

No.15

Momoyo K. Shibuya

**Imagined Empire Building through Tourism:
How the Japanese Travelled in Their Colonies**

2018年2月

Imagined Empire Building through Tourism:
How the Japanese Travelled in Their Colonies

Momoyo K. Shibuya, PhD

Associate Professor
Graduate School of Humanities and Social Science, Saitama University, Japan
Visiting Researcher
Department of Transportation & Communication Management Science
National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan

shibuya@mail.saitama-u.ac.jp

Abstract: This paper reviews the literature on tourism within Imperial Japan to see how tourism worked in building an imagined empire. Among elements of tourism, a major role in the process was played by promoters, including the government, the industry, and media. They became a groundwork to promote a perception of the hierarchy within the Empire through directing ‘tourist gaze’. The Japanese mainland tourists accepted the official tourist gaze, and approved, even unintentionally, the Japanese Empire. Meanwhile, the colonised areas reacted to the Japanese tourism in their own manners, according to the situation where they were placed. Although further studies are required, reviewing literatures from a communication perspective led us to see how tourism was used in empire building in Japanese people’s perception and how intercultural interactions was thwarted in the process.

Keywords: Tourism, the Japanese Empire, Taiwan, Korea

Acknowledgements: An earlier version of this work was presented at the International Joint Seminar (Oslo University and Saitama University) entitled ‘Internationalism in Modern East Asia’ at Saitama University, March 14, 2016. The author would like to thank the participants for their helpful comments on earlier version of this work.

* 2018 年 2 月 23 日提出

Imagined Empire Building through Tourism: How the Japanese Travelled in Their Colonies¹

Momoyo K. Shibuya, PhD

Associate Professor

Graduate School of Humanities and Social Science, Saitama University, Japan

Visiting Researcher

Department of Transportation & Communication Management Science

National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan

shibuya@mail.saitama-u.ac.jp

Introduction

Benedict Anderson (2006) has explained how the media facilitates nations to be created in public perception. The Japanese Empire is a good example of imagined community building through media, particularly the process of their expansion of the sphere of influence in order to create the ‘Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere’.

The expansion started around the first Sino-Japanese war in 1894, and it concluded a large area, covering Asian and Pacific nations. Due to Japan’s position in the international political arena, they were keen to create one imaginary inclusive community as a new emerging power, with the aim to challenge the Western powers. In their worldview, the nations under the Japanese influence were considered to be under the Empire territory but clearly distinguished from the Japan mainland. According to Araragi (2008), the Empire had a three-layered structure of hierarchy, i.e., mainland Japan,

¹ This working paper is to serve as a discussion basis for the further research design. The author welcomes comments and criticisms. Submitted on February 23, 2018. Biographical note: Momoyo K. Shibuya teaches at the Faculty of Economics, Saitama University. She received her PhD from Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia. Her research interests include ethnic relations, media and international conflict, development communication, and ethnic tourism.

overseas dependent territories, and occupied territories. This hierarchy seems to coincide with the Japanese way of perceiving the human environment by three layers of *uchi* (ingroup), *soto* (outgroup), and *yoso* (public).

The Japanese must have learned this structure through the information given by media and sensed the differences from direct contacts with local people and societies of those areas. A typical experience can be gained by travelling to the overseas territories. It is unlikely for us to imagine that the tourism industry was popular in the wartime Japan, although Ruoff (2010) successfully depicted with historical documents and materials the fact that there was a tourism ‘boom’ in Japan around the Celebration of the Empire’s 2600th Anniversary (i.e., AD 1940). He points out that wartime atmosphere and a milestone-like Empire’s anniversary aroused people’s nationalistic sentiments and brought them to national historic sites as well as newly obtained territories.

The existing studies have already noted the role of tourism in disseminating the view of the Japanese Empire. However, these studies were mostly looked from the historical perspective and not from that of tourism and communication perspective. The present paper, therefore, reviews the existing studies from the point of imagined community building through tourism. It is also expected to contribute to the future development of the study by decoding the current images that the Japanese have for their former colony nations from the perspectives of colonialism and inverted orientalism.

