

21st Century—The Era of Chiba

By Arata Hidetomo

From aircraft coming in to land at Tokyo International Airport, Narita, passengers see the blue ocean, white beaches, and ample greenery below. Chiba Prefecture is situated in a nature-rich peninsula surrounded by the sea on three sides. Although it is located in Japan's central metropolitan region, it has a burgeoning agricultural sector. Including hills with ample trees, Chiba Prefecture boasts greenery covering two thirds of its entire area. With a population of over 5.8 million, Chiba Prefecture has a well-balanced industrial mix generating a gross prefectural product of US\$180 billion at US\$1=¥100. This gross prefectural product matches that of Sweden among the OECD nations and Indonesia among other Asian countries. Looking into the 21st century, Chiba Prefecture is advancing a variety of large-scale projects with the aim of continued future growth.

Narita Airport: Japan's gateway to the world

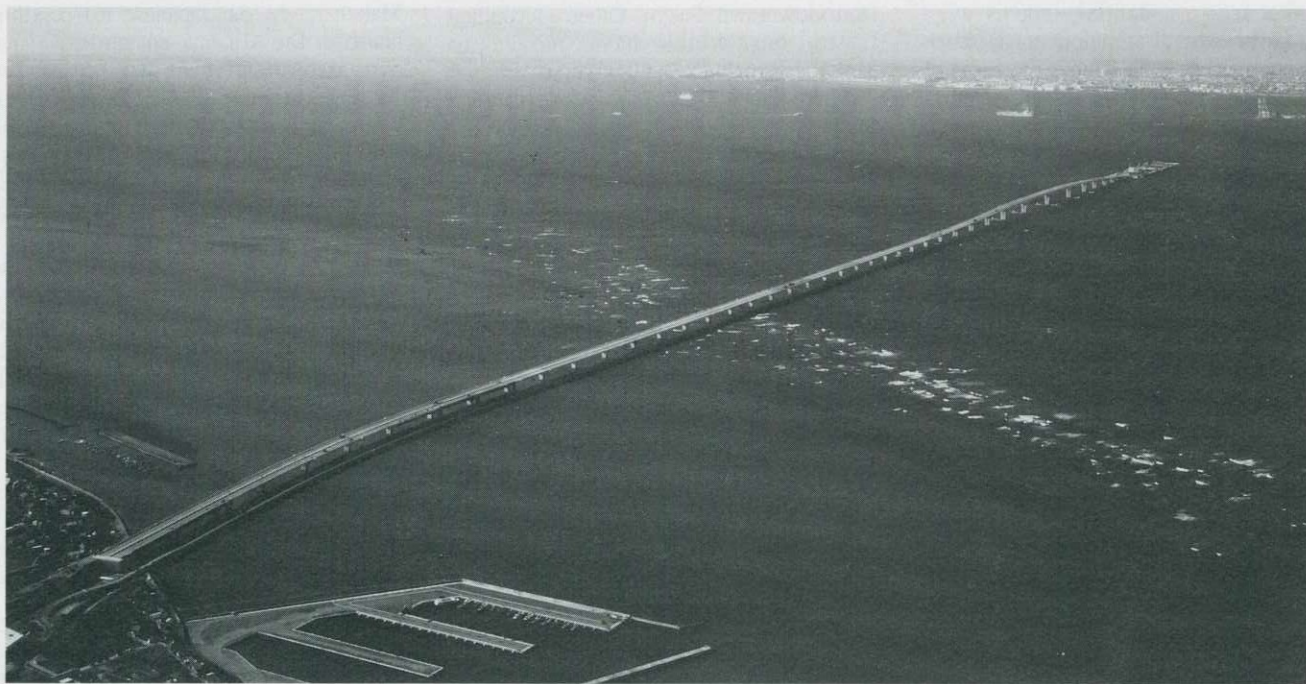
Opened in 1978, New Tokyo International Airport (Narita Airport) handles 25 million passengers a year in spite of having only one runway. Handling about 60% of all Japan's international passengers and 70% of its international freight, Narita Airport is a "small giant" contributing to the growth of the Japanese economy and international exchange as Japan's gateway by air to the world.

