

## Opening of Japan Visa Application Centre



1. In recent years, as Japan has been attracting more foreign visitors, the number of visa applications to Japan has seen a sharp rise in Hong Kong as well as in Macau. The Consulate-General of Japan in Hong Kong issued 13,609 visas in 2013 and 16,959 visas in 2014 (+24.6%), while in 2015, the number jumped sharply to 24,345, up 45.6% from the previous year.

In addition, in October 2016, the annual quota for the Working Holiday Scheme between Japan and Hong Kong was significantly raised from 250 to 1,500. Also, there are an increasing number of students seeking to study in Japan.

Therefore, in order to provide better service to visa applicants, the Consulate-General of Japan has decided to open the “Japan Visa Application Centre” which is operated by VFS Global. The opening ceremony was held on 5 December 2016 and the centre already started operating on 9 December 2016. Hereafter, applicants are advised to submit visa applications and collect their passports at the Centre, as the Consulate-General of Japan no longer accepts visa applications directly from 8 December 2016.

## **【Japan Visa Application Centre】**

Hours of Operations:

Submission: 8:30 am-3:00 pm (Monday to Friday, except on public holidays)

Collection: 8:30 am-4:45 pm (Monday to Friday, except on public holidays)

How to apply: book an appointment online

\*Walk-in service available, but priority will be given to pre-booked applicants.

(<http://www.vfsglobal.com/japan/Hongkong/English/index.html>)

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2. The number of foreign travelers visiting Japan has already exceeded 20 million during the first 10 months in 2016. Aiming to expand the number of foreign tourists to Japan, the government of Japan has set a new target of 40 million in 2020 and 60 million in 2030. The Consulate-General of Japan in Hong Kong hopes the improved consular service through the opening of the Japan Visa Application Centre will attract more people from Hong Kong and Macau to visit Japan.