

Study on Coastal Resort Development Based on the Japanese Life Style

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1. Trends and Issues Related to Resorts and Recreation in Japan

1.1 History of leisure in Japan

The word "Yasumu (to take a rest)" is found in the Engishiki (967 A.D.), an old Japanese document. As it is used here, "Yasumu" means to take a break from usual activities during sickness. The idea of "play" existed among the nobility in the Heian era (794 - 1191); however, ordinary people usually worked 14 - 15 hours a day, 320 days a year. Monthly days off generally numbered 3.

In medieval times, ordinary people took rest only when they needed to prepare for Shinto or Buddhist festivals or on the days of these festivals. Nonetheless, in the Edo era (1603 - 1867), the meaning of "Yasumu" changed from simple recuperation from physical fatigue to play and relaxation. According to a farm document dated 1685, the number of "rest days" totaled 73 per year. There were 43 holidays for various ceremonies and 30 others, including Shogatsu (New Year's Day), Koshogatsu (Lunar New Year's Day), Bon (the Buddhist All Soul's Day) and five seasonal festival days (denoted as "play days" in the document). According to a more recent farm document, from 1934, young people in farming villages often requested extra days off which were known as "nonregular play days". These young people would usually cite religious grounds for their requests, giving the desire to hold a "rain festival" or "nice weather festival" as the official reason for asking for extra holidays.

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The working conditions of employees of small merchants were much stricter than those of farmers. These employees usually lived with the merchant family, and they had to work, making preparations and doing other chores, even on festival days. In most cases, they were allowed to take days off twice a year, at Bon and at year's end. In the Edo period (1603 — 1867), worship of spirits and the Buddha became widespread, and many symbols of worship were brought to the cities from the countryside. Urban people found in the coming of these icons a kind of diversion. Later, tours of rivers and bridges in Edo became popular, and when tours of notable places came into vogue, records of personal experiences, a type of guidebook, began to be produced. About 100 years later, around 1804, the focus of worship shifted from Buddhas and Buddhist saints to protective gods, and religious pilgrimages became popular. Religious groups were organized to make trips to mountain regions such as Mt. Fuji and Mt. Asama. In addition, people visited local shrines. In particular, "Ise worship tours" were organized throughout Japan by "Oshi," tour promoters at the Ise shrine. Worshipers journeyed to Ise one after another. The Oshi produced a guidebook entitled "Pictorial Guide to Notable places at Ise" which provided information relevant to the tour as well as hints for travelers. In addition, the Oshi prepared checks which were the equivalent of today's traveler's checks, for safety during the trip. People began to set out for Ise with no money at all, relying upon the beneficence of the people they met along the way.⁴⁾ These pilgrimages were known as *okage-mairi*, and those which took place in 1830 and 1867 were especially famous and large in scale. Since the employees of small merchants had limited numbers of days off, some made secret tours to Ise. If they told their employers that their days off were for *okage-mairi*, they could avoid being reprimanded by the employer. The *okage-mairi* traveler sang, danced and wore a variety of clothes during tour. In those days, many of the trips taken by ordinary people were related to religious matters. In time, these travels gradually changed in character to leisure trips taken for nominally religious reasons.

Today, holidays are regulated by national law, but in the past the head of each village decided the number of days off his community would enjoy. In those days, people had to apply for permission to take holidays, and they often

cited religious reasons. This trend seems to have lived on in present-day Japan. In many cases, instead of an employee citing "personal reasons" for a requested paid holiday, they will often feel obliged to justify their absence. Because an acceptable reason must be given, it is still difficult for employees to take 100% of their paid holidays. The average number of paid holidays per year is 14.9 days, but in reality many people use only 7.5 days.¹⁾

In the history of leisure and recreation in Japan, travel to hot springs for medical purposes has played as large a role as tours to shrines and Buddhist temples. Japan is the world's leading hot spring country. The number of hot springs in Japan was 20,396 in 1987, and the amount of hot water they produced exceeded 2.7 million tons per day. We know from literature written around 713 A.D. that people had already used hot springs. By the Edo period, a number of people were visiting hot springs throughout Japan. The hot springs of Hakone, located close to the capital of Edo, were particularly prosperous. In Edo times, people used hot springs for medical purposes. The typical length of stay at these places was around three weeks. When travel time was included, the time required to make the trip totaled about a month. Hence, only wealthy people made such trips. It was not until the latter part of the Edo period, 1804 – 1830, that these hot springs started to be used for pleasure in addition to medical purposes, and recreational facilities began to be installed. Since then, many books on travel to these places and travel guides have been published. Means of transportation and lodging facilities were developed, and it became possible for ordinary people to enjoy these trips.

