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From the editor...

JNTO welcomes new director

The JNTO Sydney office has welcomed Mr. Jotaro Horiuchi from the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MLIT) in Tokyo as new Director. During his tenure in Sydney, Mr. Horiuchi hopes to concentrate on a number of activities including promoting the ski fields of Japan as well as the country's historical and World Heritage sites. He had the following to say about Japan as a tourist destination.

"In the past five years Japan has transformed itself into a more accessible country for English speaking tourists.

Since the Visit Japan Campaign (VJC) began in 2003 with the full support of the

Japanese government, many tourist attractions, hotels, railways and street signage in Japan have changed so that they can better accommodate international tourists. Signage was renewed to



Mr. Jotaro Horiuchi

include English, pictograms were placed in subways, and many hotels and ryokan trained their employees to speak at least basic English. Now Japan is waiting for English speaking tourists who want to indulge in the exotic and highly sophisticated culture.

There are many open-air onsen (natural hot springs) which are attached to individual hotel rooms to assure

a perfect private and rejuvenating experience, many ryokan offer 'shiatsu' massage services, and there are a variety of highly sophisticated cuisines which range from Japanese and Chinese to French and Italian.

And moreover, Japan is now an affordable destination. The Japanese yen has depreciated more than 30% against the Australian dollar in the past five years and many prices in Japan are no longer higher than in Australia. So...please visit Japan. You surely can feel relaxed, and can experience a unique and sophisticated culture and history".

Rebecca Honda



Ski promotion seminar in Sydney



Japan's perfect powder

As part of the Visit Japan Campaign (VJC) in Australia, JNTO and the VJC Committee held a ski promotion seminar and reception at the Sydney Hilton for Sydney ski/travel agents and media on 5 June 2006.

Representatives from the well known ski areas of Nagano (Hakuba and Shiga Kogen), Niigata (Myoko Kogen), Rusutsu and Furano - and popular tourist destination - Kyoto, gave

presentations and also joined the reception. The seminar was designed to further promote Japan's ski fields as an attractive destination for Australian skiers and boarders and to further educate ski/travel agents and media about the accessibility of Japan's major sightseeing areas to the ski fields.

Last season approximately 15,000 Australians visited the Japan ski fields and this figure is expected to increase next season. Last year more than 200,000 Australians visited

Japan - a record high - ranking Australia number seven on the list of top tourist contributors.

For more on Japan's ski fields visit:

www.jnto.go.jp/syd/ski/

www.snowjapan.com/

For ski brochures please contact JNTO.

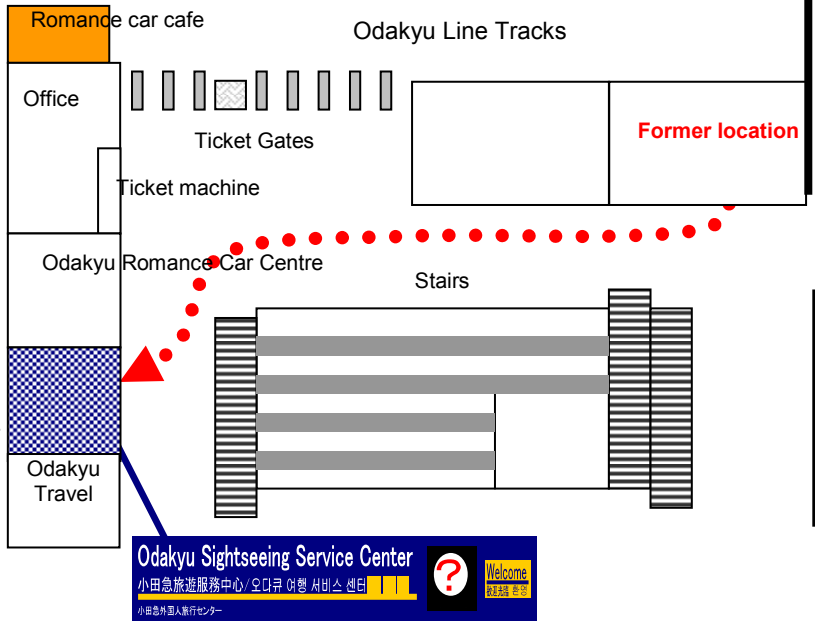
Odakyu Sightseeing Service Centre relocates

On June 11 a newly renovated Odakyu Sightseeing Service Centre opened at a new location in Odakyu Shinjuku station. The Odakyu Sightseeing Service Centre is a travel information centre that specialises in providing services to international visitors. Among the services provided by the Centre are:

- Odakyu Romance Car ticket reservations & sales
- Hakone Free Pass, Fuji-Hakone Pass, Enoshima-Kamakura Free Pass sales
- Odakyu Q Tour reservations and sales
- Hotel and ryokan reservations
- transport and tourist information

Services are available in English, Chinese and Korean.

