

Discussion

# Transmitting the Japanese Story: Toward True Cosmopolitanism

Aoyama Yasushi  
and Fujii Hiroaki

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*Now well into the information age, Japan has become a mature society. Some say it should do more to share its mature and quite diverse culture with other countries. In a world where national interests often fiercely clash, could tourism offer a new perspective on ways to promote peace in the world?*

**Gaiko Forum:** Ours is an age of global interaction, with money, products, and people streaming back and forth across national borders. There has been some debate about whether Japan should become a dynamic “big Japan,” with all manner of social and economic elements moving freely in and out of the country, or whether it should content itself with being a comfortable “small Japan,” relatively insulated from the outside world.

**Fujii:** I think insularity is something that Japan has to overcome, but at the same time it is important that it adopt a role that befits its true stature and character. Recently the Western press has been portraying Japan as a failed nation, but I think that is a mistaken view. Despite its problems, Japan is still one of the most successful countries in the world. Its gross domestic product per capita is quite high, and it has a low rate of energy consumption per capita, so its economy is comparatively environment-friendly. Our standard of education ranks among the world’s highest, and we have the longest life expectancy in the world. On the cultural side, Japan has worked hard to preserve its traditional culture, but it has also been in the forefront of technical innovation for a long time.

It is true that the economy is in trouble and that confidence in our entrepreneurial prowess has been shaken. I would say the current difficulties can be attributed, broadly speaking, to two factors. One is that the industrial social system that Japan has developed since the end of World War II no longer suits the information- and knowledge-centered economy of today’s post-industrial world. The other is the tendency among Japanese, in whatever they do, to do it only among themselves.

The strength of the United States lies partly in the fact that it attracts people from all over the world. In that regard, I think Japan needs to address these two factors. For a start, we need more people from other countries coming to Japan. It doesn't matter whether they come as tourists, students, or workers, although I would like to see more coming especially to work in the knowledge-intensive sector. Foreign nationals in Japan account for less than 1 percent of the population, which is very low compared to Britain, where the ratio is around 4 percent, or France and Germany, where it is around 7–8 percent. In that sense, at least, I think Japan should become “bigger.”

## Boosting Tourism

**Aoyama:** I was encouraged to hear recently that a panel on boosting Japan's tourist industry has been set up as an advisory body to the prime minister. The Tokyo metropolitan government also promotes tourism, using revenue from taxes on lodging and other sources.

But I see the question of a “big” Japan in terms of quality rather than scale. Japan has evolved from an industrial period, through a time focused on financial capital, to the current information age, which means it has become a mature society. The country's population is leveling off as its birth rate declines and the average age creeps higher, so in social as well as economic terms, one can say that Japan has matured.

In 1990, an international conference was held in London on the theme of cosmopolitan cities. Japan's “bubble” economy was at its peak, and Tokyo was promoting itself as cosmopolitan because it had become a center of international finance. But what the conference was more interested in was the quality of urban living; whether or not a city could reasonably claim to be cosmopolitan was judged by the quality of life its residents enjoyed, not things like international finance.

From that viewpoint, I think that what Japan today has to offer to both its citizens and the world is the culture that this mature society has achieved, and whether or not Japan can prosper on the strength of its tourist industry depends on how effectively it can share that culture with the rest of the world.

**Fujii:** Yes, I agree. Tourism could become one of the leading industries for Japan in the twenty-first century. We are getting a late start in the industry, and, obviously, we will have to work at its development, but before we can accomplish anything in this regard, I believe Japanese have to change their thinking. Up until this point, the dynamics of Japan's contact with the world has been directed at sending Japanese abroad, whether as tourists or students, but what it needs to do now is to concentrate on bringing people and resources into Japan. We should focus on attracting foreign investment and making it easier

for talented people from other countries to work and engage in research in Japan. Then there is tourism, which is a more-or-less visible and countable industry and one for which targets can be set and immediate returns measured. What I am trying to say is that tourism is a symbol of a wider range of activities, so that the idea of making tourism a key national industry means more than simply developing its mechanics.

The crux of the matter is that the wellspring of tourism is culture. Through visitors who come to Japan as tourists, we have the opportunity to introduce the wealth and breadth of our culture to the world. In the course of their comings and goings, moreover, our culture will continue to be developed and refined. So I see the fundamental task in developing tourism as getting people of other countries to recognize the true value of Japanese culture, deepening their understanding of Japan, and cultivating ties through international exchange.



