

Japan Brand ODA

Sushi, cars, animation and Mount Fuji: these frequently come to the minds of people abroad when they hear the word Japan. Today, a movement to present such culture and strengths of Japan to the world as the “Japan Brand” is getting into full swing. The government of Japan has already started projects to transmit Japanese values and attractive culture such as traditional crafts, *sake* and traffic safety. This kind of effort to present the strength of one country is performed not only in Japan but also other countries.

According to an analysis, the momentum to reevaluate each country’s international competitiveness anew has risen in the background of this movement. As globalization accelerates as well as the presence of emerging countries grow rapidly, countries are forced to face a question : what are their genuine strengths?

The strength of Japan has been utilized in the field of international cooperation. From the projects implemented during the 60-year history of Official Development Assistance (ODA), JICA summarized the knowledge and technology that Japan presents to the world as Japan Brand ODA. JICA offers them to the world and also promotes their further development. For example, the Mother and Child Health Handbook, a system to support birth and nursing that originated in Japan, has also spread in developing countries where maternity and infant mortality rates are high. *Kaizen*, practice undertaken by employees themselves to find problems in their workplace and seek improvement has also been incorporated in many developing countries by now, since it improves productivity without introducing large-scale facilities. Furthermore, significant possibilities concerning development are hidden in Japanese

knowledge and technology including science-mathematics education, disaster prevention and safe water.

There are also many cases in which Japanese regional know-how has helped to solve problems in the world. For example, in Hokkaido, the island covered with snow during winter, people grow vegetables in greenhouses with geothermal energy to minimize the environmental burden. This technology was also introduced to Mongolia, where it is also cold in winter, and has led to stable production of agricultural products. In Negros Island, in the Philippines, where people are trying to escape from an economy dependent on sugar production, they adopted agro-ecotourism learnt from the Okinawa Islands, where they have a similar environment. The Japan Brand is expected to help reevaluate the international competitiveness of Japan and to change people’s lives in developing countries.