

原 著

## Comparative Study of Agriturismo in Italy and Greentourism in Japan

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### <Abstract>

Agriturismo or ‘Agricultural Tourism’ has developed in Italy and drawn a large number of domestic and foreign tourists. The tourists stay in a farmhouse to have a farming experience and recognize how their food is cultivated in a safe way. Inviting non-farming tourists onto the farm has made a positive impact on the agrimarket. Agrimarket-report experts have shown how agriturismo — that is hosting the non-farming community and tourists on the farm in various ways — can bring remarkable benefits to farmers. Furthermore, the Slow Food Movement is catching on with people concerned about safe food in Italy as well as in the rest of the world. The Agriturismo and the Slow Food Movement are making a synergetic effect to bring success in Italy. The Slow Food movement has been a definite ally in encouraging local citizens and tourists to visit agriturismo farms and rediscover the good life that can be found by supporting local farms. This paper aims to introduce the Agriturismo and the Slow Food Movement in Italy and look into the cause of their success based on views of their historical background, a comparison of Agriturismo and Greentourism, and finally how to apply the merits of Agriturismo to Greentourism in Japan.

Keywords : Agriturismo, Slow Food Movement, Greentourism,  
local production for local consumption (地産地消)

### I. Introduction

Farm-stay tourism (Rural Tourism [England], Tourism Vert [France], Agriturismo [Italy]) has developed in Europe and has seen an increasing number of tourists around the world. The Western way of life in having long vacations has taken a firm hold in the western life-style and Western people have had a high concern for their farm produce. The farm-stay tourism offers them an antidote to the dubious science, animal cruelty, mass marketing and mass transit that has become part of the Western food system. It's a movement that puts farmers back into their well-deserved

place of respectability, and gives consumers opportunities to make more informed and healthier choices. It cuts out the middleman and puts control back into the hands of farmers.

In Italy, in particular, the Slow Food Movement generated in a small town, Bra in Piemonte, promoted the relationship between organic farming and consumers to make a synergetic effect along with agriturismo. On the other hand, the concept of Greentourism was introduced in the 1990's and Japanese tourists began to stay in farm houses instead of in conventional small hotels or B & Bs. Therefore, it has only been a short time since its introduction and still needs a lot of

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improvement. The study of agriturismo in Italy, an advanced country in its field will show the vitality of farm-stay tourism and its possibility of promoting Japanese farming.

## II. Agriculture and Agriturismo in Italy

Remarkable differences between Italian and Japanese farm-stay tourism are observed in their size and the number of employees. Italian farms typically maintain large-scale farmland and have accommodations with more than 10 rooms, a swimming pool, sauna and restaurant available for non guests. On the other hand, Japanese farms are managed by a single family on a small-scale farm. Italian farmers are required to maintain their facilities and manage their employees keeping up with both farming and lodging. They show skill in management, while avoiding bankruptcy, and seeing increasing numbers of tourists on their farms. Furthermore, they have a large farm house which is available as a hotel accommodating from 10 to 30 tourists and a large room remodeled into a restaurant. The nature of these Italian farmers' properties allows them to participate in agriturismo.

This Chapter focuses on how they developed their management skills and how they come to own a large-scale farmhouse from an historical point of view.

### 1. Italian attitudes to agriculture

Since Marcus Porcius Cato (234 – 149 B.C.) wrote *De Agricultura* (On Farming) in the Roman Age, the Italian have kept devout attitudes to agriculture for 2,200 years. Cato says in his book, "When they wanted to say that a man was good, their highest compliments were to call him 'a good farmer and a good husbandman'." <sup>1)</sup> Cato also emphasizes the management of agriculture in his writings. In his age, a farm manager (*vilici officia*) who was

entrusted by a landowner ran the farmland or manor. The farm manager should strictly obey the rules of the farmland as follows <sup>2)</sup>:

- 1) He must take care that the landowner's instructions are effected.
- 2) He must not lend to anyone but ensure that the owner's loans are repaid.
- 3) He must have no loans out to anyone, of seed for sowing, food, wheat, wine or oil.
- 4) He must regularly make up accounts with the landowner.
- 5) He must not engage the same tradesman or jobber for more than one day.
- 6) He must not plan any sale unknown to the owner, or any business concealed from owner.
- 7) He must have no private friend; he must make appointments with no diviner, soothsayer, fortune-teller, or magician.
- 8) He must not cheat the grain-field, for that would bring bad luck.
- 9) He must ensure that he knows all the work of the farm.
- 10) He must be the first up and the last to bed, having first seen that the buildings are shut up, that everyone is in bed in his proper place and that the animals have fodder.

