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YŌKOSO JAPAN! AMBASSADOR



The past few years have seen a big change in the travel styles adopted by visitors to Japan. More people are using highway buses to get around, and rental cars are also popular. A lot of visitors are buying rail passes, such as the Japan Rail Pass or the *Seishun 18 Kippu* (Youth 18 Ticket). The same kind of diversification is being seen with accommodations. Rather than staying only in regular hotels or traditional inns, more people are sampling a differ-

Swiss-born STEFAN SCHAUWECKER has been operating the English-language website *japan-guide.com* since 1996. Essential reading for visitors to Japan, it is one of the most popular Japan travel information sites on the web, with six million page views per month.

ent culture by spending the night in a capsule hotel. There is a growing desire to relish a unique experience. When eating, too, more travelers are buying rice balls at convenience stores or venturing into *gyudon* beef bowl restaurants for a taste of the typical Japanese lifestyle.



LEFT:
Schauwecker
gathering tour-
ist information
at a marsh-
land area on
Akagiyama.

in detail. This kind of fact-gathering has hugely expanded the volume of high-quality information accessible from overseas.

Japan offers foreign visitors ample opportunities for unusual experiences, making it a highly attractive tourist destination. Only inexperience in presentation and lack of tourism know-how stop it from being more popular. It's a shame, because Japan is one of the world's safest and friendliest country to travel in. If you are reading this, I hope you will click on the link to my website and open a whole new door to Japan.

@ ON THE INTERNET

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Behind these changes lies the huge jump over the last five years in the availability of information about travel in Japan. There is no shortage of information now, especially on the Internet. The website I operate updates its Japanese travel advice daily, and meticulously answers queries submitted to our online forum. When we are asked about something like the timetable for a bus service to a tiny provincial village, we look it up and answer

Target: 10 Million Tourists



A key component of the Japan Tourism Agency's efforts to promote tourism is the Visit Japan Campaign, which aims to see 10 million people visit Japan by 2010. Through this campaign, the JTA will strive to boost the number of tourists visiting Japan through efforts in 12 priority markets globally. These efforts will involve a variety of promotional activities, including advertisement and PR, exhibitions in travel shows and support to foreign travel agents. These monthly YŌKOSO! JAPAN Ambassador articles serve to promote tourism by publicizing efforts to increase the number of tourists coming to Japan, while outlining these ambassadors' activities showcases the allure of travel to Japan.

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