

# A Comparative Study of Drinking Hot Spring in Japan and Europe

Ch Takehito Noda (Associate professor of Hosei University)

## [ S Y N O P S I S ]

The purpose of this study is to clarify why drinking hot spring water has developed into a tourism resource in Europe, but not in Japan. This study aimed to find hints for fostering a drinking hot spring water culture in Japan. This study focuses on Germany, where the drinking spring culture has taken root the most, and conducts a comparative analysis with Japan. The findings of this study are as follows.

In Germany, spa water is sold as bottled water and is called Heilwasser. The legal classification of mineral water is food, while Heilwasser is a "medicine. In Japan, hot spring water is not a pharmaceutical product under national law.

However, drinking hot spring water culture has developed in a unique way. For example, at Ureshino Onsen in Saga Prefecture, hot spring water is used to make hot spring tofu, which has taken root as a local dish. The hot spring water dissolves the tofu, giving it a unique texture and flavor. It is a popular specialty among tourists. At Obama and Unzen hot springs in nagasaki prefecture, "steamed" cuisine using the steam from the hot spring water has taken root in daily life. At Nozawa Onsen in Nagano Prefecture, the use of "boiling" vegetables and wild plants in a cauldron called a Ogama, in which the spring water gushes out, is very popular. In other words, in Japan, there are various attempts to utilize hot spring water as one of the cooking methods to bring out the flavor of food ingredients rather than directly drinking the spring water. The future of drinking spring culture in Japan should not be to imitate the medicinal treatment of European countries, but rather to develop a "drinking spring food culture" as a local cuisine and cooking method.