Such management-minded attitudes have been handed down in Italian agriculture since Cato's age. The running of agriturismo also requires a strong attitude toward the farmhouse owner, because agriturismo is not the sort of job he/she can do in their spare time. They have to do very well as both a farmer and a hotel operator. Agriturismo is traditionally kept up by making the rules of order and by having an operator's manual.

Cato describes plans for a typical farm house in the Roman Age which show enough space to accommodate many guests. (Figure 1) Such a traditional Italian floor plan enables Italian farmers to offer their accommodations to tourists.



Figure 1.

## 2. Historical background of agriculture in Italy

With cultural exchange among other nations through its history, Italian agriculture incorporated various kinds of products to form fecund farming. However, it could not keep up with capitalism and mass production in 18<sup>th</sup> century West-Europe and became backward in the field of agricultural growth and development. With its high birth and low mortality rates in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Italy saw the rapid growth in population and a shortage of food. Italian agriculture could not show remarkable improvement in productivity and Italian farmers themselves suffered from a critical food shortage. Bourgeoisies replacing feudal lords drove farmers out of their farmland and took it over to run agriculture. The driven-out farmers engaged in seasonal labor as migrant workers in European countries such as France, Switzerland and Germany. Furthermore, they became a forerunner of the emigrants who went to America and South America. Ironically, the large number of emigrants solved population and food problems to save Italy. After World War II, emigrant farmers in America who had saved their money in the strong US dollar returned to Italy and had their large house with

a pool built in their native village. The local people were influenced by the American way of life and had the same style of a large house with many rooms, water and sewage. There are many examples that such large houses offer their accommodations to tourists of the Agriturismo.

Systems of agriculture for each region also contribute to a plan for the Italian farmer's house through history.

### 1) *Cassina and Mondine in the North Italy*

The agricultural system of *Cassina* played an important role in the Lombardia region, in the North Italy. *Cassina* is a central station in a plantation, forming a rectangular space, where storehouses of grain and hay, cow houses, workshops for cheese production and lodgments for a manager and hired farmers are lined along the street. Ten to twenty farming families lived in a *Cassina*. They cultivated rice in the field along the Po River in Lombardia. The rice farming was a labor-intensive industry requiring a large labor force. *Mondine*, a group of seasonal-female planters, undertook the rice crop (rice planting and rice harvesting). A rice plantation had to establish a large-scale lodgment accommodating 50 -100 female planters of *Mondine*.

### 2) *Mezzadria in the Middle Italy*

*Mezzadria* was the tenancy system under which a landowner and a farmer could make a contract in the Tuscany region. They went halves on the crops. With narrow plains such as in the Tuscany region, small farms dotted the hills. Therefore, a large scale farm did not exist like the *Cassina* which had developed on the vast plains of Lombardia. In the typical Tuscany landscape, independent farmers were to run a small and medium-sized farm with their large family.

### 3) *Latifondo (Latifundium) in the South Italy*

*Latifondo*, run by the aristocracy, the cloister and dictatorial landlords, had been systemized on a large scale in the South Italy since the Roman Age. After the rule of Napoleon, the bourgeoisie bought up land from the declining aristocracy and the fallen cloisters and became an influential landowner. They rented the land to a tenant who was entrusted with farming. The tenant employed annually-contracted farmers and day workers from neighboring villages and agro-towns. The agro-towns were a collective residential area on the hill and cliff for the residents to avoid malaria and get together to secure water. Lodgments are not found in the farmland like *Cassina* and *Mezzadonia* because the farmers in agro-towns commuted to the farmland. *Latifondo* had its own way of farming in South Italy.

The difference of these agricultural systems resulted in the different Agriturismo in each region.