Media for Tourist Gaze

The development of transportation networks, including roads, railways, ships as well as airline services, facilitated the communication within the Japanese Empire and its sphere of influence. The Japanese mainlanders who lived in the overseas territories in around 1940 were nearly 2 per cent of the whole mainlander population: The Empire territories (Taiwan, Korea and Kwantung) counted 1.37 million, Manchuria had 862 thousand, and

China had 362 thousand people (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, 1942). Needless to say, the overseas territories must have received a large number of visitors too, through individual, business, or school trips.

The Empire was committed to promoting tourism in the overseas territories due to the economic managerial necessity (e.g., Soyama, 2003; Lee, 2007). At the same time, they used tourism to promote their justice and form a social consensus about empire building. Using tourism for the promotion of nationalism was already successful in the domestic market. Japan experienced a thriving domestic tourism in the eve of war (Ruoff, 2010). People visited sites related to Japanese nation-building myths, such as Takachiho (Miyazaki) or Nara, and this experience enhanced nationalistic sentiments to support the emperor and his empire. Travel to the overseas territories seemed to be considered as an extension of such domestic travels but with a little extra cost. A 10-day tour to Korea cost 90.6–168.9 yen, or a 20-day tour to Taiwan cost 143.3–251 yen, while a 13-day Kyushu tour cost 87.7–137.9 yen (For reference, in 1940, the urban average household income was 125 yen per month) (Arayama, 2012, Yano Tsuneta Kinenkai, 2013). Like nationalistic domestic travels, the travel to the overseas territories itself could play a role as a medium that offered direct experience and ‘first hand’ information. However, many people were already influenced by information through many other media. Travel guidebooks were one of the most powerful media to help form a certain perspective, or a ‘tourist gaze’ in Urry’s (2002) term, within travellers in advance. For instance, guidebooks published by the Railway Bureau in Taiwan and in Korea, or *Ryotei to Hiyo Gaisan* (Travel Plan and Expense) by Japan Travel Bureau suggested some tour plans (e.g. Japan Tourist Bureau, 1938; Soyama, 2003; Lee, 2007; Ruoff, 2010; Arayama, 2012) that showed the most-worthy place to see or what to expect there—these suggestions were from the government side, i.e., what they wanted the people to see.

The analysis of the details of the suggested travel plans clearly indicated what the Japanese Empire wanted to show: (1) Japanese shrines, (2) factories and buildings built

by Japan, (3) local cultural sites, especially Confucius temples, and (4) natural scenic interest areas. It connotes that major purposes of those tours were (1) to understand the wide spread of the Japanese ruling power, (2) to justify modernisation brought in by the Japanese, and (3) to pilgrimage Confucius (which enhances their feeling that the only true heir of the tradition is Japan). The tourists might also feel that Japan's patronage towards traditional cultural heritage was necessary because of the idea that the local society had no capacity to do so (e.g. Soyama, 2003; Ruoff, 2010; Arayama, 2012).

In Taiwan, a model plan recommended the tourists to visit major cities on the west coast, from Taihoku (Taipei) to Takao (Kaohsiung) (Japan Tourist Bureau, 1938; Arayama, 2012). These sites followed a typical pattern as described above: They (1) prayed at shrines in major cities, (2) visited factories of camphor and opium in Taihoku, sugar factories in Taichu (Taichung) and Takao, timber mill in Kagi (Chiayi), (3) pilgrimage Confucius temple in Tainan, and (4) spent time in scenic areas like Musha (Wu-she), Nichi Getsu Tan (Ri Yue Tan: Sun Moon Lake), or Alisan (Ah Li Shan) (Japan Tourist Bureau, 1938). In addition, hot springs in Hokuto (Beitou) or Taiwan aboriginal villages were often included in the tours (Soyama, 2003; Chang et al., 2003).

Tours in Korea also followed the same basic structure. The sites included (1) shrine in Keijo (Seoul), (2) Keijo Station and the Government-General of Chosen buildings, (3) Nandaimon (Nam Dae Mun), Syokeien (Chang Gyeong Gung), Confucius school (Sung Kyun Kwan), and (4) Kongosan (Kum Gang San) (Japan Tourist Bureau, 1938; Ruoff, 2010; Arayama, 2012). Among those, importance was given to (3) the local cultural heritages in Korea, even though many of those were refurbished/rebuilt by the Japanese government, in order to appeal how Japanese did the 'right thing'.

