

“Great Challenge” on Display to the World Most Exhibitors and Visitors Ever Gather in Tokyo



The keynote symposium follows Lamy's keynote address

JATA and the Japan Travel and Tourism Association (JTTA) held the JATA Tourism Expo Japan 2015 during four days from September 24 to 27 at Tokyo Big Sight in Ariake, Tokyo, and at JP Tower in Marunouchi, Tokyo. In continuation from last year, approximately 500 groups and companies from 47 prefectures in Japan as well as around 600 groups and companies from over 140 countries and regions participated in what was the second year of the world's largest travel event. The event attracted 173,602 visitors during the four days. During the expo, in addition to holding JAPAN NIGHT 2015 as an urban MICE event in the Marunouchi district in front of Tokyo Station, the Japan Tourism Awards ceremony was held to recognize groups and individuals who contributed to the development and expansion of the tourism industry, and an International Tourism Forum was held on the theme of “Tourism and Culture.” So, great enhancements in the second annual JATA Tourism Expo Japan were evident to attendees from Japan and overseas.

A ‘Step Year’ for JATA Tourism Expo Japan

JATA Chairman Hiromi Tagawa spoke at the opening ceremony, saying “JATA Tourism Expo Japan's second year is the ‘step year’ in the hop, step, jump process, and I want to aim at making a jump forward next year.” He explained that the expo took on four challenging themes, (1) strengthening of regional flavor, (2) new evolution of outbound travel, (3) spread of the industry through new cooperation, and (4) globalization.

At Japan Night this year, Aomori Prefecture was the premium destination partner, and it staged a reenactment of the Nebuta Festival, thereby transmitting Aomori regional traditions and culture via Tokyo. The performance “imparted regional flavor” along with the ingeniously-presented information offered by the 47 prefectures exhibiting at the expo.

Other countries were represented by participants from more than 140 countries and regions who exhibited and attended the business meetings, showing the renewed expectations of many countries toward Japan. Chairman Tagawa displayed determination, saying, “We must respond to expectations and achieve new evolution in outbound travel, which has plateaued at this point in time 51 years after the deregulation of overseas travel from Japan.” There was also a large exhibit on shopping tourism at the expo this year, and Chairman Tagawa drove home the significance

of this, stating, “Our collaboration with industry is steadily spreading,” in combination with the “Artisan Street” exhibit which featured traditional crafts in continuation from the previous year.

In addition to the fact that this year's International Tourism Forum was expanded to two days, a symposium of the Asia-Europe Meeting sponsored by Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs was held simultaneously at Tokyo Big Sight, and the Asian Tourism Leader' Forum was also held as a new initiative. Chairman Tagawa said, “I would like to launch a new era through tourism that is focused on Asia.”

Japan's Vice Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism Akihiro Nishimura took the podium as a guest speaker at the opening ceremony and expressed the recognition that “JATA Tourism Expo Japan, which brings together domestic travel, outbound travel, inbound travel, and MICE, is a very important event that aims to stimulate the tourism market.” He praised the event, saying, “This event promotes not only inbound tourism which is a driving force of the Japanese economy but also domestic tourism and two-way exchanges between Japan and other countries.”

Tourism and Culture Have the Power to Build the Foundation for World Peace

Pascal Lamy, chairman of the World Committee on Tourism Ethics, gave the keynote speech at this year's International Tourism Forum on the theme of Tourism and Culture. He pointed out that the tourism industry creates a variety of opportunities for economic growth, regional development, employment creation, development of SMEs, improvement of the quality of life, and discovery and appreciation of outstanding local natural and cultural features, and thus it has come to occupy a most important position in the global economy.

From September 2005 to September 2013, Lamy served as secretary-general of the World Trade Organization, which was launched in 1995 in place of GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade). He began his career in France's Ministry of Economy, Finances, and Industry, and after he served as an advisor to the Minister of Finance and the prime minister, he also served as chief cabinet secretary to the president of the EU Commission and as trade commissioner of the EU Commission.