Narita Airport handles over 120,000 landings and take-offs a year, about 15% of which relate to international freight. To ensure smooth passenger flight operations, many cargo flights use the airport during the hours when there are no passenger flights. Nevertheless, the volume of freight handled by Narita Airport has remained the largest in the world for the past

nine years.

While primarily handling so-called "dry" cargo such as high value-added electric and electronic equipment, Narita Airport also handles a large volume of so-called "wet" cargo of perishable food. Naturally, perishable food requires fast customs clearance and transportation. Marine products represent over half of this produce, including tuna, eels, sea urchins, shell fish, shrimps, salmon and crabs. Of these marine products, a mountain of tuna, each weighing hundreds of pounds, makes an impressive sight. Equally impressive is their auctioned prices at tens of thousands of dollars each. Tuna account for about 30% of all perishable cargo, which is why Narita Airport is often referred to as the "Fishing Port of Narita."

To better deal with international cargo, a plan is in progress to establish an international multi-faceted physical



Tokyo Wan Aqua-Line

distribution base. In addition to serving as an international air cargo terminal, it will also serve as a base for distribution, warehousing and merchandising. The plan ultimately calls for the development of an international airport city adjacent to the airport.

Tokyo Wan Aqua-Line

Turning your eyes toward Tokyo Bay, you can see the on-going construction of an approximately 15-kilometer long highway (the Tokyo Wan

Aqua-Line) crossing the center of the bay. This highway will be bridged for about one third of its total length from Kisarazu, Chiba, while the remaining two thirds will be tunneled under the sea. It will be one of the world's largest structures, with bridges and the world's longest automobile tunnel.

The Tokyo Wan Aqua-Line plan was originally conceived 30 years ago. In order to ensure successful construction under soft ground and water pressure, the world's foremost civil engineering technology in the field of tunnel boring

is being utilized. With construction from the two ends connected in April this year, the Tokyo Wan Aqua-Line is projected to open this December. It is also expected to become a popular tourist attraction.

This highway is projected not only to further the development of Chiba Prefecture but also to change the traffic patterns of the Tokyo metropolitan area. Since it will create a new loop traffic route connecting 40 to 60 kilometers from metropolitan Tokyo, it is expected to alleviate the chaotic,

Chiba, Japan's Vanguard of Open International Relations — Further Cooperation and Exchanges Eyed with the World

By Numata Takeshi, Governor of Chiba Prefecture



The New Tokyo International Airport, the main gateway of Japan, and Chiba Port, whose cargo handling is Japan's largest, are both situated in Chiba Prefecture. Chiba has, so to speak two windows, of air and sea, linking Japan with the rest of the world. Perhaps this is the reason why 12.5% of foreigners visiting Japan in fiscal 1995 paid a call on Chiba, making it the fifth most popular destination among Japan's 47 prefectures. Chiba has also attracted many foreign-based companies to its MakuHari New City. The area is under development by the Chiba government as the showcase of a futurist international business city. Furthermore, the Kazusa DNA Research Institute in Kazusa Akademia Park, a complex of research organizations in Chiba, has recently achieved a breakthrough in the

DNA analyses of blue-green algae, and its researchers are busy exchanging ideas with foreign colleagues.

Another indication of Chiba's strong overseas connections is that it is a sister state of Para, Brazil and Wisconsin, in the U. S. At the same time, 25 cities, towns and villages in the prefecture have sealed sister-city agreements with cities in 13 countries including China, Denmark, Indonesia, the Philippines, Switzerland and the U.S. In this way, they are enjoying interchanges with their counterparts in a wide variety of areas.

