50th Anniversary of Deregulation of Overseas Travel-Part 4

Destination Development by National Tourism Bureaus

Romantic Road in Germany Becomes Regular Destination due to Feature Articles in Women's Magazines

In 1970, six years after the outbound Overseas travel was deregulated in Japan, which caused national tourism bureaus from other countries to open offices in Tokyo one after the other and begin active tourism PR campaigns in the late 1960s through the mid-1970s. Germany, as one of the latecomer European destinations, had a tough time permeating the Japanese market. In an effort to compete with the standard travel course of "London, Paris, Rome," Germany introduced its Romantic Road (Romantische Straße) through feature articles in Japanese women's magazines, and it turned out that this move worked miracles. The Romantic Road suddenly became well known in Japan and ended up as a success story for destination marketing in a foreign travel market.

Pioneering of Market Development by National Tourism Bureaus

In 1974, ten years after the start of deregulation of overseas travel, a rush by national tourism bureaus to set up Japan offices began, first with Tourism Malaysia in March and followed by the Belgium Tourist Office in May, Tourism Australia in July, the Spanish National Tourism Office in September, and the German National Tourist Board in November. As the number of outbound travelers from Japan increased and surpassed 2 million in 1973, the number of countries with national tourism bureaus in Japan also increased, surpassing 30 in 1973.

Fumio Sakata
Former marketing director for the German National Tourist Board

In 1977, the European Travel Commission (ETC), composed of 26 national tourism agencies from Western European countries, held a conference in Tokyo to discuss promotional measures for the Japanese market. They agreed to conduct PR activities on a regional basis for Western Europe as a whole, in parallel with the activities by individual countries. In the 1980s, the ASEAN Promotion Centre on Trade, Investment, and Tourism was also launched. So on one hand, while the trend toward region-wide tourism PR activities spread in the Japanese market, on the other hand, provincial, state, and municipal tourism agencies from vast countries such as the US, Canada, and Australia also set up offices in quick succession. Thus, efforts to create demand through specific collaborations with travel agents moved into high gear.

In the mid-1970s, as a pioneering effort in market development by a tourism bureau, the promotion of the Romantic Road by the German National Tourist Board attracted attention. Fumio Sakata, former marketing director for the German National Tourist Board from February 1974 when preparations began for the Tokyo office, recalled that time, saying, "In those days, even if we went on sales calls, no one wanted to talk about Germany. Then, we thought of introducing the Romantic Road, which was very popular with travelers from Europe and the US, to the Japanese."

The Concept Passed Down in an Unbroken Line

Germany's stern image caused people to avoid it, and so several reporters were invited to experience the Romantic Road firsthand, and they gave it their seal of approval, saying, "Women will like this route."

"What really had the most impact was the spring 1976 special large issue of non-no magazine, which for the first time introduced every aspect of the Romantic Road with a 22-page special color feature article. So that the photographer would have time to take good photos, we set off on a trip with no particular itinerary, and I drove the car and acted as the guide myself," explained Sakata.

The magazine article caused a huge reaction, and after that, all the travel wholesalers began offering Romantic Road tours. It was featured many times on TV, and the effects were tremendous.

Following the success of the Romantic Road, Erika Road (Erikastraße), German Fairytale Road (Deutsche Märchenstraße), Castle Road (Burgenstraße), and Goethe Road (Goethestraße) were introduced in Japan. These theme roads were not only popular tourism routes in Germany, but other countries also began to develop tourism campaigns using "roads."

Even now, the "Romantic Road" concept continues to be passed down in an unbroken line as a destination marketing tool not only for travel outside Japan but also for domestic trips and inbound trips in Japan, where the concept has been adopted for tourism promotion by collaborative projects covering wide areas within Japan.

Travel Becomes Fashionable and "An-non" Women Appear

The magazine ***anan***, launched by Heibon Publishers (currently Magazine House) in 1970, and ***non-no***, first published in 1971 by Shueisha, were wildly popular among young women. The smart design of the pages, which were filled with the latest information on fashion and travel, set them apart from conventional women's magazines. These magazines even set off a new social phenomenon in which women airily traveled to every corner of Japan with copies of ***anan*** and ***non-no*** under their arms, and they became known as "an-non" women.

Around the same time as the launch of these new women's magazines, the national railway's Discover Japan campaign, which started in the late 1970s, began casting the limelight on former castle towns and historic streets across Japan. A travel boom occurred among young women who traveled alone or in groups to see the beautiful scenery typified by towns such as Kurashiki and Kiyosato that were featured in ***anan*** and ***non-no***. In this way, a new style of travel became established.

In 1973, JTB Publishing launched the magazine ***Rurubu*** targeted at young women. The project team, which had started work a year prior to the launch, worked on creating colorful pages with a visual emphasis on select themes that would appeal to active women. They attempted to create new demand for travel by providing information organized around the concepts of "see," "eat," and "do."

