

# APF Speech

Lecture Speech “Regrowth and revitalization of a town through tourism”

My name is Kiyosue, director of Beppu’s Onsen Tourism.

It is the first time I speak at a place like this, and I am not sure if I will do a good job, but I will do my best and so ask for your support.

## < History of Beppu City >

First of all, I would like to talk a little bit about the history of Beppu City. The history of Beppu’s Onsen is old and is written in “Bungonofudoki” published in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. However, until recently, as a whole, it was a semi-agricultural semi-fishing village.

It changed from a semi-agricultural semi-fishing village to an Onsen town from the Meiji, Taisho, and beginning of Showa era (from 1870 to 1930). One of the main contributing factors as to why Beppu grew as an onsen town was the development of the transportation network such as the opening of the Seto Inland Sea Shipping Route and the development of the railroad and the progress of the onsen drilling technology.

Also, after World War 2, from 1950-1970 as urban infrastructure improved, inns and hotels grew in size and began to be able to host many visitors. At this time, average income increased and people were able to enjoy more leisurely time, which also had a major impact on Beppu’s development.

Concerning the number of tourists coming to Beppu, 1976 (Showa 51) was the peak with more than 13 million visiting Beppu a year. After that especially in the 1990’s, with the worsening economic situation in Japan, the numbers began to decrease. However, in 1994 (Heisei 6) the situation began to show some improvement and in 2008 (Heisei 20) around 11.5 million people visited Beppu.

## < Situation surrounding tourism >

I would now like to talk a little about the situation concerning tourism. During Japan’s period of economic growth from 1960 to 1980, most tourism was conducted in group tours that visited the main sight seeing and historic sites. Since the mid 1990’s, however, individual trips became the main form of tourism, and furthermore, day trips rather than overnight stays increased. Especially since the 2000’s, not only seeing, but experiencing things and interacting with the people of the region began to be sought for at the trip destination.

In sum, not only were the direct tourism industries such as the hotel industry, leisure services, and transportation facilities necessary for the promotion of tourism, but the activation of the region as a whole, and creating an appealing place has also become important.

#### < Beppu's Approach >

With this background, Beppu's tourism administration including "ONSEN Tourism", is working towards a tourism policy that is combined with the revitalization of the region. The project relooks at the resources of the region, and aims to polish them, looking at the culture, townscape, scenery, buildings and people that have been cultivated and nourished by the onsens.

Today's topic is "the reactivation and revitalization of Beppu through tourism", but in order to reactivate Beppu, many visitors must come to Beppu. With the increase of economical power, Beppu's reactivation can occur. For this to occur, the people who live in Beppu must be energized and motivated and must have pride in their town in order to welcome visitors. In other words, the reactivation and revitalization of a town is connected to the promotion of tourism.

For this reason, in Beppu's tourism agenda, there are two pillars. One is "Promote tourism" so that many visitors will come to Beppu, and the other is "Regional promotion" for the activation of the region.

#### < Tourism Promotion >

In "Tourism Promotion" I would like to talk a little about one main of our undertakings, Sports Tourism. In 2008 the National Sports Festival was held in Oita and various sports facilities were established and renewed. These facilities have attracted various sports events, both Kyushu-scale and Japan-scale, and the facilities have been used for university and professional teams' training camps.

Especially for the training camps, normally on weekdays when there are few people there are a dozen people and when there are many, more than a hundred athletes and related staff stay for a longer period of time and there is merit and the economical results are high. We would like to further promote these activities. In 2008, the number of people who long-stayed in Beppu was 28,628 and the economical results was more than 5 hundred 60 million yen. In 2009 the number of long stayers was 63,012 and the economic ripple effect was more than 10 hundred 20 million yen and we are raising such effects.

In this way, we do not simply state "Beppu is a nice place, please come", we have certain targets

and wish to invite as many visitors as possible to Beppu.

#### < Regional Promotion >

Secondly, I would like to talk about “Regional promotion”. For the activation of a region, the people living there themselves, must take part in activities to better the region. Therefore, in Beppu, we have the “Tourism Support project” and there is interaction among the groups undertaking the activation of the region, creating a “Town making network” so that they may cooperate with one another. Through such projects, we are undertaking in digging out the regions resources and educating the human resources that support the region.

