

# Tempting **REPEAT VISITORS**

IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS, about 10 million Koreans have visited Japan. Korea has a population of 40 million, so roughly one in four people has been to Japan. Once Koreans get to Japan, they all seem surprised to find that it is very different from their preconceptions formed based on the Korean media's emphasis on the negative aspects of Japan. As far as I know, nobody who actually comes to Japan ends up feeling more negative about the country.

I'm most interested in targeting people who have lost their prejudice and increasing the number of repeat visitors. I think that deep down inside, Koreans who visit Japan want to go home having learned about some Japanese qualities that they don't have.



**LEE YONG SOOK** *President,  
Rinkai Co., Ltd*

Born in Korea, Lee Yong Sook established a company organizing inbound tours from Korea in 1995 and is active in encouraging Koreans to visit Japan. By constantly reassessing Japanese culture through Koreans eyes, she has developed a range of attractive tours.

Taking Japanese craftsmanship as her theme, Lee tells Korean tourists about Kyoto's Kiyomizu Temple.





A lot of Koreans are passionate about learning, so they come away highly satisfied if we help them fulfill that need.

What I really want to tell Koreans about is Japanese style. To take the example of sake: Breweries all over Japan have been making sake for hundreds of years, each with its own special water, rice and *koji* (mold spores), and each applying its own unique know-how. Such little breweries exist all over Japan, living on the craft and skills of the brewers. Japanese sake is more than just an alcoholic beverage—it harbors a spirituality of its own and tells a tale of generations past. I call that style. This style underpins not just sake, but all kinds of Japanese manufacturing. Koreans are deeply impressed when I talk about this. Rather than just telling visitors about the history of shrines and temples, I try to make them aware of this broader kind of Japanese spirituality. Once they begin to notice such things, no other country can be as full of discovery for Koreans.

@ ON THE INTERNET

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



The Japan Tourism Agency's "Yokoso! Japan" campaign aims to attract 10 million foreign visitors to Japan by 2010. As part of the campaign, people striving to increase visitor numbers are appointed as Yokoso! Japan ambassadors.