

New Tide on Tourism in the Seto Inland Sea, Japan

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The Seto Inland Sea, the largest enclosed coastal sea in Japan, is well known not only in Japan but also outside Japan for its beautiful scenery with approximately seven hundred islands, traditional culture and events, historical places like the Atomic Bomb Dome in Hiroshima, and landmarks like Himeji Castle in Hyogo, ITSUKUSHIMA Shrine in Hiroshima and KUMANO KODO in Wakayama which are the World Heritages. The area along the Inland Sea as well as that of Mt. Fuji was designated as a national park in 1934 for the first time in Japan.

‘Leisure’ has been emphasized rather than ‘Tourism’ in Japan after the Second World War, however, ‘Tourism’ has been becoming more popular under the recent administration lead by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi. In fact the Inland Sea is a treasure island of limitless tourism resources.

On the other hand, the Inland Sea, where 30 percents of population, industry and land of the whole Japan are located, had suffered environmental pollution heavily in late 1960’s and 1970’s when the Japanese economy had developed rapidly. Now the environmental pollution has been stopped and many countermeasures have been taken to restore its environment by people in the coastal area, the local governments, and the central government. Considering from such background, the Inland Sea would be a good place for ‘Eco Tourism’ as well.