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## Films shot on location help revitalize Japan's regional economies



 kitakyushu

Regional economies in Japan are getting a boost from film production companies shooting on location, assisted by increasingly active local film commissions. Local governments welcome the idea as film crews bring in money and the movies they make attract tourists to the locations they have seen on screen.

In the United States, the first film commission was established in the 1940s, but Japan didn't follow suit until around 2000. Since then, the

number has burgeoned and as of 2014 there were a total of 278 film commissions across the country.

A film commission in **Kitakyushu**, Fukuoka Prefecture, has been involved in the production of over 200 films. Takashi Yamazaki, a filmmaker who has worked in Kitakyushu, said, "When I shot a scene in which several hundred people flee, the commission made it possible by shutting down the city center."

Saga Prefecture in southwestern Japan has succeeded in attracting film and television drama makers from Thailand, leading to an increase in the number of tourists from that country. Five Thai films have been produced to date. They include "Timeline," a romantic movie released in 2014 that was the fifth highest box office earner that year, according to the Saga Prefecture Film Commission. Thai tourists have come to visit the movie locations, with the number of hotel guests surging from 370 in 2013 to 5,190 in 2015.

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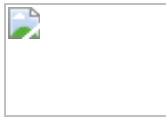
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