

The Current Status of Tourism in Northeastern China and Related Issues (Summary)

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In today's information-based society, the role played by tourism advertising campaigns is extremely significant. In a sense, modern tourism can even be described as taking place so that tourists can verify the information that they have received. Tourism information is essential to tourists' decisions to engage in tourism, as well as in the selection of their destination. In this survey concerning China's three northeastern provinces, the necessity of "improving tourism services" and "tourism advertising" came out at the top of the list of responses. The points that are particularly noteworthy with regard to tourism advertising in the future are as follows.

For some people, the three northeastern provinces could be described as regions that already have a high name recognition factor. In other words, as the former "Manchukuo", it feels familiar to quite a few Japanese people and there should be many Chinese people in the northeastern region who know Japan in both its prewar and postwar incarnations. Consequently, the big question is how to turn this awareness of the part of both Japanese and Chinese people into a "shared awareness" in the realm of tourism; thinking about ways of doing this is one of the challenges to be faced in the future.

Moreover, although the three northeastern provinces have an abundance of tourism resources, a completely different image of the region has become implanted in people's minds, perhaps because there is a surprising lack of knowledge of these resources, so it is difficult to position it as a tourism destination. For example, awareness of the Mt. Changbaishan (Paekdusan) area begins and ends with the knowledge that it is a sacred mountain for some ethnic groups (the people of the ROK and the DPRK), but this region is a tourism destination that is highly suited to ecotourism, so it is necessary to use widespread tourism PR activities to make people aware of the fact that it is possible to get to know the history and culture of this region through the filter of tourism.

Furthermore, there are various historic sites and battle sites of historic significance that are highly valuable in tourism terms, but there is hardly any knowledge of these. For example, there are sites dating back to the time of the ancient Bohai kingdom scattered throughout Northeastern

China, Vladivostok and the DPRK, and related sites remain in Japan as well, particularly on the Japan Sea side of the country, but at present there is no recognition of these as cultural treasures. Recently, the city of Mudanjiang in Heilongjiang Province began work on protecting these historic sites and is conducting development work with a view to making them a focus for tourism; this development is believed to be of immense significance in terms of both the protection of historic Bohai sites and the use of such sites as tourism resources.

International tourism markets in the three northeastern provinces rely excessively on Japan, the ROK or Russia, and there are considerable disparities between the forms of this reliance. It would be preferable to remedy this imbalance as soon as possible, but in order to do this, it is necessary for the moment to devote greater energies to attracting Russians to Liaoning Province, Japanese and South Koreans to Heilongjiang Province, and Japanese and Russians to Jilin Province. In the future, rather than being solely reliant on tourism markets in the neighboring three countries, the cultivation of tourism markets in more distant countries will be required.

Moreover, I would like to stress that, in order to rectify the imbalance between the tourism markets in the three northeastern provinces, it will be necessary to develop multiple destination tour routes through multilateral cooperation between Japan, the ROK, Russia and China. Until now, tourism routes have focused on a single country and there have been hardly any borderless "multi-country tour type" tourism products. In the future, it will be necessary to expand the range of tourism and travel products from the "single country visit type" that have been the main form until now to include "multi-country tour type" products. If the foundations for tourism in this region can be put in place, more multiple destination tour routes will be formed and it will be possible to provide tourists with more tourism and travel products that allow them to see a greater range of destinations within the region during their trip. If this can be achieved, we can expect tourism to make a significant contribution to increasing flows of people to and within the region and to deepening mutual understanding.