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“A Proposal for the Development of Tourism in Okinawa with reference to the Kyoto International Manga Museum”

4th Year, Okinawa University by Miyuki Tachibana

There are lots of elements in Okinawa that attract tourists, from the rich nature peculiar in subtropical zone to the rare endemic species, remote islands with different characteristics, culture, history, the sites of castle, traditions, cuisine, festivals and the character of the people of the prefecture. When it comes to the “representative of Japan”, “Kyoto” comes to my mind.

Last year, I went to Kyoto Prefecture to study at Kyoto Seika University, which was the partner school of my university. The reason was to learn the techniques to make use of sightseeing of Kyoto for that of Okinawa. There I experienced the unique culture, habits and traditions of Kyoto. With a seasonal street in nature called "the eyes of the base", the history in Japanese ancient times, characteristic words of Kansai and the tenement house called "the long and narrow place", the red-light district that remind you of another world, maiko art, the dyed goods of the Yuzen, in a place with uncountable temples and historic people, you can find Aoi Festival, the Gion festival, the Festival of the Ages, three biggest festivals of Kyoto, so attractive that you may want to see once more.

In Kyoto, there are also tens of thousands of comic books stored in “The Kyoto International Manga Museum”. As a cartoon lover, it was an environment where my heart beats like it cannot hold anymore. I think this is the reason why a lot of tourists every year want to experience the unique atmosphere of Kyoto. People in which I study pose sharp questions to me, that I do not know the fine culture of Okinawa. This

has made me learn a lesson. When I interacted with them, I often was faced with knowledge that was slightly incorrect to Okinawa.

My friends ordered Okinawa soba noodles in a limited time menu Shijo Kawaramachi one day in a bar restaurant. The soup, noodles and meat were quite different from those in Okinawa, but they find the soba noodles delicious. I was very shocked by that. Reaction of people who eat delicious Okinawa soba noodles should brighten the eyes more to the taste. As a soba noodles lover, the gentle shine and color, temperature, pig bone and the gentle taste of bonito of Okinawa soba made unintentionally tweet "akisabiyo, dejinaton" (Oh my goodness, the Okinawan pork!), and have a strong feeling that "I want them to know well about Okinawa"

I heard a lot of voices saying that, "I want to go to Okinawa," "I am interested in Okinawa" in Kyoto, but the number of people who have actually been to Okinawa are quite few except those who went on school trips. However, we can see that the attention from outside the province is still high from the opinion. Well, from the Internet resource looking back on "The History of Okinawa Tourism in The Past," which is based on the "2011 Tourism Manual of Okinawa"- grave tourism memorial delegation after the war, resort boom in the 1980s and, during the 90's-2000 the drama "Churasan" and the artists from Okinawa have drawn attention and aroused tourists to come each time. Tourists visiting Okinawa for the first time usually visit the major spots such as marine leisure, swimming, the nature, Okinawan cuisine, and Kokusai Street, and Chatan, where American Culture and Okinawan culture are mixed. In addition, as their first purpose of recreation, repeaters tend to enjoy the stay for relaxation, and visit natural and historical sightseeing, and enjoy Okinawan cuisine. Nevertheless, tourist arrivals in Okinawa continue to decline every year due to the impact of the Lehman shock swine flu and, the Tohoku Earthquake. Rather than visiting Okinawa far away, people needs tend to be met from entertainment nearby. Aside from repeat visitors, students and young people do not spend time and money traveling in Okinawa even they are quite interested in Okinawa, as they lack the "charm of one step away". Even though travel companies that sell cheap tickets of Peach and Skymark Airlines, and Jetstar have increased in recent years, it is a story of still ahead for those who have not experienced the soul-stirring excitement of Okinawa. Willingness to visit is buried by everyday life. So what is an island that

peoples want to visit? I want to activate Okinawa tourism by building a comic museum called "The Okinawa International Manga Museum ".

The reason why I want to establish the museum was from the life in Kyoto. As mentioned, "The Kyoto International Manga Museum" was opened on November 6, 2006 from converting an abandoned elementary school. Domestic contemporary comic books, cartoon-related historical materials in the Meiji period and later, well-known comic books around the world, magazines, animation-related materials, etc., about 300,000 of the world's largest collections are stored there. The concept of the Kyoto International Manga Museum works to take advantage of using people in the civil community collaboration and attracting lifelong learning through the cartoon, tourism and creation of new industries. When you actually pay a visit, it is bustling every day by people of wide age groups, such as local children, students, adults, families, and tourists from abroad. In fact, people of 240 000 visited the museum as in the visitor recorded in 2012. Not only do people who live in Kyoto Prefecture come, many tourists also participate in the cartoon related events held on a regular basis. When I joined the event held by the Kyoto International Manga Museum, my heart swelled with passion so I want to invite the participants to come to Okinawa in the future.

As for the construction of "The Okinawa International Manga Museum (tentative)", first of all, I propose to use the facilities and school buildings that were previously used in order not to degrade the nature of Okinawa. Besides, I also want the museum to be a cultural facility that incorporates the elements of a museum that contains research exhibitions and storage of Okinawa-related manga, Okinawan cartoonists, and animation of Okinawa broadcast so far, and the elements of a library that allows visitors to read inside. Based on the comic culture of Okinawa, it will be a direction that will actively incorporate Japanese overseas comic books, manga magazines and animation. In addition, by organizing events related to manga, we can arouse quick action and high attention of the manga readers and create the opportunities to attract tourists to Okinawa. The admission fee received from visitors will be used as a fund to nurturing natural environment and growing forest and coral in Okinawa. I can say that the start of the manga museum will lead regional development and tourism development of Okinawa. In 2013, the pop culture of Japan is attracting attention

worldwide. The number of manga lovers rapidly increases not only among Japanese but also foreigners. I think that by establishing "The Okinawa International Manga Museum (tentative)" that I propose and organize manga-related events, "Use of manga and cultural facilities + sightseeing in Okinawa" will be popular among people of different age groups not only within Japan, but also overseas, especially youngsters. "The Okinawa International Manga Museum (tentative)" is going to create an opportunity for young people to visit Okinawa, and hopefully they will visit again. If this cycle repeats itself, tourism in Okinawa will further develop. Rather than a temporary facility to attract tourists, it is one that is community-based, and it will become a cultural facility visited by domestic and foreign tourists several years ahead. In the light of incorporating delicate consideration for the tourists, setting up a comprehensive tourist information center to support to tourism in Okinawa, and enhancing barrier-free facilities for the people in a wheelchair and the elderly are also indispensable. Moreover, if we add simulated experience of cosplay, such as rental service of folk costume of Okinawa, photo-shooting and walk plan, there will be significant impacts to local residents as well as for tourists, while sightseeing in Okinawa will also become more attractive.

Although there are still more plans of tourism development, building cultural facilities loved by the region and visited by tourists no matter if they are local or from abroad is going to be an important element to sustain tourism in Okinawa. Using "Okinawa International Manga Museum (tentative)" as an opportunity for visitors to enjoy the original nature, traditions and culture of Okinawa is my unchanging opinion. This is the end of my speech. Thank you very much for listening.