To commemorate the reopening, the Centre is giving away gifts to the first 5000 visitors who purchase tickets for the following products:



Q Tour, Hakone Free Pass, Hakone Weekday Pass, Enoshima-Kamakura Free Pass, Fuji Hakone Pass, Ltd Express Romance Car, Odakyu Hakone highway bus.

Location: Ground floor, West side of Odakyu Shinjuku station

Open: 8:00-18:00, 365 days

Tel: 03-5321-7887 (in Tokyo)

Fax: 03-5321-7886 (in Tokyo)

Email:

welcome@odakyu-dentetsu.co.jp

More at www.odakyu.jp/english

Koyasan audio guide rental

Visitors to Mt Koya can now listen to commentaries about popular sightseeing spots in the area with the 'Koyasan Audio Guide' available for hire from Koyasan Tourist Association. The audio guide provides information about the locations listed by number in the Koyasan guidebook in five languages: English, French, Chinese, Korean and Japanese.

Rental Offices:

Koyasan Tourist Association's Central & Ishinohashi information centres

Hours of Rental:

8.30am-4.30pm

Cost:

500 yen per unit

The guides can be returned to the following Koyasan Tourist Association Information

Centres: Central, Ishinohashi, Nakanohashi, and Koyasan station.

Units are to be returned after use to any of the return offices, however visitors staying overnight at Mt Koya may return the units on the morning of the next day.

For more about Mt Koya please visit www.shukubo.jp/eng/index.html



Konpon-dai-to, Mt Koya

KIX 4th best airport

Kansai International Airport has been ranked the 4th best airport in the "Airport of the Year" poll announced by London based research company, Skytrax. The survey was based on votes collected from approximately 7.2 million people in 90 countries from September 2005 through May 2006. Kansai International Airport was placed 9th in 2004 and 5th in 2005. The airport is particularly highly regarded for both its products and services.

www.kansai-airport.co.jp



Unique museums in Tokyo *-add something a little out of the ordinary to your itinerary-*

Ghibli Museum

Enjoy the fantasy world of Miyazaki Hayao and Ghibli. Advance ticket purchase is necessary.

Address: 1-1-83 Shimorenjaku, Mitaka City

Access: 15 min walk from JR Mitaka station.

Hours: 10:00-18:00; closed Tues, Check web for other holidays.

Entry: 1000 yen

Web: www.ghibli-museum.jp/

Meguro Parasitological Museum

The only Parasitological Museum in the world.

Address: 4-1-1 Shimomeguro, Meguro-ku

Access: 15 min walk from JR Meguro station

Hours: 10:00-17:00; closed Mon, end/

beginning of year

Entry: Free

Web: <http://homepage2.nifty.com/callon/> (Japanese only)

The Sumo Museum

Displays sumo memorabilia.

Address: Kokugikan Sumo Hall, 1-3-28 Yokoami, Sumida-ku

Access: 2 min walk from JR Ryogoku station

Hours: 10:00-16:30; closed Sat, Sun, national holidays, end/beginning of year

Entry: Free

Web: www.sumo.or.jp/museum

Shitamachi Custom Museum

Step back in time and experience the Meiji-era Tokyo. English volunteer guide available.

Address: 2-1 Ueno Koen, Taito-ku

Access: 5 min walk from JR Ueno station

Hours: 9:30-16:30; closed Mon, late Dec-early Jan.

Entry: 300 yen

Web: www.taitocity.net/taito/shitamachi/ (Japanese only)

For further listings of unique and unusual museums in Tokyo please contact JNTO.



Useful tickets in Tokyo

Tokyo Furi Kippu (Ticket)

One day pass for JR, Toei streetcars, Toei buses & Toei subways and Tokyo Metro.

FARE: ¥1,580 (Child: ¥790)

- Unlimited travel on JR trains (except JR express trains), Toei subways, Toei streetcars, Toei buses and Tokyo Metro.

- Available at JR stations, JR travel agency "View Plaza", Toei subway stations, sales offices of Toei bus and streetcar, and ticket counters at major Tokyo Metro stations.

Tokunai Pass

JR one-day pass in Tokyo

FARE: ¥730 (Child: ¥360)

- Unlimited travel on JR trains (except JR express trains) running within the 23 wards of Tokyo.

- Available at JR stations and JR travel agency "View Plaza"

Toei One-Day Economy Pass (Ichinichi Josha-ken)

One-day pass for Toei subways, buses, and streetcars.

FARE: ¥700 (Child: ¥350)

- For day-of-use purchase, available on Toei streetcar, buses and from ticket vending machines at Toei Subway stations.

- For advance purchase, available at Toei

subway pass vending locations, station counters, Toei Streetcar/Bus offices and pass vending locations. (Choose one day within six months after the date of purchase to use the pass.)

Tokyo Metro One-Day Open Ticket (Ichinichi Josha-ken)

One-day pass for all Tokyo Metro

FARE: ¥710 (Child: ¥360)

- For day-of-use purchase, available from ticket vending machines at Tokyo Metro stations.

- For advance purchase, available from ticket counters at major Tokyo Metro stations.