Aoyama  
Yasushi

After graduating from the Faculty of Law at Chuo University, Aoyama entered the Tokyo metropolitan government service. After working in various offices concerned with city economy, urban planning, and lifestyle culture, he served as division chief of Senior Citizen Welfare, division chief of the Planning Council, and Director of the Policy Media Office. He was vice governor of Tokyo 1999–2003. Among his major writings are *Shosetsu Goto Shinpei* [Goto Shinpei: A Novel] (Gakuyo Shobo, 1997), and *Tokyo toshi ron* [The City of Tokyo] (Kanki Shuppan, 2003).

**Aoyama:** The Japanese word for sightseeing is *kanko*, which literally means “viewing” (*kan*) the “light” (*ko*). *Ko* originally also meant human culture, which was then linked to spectacular landscapes or interesting scenes. If you think of tourism in that way, you can see how shifting the focus of the nation to tourism will take more than simply beefing up its tourism infrastructure: we also need creative ideas on how to present the landmarks and achievements of our culture that people ought to see, and we have to present it all in comprehensible form.

## What Japan Has to Offer

**Fujii:** Japan should really speak out and try to contribute more to what global civilization should be like in the twenty-first century. I believe we should focus our concerns in two directions. One is toward promoting freedom, democracy, and the market economy as values to be shared all over the world. The oth-

er is to stress the importance of respect for cultural diversity. Cultures, like individuals, differ from one another. It is not a question of which cultures are superior or of whether old cultures are more important than new. These two concerns accord closely with what Japan stands for. These are principles that Japan can stand up for in the international arena, and principles that can guide our foreign policy.

At the same time, Japan should cultivate its inherent strengths and points of view, particularly on issues based in its own history and culture rather than those borrowed from other cultures. An example of this is peace, an ideal to which postwar Japanese are deeply devoted. A whole city like Hiroshima represents the prayer for peace. Another is conservation and care for the environment, and this has a long tradition in Japan. You know, people are always saying “mottai nai!” (don’t be wasteful). A lot of research has been coming out recently about the thorough recycle culture of the city of Edo, the capital of the country from the early seventeenth century until it was renamed Tokyo in 1868. Our ancient capital of Kyoto has become a byword in the environmental movement as a result of the 1997 document, the Kyoto Protocol of the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change. There has been much difference of opinion between the United States and European countries over the treaty, but “Kyoto” now serves as a kind of symbol of global environmentalism.



**Fujii  
Hiroaki**

Fujii studied at the University of Tokyo, Amherst College, and Harvard University. He entered the employ of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1956, where he has served as director-general of the North American Affairs Bureau, and ambassador to the OECD, to Thailand, and to the United Kingdom. He has been president of the Japan Foundation since 1997.

**Aoyama:** And Tokyo today, for its part, is a symbol of diversity. It offers a wealth of technology, starting underground, not only with its superb subway system but other highly developed uses of underground space. Its greater metropolitan area embraces places of great natural beauty—from the Tama Hills of its western extremity to the Izu island chain extending into the ocean off the eastern seaboard. Then there are the rich traditions of arts, crafts, and performing arts going back to the Edo period—everything from master carpentry to kabuki. For a long time, I regret to say, even Japanese failed to fully appreciate these wonderful aspects of their culture.

Then there is transportation. Cities like New York and Paris are structured around their systems of roads, which cover around 20 percent of urban land. Tokyo’s network of streets, boulevards, and expressways covers

only around 16 percent of the land. It is exceedingly complex and convoluted and often seriously congested. But what we do have is a first-class system of rail transportation. The twenty-three wards of Tokyo are dotted with more than five hundred train or subway stations. An area in New York or London the same size might have just over four hundred. Virtually every place in urban Tokyo is within ten minutes' walk of a train station, so people can get around the city very easily. Daily commuter movement is greatly facilitated by through-service trains and other forms of cooperation between private train lines serving the suburbs and metropolitan and center-city trains and subways serving the numerous hubs of the city clustered in its core.

**Fujii:** I don't know if you could find that kind of skillful dovetailing of commuter networks in any other city in the world. And Tokyo may also be the only city in the world with two loop lines.

**Aoyama:** Yes, we have the above-ground Yamanote Line loop and the recently completed underground Oedo Line loop. But more important than the number of stations, I think, is the efficiency of Tokyo's urban functions, which make it possible for people to get around easily by public transportation.

