

Analysis on the Tourism Resources of 41 Japanese Cities Facing the Sea of Japan

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Abstract

Japan is surrounded by the Pacific Ocean, the Sea of Japan, East China Sea and Okhotsk Sea. This study will try to find the tourism resources in 41 cities facing the Sea of Japan to develop the tourism in coastal regions and to expand the tourism term. As a result, the followings are concluded.

(1) There are not so many tourism resources with the advantages of only in coastal regions when we compare with those of not coastal areas. Then it is important to develop the common tourism resources like history and food together with some coastal advantages such as good scenery or seafood for all seasons.

(2) Marine sports and sunset would be the biggest tourism resources in coastal region. Then it becomes important to expand the good season of marine sports as much as possible by the combination with hot springs and warm up facilities. Sunset can be enjoyed from outdoor hot springs or each room even in the cold season. It may be also helpful to develop good viewpoints.

(3) Yacht harbor named Nezugaseki Marina is one of the biggest facilities in the coastal region facing the Sea of Japan and attracting the tourists from Tokyo region in spite of the distance of about 400 kilometers. This means that some special facilities may attract the far distance tourists if we can supply good highways and air services.

Key words: tourism, coast, marine sports, sunset, Japan Sea

1 Introduction

Japan has typical four seasons and completely different kind of winter climate within the country. Winter climate is classified as dry cold, snowy cold and warm areas. Warm areas are limited in Okinawa region, most southern islands, dry cold areas are those of facing the Pacific Ocean and snowy cold areas are those of facing the Sea of Japan and Okhotsk Sea.

Spring climate is almost same all over the country with full bloom of cherry blossoms.

Summer climate is also same all over the country with extremely hot days except high lands and northern areas.

Autumn climate is also same all over the country with colored leaves except Okinawa Islands where trees are never colored because of the semi-tropical warm climate.

Then, the areas facing the Sea of Japan have some disadvantages to attract tourists in winter with wet deep snow over a few meters of snow mantle.

This report tries to find out some good ideas to attract more tourists especially in winter and finally expand the tourism season in coastal regions facing the Sea of Japan.

