

Leisure  
INDUSTRIAL  
SURVEY

# Recreation on a Roll

**A**fter changes in the people's values the key factors swaying leisure-related demand are income, space and time. Surveys on the Japanese people's perception of their daily lives show that year after year people are becoming increasingly oriented toward leisure activities. Income is high, even if the rate of growth has slowed in today's moderate-growth economy. When these two factors are taken into account, it seems there is ample possibility that demand for leisure activities will expand. Increases in the supply of attractive space for leisure use and in leisure time, and especially the evening out of leisure time among the people, are all factors vital in bringing to the surface the latent demand for leisure activities.

Against the background of mounting demand for government measures to expand domestic demand and promote regional development, the construction of leisure facilities both by the government and the private sector at large has accelerated. At the same time, summer holidays are now being spread out instead of peaking at the same time, and there is increasing recognition of the need to introduce the flextime working system. Thus, the basic environment for promoting leisure activities has improved. Although there are problems for which solution is difficult over the short term, such as reducing overtime, the barriers to leisure activities are gradually being dismantled.

Household income and expenditure surveys reveal that in almost every year since 1975, the growth rates for education and recreation expenditures have ex-

ceeded that of total consumption. As a result, leisure activities have grown into a mammoth market exceeding ¥50 trillion (about \$300 billion) in 1985. Leisure-related consumption accounts for 27% of private final consumption spending (individual consumption spending).

There were a number of major trends in leisure-related industries in 1985 and 1986 that are expected to continue in 1987.

First, urban leisure activities are expanding as urbanization in the country's three biggest metropolitan areas gets its second wind. This trend, together with aspects of daily life such as diet and fashion, has given rise to a new pattern of sensory-oriented leisure activities using events and image-making strategies. Second, health- and beauty-oriented leisure activities are increasing as a result of the aging of Japanese society and the rising status of women. Third, now that most material needs have been fulfilled, people's attention has turned more to education, culture and nature. Fourth, there is a trend toward information-centered, high-technology leisure activities attendant on the progress in technological innovation and R&D in services and facilities. Leisure is also becoming more international because of the strong yen.

Overall, a 4-5% increase can be expected in leisure-related expenditures in fiscal 1986 because of slightly higher real disposable income as inflation subsides. In fiscal 1987, however, leisure-related spending is expected to grow more slowly. Disposable income growth will fall with the spread of a recessionary mood.

Demand for domestic travel will con-



Athletic and health clubs are mushrooming as the Japanese become increasingly leisure oriented.

Location: Sports Connection

tinue firm, with relatively little decrease despite the end of the Tsukuba Expo '85 world science fair. The number of people traveling overseas is expected to shoot up as package tour rates are lowered in the second half of fiscal 1986. Amusement park demand is also expected to be firm, reflecting the development of theme parks and the brisk introduction of new amusement machines.

In sports, such mammoth markets as golf, tennis and skiing, while increasingly mature, continue to enjoy stable growth. Athletic and health clubs in towns and sporting complexes at resorts are profiting from the continuing health and beauty boom, and the relaxation of restraints on golf course construction should invigorate the development of such facilities.

The motion picture market is expected to grow substantially thanks to a string of hit films, and the opening of new concert halls and a rush of foreign musicals into Japan is boosting the music and theatrical market.

In the indoor recreation sector, growth in the *pachinko* pinball market will turn sluggish as reaction sets in to recent rapid growth, while video game centers will see business slow due to the diffusion of home video game machines. The mah-jongg parlor business will also flag as a younger generation turns away from the game. The continuing slide of public-operated gambling at horse, boat and bicycle races will be braked by the introduction of telephone betting. Because leisure activities are so interchangeable, ups and downs in the popularity of specific activities are inevitable. But overall, the market is heading steadily upward.●

(Masao Mori, economist)

## Leisure Market, Gross National Expenditure and Private Final Consumption Spending

	¥ billion				%	
	1982	1983	1984	1985	Year-to-year growth rate	
					1983-84	1984-85
Leisure market	42,537.8	45,295.8	47,758.9	50,019.2	5.4	4.7
Ratio of leisure spending to GNE (%)	15.8	16.1	16.0	15.7	-	-
Ratio of leisure spending to private final consumption spending (%)	26.7	27.0	27.1	27.0	-	-
GNE (nominal)	269,697.1	280,567.6	298,589.4	317,616.3	6.4	6.4
Private final consumption spending (nominal)	159,606.1	167,809.3	176,141.7	184,974.0	5.0	5.0