



Asuka Village, Japan

Asuka Village is working to “turn Asuka into a museum,” establishing the entire village as an open museum, and aiming to utilize the village’s charms and create a village in which visitors can experience and feel a variety of things.

Specifically, we are promoting efforts to deliver to visitors services in which they can experience Asuka with their five senses (a virtual Asukakyo that utilizes historical content and ICT, an owner system related to agriculture, etc.). In particular, the Asuka new tourism in which stays in folk houses, historical cultural experiences and agricultural experiences are created in an integrated manner and provided to visitors has shown economic effects on things such as consumption within the village.



Summary



KUSUMI, Tokio Mayor of Mitsuke City, Niigata Prefecture

Considering the state of regional economic stimulation and the position in which we are placed, it must be described as a severe situation. We must be aware of the fact that simply attracting large-scale companies is not a measure for the survival of regions, and consider sustainable continuation of regional economies and industries, including securing employment.

In the presentations we were able to see several examples of regional successes. For example, things such as IT are industries that are not limited to large cities. In addition, it is probably necessary to utilize things such as internship systems, and have ideas for disseminating the appeal of regions. I would like the country to work together to increase the sense of value of living in regions.

For employment issues, because the population is decreasing it is important to increase the number of opportunities to match regional company job openings with job-seekers and promote local employment and U-turn, I-turn job changes to come back to regions. We should also create an environment in which women and disabled people can fully utilize their abilities, and consider the active involvement of energetic elderly people. Such things will create new employment, and dynamism will develop purposes for living. Regions should also be able to create places in which people can sufficiently utilize their differences and individuality, and successful examples have begun to appear.

We will reconsider the regional resources that we have and change them into treasures. Reconsidering the unique capabilities of Japan and regions, and further increasing the number of people with passion and the same values and aspirations is surely an important direction that Japanese society should aim for.

I am grateful that today’s meeting, where we were able to make new discoveries and notice new things, was extremely meaningful.

Theme 2: “Regional Economic Development and Employment”

Participating local and regional governments	Republic of Korea: Chungcheongnam-do Province Japan: Yamagata Prefecture, Shizuoka Prefecture, Wakayama Prefecture, Kochi Prefecture, Nara Prefecture, Nara City in Nara Prefecture, Ikaruga Town in Nara Prefecture
Lecturer	MOTANI, Kosuke Chief Researcher, Research Department, The Japan Research Institute, Limited

Lecturer's speech



“Regional Economic Development and Employment – Warnings seen from population structure”

MOTANI, Kosuke Chief Researcher, Research Department, The Japan Research Institute, Limited

The 2010 population census shows that Japan's ratio of full-time employed people is 39%, the ratio of part-time employed people is 8%, and approximately half of the country's residents are not working. However, even though that is the actual situation, there are many misunderstandings that there are still lots of job-seekers like there were 20 to 30 years ago, and employment policies focus on policies for giving work to people who have lost their jobs. Japan's ratio of unemployed people is extremely low at 2 to 3%, and even if all unemployed people were given jobs, the working population would not surpass 50%. Therefore, it is necessary to change policies from measures against unemployment to policies for increasing the number of employed people. Compared to Chungcheongnam-do Province's (Korea) approximate 65% ratio of

employed people, Japan's ratio of employed people is low, and there is a possibility that this affects international competitiveness.

In Japan, the number of employed people will decrease by 2.2 million people over the next 5 years, and it will be difficult to stop this decrease by approximately 50 years from now. This will have a large impact on regional economies and employment. Looking at economic statistics, it can be seen that the amount of exports is increasing irrespective of the decrease in the number of employed people, and that it has doubled even in the so-called “lost two decades.” Although there was a temporary decline due to the global financial crisis, Japan's amount of exports soon recovered and is now at its highest level ever.

However, on the other hand, the amount of retail sales is not increasing at all. This is because the number of employed people is decreasing due to a decrease in the working-age generation, and the total amount of personnel costs paid by companies is decreasing. If the total amount of salary decreases, of course sales of products targeting the working-age generation will fall. Japan's working-age population peaked in 1995, and since then the amount of retail sales has not increased. However, some of the reasons that it has been sustained and not shown a noticeable decline are that there are many employed people age 65 or older, and efforts are being put into product development and tourism industries intended for wealthy elderly people. In order to stimulate the economy, it is necessary to promote employment of full-time housewives and elderly people age 65 or older, and to have elderly people spend money mainly on tourism, agriculture, and locally produced and consumed items.