One of the most noteworthy developments Chiba has achieved in recent years is its enhanced relations with ASEAN. For example, in June 1996, Chiba Prefecture agreed with the ASEAN Committee in Tokyo, which comprises ASEAN ambassadors in Japan, to engage in projects aimed at strengthening bilateral friendship and cooperation. Chiba is bracing to aggressively launch new projects to flesh out the agreement, the first such accord between ASEAN and a Japanese local government. MakuHari Messe also agreed to become a sister facility of the Singapore International

Convention & Exhibition Centre in August last year. In September, Chiba is set to host an ASEAN Forum, which is expected to deepen understanding of ASEAN countries among Chiba citizens, companies and other organizations. Lastly, the Institute of Developing Economies, one of the world's largest research bodies on ASEAN and other developing countries, is to be transferred to MakuHari in 1999. The Japanese governmental institute has been accepting visiting researchers from overseas and undertaking joint research with leading research organizations in the U. S. and Europe. Chiba hopes to boost international cooperation and exchange projects in collaboration with the institute.

Chiba has also been furthering ties with European countries. MakuHari Messe has become a sister facility of Messe Frankfurt of Germany, one of the first large exhibition centers, and Kazusa Akademia Park with the top French science park Sofia Antipolis. Chiba Prefecture is thus promoting cooperation and exchanges with the world as a part of its efforts to meet the demands of the 21st century, an era of closer international relations.

over-congested traffic conditions of metropolitan Tokyo.

Kazusa Akademia Park

Following Makuhari and Narita, Chiba Prefecture's next strategy is in progress in the hills where the Tokyo Wan Aqua-Line ends. This is Kazusa Akademia Park, under construction on an approximately 1,000-hectare area. To maximize use of the natural environs in the area, this research park project is being advanced under the basic development concept of "Akademia Park with Water and Greenery." With mainly private-sector laboratories, this research park is designed to become a research and development (R&D) center of international standards for leading technologies such as electronics, new materials and biotechnology. In 1994, Kazusa DNA Research Institute opened as a

core research facility.

Kazusa DNA Research Institute engages in advanced research in the four areas of structural analysis of DNA, information decoding, functional analysis, and development of DNA analysis and decoding technologies. With successful analyzes in March 1996 of the genome cyanobacterium, the first form of life to engage in photosynthesis on the earth, this research institute emerged as an international leader in DNA research.

DNA analysis requires very thorough work. In addition to speeding up the analysis process, it is thus very important to establish a collaborative system in which work is divided among leading laboratories around the world and the research results are shared. The next research program of this research institute is the analysis of Arabidopsis, with

laboratories in the EU and the U.S. already being committed to joint research in this project. Through such efforts, Kazusa Akademia Park is steadily realizing its aim of becoming the "DNA Valley" of the world.

At present, Tokyo Tanabe Co., Ltd. is building a new laboratory for development of new pharmaceuticals, which is scheduled to open in the spring of 1998. Fujitsu, Ltd. has been buying a large plot of land in stages in order to build laboratories in the future.

Another representative facility on par with Kazusa DNA Research Institute is Kazusa Arc.(Kazusa Akademia Center). Opened in February 1997, Kazusa Arc. is a convention facility capable of hosting international conferences and seminars. The main hall seats 700 persons and is equipped with a six-language simultaneous interpreting facility. There are also multi-functional conference rooms of various sizes. Kazusa Arc. includes the newly-opened Okura Akademia Park Hotel, which offers a high quality of service.

The Kazusa hill area also offers ideal off-convention recreational activities at golf courses, beaches, valleys, hot springs, lakes and other nature sites.

While Makuhari Messe is designed for large trade fairs and conventions, Kazusa Arc. is clearly designed to meet the sophisticated needs of international conferences and seminars in the area of research and development.

Chiba Prefecture is steadfastly advancing its progressive strategy for the future. In addition to Makuhari as an international exchange base, Chiba Prefecture is effectively positioned to realize this strategy with the plan to build an international physical distribution base which takes advantage of Narita Airport, the Tokyo Wan Aqua-Line which is expected to bring about a dramatic change in metropolitan Tokyo's traffic situation, and Kazusa Akademia Park, which is striving to become an international center of cutting-edge technologies.



Kazusa Arc.

Kazusa DNA Research Institute
http://www.kazusa.or.jp/



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