Meanwhile, Kwantung and Manchuria were often travelled in the round trip to Korean peninsula. Although Manchuria was supposed to be one nation in terms of legal status, it was under the Japanese influence. Thus, people seemed to perceive it in the same manner as the overseas territories in tourism. The tour to Manchuria was unique because

it focused on war sites—it was like a holy tourism. Other than shrines, modern buildings built by Japan, or local temples and the palace, the tours visited war sites in Sino-Japan, Russo-Japan wars and Manchurian incidents to learn the great sacrifice made by Japan (Ruoff, 2010). Memorial towers were built there, and the names of the war dead were listed. What was important for the Japanese and made them proud was that they had beaten Russia, a Western country, at Rushun and created Manchuria where, they believed, five ethnic groups lived peacefully together.

To enforce the travel experience, events, photo and/or essay contests, postcards and films were used in combination with guidebooks (e.g. Soyama 2003; Ruoff 2010). Events included the expo and department store's special exhibitions (such as the 'our new lands' exhibition at Isetan department store), which successfully showed and gave an impression by emphasising exoticism of each region covered by the Japanese Empire. Similarly, films were made to visually appeal the attractiveness of the tourist sites in the overseas territories. On the other hand, newspapers, magazines and tour agencies often held photo or essay contests related to travel to the overseas territories. Such opportunities served as a medium to share a certain image of the overseas territory among those who had already travelled and those who wanted to or expected to go. Postcards are relatively personal media, but they also helped to share the images of the overseas territories. The postcard images were carefully selected to help the people form a tourist gaze. The most frequently selected scene was the modern buildings, followed by refurbished historical sites, landscape of town, busy streets, local people's life, and working people, making a good comparison between the modernised, advanced Japan and exotic but delayed local society (Ruoff, 2010).

The travel information given by media reveals the Japanese attitudes in relation to the overseas territories. They are (1) Japanese occupation was good for the local societies as they could not be modernised without Japanese support; but (2) local cultural heritage must be maintained to illuminates Japanese superiority as well as to attract tourists. It

means the Japanese Empire had a dilemma in its ruling policy of the overseas territories, as many studies have pointed out, between assimilation and differentiation. In the end, tourist sites like 'theme park' were created in the overseas territories by the Japanese for the Japanese (Luoff, 2010).

Tourist Experience Mode

The travel information was provided as mentioned above, but how individuals received it might be another story. According to Cohen (1979), there are five modes of tourist experience: recreational mode, diversionary mode, experiential mode, experimental mode, and existential mode. Tourists in recreational mode seek entertainment and wellbeing in travel, while those in diversionary mode travel to escape from boredom and routines. In the experiential mode, tourists seek for meaning outside their own society and experience authenticity of other's life. When tourists try to participate in other's life, it is considered as an experimental mode. In the existential mode, tourists leave their own value system and fully commit to other's life. How to consume the information and use travel experience may differ depending on which mode of these five the individual would be.

How the Japanese mainlanders travelled can be illustrated from the diaries and essays written by tourists themselves. They have often mentioned that there is no need to interact with local people, and it is better to avoid contacting with them as much as possible for a comfortable travel. They travelled in cabin class, stayed at Japanese style hotels, enjoyed meals at Japanese restaurants, and bought souvenirs at Japanese stores. The historical sites, which has inconvenience story for the mainlanders, were avoided or unexplained in a guided tour. However, on the other hand, they liked to take photos in local traditional costume. Male tourists preferred going to an official red-light district for Kisaeng in Korea (Lee, 2007). Although some were attracted to and appreciated the unique local culture, or were even critical towards over-Japanisation, most people seemed

to prefer to explore the local culture from ‘the protective covering’ (Ruoff, 2010). The tour guides also discouraged tourists from experiencing the local life by emphasising the gap in the living standards between Japan and the local society.