As secretary-general of the WTO, Lamy played a major role in strengthening the WTO system and is known as an expert on the global economy and international trade. In his keynote speech, he suggested that the perspective the world should emphasize rather than “tourism and economy” is “tourism and culture.”

Lamy said, “When people make contact with other cultures, interact, and enjoy themselves by traveling, it eases the friction among countries and deepens mutual understanding and feelings of respect for others.” He stressed, “Cultural tourism has the power to foster a shared ethical sense and a global sense of belonging and to create the foundation for world peace.” He appealed, “This power is what is highly significant about tourism and is what is lacking in the economy and trade.”

According to the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), currently around 40% of the world's travelers are motivated to travel by an interest in culture, whether it be tangible or intangible. However, Lamy pointed out, “While culture and tourism have a deep association, their relationship has pluses and minuses, and promotion of the protection and preservation of culture has become an important theme for tourism.” He told the audience, “Responsible leadership is needed for the mutual development of tourism and culture in optimal balance.”

Fostering Culture and Tourism for the Year 2020

The Keynote Symposium following Lamy's keynote address was moderated by Yoshiaki Hompo, specially-appointed professor at Tokyo Metropolitan University and Tokyo Institute of Technology and special advisor of the Japan Tourism Agency. The panelists were Pascal Lamy; Daisaku Kadokawa, mayor of Kyoto; Xu Jing, regional director for Asia and the Pacific at UNWTO; and Richard Collasse, president of Chanel Japan.

Xu Jing mentioned that UNWTO had co-sponsored an international conference on tourism and culture together with UNESCO in Siem Reap, Cambodia, in February this year. He stressed, "This is a 'marriage' of tourism and culture, and it is a very important milestone." He said, "I would like for people engaged in the travel industry to aim at the deepening of exchanges with people involved in cultural projects henceforth." As a key point for creating a successful partnership between tourism and culture, he pointed out the "inclusiveness" and "uniqueness" in which everyone involved has a stake, including regions, travelers, and governments.

Daisaku Kadokawa, mayor of Kyoto which was ranked No. 1 for two consecutive years on the World's Best Cities list of Travel+Leisure, a US travel magazine with a circulation of one million, introduced the initiatives he has promoted in Kyoto while endeavoring to maintain the balance of tourism and culture. He said, "My policies have been criticized as 'being against the trend of the times' because I have set stricter limits on the height of buildings than in the past and widened sidewalks while narrowing streets, but these changes are indispensable for promoting the creation of a unique city." He explained his idea, saying, "Valuing the city's scenery and the lifestyle of the people of Kyoto should lead to a future of culture and tourism for Kyoto." Given that Japan's inbound market is growing vigorously, Kadokawa said, "It would be good if people would shift from saying 'I'm glad there is Kyoto in Japan' to 'I'm glad there is Japan in the world,'" revealing his pride and motivation.

Richard Collasse, president of Chanel Japan, is a Japanophile residing in Kamakura who first began living in Japan 40 years ago. He talked about the time he visited Matsushima and was disappointed because he could see the smokestack of a power plant amidst the beautiful scenery. While speaking out about "the extreme importance of carefully passing on to the next generation the precious scenery that Japan already possesses," he also pointed out, "The modernization of infrastructure is inadequate for foreigners, for example in lodging facilities." Collasse, who has served as a Kamakura international goodwill ambassador, clearly stated his stance, saying, "Protecting traditional culture as well as merging bold modern and futuristic ideas will be an investment in the future."

The moderator, Yoshiaki Hompo, reconfirmed that "cultural tourism will play a role in bringing reconciliation to a world that is tense" and also pointed out the "fragility of tourism and culture, which are closely related." He concluded by saying, "If all of Japan works on fostering culture and tourism in preparation for the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2020, it will differentiate Japan as a destination from its competitor countries."

