

# So Much to See and Do! Japan's Regional Areas

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## Dignitaries from Overseas Visiting Various Places throughout Japan

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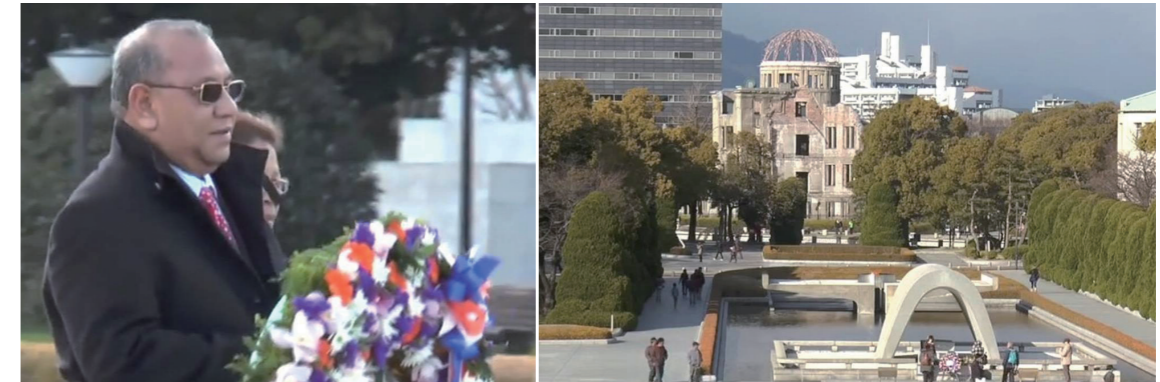
Japan comprises a long string of islands stretching north to south, located in a temperate zone. Its climate and landscape vary greatly from region to region, and each town and village has unique charms. And because Japan has four distinct seasons, you can enjoy different sights at the same place different times of the year. From the scenery of mountains and rivers to the locally rooted lifestyles and diverse food culture, everything is intricately intertwined with the changing of the seasons, so one can always find something new and interesting no matter how many times one visits.

Wanting more dignitaries from other countries to experience such local charms, the government of Japan is actively encouraging them to visit regional cities when they come to Japan. Let's take a look at the trips taken by President Christopher J. Loek of the Republic of the Marshall Islands and President Emanuel Mori of the Federated States of Micronesia.

President Loek visited Hiroshima Prefecture in February 2014. Hiroshima is well known throughout the world as a city that was devastated by an atomic bomb, but it also boasts many sightseeing destinations, such as Hiroshima Castle, Itsukushima Shinto Shrine, and other historical buildings. After touring Peace Memorial Park and Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, the president visited Miyajima Island, where the famous Itsukushima Shinto Shrine is located. Listed as a World Heritage Site, the shrine features uniquely designed structures built on the water, such as the immense 16.6-meter (54.4-foot) *torii* gate rising out of the sea and the vermilion-lacquered corridor that leads to the shrine. President Loek's heart was surely moved by Hiroshima's hope for world peace, and he experienced two faces of Hiroshima—its beautiful scenery and its vibrant townscapes.

President Mori visited Kochi Prefecture, the birthplace of his great-grandfather, in November 2014. Located in the southern part of Shikoku facing the Pacific Ocean, Kochi boasts a rich natural landscape of lush forests and picturesque shores, and is blessed with the bounty of land and sea. The president visited the Kochi Prefectural Industrial Technology Center and watched attentively as liquor was made from local citrus fruits and bananas. Next he visited the Makino Botanical Garden, where he planted a breadfruit tree with Kochi Prefectural Governor Masanao Ozaki as a symbol of the friendship between Kochi and Micronesia. The breadfruit tree can grow up to 15 meters (about 50 feet) tall. The occasion has surely provided fertile ground for the friendship between Japan and Micronesia to grow just as big.

Several other dignitaries have visited other regional cities—each with its own unique qualities. We hope that readers will visit Japan's regional cities as well.



1 & 2. President Loek offering flowers at the Peace Memorial Park. 3. The famous immense *torii* World Heritage Site at Itsukushima Shinto Shrine.



4. President Mori watching attentively as machines make liquor from local fruits. 5. President Mori and Kochi Prefectural Governor Ozaki taking part in a commemorative breadfruit tree planting ceremony.

Please use the links below to see videos of visits to regional Japan by overseas leaders:

▶ **President of the Marshall Islands visits Hiroshima**  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m04\\_jWf00Kk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m04_jWf00Kk)

▶ **President of Micronesia visits Kochi**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEunFX-051Y>

For more videos of places dignitaries have visited in Japan, do a search for "dignitaries visiting Japan from overseas" on the Prime Minister's Office of Japan YouTube channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/pmojapan>