



Chinese Influencers Promoting a True Picture of Japan

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Social media users around the world currently number around 3.5 billion, accessing a variety of content and generating all manner of interaction on social media every day. These users are greatly influenced by “influencers.” One such influencer who disseminates information about Japan from her base in Japan is Lin Yangyang.

LIN Yangyang is an active influencer hailing from China who promotes inbound tourism to Japan using the nickname Lin Ping zai Riben, mainly through Weibo, China’s largest social media platform with more than 720 million

accounts. Lin’s Weibo account has around 4.80 million followers, while her live streams attract more than 2 million viewers on average, and have a significant influence on Chinese tourists visiting Japan.

Currently, Lin is partnering with several companies

Lin Yangyang (right) attends an awards ceremony hosted by Weibo in Hong Kong honoring those who made excellent achievements in the year, April 2019
Courtesy of Cross-Border Next, Inc.



that operate businesses connecting Japanese companies interested in overseas markets such as China with foreign users.

In addition to this business, every day Lin selects the latest information from Japanese news and social media, mainly relating to tourism and food, and disseminates it to China. In particular, the reports on sightseeing spots in Japan that Lin has visited herself are the most frequently accessed content.

“I am trying to convey to people in China what I myself feel Japan has to offer in terms of its beautiful nature and culture. I am careful to be objective and avoid expressing biased opinions. I try to provide information that cannot be obtained through mass media or books, from the perspective of an ordinary person,” says Lin.

Lin opened her “Lin-in-Japan” Weibo account in 2012, one year after the Great East Japan Earthquake. She felt that China’s mass media reported only the damage caused by the earthquake, and stopped reporting on how Japanese people were dealing with recovery issues, or on the tourism industry. So as well as disseminating news reports on Japan, Lin covered behavioral traits such as the way in which people in Japan still maintained order, despite the fact that even stores in the Greater Tokyo Metropolitan area experienced frequent shortages of goods. Lin’s articles at this time received a strong response from Chinese users. In 2012, she added “in-Japan” to her account name and began to disseminate mainly Japan-related information. In 2014, at the invitation of the Tohoku Tourism Promotion Organization, Lin visited various parts of Tohoku and reported on the reconstruction of the affected areas. Since then, she has been collaborating with local governments and companies as well as working with the Tohoku Tourism Organization not only to promote the region, but also to plan new projects targeting Chinese tourists.

Lin enjoys support from users because the

information she disseminates is up-to-date as well as being very useful and highly reliable. When Osaka was hit by a typhoon in September 2018, she published information about how the shopping and business area had resumed normal operations one week later, reassuring many Chinese tourists who had been planning to visit Japan.

“I especially value the live streams that can convey a true picture of the situation. If a user asks a question, you can ask a local person on the spot. That’s something that you can only get with a live stream,” says Lin smiling.

When she was doing live streams walking around rural towns in northern Kanto, in one town an elderly local cheerfully gave her permission to be filmed, and spoke a few words of Chinese into Lin’s camera. This was met with surprise and delight from Chinese users viewing the live stream, and this live interaction between Japan and China appearing on Weibo was the most memorable event for Lin, she says.

“China and Japan both use kanji. The fact that Japan has its unique mature culture while being rooted in China is also very interesting. I really feel that China and Japan are extremely ‘close,’ and not just in terms of geographical distance,” says Lin.

Engaging in these activities and adding “in-Japan” to her Chinese social media account has led to a succession of fellow Chinese influencers. Smiling broadly, their model influencer Lin said that her goal is to continue her activities so that their go-to social media account for information on Japan will be “Lin-in-Japan.” 