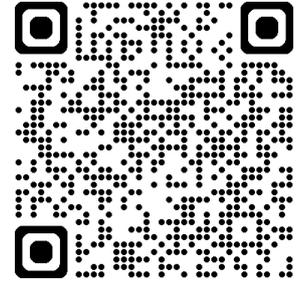


Japan hotels change strategy as Chinese stay away



<https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/videos/20260213202907042/>

During the Lunar New Year Holiday starting Sunday, Japan used to see a surge of visitors from China, many on shopping sprees.

This year things are different. Arrivals have tumbled as Japan-China ties worsened. The drop follows a warning from Beijing urging its citizens not to visit, citing safety concerns. That came after Japan's Prime Minister spoke about a possible Taiwan emergency. Now let's take a look at how hotels in Japan are coping.

Gamagori city in Aichi Prefecture, central Japan, is on the so-called golden route connecting Osaka, Kyoto, Mt. Fuji, and Tokyo, all popular tourist spots among Chinese visitors. This hotel in the city has been making efforts to attract them. It added signs in Chinese. It even started subscribing to Chinese newspapers for the guests to read. Last February alone, it accommodated about 1,500 Chinese travelers, accounting for half of all its guests for that month. But this year, the hotel has been hit hard by Chinese tourists canceling their reservations. About 2,000 called off their plans, resulting in 0 guests from China this month. A fax sent from a travel agent says, "due to recent political circumstances."

We feel it is a pity. I want to welcome them personally.

Some hotels are trying to attract more tourists from other countries. This hotel is now targeting guests from Europe and the United States. This room is designed for such visitors. Unlike some Chinese tourists who visit on weekends, travelers from Western countries tend to stay longer. The room is nearly 100 square meters, allowing as many as 6 guests to stay comfortably. It has amenities and equipment for people staying for extended periods, including a washing machine and a video screen and projector. It was a big investment for the hotel, but management believes it will pay off. There seems to be a change in customer

demographics.

Americans and Europeans are more likely to stay for a relatively long time. We have to be ready to welcome many customers from around the world instead of targeting just one market.

Experts say, Japan's tourism industry which had long benefited from a large volume of Chinese tourists, is now at a major crossroads.

I think we will see more efforts to attract visitors from Europe and the US. Now the efforts to bring in Chinese tourists are dominant. If we stick to China, that will invite risks, including political and economic ones. Targeting different countries is ideal. I think that has come to stand out after Chinese visitors declined sharply this year.

As Japan's tourism industry absorbs the loss of a significant part of its customer base, it seems likely that business operators in the country will be looking to adopt a more risk-resistant strategy.

Source: (NHK World News)

Now discuss the questions with a partner.

1. What are the pros and cons of a decrease in Chinese tourists?
2. What are some strategies for Japan's tourism industry to appeal to western tourists?
3. When you were in a foreign country did you wish the hotels would change something for Japanese tourists?
4. Have political tensions ever stopped you from visiting somewhere you want to visit?
5. Do you think tourism helps improve relationships between countries? Why or why not?