



YOKOSO JAPAN! AMBASSADOR

Katsuo Tobita

*Chairman, Japanese Inn Group and
proprietor of Shigetsu Ryokan in Asakusa*

The Japanese Inn Group was formed to provide overseas visitors to Japan with family-style accommodation. The group currently includes 82 inns, or *ryokan*, which all have three characteristics: they value hospitality with a family feel, they are cozy inns with no more than 20 rooms, and at least two-thirds of their rooms are Japanese-style. We aim to offer guests a comfort that differs from large hotels or budget accommodations.

Almost all of Shigetsu Ryokan's guests are from overseas, partly due to the inn's location in Asakusa, which still offers a flavor of Edo-era culture and is a favorite spot of foreign visitors.

Most of our guests are looking for a taste of Japan that includes tatami-mat rooms and Japanese-style baths. They want to savor Japanese culture, and an ambiance different from what a hotel offers, so they

stay here. To meet their needs we aspire to offer attentive service. This thoughtfulness in regard to guests is a mindset that Japan should take pride in. Rather than simply concluding things with the handing over a room key, we strive to make guests feel at home. That kind of service can't be maintained in larger-scale establishments, where you can't look after guests individually.

I especially want to tell people who are considering a visit to Japan that such a trip doesn't have to be expensive. If you want a cheap meal, you can eat your fill for less than 500 yen.

ON THE INTERNET

<http://www.japantravelinfo.com/top/index.php>



The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure Transport and Tourism's "Yokoso Japan!" campaign aims to attract 10 million foreign visitors to Japan annually by 2010. As part of the campaign, people striving to increase visitor numbers are appointed as Yokoso Japan! ambassadors. This series will outline ambassadors' activities to showcase the attractions of travel to Japan.