*Cassina*, the hub of large farmland in the *Lombardia* plain, concentrated storehouses of grain, a large lodgment for a manager and hired farmers, and so on. *Cassina* offers a large scale of accommodations to the Agriturismo with 10-30 rooms and a 30-100 seater restaurant.

*Mezzadonia* in the Middle Italy was the agricultural system where one farming family works as one unit to run their field. It offers a small scale of accommodations to agriturismo with 2-5 rooms and a 6-15 seater restaurant.

*Latifondo* in the South Italy was large-scale farming run by the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie. They had their grand mansions built on their farmland. Their magnificent mansions were used for large-scale accommodations for agriturismo.

Those historical and geographical factors have formed the actual conditions of agriturismo in the North, Middle and South Italy.

## III. Agriturismo in Italy

### 1. Development of Agriturismo

Modern Italy has seen a decrease in the agricultural population due to emigrants, industrialization, urbanization and people just giving up farming. There was a remarkable decrease in the agricultural population from 8 millions in 1951 to 2 millions in 1981. The occupancy rate of the agricultural population in the work force decreased from 52 % before World War II to 11% in 1980's. Agriculture in Italy assumed different aspects from what it had been because of the decreasing number in its population. The number of farmers engaged in *Mezzadonia* dropped sharply. *Cassina* and *Latifondo* which forced tenant farmers to suffer extreme poverty were dissolved, resulting in an increase in the population of independent farmers. Italy's affiliation with the EU has promoted a channel of free distribution within EU countries, stable prices of agricultural products with the other countries and a guaranteed income system to keep farming income at levels with other industries. Riding on the waves of mass production and mass consumption, agriculture accelerated the growth of industrialization. As a result of its modernization, the introduction of chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides to farmland contaminated rivers and lakes, and brought a change of the ecosystem in Italy. Industrialized agriculture devastated the rural landscape due to the expansion of mono cropping in fields. As a result of these drawbacks, new movements which reassessed industrialized agriculture, such as preserving the scenic sites in a farm village, keeping food safety and curbing the drain of farming population spread throughout the country. The movements awakened the importance of agriculture, as a food-supplying base, to the people.

## **2. The organization and system of the Agriturismo**

The Agriturismo allows only farmers to run a tourist home and accommodate tourists. It is a fusion of farming and tourism which enables tourists to observe how farmers grow agricultural products, participate in farming, enjoy a grand view of the farmland and to have a good rest. The tourists also enjoy eating fresh and organic foods such as vegetables, wine, olives, meat, and dairy products. The Law of the Agriturismo was enacted as a national law in 1985. Another law was also introduced in 2006, aiming to coordinate an EU's policy on promoting the development of agriculture. The law in 2006 aims, for the right purpose of the Agriturismo, to make good use of local resources, to keep producing high-quality and traditional food and its food culture, to protect the environment and to improve farmers' status. It is stipulated, a little differently in each province, as terms and conditions that farmers should spend more than 50% of their working time on farming and have less than 50% of an annual income from agriturismo. The law defines that only full-time farmers are entitled to run agriturismo and hotel and restaurant owners are not permitted. There is a clear-cut line between them.

## **3. The accommodations of agriturismo**

The accommodations consist of guest rooms and a dining room where all guests can be seated. The rooms range from a single room to a room for a large family, each room having its own shower or bath. A farmhouse without a dining room offers a kitchenette and guests are able to cook for themselves buying vegetable, fruits, meat and dairy goods on the spot. The kitchenette is equipped with cooking utensils and seasoning. The guests have an opportunity to cook using local foodstuffs and learn local cuisine and food culture. Even small-scale farmhouses have several rooms besides the

master bedroom because its farmers would have living-in employees and seasonal workers. Furthermore, they would have a room to invite for dinner the poor in their village. It is clear that they have kept the foundation of agriturismo.

## **4. Local varieties in agriturismo**

The Agriturismo in Italy is not always maintained in accordance with uniform regulations through the country as each province has its own aspect. Various kinds of agritourismos are operated according to the local features of land and climate. Let us now look at the farm houses for agriturismo in each province, giving concrete examples.

