

Preface

Tourism studies in Japan: Toward the globalization of tourism research

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We live in the age of global mobility. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 1.2 million people traveled across national borders in 2016. The figure is expected to increase to 1.8 billion in 2020. In this accelerated global mobility, the sum of international tourism receipts earned by destinations worldwide surged to US\$1,220 billion in 2016. International tourism represents 7 % of the world's exports in goods and service. Tourism has thus become a gigantic socio-economic phenomenon in the contemporary world. It must be also noted that Asia is the most rapidly growing zone in the current global mobility. Particularly, China is the most powerful generator of trips in Asia, producing 135 million travelers in 2016.

Japan has a long tradition of domestic tourism. However, it was backward in the international tourism market, particularly the inbound field. Therefore, in 2003, the Prime Minister Jun'ichirō Koizumi declared that Japan should be a tourism-oriented country (*kankō rikkoku*), meaning that it should promote the arrivals of international tourists. At that time, there was a big imbalance between outbound and inbound tourist mobility: In 2003, for instance, about 17 million Japanese departed for foreign destinations, while only 5 million foreigners visited Japan. As for international tourist arrivals, Japan was ranked below the thirtieth in the world.

The Koizumi government started "Visit Japan Campaign" to invite foreign tourists to Japan. The target was 10 million inbound tourists by 2010. For that purpose Tourism Nation Promotion Basic Law was enacted in 2006, and Kankō-chō, Japan Tourism Agency, was established in 2008. The number of international tourists to Japan has increased in spite of a big drop caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011. In 2017, it reached 28.69 million. The government now plans to raise the inbound figure to 40 million by 2020, the year of the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games. This brings a huge economic benefit. The inbound tourist consumption in 2017 amounted to more than 4 trillion yen.

We have also seen the rise of tourism studies in Japanese universities after Koizumi's declaration. Before Koizumi's tourism promotion policy there were only a few universities in Japan that had tourism studies departments. However, now more than 80 universities have tourism studies programs.

Tourism education in Japan at the university level started in the 1960s. Toyo Junior College (now Toyo University) set up the first department of tourism studies in Japan in 1963, and Rikkyo University established its tourism studies department in 1967. Although tourism studies had been a minority in Japanese universities, since the Koizumi administration, the situation has changed. Many private universities set up tourism studies departments as a master card to attract students against the decrease in student numbers caused by the dwindling birthrate. Some state universities also established their tourism studies departments: Ryukyu University (in 2005) and Wakayama University (in 2007), and Hokkaido University set up Center for Advanced Tourism Studies (in 2008).

As for academic associations related to tourism studies, as far as I know, there are six. These include: Nihon Kankō Gakkai (Japan Academic Society of Tourism), established in 1960, Nihon Kankō Kenkyū Gakkai (Japan Institute of Tourism Research), established in 1986, and the biggest research association in Japan with more than 1,000 members, Nihon Kokusai Kankō Gakkai (Japan Foundation for International Tourism), established in 1993, for the promotion of international tourism, Sōgō Kankō Gakkai (Japan Society for Interdisciplinary Tourism Studies), established in 2001 for the promotion of interdisciplinary tourism studies, Kankō Jōhō Gakkai (Society for Tourism Informatics), established in 2008 by combining tourism with information studies, and Kankō Gakujutu Gakkai (Japan Society for Tourism Studies), established in 2012, mainly based in the Kansai/Osaka region.

There is no satisfactory agreement on the definition of tourism studies. Some argue that tourism studies are not a specialized discipline but interdisciplinary studies. Researchers examine tourism from their specialized discipline such as economics, business management, policy science, geography, sociology, and anthropology. So they may be called, economic tourism studies, geographical tourism studies, sociological tourism studies, anthropological tourism studies, etc. They form subfields of existing disciplines. I have been concerned with the anthropology of tourism as a subfield of anthropology, after I came across the theme of tourism during my anthropological fieldwork in Indonesia in the late 1970s.

However, the phenomenon of tourism may be seen as a “total social fact” if we use the classic terminology of French sociologist, Marcel Mauss.⁽¹⁾ It is at once political, economic, social, and cultural. It is then relevant to adopt an interdisciplinary approach to the study of tourism. Some research associations like Sōgō Kankō Gakkai and Kankō Gakujutsu Gakkai emphasize this interdisciplinary approach. However, as Nobuyuki Okamoto⁽²⁾ stated, there exists another approach to tourism. It is an approach to see the phenomenon of tourism in its own right, not a subfield of established academic disciplines. This approach concerns the analysis of tourist behaviors and tourist objectives as its areas of research. This method could contribute to the holistic understanding of tourism.