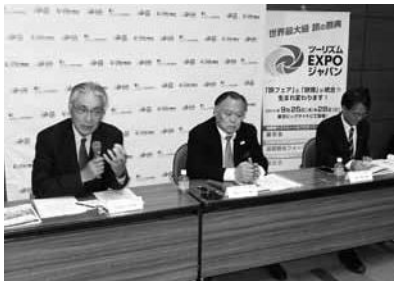
This trend toward more individualized domestic trips eventually spilled over to the expansion of demand for FIT (fureign individual travel) in outbound travel.

(See JTB Group 100 Nenshi〔100-year history of the JTB Group〕.)

Proclaiming Japan as a "Tourism Nation" with a Three-in-One Event

Expo Promotion Office Calls Press Conference to Announce Framework

On May 21 at the Zennittsu Kasumigaseki Building in Kasumigaseki, Tokyo, the JATA Tourism Expo Japan Promotion Office called a press conference to announce the framework of the JATA Tourism Expo Japan 2014 to be held at Tokyo Big Sight in Ariake, Tokyo, this September. JATA Chairman Jungo Kikuma, chairman of the expo's Executive Committee, noted that the expo, which merges the Japan Travel and Tourism Association's Tabi Fair and JATA Tabihaku, is significant also as the site of the Japan Tourism Agency's Visit Japan Travel Mart 2014, which will feature inbound travel business talks, creating "a comprehensive three-in-one tourism event featuring outbound, domestic, and inbound travel." With more than 1,200 exhibitor booths already anticipated, he said that the event is expected to be double the size of its forerunner, JATA Tabihaku, which had been held every year around the same time. With the JATA Tourism Forum being held together at Tokyo Big Sight, he emphasized, "I am confident that we have prepared a venue that will proclaim Japan to the world as a 'tourism nation.'"



Director Minami, Chairman Kikuma and Yoshinori Ochi, Secretary-General of JATA(from left to right)

As the launch this brand-new large framework approaches, he expressed a desire for JATA Tourism Expo Japan to appeal to people both in Japan and overseas with its International Tourism Forum, exhibits, and business talks under the theme of "A New Journey Begins."

The director of Japan Travel and Tourism Association, Yoichi Minami, is vice chairman of the Expo's Executive Committee. Given that the event including outbound, domestic, and inbound travel will be held at one venue, he believes, "New initiatives for travel will begin." Noting that more than 300 exhibitor applications have been sent in from across Japan, from Hokkaido to Okinawa, Minami said, "I think people all over agree with and are cooperating with our idea for holding a new travel event in Japan in East Asia.

Moreover, Minami stated, "We have great expectations regarding the fact that exhibitors from more than 150 countries and regions around the world as well as domestic exhibitors will meet in one place and will be able to conduct exchanges in the same space and time." He emphasized the magnitude of the synergistic effects of holding a three-in-one event such as this one with outbound, domestic, and inbound travel, saying, "Outbound trips are not just about having Japanese travelers get to know other countries. Through events such as this one, we actually create opportunities for overseas exhibitors who are involved in tourism to experience the attractions of Japan's various regions."

International Tourism Forum

Analyze the latest information about the travel industry and hear discussions by domestic and foreign industry representatives that open up future prospects for developing the travel and tourism industry!


The International Tourism Forum held at JATA Tbihaku last year

〈Theme of the International Tourism Forum〉
Tourism and Community Development

〈Concept〉
Recognizing an important role of Japan as a leading tourism nation in Asia and the Pacific, International Tourism Forum will present a place to discuss, share and disseminate latest tourism trends and strategic views in the field of overseas travel, domestic travel and inbound travel for sustainable tourism growth.

〈Event Schedule〉
September 26, 2014(Fri)

◎Keynote Speech
Theme : "Tourism and Community Development"
Organizer : Japan Travel and Tourism Association, Japan Association of Travel Agents
Cooperation : The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)
Speaker : Dr. Taleb Rifai, Secretary-General, UNWTO
Time and Date : 10:30-11:00, Friday, September 26, 2014
Venue : International Conference Room / Conference Tower (7F)

◎Keynote Symposium – Panel Discussion in collaboration with UNWTO
Theme : "Mega Events and Tourism"
Explore in depth the most efficient and effective ways to optimize the benefits of hosting mega events such as Olympic Games from the viewpoint of tourism.
Organizer : Japan Travel and Tourism Association, Japan Association of Travel Agents
Cooperation : The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)
Moderator : Prof. Yoshiaki Hompo, Special Advisor to Japan Tourism Agency
Panelists : Dr. Taleb Rifai, Secretary-General, UNWTO
Mr. Christopher Rodrigues, Chairman, Visit Britain
Mr. Ryoichi Matsuyama, President, JNTO
Time and Date : 11:00-12:30, Friday, September 26, 2014
Venue : International Conference Room / Conference Tower (7F)

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Discussion Deepens to Create Shared Awareness as Tokyo Olympics Approach
JATA Tourism Expo Japan as One of Three Major Tourism Events in the World

Tourism Expo Japan, to be held this September, is a new event that showcases the three facets of travel: outbound travel, domestic travel, and inbound travel. We spoke with Professor Yoshiaki Honpo of Tokyo Metropolitan University who will again serve as moderator for this year's International Tourism Forum, a highlight of the Expo. Professor Honpo talked about the significance of the Expo and the general direction of the discussion at the upcoming forum.

