

New Year's Greeting by Hiroyuki Takahashi, Chairperson, Japan Association of Travel Agents
Aiming for "Renaissance" of the Tourism Industry

Last year, the market did not recover in earnest due to intermittent states of emergency and the call for refraining from traveling across prefectural borders. In addition, the inbound monitor tour planned for the resumption of international exchange and the inspection team to Hawaii had to be postponed due to the threat of the new Covid-19 variant. As a result, the unprecedented crisis continued throughout the year.

As we expect the support for regional tourism projects to be expanded and the "Go To Travel" campaign resumed next year, we can see some bright signs for the new 2022. The world's largest travel event "Tourism EXPO Japan" is scheduled to be held in Tokyo for the first time in four years. We expect that it will be a major catalyst not only for domestic travel but also for the rebound of overseas and inbound travel.

. We would like to make this year the year of "renaissance" of the tourism industry.

Our industry was devastated by the Covid-19 pandemic, but we also received the opportunity to think about new forms of tourism and the future of the travel market. With the spread of remote work and heightened awareness of social distance, new forms of travel such as "Workcation", "Farm Stays", and "Glamping" are garnering attention.

In addition, it is necessary to reconsider the meaning of Green Transformation (GX), which aims to reform the global environment and how "sustainable travel" can contribute to the SDGs. Furthermore, we must improve customer convenience through digital transformation (DX) and work on improving productivity and profitability – challenges that the travel industry has tried to address for many years. Needless to say, we will also ensure compliance.

On the way to the new post-pandemic era, we will work proactively with other industries and local regions to ensure that we build back better through "cooperation" and "co-creation." In this new phase, I believe that the true value of a travel company will be questioned in light of how it can provide new products and services that meet the needs and satisfaction of our customers.

Our only source of support during Covid-19 is the knowledge that many customers are looking forward to the day when they can travel with a smile on their face. In order to respond to these feelings, we will continue to implement measures to thoroughly prevent infection. All member companies of JATA will work together for the recovery of the tourism industry.

We look forward to your continued guidance and encouragement this year as well.