

Preface

International tourism is growing at an unprecedented pace. In 2012, over 1 billion people traveled overseas and that number is expected to grow to 1.8 billion by the year 2030. Pursuing tourist arrival growth has become very competitive and destinations are no longer in a seller's market.

In recent years, great attention has been paid to the People's Republic of China in the sphere of tourism studies. China has become the world's leader in spending (USD\$194 billion in 2015) for international travel and the country has generated a record number of international tourists (120 million in 2015). As a destination, China is soon to be the world's most visited tourism destination, overtaking France, which has been the leader for over two decades. The former leading Asian overseas travelers, the Japanese, have taken a back seat to the massive crowds of Chinese travelers. Today Chinese tourists can be seen everywhere around the world at popular tourist destinations. They are usually spotted in large groups led by flag-waving guides, overrunning popular tourism sites and lining up in front of name-brand luxury retail shops. The change in travelers' demographics continues as destinations evolve to adjust to change.

We all know that change is inevitable and the tourism industry is surely not immune to it. Even destinations that once specialized in attracting certain types of visitors and levels of income now have to upgrade their basic infrastructures and add new attractions. It is essential that destination leaders understand their market segments as they are today and that they plan their development strategy accordingly. It is also imperative that developments are quality driven and that the consumer experiences are kept in mind. Destinations face losing repeat visitors as they seek alternatives if their marketing and research efforts do not work toward continuing to identify key market trends and improving its product.

The strategic guidance given to and management of the tourism sector by the administration of any destination is a key foundation to that destination's ability to be successful. In order to provide this guidance, current information must be

available that makes clear what trends are underway, not only travel trends, but also developments that are affecting societal changes in the destination and also in the visitors' country of origin. Understanding primary source markets that make up the bulk of visitor arrivals is critical to destinations, especially if tourism revenue makes up a substantial portion of the destination's economy.

International destinations that formerly relied on Japanese tourists as their primary market are now facing challenges concerning the shift in their customer profile. It is not just tourists from China that are growing in number, but also tourists from South Korea, and other source markets in the Asia Pacific region. Infrastructure that had been in place for decades to welcome and manage large numbers of Japanese travelers now is gradually changing to make way for a more diversified tourist market. These destinations may still be welcoming a substantial number of Japanese tourists, due to their proximity to Japan or other reasons, but now must adjust the products or services that they offer to meet the expectations of the various source markets.

Destination management organizations, as well as management leaders at hotels, restaurants, retail organizations, and other services frequented by Japanese tourists may be in a position that acknowledges the continued importance of the Japanese market and have a desire to maintain a substantial share of this market. Naturally, they may have valid questions about this shift in their visitor/customer profile. Some of these may be—What happened to the Japanese overseas travel market that was so strong for decades from the 1970s? What is the situation today with Japanese overseas travelers? What are some of the visible trends in Japanese society today that indicate what is in store for the future of Japanese overseas travel?

This book aims to answer these questions by first examining the history of Japanese overseas travel, and then by reviewing how changes in Japan's economy, as seen through employment and leisure trends, affected international travel to this day. In the latter parts of the book, some opportunities are presented for destination management leaders and businesses that may want to capitalize on this still important market.

This book also serves as a helpful resource for practitioners as well as students of international tourism. Employment and leisure trends in Japan from the postwar era to the present are reviewed in this book. It also examines how these trends will affect tourism destinations and businesses that rely heavily on Japanese overseas tourism.

Topics to be of particular interest to readers include the most current Japanese employment and leisure data and how the data compares with the earlier, postwar era that made up the boom years of Japanese overseas travel. The latest information presented in this book will provide insight into how today's working and living conditions in Japan influence overseas travel expenditures today.

Because this book is primarily one that covers the topic of tourism, we must first define "tourism". Although a number of definitions exist, the one from the United Nation's body on tourism, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is most appropriate for this book. It states that "tourism comprises the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than

one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited” (World Tourism Organization, 2006). This book uses this official UNWTO definition of tourism to ensure clarity and consistency in discussions of activities concerning this topic.

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