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## The development of rural tourism in Japan

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In Japan, rural tourism has developed since the first half of the 1990s. Most of researches on rural tourism deal with phenomena in the recent decades. However, some forms of tourism existed in rural spaces before the 1980s. Few studies analyze changing process of rural tourism in the last hundreds years. This study examines characteristics on the development of rural tourism in Japan. In this study, rural tourism is defined as all form of tourism existed in countryside.

Before the 1960s, rural tourism arose with some typical facilities such as tourist farms for fruits, farmer's accommodation, tourist ranches, etc. However, visitor did not always use these facilities to stay in rural spaces, but the facilities were characterized as dropping or resting points among the itinerary of circuit tour for sightseeing. Visitor thus used only to consume alternative tourist attractions located in the rural spaces. Since the 1970s, contrary, the number of tourists who consume rurality has gradually been increasing parallel with the rising preference to rural landscape and culture. The increasing number of urban population also affects this development of authentic rural tourism. Some forms of rural tourism emerged in neighboring regions of large cities based on the establishment of allotment gardens (Kleingarten in German) or farmers markets, and new use of farmer's accommodation for the experience of agricultural activities. There are also some cases that tourists play an important part to keep traditional rural landscape. Today two different types of rural tourism coexist in Japanese rural spaces: traditional rural tourism established before the 1960s and new rural tourism with the consumption of rurality by tourists. To recognize this difference may be indispensable to examine the sustainable development of rural tourism.

Keywords: rural tourism, rural space, rurality, consumption, Japan