Seashore leisure activities did not make their first appearance in Japan until the 19th century. We know that Emperor Uta enjoyed boating on the Arashiyama river in Kyoto as early as 898 A.D. Since then, people have enjoyed the aquatic environment. By 1661 wealthy merchants were enjoying boating in magnificent houseboats⁵⁾. However, the majority of these activities were carried out on inland rivers. Seacoasts were designated as places of production, not recreation. In addition, the size of ships was restricted because of the isolation policy adopted by Tokugawa Shogunate (1603 – 1867) in 1635. With the introduction of Confucianism as a governing philosophy, the idea that "working is good and playing is wicked" spread. Because of this, recreation activities

went into decline, and people began to have very little association with the sea except for the purposes of fishing and domestic transportation. In 1879, as part of a policy promoting the introduction of European and American culture, a medical scientist, Dr. Beltz, opened a bathing resort for the preservation and improvement of health at Katase/Enoshima beach in Kanagawa Prefecture. This was the first time a seashore area was used as a resort space, but the area was a place of recreation for the nobility only. It was not until around 1950 that sea bathing spread among ordinary people. And it was as late as the 1970s that people started to actively utilize seashore regions for recreational purposes other than bathing.

1.2 Trends and issues related to leisure in Japan

In Japan, the average number of working hours has remained 2,100 hours/year for the past 10 – 15 years; this is 200 – 500 hours more than that in Europe and the United States. The government is making various efforts to reduce the total annual number of working hours to about 1,800 by 1992. Beginning this year, government offices will be closed on every other Saturdays, and banks will be closed on all Saturdays; thus the trend is clearly toward shorter working hours. However, one out of three workers still cannot take more than four consecutive holidays. Among workers who can take continuous holidays of longer than four days, the average number of such holidays per year is 1.3.⁵⁾ The small number of extended holidays reflects a situation in which those wishing to take holidays must consider the feelings of superiors and colleagues and the work load at the work place. The number of paid holidays averaged 14.9 in 1986, however, the number of paid holidays actually utilized was approximately half that. Under these circumstances, the desire for leisure is gradually increasing. Leisure is considered important by 27.0% of all Japanese.⁵⁾ Among the younger generation, the percentage is much higher: 50.7% for men and 47.7 for women. "Meeting friends" is cited as a leisure activity by 59.4% of respondents; 58.2% cite "enjoying peace of mind." These are followed by improvement of health or physical strength, resting, etc. As job-related stress increases, so does the desire for leisure. A larger percentage of younger people cite meeting friends as an activity of primary

importance. Middle-aged people are more apt to cite association with family members and peace of mind as leisure goals. Elderly people see improvement of health and development of physical strength as the primary purpose of leisure. Desire for leisure or free time as an important element of daily life increased from 20% in 1973 to 32% in 1987. By contrast, desires for improvements in diet and the living environment stayed the same. The greatest number of holidays are taken in the summer, followed by the winter, spring, and fall. People tend to take their holidays at the same time because many workers take holidays when their children are off from school. This results in periods of extreme crowdedness at tourist areas. Obviously the number of holidays must be increased; in addition, a system must be established to increase the number of continuous holidays and establish a flexible system by which workers can freely take holidays at the times they prefer.⁵⁾ More than 70% of people over 15 years old enjoy traveling as a form of recreation; however, 70% of them stay, not at resorts, but at their parent's homes. The other 30% mostly make sightseeing trips. Only 7% of the people who enjoy travel stay at a place longer than 4 days. This can be explained in part by the fact that Japanese like to visit a variety of places so as to add to their knowledge. It also reflects the facts that lodging fees are high in Japan and the length of available holidays is short. People try to see as many places as possible in a short period of time, and they tend to schedule so many activities that they must recuperate from the exhaustion of the trip upon returning. This is far from the ideal situation for enjoying a vacation at a resort. Today, young people enjoy hobbies and long stays at resorts; however, due to the increase in lodging and transportation costs, the quality of the services and facilities of the resort visited is a secondary concern for some. However, they are sure to demand improvements in quality.