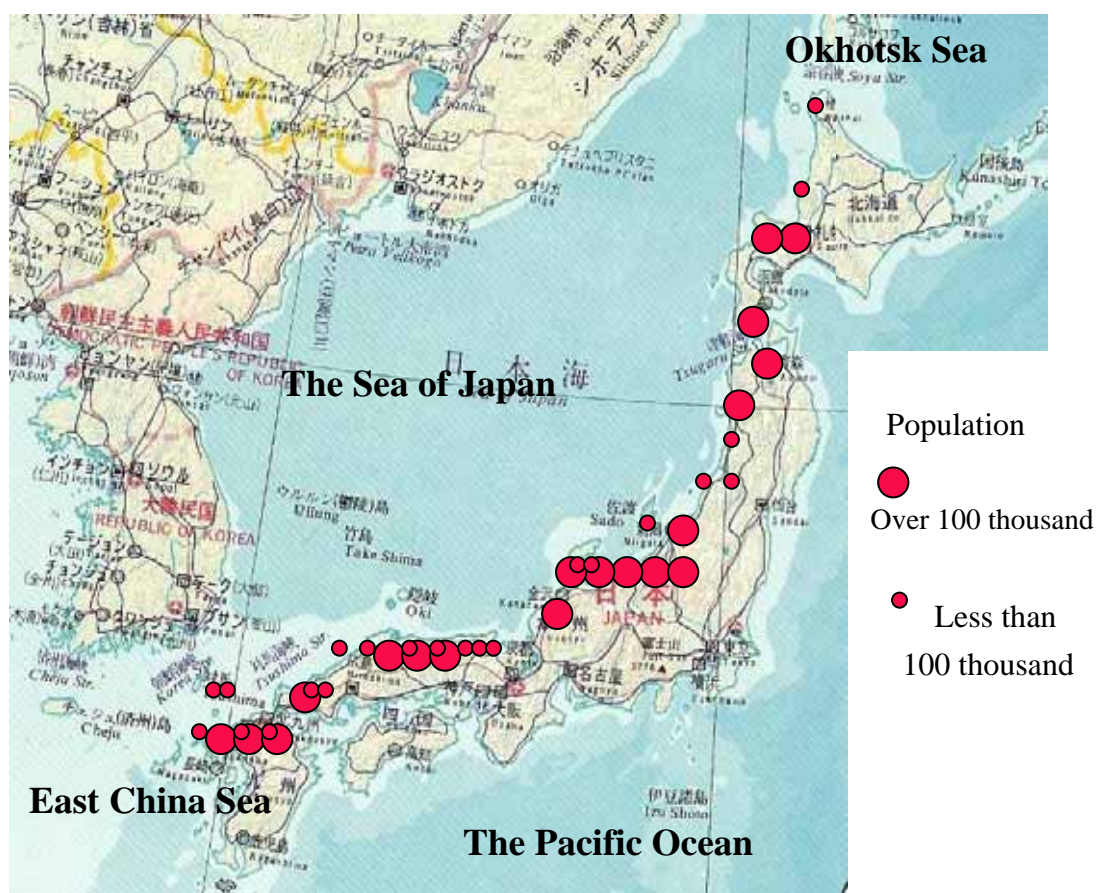


Fig1 The Location of 41 Cities

2 Selected Cities and Their Tourism Resources

There are about 60 cities facing the Sea of Japan in the total length of seashore of about 2000 km. The number of cities is decreasing year by year because the municipalities are facing population decrease and have a tendency to merge each other in order to realize the more efficient administration. 41 cities are selected from

north to south based on their geographical location that they are really utilizing the seashore line as a tourism resource.

The tourism resources based on their home pages were shown in table 1 divided by 5 categories, all seasons, spring, summer, autumn and winter.

Table 1 Proposed tourism resources by seasons

All seasons	Interchange with Sakhalin and other foreign cities, Sea food , Traditional food, Famous institutes and universities, Historical heritage, Castle heritage, Temples and shrines, Home of mythology, Heritage of gold and silver, History as a Babylon island , Glass arts, Japanese lacquer ware, Pottery, Music museum, Literature museum, History museum, Amazon museum, Art museum, Valuable statues, Distinguished view points, Coastal scenery , Natural reservoir, Home of valuable plants and animals, Hot springs, Traditional ferry boats , Modern high speed ferry boats, Sea port , Airport, Convenient airline services, Traditional hospitality, Leasing of abandoned houses, Subsidies for international events, Traditional street musicians for propaganda, Shopping center, Food and adult-entertainment, Multi-language medical service, Hometown of Japanese princess, City itself like Sapporo and Fukuoka
Spring	Beautiful high land, Trees and flowers, False pond
Summer	Sunset of the Sea of Japan , Beer garden, Summer festival, Beautiful high land, Yacht harbor
Autumn	Sunset of the Sea of Japan , Colored leaves, Beautiful high land, Harvest festival
Winter	Snow festival, Skiing, Hot springs in snow, Winter food

(**Bold letters** show the advantage in coastal regions)

We can learn from Table 1 that the tourism resources directly related to the coast are not so many and almost all cities put their emphasis on the history and food. This means that the tourism development of coastal regions would not be so much different from those of inland cities. Common resources like hot springs should be upgraded by combining with some other resources such as the coastal good scenery and seafood. Then the tourism of coastal regions would be more activated.

3 Analysis on the Seasonal Tourism Resources

Table 1 also shows that the most of the tourism resources are for all seasons and only flowers and false pond in spring, marine sports and sunset in summer, sunset and colored leaves in autumn, snow and skiing in winter are the seasonal resources. Then, it is necessary to examine these seasonal resources from the view point of the advantage of coastal regions. Table 2 shows the comparison of mountainous areas and coastal areas on these seasonal tourism resources.

