

Email Newsletter from Mayor of Okayama City (69) July 27th, 2016 Issue

【A Visit to Malaysia which I felt a big potential】

Hello, I'm Mr. Omori, Mayor of Okayama.

Between last July 20th and 22nd, I visited Malaysia whose economy has remarkably grown in recent years and it is said to be that the country has a great potential. I did various promotional activities with Mayor of Hiroshima, a Vice Mayor of Takamatsu, and a Vice Mayor of Matsuyama in the country. It was a tough schedule of only two night's stay. However, we were able to produce a great deal of results even during the short time.

From July 21st till July 27th, a fair of products was held at 3 stores of AEON Malls in Malaysia. At the fair, 35 corporations participated to the fair and 26 of them joined to the fair for the first time. As we, all of four cities together, were able to borrow a large space for our event and our booths did a roaring trade. We promoted and advertised the name of "The Setouchi products" as much as we could.

12 corporations in Okayama City participated and 7 of them newly joined to the fair. They advertised white peaches, grapes, and kibidango (millet dumpling) which is certified as halal foods. Although all products gained public favor, kibidango with powdered green tea which is a new flavor of this year was extremely popular among them, as a powdered green tea boom is seen in Malaysia. I also had the kibidango which was delicious and I enjoyed its flavor with a faint aroma of the powdered green tea.

In addition, many customers from the wealthy visited our booths more than my expectation and white peaches met with their approval. Though I have worried if high-priced white peaches will be sold or not, one customer purchased 10 white peaches in front of me. I felt a great potential for a sales performance of our products in the future seeing the customer's great appetite for buying before my eyes.

We gained the big fruit from these promotional activities and I got a strong sense of an advancement of number of Malaysian tourists to the area around the Inland sea of Japan. During my stay in Malaysia, I promoted attractions and the appeal of the Inland

sea area in a various occasions such as a fair of products, a tourism seminar, and visits to Malaysian tourism corporations. It was so delightful to see a great interest to a tour of the Inland sea area in Malaysian people by our public relations. Malaysian people, even the wealthy, are losing their interests to travel Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka which are typical travelling destinations in Japan after their many visits to those areas. Furthermore, I learned that a type of tour to experience something is suited to the tastes of not only Malaysians, but also other tourists from overseas. With the trend, a tour to experience making udon noodles of Kagawa Prefecture is very popular for the tourists from overseas. Therefore, we need to consider what kinds of tours to let the tourist experience something in Okayama City we can offer them besides a tour to pick up fruits.

The most important value of this visit to Malaysia is to be able to send out the name of "The Setouchi products" with its strong image in cooperation with main four cities in the Inland Sea area. If only one city did public relations in Malaysia, it would be difficult to make a strong impression of the name of "The Setouchi products" on people and we could not gain the same level of success in the public relations.

From now on, Okayama City is going to develop the whole area around the Inland sea with cooperation and competition with four cities together including Okayama City. I am going to continue to plan events for public relations with other three cities together such as the fair held in Malaysia in this visit.

Lastly, this project was able to produce excellent results by efforts of many supporters. Some of them are my friend Mr. Miyagawa who is also an ambassador to Malaysia, Mr. Yoshioka who is an honorary chairman of ROHM Wako Co., Ltd., Mr. Takehara who is a president of ZENBI Co., Ltd., and Mr. Okazaki who is a president of AEON RETAIL Co., Ltd.

Mr. Miyagawa provided us a wonderful venue for a presentation and invited Mr. Tan Sri Dato' Sri Azman Hashim, a Chairman of The Japan Malaysia Economic Association, and others who are related to many tourism corporations and political circles to an official residence of the ambassador. Mr. Yoshioka and Mr. Takehara attended to the presentation by making their time in their busy schedules. Mr. Okazaki gave us an opportunity to start this project and made every effort to hold the fair of products. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who supported us in this email newsletter.