**Fujii:** Yes, this is no mean achievement. The media labeled the nineties Japan's "lost decade," but I don't agree. It's true that the economy has not been good, but living in Tokyo is actually much better now than it was in the middle of the bubble. The parks are better, the cultural facilities are better, the subway system is better. And people are beginning to move back into the inner city. Japanese society has its problems, but it is hard to find a city of this size so clean, safe, efficient, and reliable. Tokyo is steadily becoming a more attractive city. I think being more aware of this could give people more drive and conviction in their endeavors.

**Aoyama:** A recent survey of businessmen from Asia asked what they considered the good and bad points of Tokyo. On the minus side, many cited the inconvenient location of the airport, but on the plus side many said they were impressed by the orderliness of the city. And it's true—the complexity of our streets notwithstanding—public transportation and other systems that serve the city are organized and the service is regular and on-time, and this is something in which we can take great pride.

**Fujii:** People from other countries have often remarked to me that Japanese don't seem to do much private socializing. They seem to mean things like married couples' going out for dinner and other gatherings where business is not the primary focus. In the West, this kind of socializing provides opportunities



for people to observe one another, and to see how trustworthy they are. If you are going to take risks in business, it may be indispensable to get to know those you are dealing with socially. Tokyo has hundreds of wonderful restaurants, and while they do seem to be popular with young people, they tend not to be used as venues for this kind of socializing among members of the older generation.

**Aoyama:** Vienna and Salzburg have music, New York has its musicals, Paris has its art exhibitions and shows. That kind of culture flourishes from within, because the city's inhabitants themselves enjoy and support it; it's not just for the sake of visitors from outside. Postwar Tokyo developed as a city surrounded by commuter suburbs, to which people returned at night, and this put it at a disadvantage in fostering cultural attractions. When people can actually live in the city center, they have more free time to enjoy culture, and the city will respond in kind to that demand.

**Fujii:** Yes, although tourists are important, they can't be the prime movers. In order to sustain cultural activity, the people of a city themselves have to want it. Also relevant here is the critical economic role that culture and art play in the information society. Culture and art only emerge from individuals; they arise from individual inspiration and creativity. So if we are going to cultivate and encourage this energy, it's important that there be places for talented individuals to meet, the way the leaders of the Impressionist movement of the nineteenth century gathered at the cafes in Paris. And the city also stimulates people by bringing them into contact with the exotic and unfamiliar, the way the Impressionists were exposed to ukiyo-e and Japanese art.

## Ideas for Tokyo

**Aoyama:** It's become quite obvious lately, with the advent of the mature society and the information age, that urban functions and the nature of urban society are changing. When Japan was going through its industrial and financial periods, Tokyo was a city where millions of employees came every day to work in offices. With the onset of the information age, however, Tokyo is becoming the scene of information-intensive industries. In this new knowledge-centered setting, productivity thrives on interaction among people from different industries and businesses. The changes have made it suddenly necessary to improve urban amenities—to update office equipment and technology, provide places to maintain physical fitness, go shopping, and enjoy dining—all adjacent to workplaces. This process is transforming the townscape all over central Tokyo, and it is important that we tell the world—show the world—more about what our cities are and how they are changing. Traditional culture is important, but for people visiting Tokyo as tourists, there ought to be attractions that stimulate intellectual interest and respond to artistic and cultural tastes. The city has more to offer than does a place that is purely a resort.

**Fujii:** That idea is behind the drive, I believe, to provide more high-rise housing in the city center, thereby enabling people to live there.

**Aoyama:** Exactly. The biggest problem with urban planning in Tokyo is its orientation to the horizontal and two-dimensional—prompting endless, dense urban sprawl. We take it to be our greatest challenge to promote more three-dimensional use of space, building upward and providing more open space in the city.

**Fujii:** But building more high rises has got to go hand in hand with keeping the waterways and parks clean and incorporating within it areas that preserve the natural landscape. In this respect Tokyo is lucky to be by the sea and also to have the vast wooded grounds of the Imperial Palace in its center. The Imperial Palace grounds is home not only to one of the oldest families in the world, but also to some 5,000 species of wild plants and animals. You can eat fish caught in the seas before the city. This is unusual for a major metropolis.