1.3 Current status and issues of coastal resorts in Japan

The total area of Japan is 377,815.02 km², and the total length of its coastline is 33,057 km (the length of the natural coastline is approximately 24,000km). This is not small compared with the length of the coastline of the far vaster United States (56,700 km). From the viewpoint of preserving the nation's land,

seashores have been controlled and maintained. Sand nourishment, installation of step-type breakwaters and planting have been carried out since 1965. Throughout Japan, there are 1,346 bathing resorts recognized by public organizations; most of these places are used only in the summer months of July and August. At these times, these bathing sites are jammed with one hundred million people and are crowded beyond imagination (The amount of space available at peak time is 1.6 m²/person). Since these bathing sites only do business for a short period, the local merchants put up temporary resting houses call "seahouses" and offer food and services that are low in quality considering the price. Recently, the number of facilities offering high-quality services and foods has been increasing, but it is still not adequate. Some people stay away from crowded and uncontrolled beaches, which are often filthy, and go to places in southern Japan, such as Okinawa. Also, thanks to the increase in the value of the yen, some go abroad.

The following facilities can be listed as facilities for year-round oceanic-type leisure/recreation activities and have potential for future growth. Thirty-three public facilities accommodate hobby fishers, estimated to number 30,000,000. One thousand four hundred thirty-nine firms offer leisure fishing services, and leisure fishing guides number 34,000. Three hundred sixty-seven marinas accommodate approximately 50,000 boats (this number includes 37 public marinas which accommodate 9,450 boats). The number of holders of beginner's navigation licenses for small boats now exceeds one million, and the number of boats owned is over 210,000. The countries which claim the largest numbers of small boats are the United States (9.55 million) and Canada (1.51 million), followed by Sweden and Great Britain. Japan ranks twelfth. In Norway there is one boat per six people; in Finland there is one per nine people. The number of people per boat is 554 in Japan, meaning that the number of boats per population unit is only one-quarter to one-fifth that in European countries. Although Japan is said to be an "ocean country," at least from the standpoint of oceanic leisure, it actually lags far behind other countries. In the last few years, the growth of oceanic leisure has been noticeable, and the number of owners of boats has increased. However, development of marinas is not catching up with the growth of the number of boats, and more than 93,000

boats are left neglected at rivers and harbors. The number of accidents and complaints involving these neglected boats is increasing. Particularly conspicuous have been problems involving commercial fishing boats and the abandoning of boats. Building of marinas, which can respond to the needs of specific areas, is an important task for the future.

The number of Japanese surfers registered to the association increased from 1,000 in 1975 to 7,000 in 1985. The number of registered people enjoying board sailing increased from 450 in 1975 to 3,000 in 1985. The jetskiing population, which was less than 100 in 1984, has grown to over 400. These populations are expected to grow even further. However, as they increase, various problems involving early morning and late evening noise at beaches and adjacent residual areas, garbage disposal, and other nuisances are developing. In view of these problems, restriction of leisure areas and education of users of these facilities are now being considered. There are 515 camping and autocamping sites distributed throughout Japan; however, these facilities are mostly used during the summer. They thus are not fully equipped and offer few attractions. The need for autocamps will increase in the future; these camps have high potential to become popular facilities open to the general public, if the kinds of services and management available in urban areas can be introduced.

There are 23 national parks which include 57 marine parks in Japan. They have long shorelines in various configurations created by warm and cold currents. Areas offering good scenery are expected to become bases for marine leisure. At present, utilization of these facilities is generally heaviest during summer; therefore, some measures must be taken to attract people during the winter off-season.

There are 55 aquariums throughout Japan which keep rare animals, fishes and shells, and also plan various events in an attempt to attract people throughout the year. July has been designated seashore protection month, and during this period various events are held to promote the idea of seashore protection. In addition, international races of yachts and motorboats are held, not only in summer, but in spring and fall as well. A limited group of hobbyists makes use of marine areas throughout the year, but because of the geographic

and weather conditions in Japan, use of seashores and the ocean for leisure and recreation is heavy mainly in the 3-4 summer months. Only 15.5% of the population visits oceanic resorts other than those in Okinawa and other southern areas during the other three seasons. Of these, 51.2 % visit these places occasionally for shell gathering or fishing, mostly on one-day trips. Oceanic resorts are not visited at all by 32.9% of Japanese. These data explain the difficulty of attracting people throughout the year to seashore/ocean facilities.

2. Direction of Development of Japanese-Style Coastal Resorts

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In view of these circumstances, improvement of oceanic leisure facilities alone will not be enough to attract people to coastal areas throughout the year. When the weather and oceanic conditions of Japan are considered, various measures must be taken to attract people during off-seasons. We should make their stay attractive in terms of software by holding workshops for hobbyists, providing technical services and opening conferences during winter. Also, care must be taken to see that people can spend their time at the resort meaningfully. Sanitariums making use of Japan's hot spring resources and restaurants which supply fresh seafood must be developed in addition to tour and lodging facilities. There are 611 facilities for skiing, the major winter leisure activity. It should be possible to attract people during the off-season by tying these skiing facilities to sea resorts.

