldas Cluzas, Head of Tourism Policy Division of the Ministry of Economy of Lithuania and Mr. Shigeyoshi Noto, Director of the Lithuania Tourism Promotion Office in Tokyo were followed by a get-together over Lithuanian dishes and cassis wine. Japan has been positioned as one of the most important source markets for Lithuania and the related authorities have concentrated efforts on promotion in Japan. Continuous participation in JATA Tourism EXPO Japan and outsourcing of the tourism promotion to a Japanese marketing company have been the two latest achievements of the Lithuanian State Department of Tourism. The activities of the Lithuanian embassy in Tokyo have also given a powerful push to increasing the popularity of destination Lithuania among the potential Japanese travelers.



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 **Tourism Expo Japan**

*September 21<sup>st</sup> - September 24<sup>th</sup> 2017 @ Tokyo Big Sight*

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♫ *The Early Bird Discount **available** only **till February 28th!*** ♪

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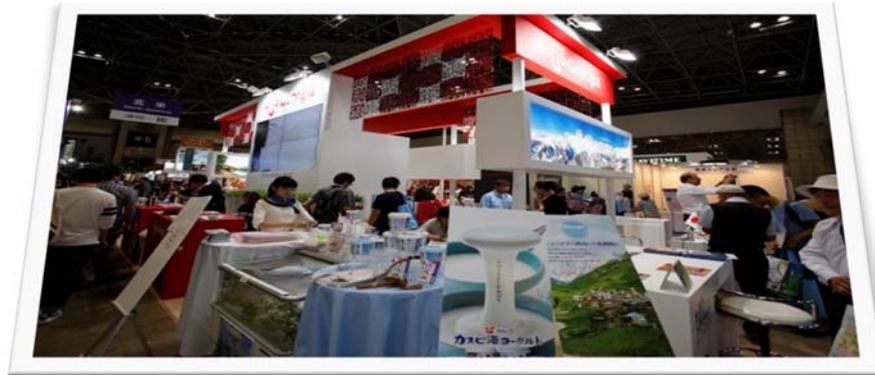
***A longer, stronger, better Business Session in 2017!***

Known as JATA Tourism EXPO Japan, the event which has become the largest and most comprehensive travel trade event in Asia, is going to be branded as TEJ, the abbreviation of Tourism EXPO Japan! Though not so different from the old one, the new name reflects the new scale of the event. The Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) has joined the organizers – the Japan Association of Travel Agents (JATA) and the Japan Travel and Tourism Association (JTTA), – reinforcing the momentum of the promotion of outbound, domestic and inbound travel.



In 2016, exhibitors from 140 countries and 47 Japanese prefectures and regions showcased the potential of their destinations and products in 1,662 exhibition stands, held meetings with potential business partners and, at the same time, turned the six exhibition halls into a vivid array of mini events such as national dance and music performances, wine tastings, talk shows, tattoo painting, and virtual and real-time experiences. As the scale is becoming larger, the organizers expect a stronger flow of

participants and visitors than last year, when the event welcomed more than 180,000 people in a short four days! With the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics only three years ahead, Japan continues to work for its growth as a leader in the field of travel and tourism.



Last year, more than 40,000 travel industry professionals attended the event and as every international event needs to heed to the voices of the participants, this year, we are going to reply to the call for a longer and more efficient business session.

On September 21<sup>st</sup>, TEJ will offer

- Outbound travel business session
- Inbound travel business session
- Domestic travel business session



## The **NEWS!**

Exhibitors will be able to **make appointments for business meetings with current and future partners at their own booths on September 22<sup>nd</sup>.**

The contact details of both buyers and sellers will be available beforehand to those who register to make appointments through the appointment system of the Tourism EXPO Japan Promotion Office. The exhibitors will be able to set appointments also on Saturday (Sep 23<sup>rd</sup>) and Sunday (Sep 24<sup>th</sup>) at their booths.

● *Please note!*



*Our* is *available until February 28<sup>th</sup> (Tue)*

**For inquiries:**

Tourism EXPO Japan (TEJ) Promotion Office

Tel. +81-3-5510-2004; Email: [event@t-expo.jp](mailto:event@t-expo.jp) URL: [t-expo.jp/en](http://t-expo.jp/en)

*Ministerial Round Table*

This year, reflecting the voices of the many participants of Tourism EXPO Japan so far, we have decided to launch the TEJ (Tourism EXPO Japan) Ministerial Round Table on the first day of Tourism EXPO Japan, inviting tourism ministerial class executives from all over the world.

The first TEJ Ministerial Round Table is scheduled for the morning of September 21, 2017 in Tokyo. As the year 2017 has been designated the “International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development”, the theme of this panel discussion will be “Sustainable Tourism for Development.” We are firmly convinced that the first TEJ Ministerial Round Table will become a high level discussion and opinion exchange venue for all the participants.