### **1) Aosta (mountainous region) (Photography 1)**

*La Vrille* in the valley of Aosta is a winery farm and surrounded by a vineyard. A winery house, which was originally built for preserving wine casks, has been renovated for accommodations for agriturismo. They offer meals with half board because *La Vrille* is in a remote area and there are no restaurants around there. The charge of stay is 65 Euros.



Photography 1 A winery house, which was originally built for preserving wine casks, is renovated for accommodations of agriturismo.



2) Liguria (Mediterranean region) (Photography 2)

*Poggio dei Gorleri*, situated on a Mediterranean hillside, is a cultivator of olive and citrus fruits. As the olive and citrus fruit on the Mediterranean coast have been sold for high prices since ancient times, there are many rich cultivators who have accumulated a fortune. Therefore, they can offer a luxurious apartment house with a pool and a tennis court as well as a living room, bedrooms and a kitchen.



Photography 2.a



Photography 2.b

3) Lombardia (plain region) (Photography 3)

*Cassinazza* situated near the Lake Como is typically built taking the form of *Cassina* [ref. II.-2. -1)]. An avenue lined with big trees leads to a farmhouse on the large farmland. A large-scale central station with many buildings is transformed into large accommodations with 20-30 rooms and a large

dining room.



Photography 3 *Cassina*, large-scale central station with many buildings is transformed into large accommodations with 20-30 rooms and a large dining room.



Photography 4 The indicator leading to a farming house of agriturismo posted by a municipality.

#### IV. Slow Food Movement

Started by a food journalist, at Bra in Northern Italy, in response to the arrival of the McDonald's fast food chain on the steps of Piazza d'España in Rome, Slow Food is now an international organization with 83,000 members in more than 100 countries. It has grown rapidly even in the U.S. in the last few years. The journalist, Carlo Petrini, was clearly disgusted with the loss of food's originality to keep people close to the earth, in touch with artistic inspiration, and keep them bonded to each other. The Slow Food Movement embraces the restoration of a feeling when the mind is open enough for cuisine to be inspired by the local farmers and home gardeners. The Slow Food movement has been a definite ally

in encouraging local citizens and tourists to visit agriturismo farms and rediscover the good life that can be found by supporting local farms. Agricultural consumers are reached via taste-testings, publications, festivals, articles, and awards events. Farmers can receive newsletters, magazines, and get directly involved in many ways.

The Slow Food Movement is a movement not against Fast Food, but for the improvement of living and eating standards. Foods made by the Fast Food industry are globally dealt and distributed only for the purpose of profit and loss. People around the world eat the same food with the result of the loss of endemic species and the global expansion of mono cropping, which can lead to the devastation of the rural landscape, a village community and biodiversity. The Slow Food Movement aims to resolve these problems.<sup>3)</sup> It started by establishing its organization in a small town, Bra, in northern Italy, and soon spread from the whole of Italy to the world. It has developed making a synergy effect along with the Agriturismo, which prevents the industrialized agriculture from using gene recombination, encourages small-scale farmers to produce safe food in traditional ways, lets city dwellers recognize the importance of agriculture and have an awareness of safe food. The industrialized agriculture forces farmers to produce a mono crop on a large scale and uses a lot of chemical fertilizer on barren land. Finally, it eventually deteriorates the village landscape which will be a matter of a life-and-death to the Agriturismo because the Agriturismo offers tourists spiritual healing in a natural setting as well as agricultural experience on the farmland.

Even in Japan, people point out that food sometimes contains carcinogenic additives and have begun to have interest in the way of producing agricultural products. However, most people actually consume industrialized-food products in line with the distribution system of large-scale retailers. The farmers

increase the plastic greenhouses area with a mono crop cultivation, which destroys scenic spots in a traditional-farm village and degrades vegetational diversity. Depopulated regions are seeing terraced fields disappearing covered with weeds due to lack of a successor.

