



Actively engaging in business negotiations in anticipation of a full tourism recovery in the outbound travel section



Upper) All three symposia attracted a large number of participants
Middle) Presentations on the outdoor Stage A included cruise travels
Lower) Individual business sessions with foreign media

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Travel Professionals Continue Their Dialogue for the Future of Tourism Exhibition Booths Featuring Adventure Tourism and New Technologies

Travel professionals from over 70 countries convened in Osaka on the second day of "Tourism Expo Japan 2023 Osaka/Kansai (TEJ 2023)" and discussed the direction of the post-pandemic global tourism industry. The day featured three symposia and seminars for tourism experts, facilitating the exchange of experiences during and post pandemic, engagement with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), need to accommodate regional revitalization, challenges they face in their markets and their strategies. Participants also explored emerging opportunities in the future of tourism.

One pressing concern within Japan's travel industry is a sluggish recovery of outbound travel after the pandemic. To address this, one of the symposia was titled "Promoting Japanese Outbound Travel." The market survey on Japan's outbound travel unveiled while 45% of Japanese have previously experienced overseas travel, 23 million of them have yet to travel abroad after the pandemic. Notably, the survey

highlighted a particularly slow recovery among female group travelers in their 50's and above, making the recapturing of these returning travelers a top priority. During the symposium, panelists representing Thailand, Malaysia and Spain shared their experiences during the pandemic and outlined strategies to reignite Japanese travelers' interest.

With Expo 2025 Osaka Kansai, Japan (EXPO 2025) drawing near, another symposium was hosted with a focus on Expo 2025 which is expected to generate an economic impact of 500-600 billion yen. Participants learned about stakeholders' efforts to redirect the inbound travelers visiting Osaka to other destinations in Japan. Adventure tourism, the theme of the third symposium is seen as a vital means to expand Japan's travel market. Leveraging Japan's abundant nature and cultural heritage, adventure tourism holds untapped potentials for the inbound and domestic markets. As affluent Japanese travelers shift their destinations from luxurious domestic accommodations to overseas options,

adventure tourism is expected to provide alternative travel destinations.

The Travel Showcase which will be open to public on October 28-29 serving as a hub for numerous promotional talks. Countries seeking to attract Japanese outbound travelers such as Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Republic of India seized the opportunities to appeal their enticing travel recourses. Additionally, industry professionals showed interest in travel products featuring innovative digital technologies such as facial recognition for multilanguage shopping experiences and VR experiences bridging the past and present. As discussed in one of the symposia, many exhibitors were featuring adventure tourism. For the future tourism, space tourism was also highlighted.

Looking ahead, 2024 marks the 60th anniversary of Japan's deregulation of overseas travel. TEJ 2024 is scheduled for Sept 26-29th in Tokyo, where discussions on "rethinking" the future of the global tourism, initiated during TEJ 2023 will be further explored and assessed.

Symposium on Promoting Japanese Outbound Travel

Theme The Post-Pandemic Comeback of Japanese Outbound Travel

Moderator



Mr. Toshiya Miyazaki
Leader, Tourism Policy Team, Mitsubishi Research Institute, Inc.

Commentator



Mr. Yoshinori Ochi
Visiting Professor, Department of International Tourism Management, Toyo University

Panelist



Ms. Hiromi Kazama
Promotion Manager, Tourist Office of Spain

Panelist



Mr. Yoshiaki Fujimura
Marketing Manager, Tokyo Office, Tourism Authority of Thailand

Digging into Different Resources of Destination to Boost Outbound Travel

In the opening, Tomoyuki Ishizuka, Deputy Director General of Japan Tourism Agency, made a remark on Japanese outbound tourism. Outbound travel is recovering quickly to nearly 50% of pre-Covid level after the easing of border control this year, while its full recovery is still halfway. Ishizuka stressed that outbound travel helps develop an international mindset among people which is essential in building stable international relationships.