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σ *Salt & Pepper* ρ

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Salt and Tourism Promotion??

Can you use salt to promote your destination in Japan?

The other day a business partner told us that his country produces a precious ingredient which no chef in the world would forego in their work.



As simple as salt is, it is probably the most commonly used ingredient throughout the world. The French have brought the production of salt to an art and the word goes that different types of salt go best with different ingredients and different drinks. In Japan, however, in addition to making your dish more palatable or giving you a better appreciation of your sweets, it has another very important function: to cleanse and purify people and places. In addition to fire, smoke and sake, it is used to chase away the death or evil spirits at home, at temples, in shops and in sumo wrestling.



Salt cleanses people from the funeral ceremonies they have just attended as funerals symbolize death. At the end of the funeral every person is given a small packet of salt which they are to spread in front of their entrance door. By doing this it is believed that one doesn't bring the death spirits with them into the home.

Now I know why, when I presented a small package of quite expensive gourmet salt to a Japanese colleague of mine she looked at me in a strange way and did not seem to appreciate the one simple thing which made any fresh vegetable taste like a culinary blessing.

Well, back to the question whether you could use salt to promote your country in Japan. The answer is "Yes." Only be sure to give that positive twist to your promotion by giving, for example, examples of how it could be used in certain Japanese dishes (never forget that Japanese people love, love and love food) to bring out the best of the other ingredients. And that the best way to get that precious salt is to visit your country! (Sounds very simple but sometimes the simplest things do work best.)

To learn more about salt in Japanese culture, please visit

<http://asianlifestyledesign.com/2012/03/salt-in-japanese-culture/>

<https://ourworld.unu.edu/en/preserving-japans-sea-salt-making-tradition>

<http://www.kobejones.com.au/the-importance-of-salt-in-japanese-culture-and-cuisine/>

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↪ See who visited us ↩

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January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017: [Mr. Amir Halevi, Director General, Israel Ministry of Tourism, visited Mr. Jungo Kikuma, Vice Chairman of JATA](#)

December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016 [Mr. Harris Chan, Area VP, Marriott International Hawaii Region, visited Mr. Tagawa, Chairman of JATA](#)

December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016 [Mr. Malcolm Smith, General Manager of IPW\(USA\) and Mr. Elliott L. Ferguson II, President & CEO of Destination DC, visited Mr. Hiromi Tagawa, Chairman of JATA](#)

December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 [H.E. Ms. Anne Barrington, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ireland in Japan, visited Mr. Tadashi Shimura, President of JATA](#)

November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016 [Mr. Wei Wang, Chief Representative, Spring Group Japan Office, visited Mr. Tadashi Shimura, President of JATA](#)

November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016 [Mr. Shin Sang Yong, Executive Director, Tokyo Office, Visit Korea, visited Mr. Tagawa, Chairman of JATA](#)

November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016 [H.E. Mr. Leon Malazogu, Ambassador of the Republic of Kosovo in Japan, visited the Headquarters of JATA](#)

November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016 [Ms. Rita D. McClenny, President and Chief Executive Officer, Virginia Tourism Corporation, U.S.A., visited Mr. Hiromi Tagawa, Chairman of JATA](#)

November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016 [Mr. Li Jingping, Director of the Dalian Tourism Bureau, China, visited Mr. Tadashi Shimura, President of JATA](#)

October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016 [H.E. Ms. Wanda Corazon Tulfo Teo, Minister of Tourism of the Philippines, visited Mr. Hiromi Tagawa, Chairman of JATA](#)

October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016 [Mr. Anko Van Der Werff, Chief Revenue Officer, Grupo Aeromexico, visited the Head Quarters of JATA](#)

October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016 [Mr. Tahirou Barry, Minister of Culture, Art and Tourism of Burkina Faso, visited the Head Quarters of JATA](#)

October 18th, 2016 [Mr. Mukhtar Babayev MP, Head of Azerbaijan-Japan Inter-parliamentary Friendship Group, Visited Mr. Tadashi Shimura, President of JATA](#)

October 13th, 2016 [H. E. Mr. Geert Bourgeois, Minister-President of the Government of Flanders, Belgium, and Mr. Peter De Wilde, CEO VISITFLANDERS and President of the European Travel Commission visited Mr. Hiromi Tagawa, Chairman of JATA](#)

October 6th, 2016 [Mr. Colin Fox, Chairman of the Lake District-Japan Forum visited Mr. Tadashi Shimura, President of JATA](#)

For more information about JATA, you are welcome to explore <http://www.jata-net.or.jp/english/whats/wht12.htm>