A phrase, “local production for local consumption”, has been heard in Japan recently. The phrase squares with the purpose of the Slow Food Movement because it aims to consume local food from the food miles and safe food points of view. It is the point, “local production for local food” that the Slow Food Movement can revive modern agriculture in the world. A wide variety of agricultural food leads to the revival of a life filled with every kind of safe food, which results in preventing farmers from using chemical fertilizer, herbicide and pesticide and cultivating organic food in a natural-minded way. Getting back a life affluent in safe food means that farmers keep their scenic sites of traditional-farm village as they once were. The reason the Slow Food Movement came into existence in Italy is that Italy traditionally had a background in local and agricultural diversities. In addition, the fact that the increasing number of independent farmers after World War II cultivate their farmland not on large but on small scale goes well with the philosophy of the Agriturismo. There is the possibility of the Slow Food Movement taking root in Japan as it has the same cultivated acreage as Italy.

## **V. The Agriturismo and Greentourism in Japan**

Italian people have showed a respectful attitude toward agriculture as Cato advocates in his book, “When they wanted to say that a man was good, their highest compliments were to call him ‘a good farmer and a good husbandman’.” Italy was decentralized through history so that it barely accomplished national unification in 1861. Overconcentration in

the capital city has not occurred because Italian people attach importance to their local diversity and have never followed the example of a life in Rome. On the other hand, the Japanese have looked down on agriculture since the Meiji Restoration with its modernization and centralization. Tokyo was ahead of the times by importing Western civilization as a good model of modernization and propagated it from Tokyo to other parts of the country. Such a historical background led to the neglect of farming in the country. There was no growing tendency among city dwellers toward learning anything from farming. In Italy, the requirement for success in the Agriturismo was already achieved by many people who were already aware of the importance of food and agriculture. In Japan, there is a strong possibility that Greentourism will also develop rapidly in accordance with the awareness of the importance of safe food and agriculture. As stated in Chapter IV, “the fact that the increasing number of independent farmers after World War II cultivate their farmland not on a large but on a small scale goes well with the philosophy of the Agriturismo.” The cultivated acreage of Italy is similar to Japan in comparison with other countries taking into account a large-scale area.

	<u>Italy</u>	<u>Japan</u>
Total area	301,000km <sup>2</sup>	377,000km <sup>2</sup>
Cultivated Acreage	8.4%	4.5%
Double-Cropping Area	2.8%	0.4%
Pasture Area	0.2%	0.2%

As for accommodations in Japan, typical farmhouses used not to have enough rooms for guests. All the family shared one room for sleeping. Cattle were raised under the same roof in some regions. As a result, Japanese farmers couldn't provide hospitality to guests due to architectural limitations while Italian farmers could easily always offer an extra room with bed and breakfast. The poor standard of

accommodations have been an obstacle to success of Greentourism in Japan. Problems that should be solved with Japanese farmhouses while referring to Italian farmhouse are as follows;

### ***1. Architecture***

Individual farmers can not change the present situation to accommodate guests in their small houses. The best way to realize their idea is to renovate and utilize established public facilities. In recent years many primary schools and junior schools have closed due to the decreasing number of children in depopulated regions. Municipalities can reuse such facilities by changing them into hotels and restaurants. They can also transform an auditorium into a wedding or a concert hall.

### ***2. The length of visit***

The Agency of Tourism aims for the average Japanese person to have an opportunity for a long-term trip. However, it will take quite a long time before Japanese companies allow such long vacations. They need to work on the baby-boom retired generation to be able to invite such tourists to their village. They have to hold annual events which attract the baby boomers, such as old music and dance festivals, meeting for regional literary works and historical-site tours. Appealing flyers and pamphlets designers for such baby boomers should be published and sent to travel agents and homes.

### ***3. Involvement in educational institutions***

As good dietary education has been introduced in primary and junior schools, teachers are taking their pupils to farm villages and letting them have agricultural experiences such as rice-planting and rice reaping. The staff of farming villages often visit city schools to teach how to plant a schoolyard with



vegetables. The pupils attend cooking lessons using their own harvested vegetables and know the process from production to consumption. This will enable a good relationship to be established between the pupils who will become good consumers and the farmers who are recognized as being good providers of safe food.

#### ***4. Introduction of welfare and medical care***

Municipalities can hire qualified staff for nursing care, so that they can hospitalize mentally and physically handicapped persons in their facilities and let them have agricultural experiences as a kind of treatment in the country.