Miyazaki presented the result of the survey on outbound tourism; post-pandemic outbound travel has more short-hauls, fewer activities per trip, an increased proportion of young people as well as solo and family trips, mainly due to the weak yen and high air fares. The survey identified sufficient potential for expanding the outbound tourists both in the short-term (post-pandemic) and in the long-term through strategic promotion and by addressing the concerns felt by the people who have yet to experience international travel.

Following Miyazaki's report, tourism representatives from Spain, Malaysia, and Thailand presented each country and discussed the initiatives to attract Japanese tourists. In the presentation on Spain, Kazama said that Japanese travelers to Spain have a low share of 0.8%. The government is focusing on attracting young female travelers, promoting sports tourism, and enhancing marketing through social media. Kazama also pointed out that difference in holiday seasons in Japan and Spain works favorably to decentralize travelers in Spain. In presenting Malaysia, Shimizu said that the number of travelers from Japan is slow to recover. Having strength in a low cost of accommodation and visas that are relatively easy

to acquire, Malaysia aims to attract long-stay travelers for education and workation. In the presentation of Thailand, Fujimura reported that the number of travelers from Japan has come back to 50% of pre-pandemic level.

The panel session discussed insights into the survey results and initiatives taken by each country. Kazama indicated that long holidays in Japan such as Golden Week in late April to May and Silver Week in September are key to boosting a long-haul travel. Spain can attract more tourists by enhancing travel contents and communication to meet different targets. From Malaysia, Shimizu suggested that nature, culture, urban tour, and gourmet are something Malaysia can offer to the increasing solo, male travelers in Japan.

Fujimura said, "Many Japanese people have a traditional image of Thailand but we must refresh these images by suggesting new contents." He also said that promotion of destinations other than Bangkok is necessary and called for collaboration of tourism stakeholders in developing diverse destinations in Thailand.

Ochi concluded the session calling for the involvement of tourism ministries in each country and government agencies in Japan in promoting destinations to Japan and strengthening airline routes to boost the outbound travel in Japan.

Panelist



Ms. Kimiko Shimizu
Marketing Manager, Osaka Branch, Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board



Mr. Tomoyuki Ishizuka
Deputy Director General of Japan Tourism Agency

Expo 2025

Theme Symposium on Promotion by

Keynoter



Mr. Toi Yoshitaka
Representative Director/Senior Executive Director, KANSAI Tourism Bureau

Moderator



Mr. Yasushi Karakita
Representative Director, President, TOBU TOP TOURS CO.,LTD

EXPO 2025 Set to Send Visitors Japan-Wide

In the symposium that gathered top executives of tourism organizations and companies, speakers exchanged insights on how maximize the effect of Expo 2025 Osaka Kansai, Japan (EXPO 2025) in promoting inbound travels not only to the venue's surrounding areas but also to other destinations in the entire country.

Kansai Tourism Bureau Representative Director Yoshitaka Toi commented in his keynote lecture that a partnership agreement was signed among DMOs representing four regions in western Japan, Kansai, Sanin, Shikoku and Setouchi to define these regions collectively as "Greater West Japan" and to attract inbound tourists.

"It is estimated that EXPO 2025 will receive about 3.5 million foreign visitors. It is a must to prepare various routes and themes for these visitors to choose from to make the most of their stays before and after the visits to the event," Toi said. In doing this, Toi stressed the importance of offering opportunities for international exchange while pursuing sustainability in tourism.

In the panel session moderated by Tobu Top Tours Co. President Yasushi Karakita, Okinawa Convention and Visitors Bureau Chairman Yoshiro Shimoji said, "The inbound tourism in Okinawa has not fully recovered. A labor shortage is affecting the speed of reopening international flight routes which are indispensable to bring back tourists to the island," emphasizing the necessity of deepening collaboration with Osaka to reach out to foreign tourists.

JTB Corp. President and CEO Eijiro Yamakita said that gastronomy, adventure, health and sustainability are the growing

Symposium

Sustainable Tourism
EXPO 2025

■ Panelist



Mr. Yoshiro Shimoji
Chairman, Okinawa Convention & Visitors Bureau

■ Panelist



Mr. Eijiro Yamakita
President & CEO, JTB Corp.