One area that has the potential for appeal to tourists is Jinbocho, a district clustered with bookstores, specializing in new, old, and rare books. As far as tourism is concerned, it's important as a place that preserves the old, but I also think it may be unique in the world for the density of bookstores. This was also an area once frequented by Chinese historical figures like revolutionary leader Zhou Enlai, writer and social critic Lu Xun, and father of modern China Sun Yat-sen. For Chinese tourists in Tokyo, whose numbers are expected to increase more than any other tourist group in the years ahead, Jinbocho may hold this kind of interest as well.

**Aoyama:** Yes, Jinbocho is a good example of culture and the accumulation of knowledge, a combination that is well-matched to the needs of the information society. During Japan's era of rapid economic growth, a law was instituted to prevent the excessive concentration of population in the center of the city, but the effect of that law was to force universities to move out into the suburbs. That law has since been repealed, and in Kanda, Marunouchi, and Iidabashi plans are now being made to establish a string of graduate schools for people, especially businesspeople, who want to return to higher education mid-career. I believe these plans will greatly alter the character of those downtown areas.

**Fujii:** The best that Japan has to offer is of a human scale. Ours is not a country with grand attractions like the Pyramids or the Great Wall, but even so it is a treasure trove of culture. Tokyo, a symbol of Japan's own diversity, is, I think, one of the world's most diverse cities. New York, Paris, and London have great diversity, too, but Tokyo is a blend of Asian and Western cultures, as well as of elements of past, present, and future. In Tokyo, furthermore, people have kept a fairly close relationship with nature.

**Aoyama:** Tokyo is so dynamic; it's constantly remaking itself. That's part of its charm. Tokyo is at its best, I believe, showing what a great city can be.

**Fujii:** Things like robots and animation are part of Japanese culture, too. They show the close relationship between culture and industry, and illustrate the much-treasured Japanese tradition of the closeness between human beings and their tools. To call a sword the spirit of the samurai is a rather unfamiliar concept in the West. Robots, too, are the products of a culture of human-friendly technology, the kind of thing that can be found in abundance in Tokyo. If we make use of these aspects of our culture, Tokyo will become an even more exciting city.

**Aoyama:** London held an international exposition in the mid-nineteenth century to advertise advances in science and technology. Not to be outdone, Paris soon put on its own world expo, displaying the world's achievements in culture and the arts. Japan, too, has much that it could contribute to and show to the world.

A number of things hold Tokyo back. One long-discussed problem is the lack of adequate runways at its main international airport.\* Another lack is

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\* Editor's note: New York has a total of nine runways. In the case of Tokyo, the mainly domestic airport at Haneda has three runways, but Narita International Airport long had only one runway, from 1978 when it was opened to April 2002, when only one more was added. While the annual number of arrivals and departures for New York is about 1 million, by contrast, it is only 400,000 for Tokyo. The lack of airport runways is believed to place a considerable constraint on Japan's international competitiveness.

twenty-four-hour entertainment with casinos and the like. I hope the Japan Tourism Advisory Council will consider ways to address these problems.

**Fujii:** Tourism-wise, the city has other obstacles it needs to overcome as well—access to and from the airports is poor, there aren't enough tourist information booths, it's hard to exchange money in the city, not all businesses accept credit cards, and the signs are not easily understood.

**Aoyama:** As I said earlier, the metropolitan government is using revenue from hotel taxes to promote tourism. These funds are being used to post signs that are translated not only into English but also into Chinese and Korean. And to make it easier to navigate the city streets, we are going to install street signs and better maps.

Aoyama:  
Tokyo attracts only about 2.8 million foreign visitors a year. Singapore gets about 6 million.

**Fujii:** Yes, the aim should be to enable overseas visitors to walk around Tokyo by themselves. At the same time, we need to provide better information about places of interest. Japan is full of interesting stories, but few of them are familiar to people from other countries. When we visit a place like Rome's Appian Way, we Japanese—at least those of us of the older generation—cannot help being reminded of the novel *Quo Vadis*, which was once part of an educated person's reading. Through that novel we could share something of the history of that place.

**Aoyama:** Japan has a history and literature full of interest and drama, but we have to make that sort of thing better known to the rest of the world. And like the novel that is associated with the Appian Way, there should be more of our literature that is part of world literature, thereby transmitting our stories to people in other countries before they even come to Japan. That was how popular film stories like *Roman Holiday* and *Breakfast at Tiffany's* turned certain locations into international tourist destinations. It's not quite the same thing, but I think the Japanese animated film *Spirited Away* has been an important step in that direction.