The resources which have advantages in coastal regions are false pond in spring, marine sports in summer and sunset in summer and autumn. On the other hand, mountainous areas have flowers in spring and summer, colored leaves in autumn, snow and skiing in winter. Therefore, coastal region has the disadvantage in winter if we compare the coastal areas and the mountainous areas.

The study area facing the Sea of Japan has the snowy, cold and windy winter caused by the winter monsoon from Siberia. It is seldom to have clear sky in those days and have fewer tourists. It is also difficult to get fresh fish in winter rough sea and keepable foods become predominant.

Then, the only solution in such situation would be the discounted sales. Almost all hotels have discounted rate in winter with the catch copy of “Let’s watch winter rough sea eating delicious winter foods and bathing in hot springs.”

Table 2 Comparison of the Advantages of Seasonal Tourism Resources in Mountainous Areas and Coastal Areas

Tourism Resources	Mountainous Areas	Coastal Areas
Flower	Various kinds of flowers bloom in mountainous areas from spring through early autumn.	Mostly cherry blossoms in April would be appreciated but there are not so many kinds as mountainous areas because of the effect of salt from the sea.
False pond	Cannot be seen.	Some bay areas have false pond in spring. But it is rare to see.
Marine sports	Not applicable.	Yacht may be enjoyable for all seasons except winter. The other marine sports such as swimming would be good in summer.

Sunset	Not recommendable. Because the beautiful sunset requires considerable sight distance and the top of mountain is good for sunrise rather than sunset.	Sunset beyond the sea is always beautiful especially in summer and autumn. Humid spring and cold winter don't match to the sunset.
Colored leaves	Colored leaves would be the biggest tourism resource in mountainous areas in autumn.	Colored leaves in coastal areas are not so beautiful because of the stable temperature of coastal regions and the effect of salt.
Snow	Pure powder snow in the mountainous areas always attracts people for skiing and watching.	Not heavy snowfall and mantle will match to the coastal scenery. Many people like to watch it out of the window of hot springs or hotel rooms.
Skiing	Skiing is good in inland high altitude areas.	Not applicable because of the wet snow and the geographical reasons.

As a whole, coastal region here has the disadvantage in winter and trying to get more tourists in winter by means of discounted room rate and some winter adventures. It may be also true that the seasonal tourism resources are not so rich and should be combined with some other resources such as historical heritage, local delicious food and beverage, distinguished hospitality of hotels and restaurants, comfortable climate, outstanding scenery and so on.

4 Languages Used in Homepages

It is vitally important to send the information of the area on their homepages and the languages used in their homepages are shown in table 3.

Table 3 Languages used in the homepages

Language	Number of Cities
Japanese	41
English	24
Korean	9
Chinese	11

Russian	4
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There are some cities using French, Germany, Portuguese, Spanish, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Philippino and Thais.

It is surprising that 17 cities do not have English site and one city does not have English navigator even it has English pages inside.

5 Conclusion

In order to develop the tourism in coastal regions and to expand the tourism term, the following recommendations would be selected.

(1) There are not so many tourism resources with the advantage in coastal regions when we compare with those of not coastal areas. Then it is important to develop the common tourism resources like history and food together with some coastal advantages such as good scenery or seafood for all seasons.

(2) Marine sports and sunset would be the biggest tourism resources in coastal region. Then it becomes important to expand the good season of marine sports as much as possible by the combination with hot springs and warm up facilities.

(3) Sunset is good for the areas facing west. If we can supply good view points in warm rooms, it may become the all season tourism resource. But, the coastal region of the Sea of Japan is usually snowy in winter and it is seldom to see the sunset.

(4) Yacht harbor named Nezugaseki Marina is one of the biggest facilities in the coastal region facing the Sea of Japan and attracting the tourists from Tokyo region in spite of the distance of about 400 kilometers. This means that the tourists from far distance can be expected if we can respond to some special needs together with good transportation systems.

References

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