We should also note the practical aspect of tourism studies. Some associations like Kokusai Kankō Gakkai stress this aspect by inviting practitioners of tourism to the association. In this sense tourism study is not a pure academic science but rather an applied one, involving tourism business and government sectors of tourism. This is the case with Sōgō Kankō Gakkai. It emphasizes the connection of *san* (industry) and *gaku* (academics) in tourism studies. Teaching staff at universities are often recruited not only from pure academic fields but also from business fields such as travel agents, hospitality industry or transportation industry. In Japan this style of scholarship is called “*jitsugaku*” (practical science).

“*Kankō*,” a Japanese word for tourism, is literally translated as “seeing light.”⁽³⁾ The word is originally from the Chinese classic, *I Cing (Yi Jing)*, or *The Book of Changes*, in which kings/political leaders show “a nation’s light (pride).” Interestingly, the word no longer exists in contemporary Chinese, while it is preserved in Japanese. In its everyday use, *kankō* has now the sense of “pleasure travel,” connoting the visiting of scenic or historic places. This valence of the term spread particularly in the 1930s with the development of railroads. Before that, the word *tabi*, which originally implies “painstaking travel,” was more commonly used. This change in the use of words may be parallel with the shift from travel to tour in 19th century England. The English word “travel” has the common etymological root of the French *travail* (“labor”), while “tour” is etymologically related to Latin *tornos*, meaning “to turn.” If we could establish tourism studies based on this kind of conceptual difference (and similarity) in Japanese “*kankō*” and English “tourism,” it would be a great contribution to the establishment of global tourism studies.

Even in the age of “global” tourism, people often move not necessarily globally, but regionally. In Japan’s international tourism, more than 70 percent of Japanese outbound tourists go to Asian countries, and about 80 percent of inbound tourists to Japan are from Asian countries. Against this background, one may create “Asian” tourism studies by promoting dialogue among researchers based in Asia. Tourism studies from Asia will be a great contribution to global tourism studies. This Asian perspective will also help bring the balance to Western centered tourism studies in the world.

In this respect, it deserves attention that the Centre for Asian Tourism Research at Chiang Mai University in Thailand has recently set up *Asian Journal of Tourism Studies*, inviting not

only Thailand researchers but also Asian and Western scholars who are concerned with tourism in Asia. It is also noteworthy that recently Euro-Asian tourism studies association EATSA (Euro-Asia Tourism Studies Association) was established and annual conferences have been held in Europe and Asia alternatively, beginning in Taiwan in 2015.

As tourism studies boom in Japan, tourism papers produced in Japan are increasing. However, most Japanese researchers usually publish their research findings only in Japanese which is not accessible to non-Japanese readers. To overcome the situation, International Society for Tourism Research started to publish *Journal of Global Tourism Research* in English in 2016. Regarding the publication of an English journal from Japan, this journal intends: “... Japan is falling behind in globalization and there are no international scientific journals of tourism research. It is necessary to collect many tourism related subjects from inside and outside of Japan, and disseminate the knowledge and expertise to the world to establish a world tourism nation.”

The question is, however, how to achieve the goal. In his introduction to this special issue of World Anthropologies of Tourism in the Journal *American Anthropologist*, Noel Salazar⁽⁴⁾ states that “the anthropologists who are most active across borders (including world anthropologists) are, in many cases, the least ‘national (istic).’ Their career trajectories show increasing transnational academic mobility rather than a firm embeddedness in any ‘national tradition.’” Then he writes, “the authors of this special section are those who have personal (hi)stories of academic mobility.” They are an exemplary model of world/global anthropologists.

It is necessary to promote academic mobility/interaction for making the discipline truly global. The Japanese government recently launched a new project to globalize Japanese universities. Money from the project is being used to boost exchanges with foreign universities, both of students and teaching staff. It is clear that we cannot maintain “*sakoku*” (national isolation) in the current process of globalization. Like contemporary global tourists, we have to travel globally beyond our national boundaries.

Notes

⁽¹⁾ *The gift*. W. W. Norton & Co., 2000.

⁽²⁾ Kankōgaku eno sasoi (Invitation to tourism studies). *Kankōgaku ga wakaru* (Understanding tourism). AREA Mook. Asahi-Shinbun, 2002.

⁽³⁾ The following 3 paragraphs are based on a revised version of my earlier paper, Anthropologies of tourism: A project toward a global anthropology. *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 119, 744-747, 2017.

⁽⁴⁾ Anthropologies of tourism: What’s in a name? *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 119, 723-725, 2017.

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