Japan is experiencing the situation of a decreasing population, which the rest of the world will face in the future, before any other country. There is probably no other country in the world that can exhibit a performance of a level as high as Japan when it falls into the same situation that Japan is facing now.



Overviews of regional reports of participating local and regional governments



Yamagata Prefecture, Japan

In order to improve the added value amount of the manufacturing industry, Yamagata Prefecture is providing consistent support for new business development by small and mid-size companies from the conceptual stage through creation of a business, preparing a comprehensive consultation office for various consultations, developing policies for things such as promotion of collaboration between universities and companies in the prefecture, and working to create industries that will be new pillars by promoting accumulation of industries in cutting-edge technical fields and fields that are expected to grow and conducting strategic attraction of companies.

In order to respond to the difficult employment circumstances since the Lehman shock, we are moving forward with things such as creation of stable employment that is part of measures to stimulate industries and preparation of an employment environment in which anyone can find work.



Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan

Shizuoka Prefecture set four fundamental objectives for creating opportunities for creation and accumulation of new industries that improve and strengthen abilities for disaster prevention and mitigation and utilize local resources and bringing about new lifestyles and for preparing a base to support daily life, and we are undertaking things such as preparation of a social base that is resilient against earthquakes and tsunami, creating a brand for prefectural products, preserving and restoring the rich natural environment, and building a network of transportation and information transmission.

As our vision for the future, we are aiming to realize a safe, secure, and appealing "Home of Mt. Fuji," based on the 3 strategies of coastal and urban innovation, inland and elevated area innovation, and formation of a multi-layered regional collaboration axis in which coastal and urban areas and inland and elevated areas collaborate and supplement each other.



Wakayama Prefecture, Japan

By utilizing sister friendship relationships and networks with other countries that have already been built (Florida, United States and Galicia, Spain), and concluding memorandums of understanding for the purpose of collaborating mainly in economic fields with local governments of other countries, Wakayama Prefecture is working to support expansion of prefectural businesses into other countries, promote exchanges in tourism fields, and develop human resources through youth exchanges.

Last year we concluded a "Memorandum of Understanding for the Purpose of Promoting Trade and Economic Cooperation" with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, and since then we have been moving forward with things exchanges such as an exhibit at a Hong Kong Food Expo and hosting a mission group.



Kochi Prefecture, Japan

Kochi Prefecture began a plan to stimulate industries in April 2009. Of the current second-term plan, the strategy for industrial growth consists of the 5 industry fields of agriculture, forestry, fisheries, commerce and industry, and tourism, and "collaboration fields" that require collaboration that surpasses specialized fields, and we are proceeding with 230 projects under a "regional action plan" for specific projects to be conducted in each region.

In order to promote the second-term plan, we are setting and proceeding with policies for 6 fundamental directions of solidifying the foundation and venturing into markets outside the prefecture, strengthening collaboration between industries, making industries more robust and increasing local power, taking on the challenge of creating new industries, developing industrial human resources, and increasing dynamism by promoting resettlement in the prefecture.



Nara City, Japan

With an objective of preparing a base of things such as appealing tourism resources that can only be found in Nara, Nara City is establishing and operating a "Naramachi Machiya bank" with the aims of not damaging the historic cityscape and of using the empty houses of Nara Machi as tourism resources. In addition, we are working to attract visitors and providing aid for various events conducted by groups related to tourism, such as Nara To-Kae and Nara Rurie.

We are also putting efforts into support for business start-ups, and proceeding with efforts such as a "business contest" for people who want to create actual start-ups, and provision to entrepreneurs of a portion of "Kiratto Nara," which was opened in the center of the city.



Chungcheongnam-do Province, Republic of Korea

Chungcheongnam-do Province has promoted strategies for development of the regional economy, focused on manufacturing, and achieved remarkable growth, but since the global financial crisis we have experienced dramatic stagnation of the regional economy and worsening of the employment environment.