Currently, there are more than 300 groups and individuals participating and taking part in many activities. Many students are also among these groups and interacting with the local people for the activation of the region.

I believe that it is important for the people living in the region to take part in the revitalization of the region with pride and love, and that they come to know Beppu well and like Beppu.

If you visit a town in which the people of the town are complaining about their town, it is probably not a very pleasant place to visit.

I think I would like to go to a town where the people living there are living actively, and take pride in their town. I am working so that a town making by these types of citizens’ may be done.

#### < International Tourism >

Currently, in the country, in aiming for a tourism oriented country, the promotion of international tourism, especially, increasing the number of foreigners visiting Japan is being undertaken.

Even in Beppu, the number of foreign visitors which was about 146,000 in 2004, rose to more than 250,000 in 2008. Especially visitors from Asian regions made up about 90% and within that number, the number of visitors from Korea is rising very much.

However, the structure for accepting visitors is not yet sufficient and in the future further maintenance will be necessary to invite the international visitors whose numbers we predict will rise.

In December 2007, the Asia Pacific Water Summit was held in Beppu City. This was an international conference in which governmental officials and representatives from international organizations from different regions and countries of the Asia Pacific discussed issues and problems concerning water from many different perspectives.

Also, on August 7-8 “APEC Growth Strategy High Level Policy Round Table” will be held in Beppu. At this conference, government related members from each country and those of ministerial level related to economic growth will participate to discuss the strategies for the Asia Pacific Regions’ economic growth.

The support of university students and students from abroad is necessary for these types of events and I believe that it is necessary to deepen the link with the university also from the perspective of promoting the region’s growth.

Now I would like to talk a little about what our city has to do as a tourist city. Beppu’s image in Japan is “Onsen”. The amount of hot springs discharge is of course number one in Japan, and the number of onsen’s is also number one in Japan. Also 10 types of hot spring types can be found in Beppu and I believe it is only in Beppu that 10 types can be found in one region.

However, onsen can now be found in many places in Japan. This has to do to the advancement of the drilling technology. However, recirculatory type onsens and onsens that add water because of the small amount of hot spring discharge is the actual situation. Even with these types of onsen, it is true that in general, onsen can easily be enjoyed in many places.

In order to differentiate the region, it is therefore necessary to increase the brand name of this onsen with abundant amount of hot spring discharge.

In Beppu’s case, there are many different types on bathing which go back in history of onsen in Beppu, such as the “Sand Bath” where people are buried under sand, the “Steam Bath” in which people are steamed in the onsen steam (this is like a natural sauna).

Also, not only is the hot springs used for bathing, but it is also used in daily life such as for drinking, cooking by using the hot spring steam, heating using the onsen heat and the cultivation of plants.

Furthermore, there are more than 100 communal baths in the city and it is a place where the locals from a community gather and socialize.

There is a need to research the history and culture based hot spring resources and utility and publish the information. We have already received the cooperation of university professors who are researching the hot springs from many different fields including medical and ethnological fields. There is an increasing trend towards a healthy lifestyle, so, I believe that Beppu’s “Onsen power” needs to be researched and the results must be publicized.

< Summary >

I have now spoken about “Activation and revitalization of Beppu through Tourism”, but in summary, I believe that tourism is to see and show a region’s light or something the region can take pride in.

To “show” is creating of a town in which the people think “I’m glad I live here”, meaning the promotion of a region, and to “see” is to promote a region that people will say, “I’m glad I went”. It is very important to develop the town and promote tourism together, so that Beppu is both “good to live in and good to visit”.

Furthermore, I would like to say, in the end there is the person. Educating the human resources that bear the region, increasing the consciousness to warmly welcome visitors is what I would like to continue striving for in the future.

This was my talk “Reactivation and Revitalization of a town through tourism”, and in closing, I hope that in some way it may have been beneficial to your research.

Thank you very much for listening.