Nebuta Colors the Night Sky of Gyoko Street

1,700 Attendees from Japan and Overseas at the Marunouchi Venue



A reenactment of the Nebuta Festival by Aomori Prefecture

On September 25 during the JATA Tourism Expo Japan 2015 on Gyoko Street in the Marunouchi district in front of Tokyo Station, Japan Night 2015 was held as an urban MICE event that utilized a national strategy zone. Around 1,700 people gathered, including participants in the Visit Japan Travel Mart & MICE Mart 2015 sponsored by the Japan Tourism Agency and Japan National Tourist Organization (JNTO). Relationships were deepened among the visitors from Japan and abroad, persons engaged in Japan's travel and tourism industry, and buyers of inbound trips.

Norio Yamaguchi, president of the Japan Tourism Promotion Association who presented the greetings at the beginning of the event, emphasized the importance of this year's Japan Night, saying, "In addition to transmitting Japan's tourism, culture, traditions, and food from the Marunouchi district, we also launched the premium destination partner scheme which will create a ripple effect by linking the regions of Japan and the countries of the world with JATA Tourism Expo Japan." Aomori Prefecture, which expressed an interest in being the first premium destination partner, displayed some of the attractions of Aomori by staging a reenactment of the Nebuta Festival, a traditional festival, at Japan Night with Aomori Governor Shingo Mimura at the head of the procession.

In addition, Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism Akihiro Ota, a guest speaker, said, "The number of inbound visitors which surpassed 10 million two years ago displayed a momentum that brought it close to 19 million persons this year. To further boost the number of inbound visitors, I would like to enhance the attractions of Japan." He called on everyone, saying, "In addition to inbound travel, domestic tourism and outbound travel by Japanese people are also important for Japanese tourism, and so to expand two-way exchanges and to achieve 20 million inbound visitors, a goal of which is expected to be reached before 2020 when the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics will be held, let us make tonight's Japan Night the kickoff event."

Lively Discussion on Themes at Symposium

Focus on Asia Along with Outbound, Domestic, and Inbound Travel



Asia Travel Market Analysis 2015 Session

At the International Tourism Forum held September 25 and 26, the first Asian Tourism Leaders' Forum was held, in addition to a symposium on the themes of outbound travel, domestic tourism, inbound travel, and halal as well as Asian Travel Market Analysis 2015. Moreover, on September 25, the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Symposium on Promoting Tourism sponsored by Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs was held simultaneously for the first time.

At the panel discussion entitled Asian Travel Market Analysis 2015, the keynote address was presented by Mario Hardy, CEO of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA). Next, Carmen Roberts, presenter on the BBC World News' Travel Show, acted as moderator for the panel discussion by three panelists: Mario Hardy, Noviendi Makalam, director for international relations at the Ministry of Tourism of the Republic of Indonesia, and Hai Ho, founder of Triip.me which is based in Vietnam. In addition, there was also a presentation of research on trends in travel in the Asian region by Wakayama University.

Mario Hardy referred to the fact that, whereas the number of arriving travelers is estimated to increase 2.8% annually in Europe by 2020, the forecast is 6.8% in Asia, indicating that demand for travel to the Asian region is rapidly growing. He stressed the importance of continuing sustainable tourism development by diversification of the source markets and dispersion of travel demand through cooperation among governments and public-private partnerships, etc.

Noviendi Makalam revealed that the number of foreign travelers who visited Indonesia in 2014 set a new record, at 9.45 million persons, up 7.2% year on year. He explained that the Indonesian government aims to expand the tourism industry as a percentage of the GNP from 9% in 2014 to 15% in 2019.

Hai Ho presented an initiative by students in Ho Chi Minh City to utilize Uber, a smartphone app for calling taxis, and crowd-sourcing methods used by micro-scale travel agencies. He urged, "Now that we are heading into the age of a sharing economy, we should utilize the power of the private sector and enable citizens to display their creative powers."

At the International Tourism Forum this year, the first Asian Tourism Leaders' Forum was held as a place for the development of discussion by leaders in the Asian tourism sector concerning government and strategy.

JATA Chairman Hiromi Tagawa, who chaired the Executive Committee of the JATA Tourism Expo Japan 2015 said, "I hope the discussion that began in this place will help to change the direction of tourism in Asia and the world for the better." He urged, "Let's create a 'new age for Asia' with sustainable development and symbiosis between environment and culture."

