

**[Overview]****[Hot spring area category]: Kusatsu reigns east 11 times in a row, Beppu west 4 years straight**

In the hot spring area category, Kusatsu Onsen (Gunma) won the east yokozuna title 11 years in a row, whereas Beppu Onsenkyo (Oita) was selected the west 4 years straight.

Kusatsu was recognized for its new measures such as the redevelopment of the iconic “yubatake (hot water field)” area, not only to bring in new tourists but also to keep the repeat tourists, as well as its good accessibility from Tokyo, which led to its winning of the yokozuna status 11 years in a row. Beppu Onsenkyo was recognized for its unique beauty of steams rising from all parts of the town, and its variety represented by “Beppu Hachiyu” (Beppu’s eight hot springs); the place allows you to enjoy in different ways on every visit, and it is also enjoyable as a tourist spot.

The award presentation ceremony was attended by Takashi Nakazawa, Chairman of Kusatsu Onsen Tourist Association, and Daisuke Ono, President of Beppu City’s Tokyo Office. In recent years, Kusatsu Onsen and Beppu Onsenkyo have been in the news supporting each other, such as “Kusatsu Onsen providing hot water to Beppu Onsenkyo” and “Beppu Onsenkyo running advertisements in Kusatsu Onsen to attract tourists”. At the presentation ceremony, Chairman Nakazawa commented, “We want to make the onsen culture UNESCO’s intangible heritage. Mayor Nagano (of Beppu Onsenkyo) agreed to our idea, too. The two yokozunas are eager to work together to boost the Japanese onsen culture.”

**[Ryokan/hotel category] Eastern Japan reigned by Kinugawa Onsen Asaya second time in a row; Suginoi Hotel wins yokozuna status of western Japan for four consecutive years**

The ryokan/hotel category was won by Kinugawa Onsen Asaya (Tochigi) in the eastern Japan segment for the second time in a row, and Suginoi Hotel (Oita) for the western Japan segment for four consecutive years.

Kinugawa Onsen Asaya was appreciated from a wide range of people with its buffet-style restaurant that offers a variety of 100 Japanese, Western, and Chinese cuisine, as well as the beautiful scenery from its Sky Garden Open-Air hot spring, and the detailed response of the staffs.

Suginoi Hotel won appraisal with its iconic “Tanayu” that commands the panoramic view of Beppu Bay, and the high-quality buffet-style restaurant.

Miwa Yagisawa, Okami (manager) of Kinugawa Onsen Asaya, commented: “We will continue to strive for an accommodation that makes our guests happy and feel like coming back.” Koichi Sasaki, General Manager of Suginoi Hotel also expressed his determination towards next year’s yokozuna title, “We will brush up both of our tangible and intangible aspects so that we will be selected yokozuna again next year.”



## [Overview]

### [BIGLOBE Onsen Award summary]

After the award presentation ceremony of BIGLOBE Onsen Award, onsen beauty researcher/travel journalist Hiroko Ishii and BIGLOBE's Hiroshi Okura who is in charge of "Onsen Award" took a look back at the ranking based on its results.

As for the reason to create a new category of "ryokans/hotels recommendable to foreign tourists", Okura explained, "Japan will host a string of world-class sport events in the course of this year and next. At this timing, we added another award category to introduce the ranking of accommodations recommendable to foreigners from a Japanese people's standpoint." Ishii added, "Foreign guests who visit Japanese onsens are really into Japan and they come back many times. I hope they become fond of onsens even more so that onsens across Japan gather more steam."

Besides the categories announced at the event, other poll results have been revealed online as well, including the "satisfactory level ranking" and "ranking by area" that rank the satisfactory levels of aspects such as spring quality and food, and "recommendable accommodations with 20 rooms or less" reflecting the rise of popularity in trips spending elegant time at intimate accommodations that offers a sense of privacy.

\* "BIGLOBE Onsen Award" poll result announcement website (partly in English):

<https://travel.biglobe.ne.jp/onsen/award/>

During the latter half of the award presentation ceremony, actress Dan Mitsu and comedian trio Dachou Club joined actor and BIGLOBE "Onsen Award" special supporter Ryuji Harada, adding to the excitement of the event.