Toei and Tokyo Metro One-Day Pass

(Kyotsu Ichinichi Josha-ken)

One-day pass for both Toei and Tokyo Metro

FARE: ¥1,000 (Child: ¥500)

- Available from ticket vending machines at Toei and Tokyo Metro stations.

- No advance purchase.

Yurikamome One-Day Open Ticket (Ichinichi Josha-ken)

Useful one-day pass for Odaiba (Tokyo Bay) area.

Fare: ¥800 (Child: ¥400)

- Available from ticket vending machines at all Yurikamome stations.

Passnet Card

Just one fare card for 22 private railway and subway companies (not valid for JR trains) in Tokyo and its suburbs.

FARE: ¥1,000 ¥3,000 ¥5,000

- It is a prepaid card good for the services of 22 railway and subway companies in Tokyo and its suburbs:

Tokyo Metro, Toei Subways, Odakyu lines, Keio lines, Keisei lines, Tokyu lines, Keikyu lines, Tobu lines, Seibu lines, Yokohama Shiei (municipal) subways, Sagami Railway lines, Yokohama Kosoku line, Shin-Keisei line, Hokuso line, Toyo Kosoku line, Saitama Kosoku line, Rinkai line, Yurikamome line, Disney Resort line, Tama monorail and Hakone Tozan line and Tsukuba Express.

- Available from ticket vending machines at the stations of most of the railway companies.

Tokyo Metro web

www.tokyometro.jp/e/index.html





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 For general information, maps and brochures for travel to Japan contact JNTO. Visit the new look, easy to navigate JNTO website.

The Visit Japan Campaign

An initiative of the Japanese government, the Visit Japan Campaign (VJC) aims to attract 10 million visitors per year to Japan by the year 2010. At present Japan receives just over 6 million visitors. In 2005, Australia became a target market for the VJC. JNTO supports this campaign and encourages you to visit the VJC website.

www.japanwelcomesyou.com



Other useful Japan travel sites

www.japan-guide.com
<http://gojapan.about.com/>
www.outdoorjapan.com

For train timetable information visit:

www.hyperdia.com/
www.jorudan.co.jp/english/norikae/e-norikeiyin.html

Travel Planner for Tokaido & Sanyo shinkansen lines - ideal for Japan Rail Pass holders as there is an option to remove the Nozomi shinkansen from the chosen route.
http://train.sppd.ne.jp/train/sche/index_e.php

A taste of Japan

Whether you are after tempura in Tokyo or okonomiyaki in Osaka these sites can help you discover the culinary delights of Japan.

Gourmet Navigator

www.gnavi.co.jp/en/

Tokyo Food Page (also has links to Kansai region)

www.bento.com/

Tokyo Vegetarian

www.vegetokyo.com



- Calendar of Events -

Tokyo & Vicinity

July 5 - August 6 Tokyo Summer Festival, various locations in Tokyo

One of Japan's main music festivals. Musicians from across the world will gather in Tokyo to perform classical music, break dance, afro-pop, traditional Japanese music and more, under this year's theme 'Songs of the Earth, Music in the Streets'.
 More at www.arion-edo.org

July 16 Yokohama International Fireworks, Yamashita Park, Yokohama

One of Yokohama's biggest fireworks displays, more than 5,000 fireworks will light up the sky at Yokohama Port to mark the end of the annual Yokohama Port Festival.

July 29 Sumida River Fireworks, Asakusa, Tokyo

Tokyo's largest fireworks display with more than 20,000 fireworks set off.



Sumida River Fireworks

Kansai Region

July 1 - 31 Gion Festival, Yasaka Shrine, Kyoto City

Attracting more than 1 million visitors the Gion Festival is one of Kyoto's three most celebrated festivals. The festival is famous for its Yamahoko float procession on July 17 which takes place along the main streets starting from Shijo Karasuma.

July 24 - 25 Tenjin Festival, Osaka Tenmangu, Osaka City

This annual summer festival is dedicated to Osaka Tenmangu (shrine). The highlight of the festival is on July 25 when a fireworks display lights up the Oh River and is watched by thousands of people from the riverside and from the many riverboats passing along the river.

Nationwide

July 1 - 15 Hakata Gion Yamakasa Festival, Kushida Shrine, Fukuoka City

The dynamic Hakata Gion Yamakasa is one of Fukuoka's signature festivals. The climax of the festival is on the final day when a fleet of giant floats are raced through the streets of Hakata by men wearing happi coats.

July 9 - 23 Sumo Grand Tournament, Aichi Prefectural Gymnasium, Nagoya

July 17 Marine Day (national holiday)

August 3 - 6 Kanto Festival, Akita City

One of the three main festivals of the Tohoku region. Kanto - long bamboo poles with paper lanterns attached - are paraded through the streets by the youths dressed in short jackets, hachimaki (headbands), white tabi (socks) and zori (straw sandals).

Sept 18 Respect for the Aged Day (national holiday)

Sept 23 Autumnal Equinox (national holiday)