Mr. Tran Dong Phuong, director of the Finance, Industry and Infrastructure Directorate in the ASEAN Secretariat, said his view is that the breadth of travel products will expand, such as those for ecotourism where multiple countries collaborate in a single market, due to the launch of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) scheduled for the end of the year. He also disclosed that ASEAN is considering the introduction of a certification system based on certain criteria.

1.648 Million Outbound Japanese in August, Down 7.6%

New Record of 1.817 Million Inbound Visitors, Up 63.8%

According to a preliminary report released on September 16 by the Japan National Tourist Organization (JNTO), the number of outbound Japanese people in August this year was 1,648,000, a 7.6% decline year on year. Moreover, during the eight months from January through August, the number of outbound Japanese was only 10,582,500, down 5.6% year on year.

This marks 15 consecutive months of decline year on year in the number of outbound Japanese, since June last year. Moreover, the size of the drop which expanded from 1.5% year on year in May this year to 7.6% in June shrunk to 6.7% in July but once again expanded in August.

On the other hand, the number of inbound visitors in August reached 1,817,100, a 63.8% increase year on year, surpassing by 708,000 persons the previous record for August of 1,110,000 set in 2014. The cumulative figure from January through August this year was 12,875,400, an increase of 49.1% year on year.

JNTO explained the uptrend in inbound visitors in August, attributing the significant increase to expansion of flight routes, increased climate for cruise ships, fading of the impact of the Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) in South Korea that caused people to refrain from travel, and visa exemptions and relaxation of requirements in recent years, in addition to demand stimulation through promotion of trips to Japan during the summer vacation season coupled with higher demand for shopping due to the weaker yen and the expansion of consumption tax exemption since October last year.

By market, inbound visitors from China amounted to 590,000, up 131.1% year on year, and in addition to setting a new record for the month of August, new single-month records were set by South Korea, Italy, and Spain. Among other markets, 13 markets set new records for August, including Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam, India, Australia, US, Canada, France, and Germany.

2015 Visitor Arrivals & Japanese Overseas Travelers (Unit: Persons)

Month	Visitor Arrivals			Japanese Overseas Travelers		
	2014	2015	Change %	2014	2015	Change %
1 Jan.	944,009 (730,519)	1,218,393	29.1 (33.9)	1,253,404	1,235,612	-1.4
2 Feb.	880,020 (688,902)	1,386,982	57.6 (75.2)	1,404,873	1,257,154	-10.5
3 Mar.	1,050,559 (802,434)	1,525,879	45.2 (54.1)	1,596,751	1,534,026	-3.9
4 Apr.	1,231,471 (1,020,474)	1,764,691	43.3	1,189,132	1,144,833	-3.7
5 May	1,097,211 (892,577)	1,641,734	49.6	1,280,765	1,262,103	-1.5
6 Jun.	1,055,273 (866,883)	1,602,198	51.8	1,289,029	1,190,805	-7.6
7 Jul.	1,270,048 (1,080,552)	*1,918,400	*51.0	1,414,912	1,309,956	-7.4
8 Aug.	1,109,569 (903,919)	*1,817,100	*63.8	1,783,127	*1,648,000	*-7.6
9 Sep.	1,099,102 (846,241)			1,520,863		
10 Oct.	1,271,705 (1,029,922)			1,417,766		
11 Nov.	1,168,427 (943,831)			1,355,246		
12 Dec.	1,236,073 (1,074,350)			1,397,520		
1~8 Jan.-Aug.	8,638,160 (6,986,260)	*12,875,400	*49.1	11,211,933	*10,582,500	*-5.6
1~12 Jan.-Dec.	13,413,467 (10,880,604)			16,903,388		

◆Note 1. The figures for Jan.-Nov.2014 are provisional, while * stands for the preliminary figures estimated by JNTO.

◆Note 2. Provisional and definitive figures for Visitor Arrivals are compiled by JNTO (source: Ministry of Justice), and provisional and definitive figures for Japanese Overseas Travelers are provided by the Ministry of Justice.

◆Note 3. The figures in () represent the number of tourists among the total.