#### ***5. Environmentally-minded measure***

Environmentally-minded measures can be taken as an advanced example and is the primary focus of public concern. For example, an agriturismo Italian farmhouse installed an phytopurification system for both sewerage and drinking water to reduce the impact on the environment. The system obtains water for irrigating the fields thanks to the filtering action carried out by various plants, which trap and use all the organic and chemical substances in the water. Therefore, any effects caused by the presence of the guests in the farmhouse will have no effect on the water table. Another initiative is a heating station that can burn vegetable biomasses, i.e. waste and residual material from wood, which is used for heating the water and the rooms. No toxic gases are given off into the atmosphere and the greenhouse effect is not increased in any manner.

## **VI. Conclusion**

The population drain from agricultural

areas to urban areas has stopped for the last 20 years and a moderate movement from the city to farm villages has happened in Italy. Urban residents who sympathize with the philosophy of the Agriturismo stay in a farming village practicing local production and local consumption and return to their city as a good consumer of safe food. That is the synergetic effect of the Agriturismo and the Slow Food Movement. As young Italians regard agriculture as one of their professions through the Agriturismo and the Slow Food Movement, young Japanese may also change their minds and return to agriculture after the Greentourism and the Slow Food movement take a firm hold in Japan.

The period from the Meiji to the Showa era saw the Japanese abandon their traditional heritage in the strive for modernization but with the sacrifice of agriculture. People who disregard agriculture will not have a bright future as it is said "there is not much point in modernization without reflection on the past." A country will not win its independence without self-sufficiency in food. It goes without saying that the establishment of the system which connects the farming producers with their consumers is important for the future of agriculture in Japan. In such a way, it is hoped that there will be the creation and development of Japanese farming houses with the blending of Greentourism and the Slow Food Movement.

## **Notes**

- 1) "Et uirum bonum quom laudabant: bonum agricolam bonumque colonum; amplissime kaudari existimabatur qui ita laudabatur." (*De Agricultura*, p. 52.)
- 2) *De Agricultura*, p.69.
- 3) "The culture of our life rests on a false interpretation of industrial civilization; in the name of dynamism and acceleration, man invents machines to find relief from work but at the same

time adopts the machine as a model of how to live his life ... Against those, and they are in the majority, who can't see the difference between efficiency and frenzy, we propose a healthy dose of sensual pleasures to be followed up with prolonged enjoyment." (*The Slow Food Story*, p. 30.)

"The critique of first life has brought a particular mode of life under global capitalism; one which, according to Slow Food activists, has had a devastating effect not only on food but also on landscape, community, biodiversity, local tradition and knowledge, the distinctiveness of taste, the environment and quality of life." (*Ibid*, p. 40.)

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## イタリアのアグリトゥーリズムと日本の グリーンツーリズムにおける比較研究

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### ＜要 旨＞

アグリトゥーリズムはイタリアで発達し、国内外から多くの旅行者や都市住民を惹き付けている。農家滞在の体験は、都市住民が日常食する農産物の安全な生産方法を理解する一助となっている。農産物の消費者を生産現場に招くことで農業市場や流通に健全な影響を与え始めている。農産物の市場調査専門家は「旅行者や都市住民を多様な方法で農家に招くアグリトゥーリズムは農家に著しい恩恵を与えている」と報告している。さらに、イタリアから世界中にスローフード運動が展開され、安全な食への関心が増大している。イタリアではアグリトゥーリズムとスローフード運動の相乗効果が農業に良好な結果をもたらしている。アグリトゥーリズムとスローフード運動は旅行者や都市住民に農業の生産現場を紹介し、農家を支援することにより気づかされる農産物の安全性と質の高い食生活を再発見させる効果を生んでいる。当論文はイタリアにおけるアグリトゥーリズムとスローフード運動を調査し、歴史的視点からその成功の原因を探ったものである。さらに、アグリトゥーリズムと日本のグリーンツーリズムを比較して、アグリトゥーリズムの成功例をグリーンツーリズムに適用する指針を示したものである。

**キーワード：**アグリトゥーリズム、スローフード運動、グリーンツーリズム、地産地消

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