■ Panelist



Mr. Yoshimasa Sakai
Section Director General (Small and medium-sized companies and Regional Cooperation), Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition

■ Panelist



Mr. Tsutomu Wakamatsu
Executive Vice President, JAPAN NATIONAL TOURISM ORGANIZATION

areas in tourism and creating new travel destinations and packages throughout the country focusing on these areas will appeal to visitors while contributing to the mitigation of over-tourism.

Yoshimasa Sakai, Director-General of Public Relations Strategy Bureau, Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition, said that the organization is building a portal website named "Expo 2025 Official Experiential Travel Guides" to be launched in April 2024 which will not only share videos to promote various travel destinations in Japan and event information, but also sell tours, accommodation plans, day trips and event tickets online to broaden choices for expo visitors on how to spend their time in Japan.

Japan National Tourism Organization Director Tsutomu Wakamatsu said that the potential target markets of the expo would be the entire Asian region and the United States, as well as European and Middle East nations based on the analysis of the data gathered on the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the Aichi Exposition held in 2005. He commented that the JNTO shares the same goal to attract foreign visitors to diverse destinations across the country with other stakeholders of tourism and the expo.

Adventure Tourism Symposium

Theme Symposium on Future of Adventure
Tourism in Japan

■ Presenter



Mr. Ken Takada
GLOBAL MARKETING DIRECTOR (ATTA Ambassador), JAPAN ADVENTURE TOURISM ORGANIZATION

■ Moderator



Mr. Masaki Yamashita
Director, JAPAN ADVENTURE TOURISM ASSOCIATION (JTB Tourism Research & Consulting Co.)

■ Panelist



Mr. Hiroshi Kawaguchi
General Manager, Oku Japan KK

■ Panelist



Mr. Yoshihito Yamamoto
Chairman (CEO), YOSHINOYAMA Tourism Association (Yoshinosou YUKAWAYA)

Ordinary Experience and Tradition
Give Travelers True Encounters

Kensuke Takada, who served as main MC of ATWS (Adventure Travel World Summit) 2023 in Hokkaido opened the symposium by reporting the first ATWS held in Asia. He highlighted that Japan has been finally recognized as a destination of Adventure Tourism in the world through the event, and that Japan now needs to work on spreading correct Adventure Tourism and prepare for welcoming AT tourists.

Introducing the AT initiatives taken by each panelist, Kawaguchi explained his company Oku Japan. Based in Kyoto with branches in three other regions, Oku Japan engages in so-called "soft adventure" that focuses on light activities such as hiking and walking. He treasures connection with the local regions by understanding challenges that local region face, incorporating them into the tourism and solving these challenges. Mt. Yoshino Tourist Association, led by Yamamoto, expands tourism consumption by developing killer contents using the regional resources and communicates the attraction of Ohmine-Okugakemichi, a part of world heritage "Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range" in the Kinki region. Kyoto by the Sea, led by Nishiki, organizes tours in the northern Kyoto region through walking across local mountains, historical and cultural heritages.

In the panel discussion, Yamashita asked the

regional initiatives to meet the needs of AT travelers. Kawaguchi said that product development requires emotional aspects in addition to technical aspects; a welcome by the local community is essential in successful AT, and to nurture the sentiment,

operators must be closely attached to the local communities through daily dialogue with people and participation in traditional community events. All panelists agreed that while AT offers extraordinary experiences, unintentional experiences is something that speaks to travelers. Nishiki also joined in the remark by sharing his experience of AT participants shedding tears after spending a few days of tour with him as the guide. Yamashita concluded the discussion by stressing the importance of ordinary experience and tradition that are repeated in a daily life to give travelers true encounters with Japanese people in Adventure Tourism.

■ Panelist



Mr. Mao Nishiki
Chief Planning & Sales Manager, Travel Product Planning & Sales Promotion Division, Headquarters, Kyoto by the Sea DMO



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