When looking at the Japanese behaviour above, it can be said that people were seeking for something different from Japan in the overseas territories but at a relatively shallow level. A sense of being in a foreign country was important, given that the copy ‘once you go Korea, you will meet a new culture you never experienced before’ successfully worked among the Japanese mainlanders (Ruoff, 2010), but it is only when they could feel secured enough. Among Cohen’s five modes of tourists, therefore, the mainlanders were considered in the recreation or diversionary modes. Even those who appreciated the local culture did not seek for meaning in the local culture, and thus, they do not seem to fit in the experiential mode.

Doxy’s Irritation Index

Tourists, promoters, and the local communities—these are three elements involving in tourism. It is rather difficult to know how colonised communities perceived tourism in the Japanese Empire, though it is an important aspect to be considered when we talk about tourism in empire building.

The attitude a tourist site community has towards tourists will develop to follow the four stages (Doxy, 1976). In the initial stage, the community feels happy and welcomes tourists (euphoria stage). However, as the number of tourists increases, the life with visitors becomes an everyday reality, and the community moves to the second stage, losing their interest and considering the tourism as a source of income (apathy stage). When more tourists visit, the community members become frustrated and feel irritated as it gets in the way of their normal life. At this stage of annoyance, the community members begin to show misgivings. If the situation is not improved but tourists continue increasing,

the tourists are regarded with hostility (antagonism stage), and the community finishes accepting the tourists if it goes extreme.

This irritation index would not be simply applied to the case of colonised areas, because there is a given power relation between the tourists and the local community. In order to add their power relations in consideration, the situation where the local community was placed is sorted out by two axes: active or passive, and positive or negative. For the overseas territories of the Japanese Empire, the local communities did not have the power to decide whether or not to become a tourist site. Naturally, the situation of the communities was considered passive. As for another axis, positive or negative, it depends on the outcome perceived by the community. Some successful, thus positive, communities would be reluctant but accept the situation while unsuccessful ones would remain silent but against the tourism directed by the Japanese.

In Taiwan, the Japanese mainlanders' community there was proactive toward tourism by developing the industries related tourism, such as the production of souvenirs. They also selected major tourist sites as *Taiwan Hakkei* (Great 8 Sceneries in Taiwan) to attract more tourists. However, the local Taiwanese communities did not follow the Japanese way. Some aboriginal communities were reluctantly incorporated into the Japanese tourism. They opened their villages to the Japanese tourists and showed their traditional dance for alcohol. Other locals, however, lost interest to the Japanese tourism, developed their own tourism style, which suited their taste, and started to enjoy by themselves (Soyama, 2003). They might be at apathy stage, or perhaps at annoyance stage, but they avoided entering to the antagonism stage by making a new departure.

On the other hand, people in Korea invented a countermeasure for the Japanese tourism by introducing the same technique as the Japanese did, i.e., nationalistic tourism. The Koreans started and promoted historical heritage tourism in order to regain the ethnic independence under Japanese occupation. Using the story of Dangun mythology, newspaper columns strongly suggested people to visit the places where the nation was

born. This shows that they feel a certain level of irritation at the annoyance stage, or hostility at the antagonism stage. (Of course, such irritation or hostility were considered not only from tourism but from more general Japanese colonisation and occupation, as they claim their ethnic independence and pride.)

Discussion

The Japanese wartime tourism to the overseas territories looked from the three elements of tourism—promoters (the government, the industry, and media), tourists (the Japanese mainlanders), and the local communities (the overseas territories)—has demonstrated a symbolic example of creation of imagined empire. The major points of each aspect would be summarised as below.

With regard to the promoter side, mediated information worked successfully in facilitating the ideal ‘tourist gaze’ among the Japanese mainlanders. In order to make the overseas territories exotic enough as attractive tourist sites but Japanised enough as colonies, considerable efforts were made by Japan, though it brought a struggle with assimilation-differentiation dilemma like in other imperialist powers.