Expectation of Synergistic Effects on the Business Base

----What do you think is the significance of the JATA Tourism Expo Japan 2014, which is a new event resulting from the merging of the Japan Travel and Tourism Association's Tabi Fair and JATA Tabihaku?

Honpo Given that the Visit Japan Travel Mart 2014 will be held simultaneously with inbound negotiations as its centerpiece, I think the event itself has value because it showcases the three facets of outbound travel, domestic travel, and inbound travel at one venue. I strongly expect that it will produce synergistic effects as BtoB is increasingly emphasized. However, unless it offers more than mere information exchange and actually ties into specific benefits for all the participants, it won't become an event that is competitive internationally.

----Since this event showcases all three facets of travel, it seems that there is potential for creation of various forms of derivative effects because domestic suppliers will be able to experience international business more than before, and overseas suppliers and buyers will gain a greater understanding than ever of Japan's domestic tourism resources and sightseeing subject matter.

Honpo That may truly be what is raising people's expectations the most about this Expo. For suppliers such as local government bodies and tourism associations that will exhibit at the JATA Tourism Expo Japan, the appeal of the event will be increased when they make specific business deals and become able to more clearly hypothesize the segment they are targeting. It should also lead to a boost in the level of each of the tourist locations, resources, and subject matter.

----In particular, there is an expectation that overseas suppliers who've exhibited at JATA Tabihaku in the past will be astonished when they see the abundance of domestic tourism resources and subject matter in every region of Japan.

Honpo I'm confident that there are enough resources and subject matter available in Japan to astonish them, but it is not enough just to have these things available. How we show them off and how we communicate about them is really what will be more important. At the same time, I appreciate the desire to become one of the three major tourism events in the world on par with WTM in London and ITB in Berlin, but on the other hand, I think it is necessary to differentiate the Expo from those two other events and to make it Japanese. We must also have more discussion about that. I think we have to clarify why there is value in holding this event in Japan and what significance is to be found in that.

A Tourism Industry Suitable for a "Mature Major Nation"

----From the standpoint of endowing it with such significance, what do you think of the International Tourism Forum that you moderated last year and will moderate again this year?

Honpo At last year's International Tourism Forum, we had a discussion by a panel of participants engaged in the international tourism field consisting of Taleb Rifai, secretary-general of the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), David Scowsill, president and CEO of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), and Hiromi Tagawa, vice chairman of JATA and president and CEO of JTB Corp. The fact that we gathered together some of the top people who are in the forefront globally in the industry was significant in and of itself. It provided an opportunity to catch up on the trends in the world and to open our eyes to the world, and I think that is what was most significant about it.

----This year, the Olympics which are to be held in Tokyo in 2020 are positioned as the central theme.

Honpo In Japan's tourism world, there are various issues, but currently everyone's greatest matter of interest is probably how to utilize the Olympics given that Japan reached 10 million inbound visitors last year and is headed toward 20 million, a goal that Japan's Tourism Agency calls the "new hurdle." As Japan takes a new step toward the next age of tourism, I think it would be good if we could deepen the discussion and promote a shared awareness of the Olympics, which are expected to be our greatest opportunity for increasing inbound visitors.

----What do you think about the significance of holding the Olympics in the total overall sense, including not only inbound but also outbound and domestic travel?

Honpo We may be getting too deeply into the discussion about the Olympics, but with regard to what the significance of the 2020 Olympics is for Japan overall, I think there is a need for more profound discussion. The Olympics' significance as "an event to create a constructive legacy" as it adds successive layers to its history is also written in the Olympic Charter. The legacy of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics was clearly to mark Japan's "entry in to the ranks of advanced countries." In recent years, the idea of creating a legacy through tourism has become established as a major policy goal.

----As we approach the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, what sorts of specific steps are being envisioned to create a legacy through tourism?

Honpo I think that the discussion on what the legacy of tourism is ties into what the legacy of the Olympics is. It may tie into reaching the target of 20 million inbound foreign visitors, but I personally think that Japan's legacy will be to show that it fills a responsible position in international society as a mature major nation and to show its strength as a cultural nation that befits its position. In brief, if the 1964 Tokyo Olympics were a time to "leave the ranks of developing countries and enter the ranks of developed countries," then the 2020 Olympics will be an opportunity to "show Japan as a mature major nation." That is very consistent with what Japan is trying to show the world in the field of tourism through inbound travel. For that to happen, the industrial world must also be suited to that purpose. Japan's industries should operate not only in the shrinking domestic market but should also pursue the deployment of global operations. Japan cannot be considered a "mature major nation" unless its industries at least have the backbone to display their capabilities close to home in Asia and to tie that into the promotion of tourism in Asia overall. If Japan as a whole can create such an image, then I think it will become logical to say that one of the three major tourism events in the world must be held in Japan.