**Fujii:** One problem, though, is that, on the whole, tourists coming to Japan don't spend a lot of their time in Tokyo. If they have a week, they will go to Kyoto and perhaps Nara, and they'll probably spend only a day or two in Tokyo. So the question is, where to go when you're in Tokyo for such a short stay.

**Aoyama:** Tokyo attracts only about 2.8 million foreign visitors a year. The Louvre alone gets more, around 3 million a year; Singapore gets about 6 million.

**Fujii:** As a destination for foreign tourists, Japan ranks thirty-fifth in the world and only ninth in Asia, below even Macao. When you consider Tokyo as a tourist destination, it's not clear exactly what you should see there. Perhaps this could be remedied if Tokyo had some sort of exhibition center with interesting and entertaining presentations about Japanese history and culture—a central place where tourists can learn what's where in Japan.

**Aoyama:** That's the kind of hospitality we need to provide. But the Japanese public has to take a more active, constructive role in discussing how tourism can be made a source of national prosperity. Asians are big world travelers today. Places like Kyushu have determined to catch this new wave of Asian travel, and at hotels in Fukuoka and Kagoshima, you can hear all kinds of Asian languages being spoken; that is something that should spread to all parts of Japan.

Fujii:  
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**Fujii:** With all the advances that have been made in audiovisual technology, one might well wonder why people still travel. Clearly, they want direct, first-person contact with a world that's different from their own. The answer to better tourism is definitely not making rural cities over in the image of Tokyo.

**Aoyama:** That's why the scheme to rebuild local cities throughout Japan in Tokyo's image—an idea that became national policy under what was once the National Land Agency—was doomed to failure from the start. All it did was drain the finances of local governments throughout the country. Those regional areas could have spent their money to much better advantage developing and promoting their own local culture.

**Fujii:** In that respect, certain cities are gradually coming to the fore, like Kanazawa near the Japan Sea, Fukuoka in Kyushu, and Obuse in northern Nagano. Each place has its own history and environment to draw from, and that is what each locale should do, because that's what's authentic. As the capital, Tokyo should be letting the world know about the diversity of Japanese culture—not only to the world at large but also to Japanese themselves. People of our generation are more or less familiar with traditional Japanese culture, but I'd like to see younger Japanese gain a better appreciation for what is unique and precious about their cultural heritage.

## Tourism and Foreign Policy

**Aoyama:** If Japan is to make tourism a major industry, both the government and the people need to approach the idea with more conviction. The government, for example, could draw the world's attention to lesser-known Japanese cities by arranging for them to host international conferences, in the way the G-8 summit was held in Okinawa and the U.N. meeting on the environment was convened in Kyoto.

**Fujii:** Encouraging people from other countries to come to Japan means opening Japan up more widely to the world. That will inevitably bring some difficulties, including some sacrifices of public safety and security, but I just don't think it is possible to maintain Japan's international competitiveness on our own strength alone. We need to attract people from other countries, not only as tourists but in other capacities as well, and to make Japan a country that they too can enjoy visiting and living in. This process would also bring vitality to Japan. Already we know that Japanese culture is being treasured, passed down, and further refined not only by Japanese but by people from other countries, as exemplified by champion sumo wrestlers like Akebono and Musashimaru, shakuhachi players like John Neptune, sake-brewer Philip Harper, and sake brewery manager Sarah Marie Cummings.

**Aoyama:** Quite a lot of young people from overseas put down roots in Nagano after the 1998 Winter Olympics. So the lasting benefits of the Olympics can be measured not only in the fine sports facilities that were built but also in this infusion of foreign nationals living in or returning to visit the area. Such international events—the FIFA World Cup was another—play a very important role as catalysts for tourism and internationalism. Unfortunately, fewer and fewer international conferences are being held in Japan. The government should make a systematic effort to change that, designating appropriate cities for such meetings and encouraging organizers to hold events there.

**Fujii:** For late-starter Japan to catch up in the tourist industry, it needs to develop strengths through a kind of priority-production approach. At the same time, each region of the country has to develop its own unique tourist appeal. This would invigorate domestic tourism as well.

**Aoyama:** That's the kind of economic development that was advocated by Albert Hirschman—you improve the whole by developing strategic strong points. Tokyo's waterfront sub-city is an example of that. A few years ago, it began to attract more visitors than Disneyland. Originally, the area was all office buildings, but now you can find shopping, entertainment, and other activities. And this place of change and progress has now itself become an object of interest.