Meanwhile, the tourists perceived and behaved according to the given tourist gaze through media without questions, which means they became a good supporter of the Empire. Although they simply sought for entertainment or escape from routine boredom, their behaviour in the overseas territories were too naïve; they enjoyed exotic local culture from a secured, unchallenged place. Their gaze was not developed to gain an insight and deep understanding of the others, even after travelling.

Because the Japanese tourists tried to avoid contacting with them, local residents of the overseas territories reacted against depersonalised tourists at large by indicating a certain feeling of the apathy, annoyance, or antagonism stages. It suggests that tourism communication for empire building on the colonised side did not go as effective and

smooth as the mainland side. Taiwan and Korea showed different reactions, which might depend on how successful, or not successful, in tourism and communication, although we need to wait for a further study to discuss in details.

This literature review from the perspective of tourism and communication studies could offer a good understanding about how tourism was used in empire building in Japan and how intercultural interactions were thwarted in the process. Nevertheless, there are still many to be researched for a full picture. The difference of reactions towards Japanese tourism showed by Taiwan and Korea as mentioned above is one of those. To this end, physical and/or testimonial evidence for missing parts such as the colonies' view point and the impact of the historical cases on post-colonial tourism need to be searched in future studies. At the end of the day, we may not be able to capture the significance of this history without the knowledge of that part.

Reference

- Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined Community* (Revised ed.). London: Verso.
- Araragi, S. (2008). Introduction. In Araragi, S. (ed). *Nihon Teikoku O Meguru Jinko Ido No Kokusai Shakaigaku* (Global Sociology on Immigration within the Japanese Empire). Tokyo: Fuji Shuppan.
- Arayama, M. (2012). 'Ryotei to Hiyo Gaisan' (1920-1940) ni Miru Tourism Kuukan (Tourism Space in 'Travel Plan and Expense' (1920-1940)). *Annual Review of the Institute for Advanced Social Research*, Vol 8. pp.1-16.
- Chang, W.C., Ueda, A. and Miyazaki, K. (2003). Nihon Tochi Jidai ni Okeru Taiwan no Genjumin Kanko no Keisei (The Historical Development of Ethnic Tourism in Taiwan during the Japanese Ruling Period). *Japanese Journal of Tourism Studies*, No. 2. pp. 47-55.
- Cohen, E. (1979). A Phenomenology of Tourist Types. *Sociology*, Vol 13(2). pp 179-201.
- Doxy, G. (1976). A Causation Theory of Visitor-Resident Irritants: Methodology and Research Inferences. *Proceedings of the 6th Annual Conference of the Travel and Tourism Research Association 1*. San Diego, CA. pp.195-198.
- Japan Tourist Bureau (1938). *Ryotei to Hiyo Gaisan* (Travel Plan and Expense). Retrieved from <http://kindai.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1120981> on 22/02/2016.
- Lee, Y. (2007). Shokuminchi Chosen ni Okeru Chosen Sotokufu no Kanko Seisaku (Tourism Policies by Government General of Chosen in the Colonised Korea). *Shimane Journal of North East Asian Research*, Vol.13. pp.149-167.
- National Institute of Population and Social Security Research (1942). *Toa Kyoieiken Minzoku Jinko Saihaibun Keikaku Shiryo 5: Zaigai Naichijin Jinko Bunpu, Zaigai Naichijin Shokugyobetsu Jinko Kosei* (Documents on Ethnic Population Relocation Plan in East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere). Retrieved from <http://www.jpss.go.jp/syoushika/bunken/data/pdf/J08639.pdf> on 15/02/2016
- Ruoff, K. (2010). *Kigen 2600nen: Syohi to Kanko no Nationalism* [Translated by Kimura, G.] (Imperial Japan at its Zenith). Tokyo: Asahi Shimbun Publishing.
- Soyama, T. (2003). *Syokuminchi Taiwan to Kindai Tourism* (Colonial Taiwan and Modern Tourism). Tokyo: Seikyu sha
- Urry, J. (2002). *The Tourist Gaze* (2nd ed.) London: Sage.
- Yano Tsuneta Kinenkai (ed.) (2013) *Suji de Miru Nihon no 100nen* (Japan's 100 years from figures). Tokyo: Yano Tsuneta Kinenkai.