The goal is sustainable economic development through intrinsic development strategies. In addition to attracting domestic and foreign companies, developing future industries such as hydrogen-fueled automobiles, and creating industrial complexes, we are promoting a “system of public announcement of employment creation goals,” strengthening employment support services, and undertaking things such as projects to develop human resources that respond to companies’ needs and projects start-ups by young people and senior citizens for the purpose of a paradigm change for employment creation.



Ikaruga Town, Japan

In Ikaruga Town, the town hall, tourism association, and commerce and industry association, etc. are collaborating to undertake various projects.

The town has formulated a plan to maintain and improve historical scenic beauty, and is working to prepare a cityscape and a base for walking around the town, as places for new hospitality. Local shopping areas are holding an event called “Jorakuichi” that utilizes empty stores and empty spaces. The commerce and industry association is using a theme of a “program for school trips for adults and a project to develop overnight stays in Ikaruga,” and aiming to have people learn more about Ikaruga through learning and experiences and thereby secure repeat visitors. The commerce and industry association youth division is working to develop special products such as a “pear gelatin,” and they have also started to create a “Tatsuta fried food” brand derived from the Tatsuta River.



Nara Prefecture, Japan

Nara Prefecture is in an area that contains 3 large cities, and yet corporate income is low and employment flows outside the prefecture. In addition, although there are many tourists, tourism consumption is low. A contributing factor behind this is the fact that during the growth period it developed as a bedroom town for Osaka, and water and sewage and roads to Osaka were prepared first. In other words, the prefectural land structure has incomplete preparation of infrastructure for intrinsic industry growth within Nara Prefecture. Therefore, the prefecture plans to formulate fundamental plans for preparing roads based on an ordinance related to preparation of roads in Nara Prefecture, and indicate what kinds of roads should be prepared and how to proceed with preparation. Amid these things, we plan to indicate what kinds of things should be undertaken for road policies in order to strengthen company location and tourism stimulation.

Summary



MOTANI, Kosuke Chief Researcher, Research Department,
The Japan Research Institute, Limited

The points shared by Chungcheongnam-do Province (Korea) and each of Japan’s participating prefectures are not only that they are creating large manufacturing bases by attracting companies, but also that they are conducting intrinsic industry stimulation by utilizing their regions’ resources. Chungcheongnam-do Province is developing rapidly because it is directly connected to the Seoul metropolitan area by an expressway. However, because the living area will remain in the Seoul urban area and consumption will not grow if they only attract factories, they are trying to increase the number of people who put down local roots or who move into the area and work there. This point is shared by Nara Prefecture, which is in an area for commuting to Osaka for work or school. Much of Nara Prefecture’s consumption is generated in Osaka, and it does not lead to stimulation of Nara Prefecture’s economy. It is

necessary to utilize resources such as tourism and agriculture, and implement policies under which local consumption will grow.

Yamagata Prefecture, Shizuoka Prefecture, Wakayama Prefecture, and Kochi Prefecture are pioneers in intrinsic industry stimulation. Yamagata Prefecture is collaborating with Yamagata University Faculty of Engineering to develop sprouts for new industries, through things such as creating products out of organic EL. Wakayama Prefecture and Kochi Prefecture are vast agricultural areas. Discussions were held about local production and external commerce, in which agricultural products are processed and then sold outside the prefecture, and greater added value remains in the area. Wakayama Prefecture is utilizing private-sector ventures, and Kochi Prefecture is conducting prefecture-led support for industries. Shizuoka Prefecture, which has large industries such as automobiles and high-tech, is developing new fields in optics, medical treatment, and welfare industries.

Discussions were also conducted about use of land, including land development in areas with lots of buried cultural assets and moving towns to elevated land as a measure against tsunami and it seems that, as democratic countries, both Korea and Japan respect residents’ consensus and are proceeding with low-key efforts.

There are interesting ways of doing things in each region that people have not noticed yet, and therefore if possible I hope that you will make time to visit other regions and then take home interesting examples.

Group discussions



Presentation of commemorative gifts

Welcome reception