**Fujii:** The Japan Tourism Advisory Council, composed of eleven persons including myself and attended by the prime minister, is considering a comprehensive strategy that involves the whole spectrum of government ministries and agencies as well as local government bodies. The thrust is to promote the culture and attractions of Japan through a joint public- and private-sector effort, and the outreach would include Japanese embassies and consulates abroad, chambers of commerce and industry, and so on.

**Aoyama:** Gearing Japan for tourism would also create jobs and invigorate the economy, and the influx of foreign nationals would enrich Japan's own culture.

**Fujii:** In the thirty years that the Japan Foundation has been promoting Japanese culture abroad, our experience has been that when people come here who already have a liking for Japanese culture, they grow to like Japan even more. In most cases, even people who know virtually nothing about Japan come to like it once they've actually been here. They say that when they see it for themselves, their biases are dispelled. In that sense, encouraging more people from other countries to come here can contribute to Japan's security in the long run.

Aoyama:  
Gearing Japan for tourism would invigorate the economy, and the influx of foreign nationals would enrich Japan's own culture.

**Aoyama:** Indeed, gaining a better understanding of each other is the foundation of world peace.

Of course this process will not be without problems. How to maintain peace and order is a matter of great concern. As the number of people coming into Japan from other countries increases, the heterogeneity and diversity of society increase, inevitably releasing various unfamiliar forces. Along with the great contributions people from other countries are making to our society and culture, we also face the problem of increasing crime committed by foreigners. The situation is so serious that there is a shortage of detention facilities in Tokyo. We have increased the number of police officers, but overall we don't have enough physical facilities—lockups, prisons, and so on—to cope with the problem. As I said before, so far the streets of Japanese cities are safer than in New York or London, and we want to keep them that way.

Tourism also ties in with increased immigration and illegal entry or overstay in the country. Japan needs migrants partly because of its shortage of unskilled labor, but in the case of tourism we must not overlook its effect on public peace and safety.

**Fujii:** You're quite right. I'm not suggesting that Japan should indiscriminately open its doors to foreign workers. But ranked thirty-fifth in the world as a destination for foreign visitors, Japan needs a plan to increase the number of overseas tourists while also maintaining its high standard of public peace and safety.

**Aoyama:** Yes, the concern for public safety does not have to inhibit the promotion of tourism. Immigration is a separate issue.

**Fujii:** In my view, we need to establish a comprehensive policy that addresses all issues related to foreign nationals in Japan, not just immigration control. In any case, in order to invigorate Japan's economy and culture, we need to open up the country as much as possible.

**Aoyama:** Some argue for bringing in unskilled labor from abroad, but before doing that I think we need to look more carefully at Japan's social structure. If we take down some of the established barriers, and if the job market were more open regardless of gender and age, Japan might even have a surplus of labor. I am also not so sure it is necessary to draw such a sharp distinction between skilled and unskilled labor. We could imagine, for instance, a social system whereby, after reaching a certain age, skilled workers switch to unskilled labor under job-sharing programs. Would Japan still have a shortage of unskilled labor under those conditions? We don't necessarily have to rush to immigrant labor as the solution.

Fujii:

**I just don't think it is possible to maintain Japan's international competitiveness on our own strength alone.**

**Fujii:** The question of how better to mobilize the skills of women and senior citizens is certainly an important one.

I would also point out the connection between promoting the tourist industry and foreign policy. This is a broad-ranging field; the ultimate goals of Japan's foreign policy are to ensure the safety of Japan and its people, and to strengthen the Japanese economy. But the way this is done changes with the times; Japan's foreign policy today is not what it was during the Cold War. You also have to remember that in diplomacy it takes more than smooth dealings between governments to actually accomplish the task at hand. The officials engaged in implementing foreign policy must be realists, constantly adapting to ever-changing circumstances. And I firmly believe that in today's reality the people play a crucial role. We must recognize the power of the people, both in terms of public

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opinion and in relation to this question of tourism. In that sense, I think the topics of our discussion today are of great importance to Japan's foreign policy.

**Aoyama:** Yes, I would say the issues involved with the development of tourism are not only key in terms of our own cultural and social development but are also germane from the perspective of promoting international understanding and peace in a world where national interests are often in conflict.

### About this Article

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