In order to realize these goals, we shall have to improve transportation facilities such as road networks; develop infrastructure, e.g., improve the basic facilities of planned resort locations; and develop public lodging facilities to lower lodging costs and prolong the length of stay. In addition, through the introduction of private resources, attractive facilities such as resort hotels, sporting facilities and restaurants should be constructed to attract people of all ages throughout the year.

Except for in the suburbs of metropolitan areas, the availability of attractive jobs is limited. In particular, job opportunities for young people are few, and in

many cases, those from rural areas must find jobs in the city. Once job opportunities in coastal resort areas improve and people can stay in their home towns, the services provided by these people will improve due to better employee training. The issue here is finding jobs for people outside of the summer peak season. It will be important to provide job opportunities whereby people can work throughout the four seasons at various facilities in the resort. The employees will be moved about within the resort depending on the amount of labor required by each facility. This should improve efficiency in the use of labor. When visitors come to a resort throughout the year, the effect on the commercial activity of the resort area should be great. Even during winter, when agricultural activity is slow, the demand for quality agricultural products and seafoods will increase. The local government can expect an increase in tax revenue through property taxes, sales taxes and facility usage taxes. The keys to the success of Japanese-style oceanic resorts will be a "network of sea, mountains and hot springs," a network of public, local and private-sector investment, and operation by local people with the cooperation of public organizations. On the basis of these needs, the government enacted a general law for the development of recreation areas. This law promotes the development of general recreational facilities so that people staying at resorts can enjoy sports, educational and cultural activities.

2.2 Case Report

Bearing in mind the above-mentioned considerations, we shall describe an example of resort development at Hiyezu Beach in Tottori Prefecture. Since the completion of the Chugoku Highway, it has been possible to reach Hiyezu Beach within three hours from the Osaka and Kyoto areas. The area has hot springs and thus can be developed as a weekend resort. Thirty minutes away there are also the plateau skiing sites of Daisen and Hiruzen, and Sakaiminato, one of Japan's three major fishing ports. These leisure places can be developed to meet the various requirements described in this report, and thus the area has potential as a base for a resort area. The plan for this area foresees sea bathing and oceanic leisure at Hiyezu Beach in the summer and skiing during the winter at Daisen and Hiruzen. In the spring, people can enjoy tulips at

Hiyezu and tender spring greenery at Daisen. In the fall they can enjoy viewing the colorful foliage and picking edible wild plants —— thus activities for each of the four seasons can be planned.

With consideration to the financial positions of users, accommodations ranging from low-priced public lodging facilities to high-grade hotels financed by private resources will be set up; membership-resort villas will also be constructed. In addition, a transportation network of the resort area is planned so that people can enjoy skiing while staying at a resort near the seashore during winter. Conversely, they will be able to enjoy swimming during the summer while staying at a mountain resort. Each facility will be connected with an information network so that reservations and cancellations for facilities and restaurants in mountain resorts can be done from seashore resort facilities and vice versa.

It will also be possible to obtain fresh seafood through Sakaimanato as required and serve it to users. Instead of employing part-timers to meet seasonal requirements, resorts should employ full-time workers to guarantee high-grade services. As work loads vary seasonally, these workers will be moved around from one resort to another. All of those areas will be located within 30 - 60 minutes of each other so the distance will be easily commutable. Job opportunities for younger people in their home town area will increase, and this should help stem the drain of younger people from the provinces. In addition, as the proportion of older people in our society increases, improvement of services to users of resorts through use of experienced workers is expected.

The seafoods, fruit, livestock, and flowering plants and bulbs produced in the area, traditionally consumed locally, will also be sold to vacationers, leading to the revitalization of local commerce, agriculture, and livestock farming. This in turn will increase revenues from property taxes and hot spring use taxes, and a significant impact on the local economy can be expected. According to the plan, the resort facilities that are to be developed by the seashore will serve as the nucleus of a sea/mountain network in the Hiyezu area. Also planned are swimming facilities encompassing a man-made beach, marina, flower center for tulips, Dutch garden, shopping centers selling the area's

agricultural products, flowering plants and seafood from Sakaiminato, and sanitariums utilizing hot springs. Sporting facilities such as tennis courts will be included. Resort hotels constructed using private resources and membership hotels should provide a variety of lodging facilities.

We have discussed the construction of a coastal resort base in Japan. It is difficult to establish a year--round coastal resort given the limitations of the seashore area. Under the circumstances, the best development plan seems to be one in which a seashore area is utilized as a base for a resort area encompassing sea, mountains, and hot springs.

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