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AFTERWORD

Wartime, War-Related, and National Heritage Tourism in Japan: Where Do We Go From Here?

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This afterword discusses future avenues of research into war, tourism, and modern Japan. Suggestions for future research projects include wartime tourism by soldiers, a history of the Japan Tourist Bureau at the height of the empire of Japan, a trans-1945 study of the changing heritage landscape in “Japan,” Confucian tourism in modern East Asia, and examples of tourism of resistance.

Keywords: Japan Tourist Bureau, empire of Japan, heritage landscape, Confucian tourism, tourism of resistance

Introduction

One must distinguish between the concepts of “wartime tourism” and “war-related tourism.” In the case of Japan, wartime tourism largely refers to tourism between 1931 and 1945, during what has been termed the Asia-Pacific War or the Fifteen-Years War. Wartime tourism is leisure travel that takes place in wartime. Scholars tend to focus on how wartime tourism facilitated popular support for the conflict(s), but wartime tourism exists in various forms.

Before the Manchurian (Mukden) Incident of 1931, Japan fought in the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and then the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905). Both of these conflicts left a legacy of sites that were incorporated into the expanded national heritage landscape. In fact, organized large-scale tourism by Japanese to the Asian continent dates from the period immediately following the victory over Russia. As early as 1906, state and non-state actors collaborated to send large groups of Japanese on tours to battle sites such as Port Arthur, that had been central to Japan’s triumph. These post-Russo-Japanese War tours constitute war-related tourism.

Was tourism that reinforced the goals of Japan in the Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War taking place in Japan proper (and possibly beyond Japan proper) contemporaneously with these two wars? If so, to the best of my knowledge these examples of wartime tourism have not been explored in depth. Japan was a minor participant in (but significant beneficiary from) World War I, and a major participant in the Siberian

Intervention (1918–1922). Here, too, if there is a story of wartime tourism, it has not yet been told in the scholarly literature.

But from 1931 until the juncture in the 1940s when the war situation turned so desperate as to curtail tourism—the month that this happened differed depending on the area of the empire, but it ranged between mid-1942 and early 1943—an ongoing mass tourism boom that began in the 1920s overlapped with a nation-state at war. Imperial Japan by the 1930s was an empire of mobility, even while at war. The conflicts lasted long enough for various agents to experiment at length with how to leverage tourism on behalf of the war effort. This makes this period particularly rich for the study of wartime tourism.

Since its surrender in August 1945, Japan has been at peace. Although Japan continues to host a number of U.S. military bases (with an especially heavy concentration in Okinawa), and has served as a staging ground for wars involving the United States during the postwar period, there are no examples of wartime tourism since 1945. But war-related tourism has been popular, and is the focus of some of the essays in this collection. And there are many fine examples of scholarship, including here, that examine both wartime and war-related tourism as they trace a topic over several decades. This special issue of *Japan Review* covers a lot of ground, both thematically and chronically, about wartime and war-related tourism and should be of interest not only to scholars of Japan, but also to scholars of tourism in general.

Where are fertile areas for additional research about wartime and war-related tourism, and about national heritage tourism, a form of self-administered citizenship training, in a more general sense? It is not easy to research and to write histories of the empire that elucidate the interplay between the mother country and the colonies. Indeed, to carry out such research, ideally one should be fluent in more languages than most people could master in a lifetime. The Japan Tourist Bureau (JTB) was one of the few organizations that had a true empire-wide presence.¹ The military was another and, although I will not delve into this issue in depth here, it is fair to say that we still do not have a comprehensive study of Japan's military personnel as tourists during the imperial era. Additionally, although not solely responsible for the development of what might be termed the cultural capital of tourism, the JTB from the time it was established in 1912 tended to be at the center of the evolution of this culture, and provides a useful window to study its empire-wide development.

An advertisement that the JTB published in the January 1940 issue of the tourism journal *Kankō tōa* 観光東亜 lists the JTB as operating, in addition to the main office in Tokyo and the eleven branch offices (three of which were outside of Japan proper, in Mukden (present-day Shenyang), Seoul, and Taipei), 137 “information offices” (*annaisho* 案内所) throughout the empire. Sixty-nine of the information offices, more than half, were located in areas under Japanese control but outside of Japan proper. They included information offices in places that one might not think as having attracted tourists in 1940, such as Inner Mongolia.²

A nuanced history of the JTB at the height of imperial Japan would allow someone to pursue a topic, in this case tourism, in a truly empire-wide fashion; it would promise in

1 The Japan Tourist Bureau underwent name changes, including during wartime, but for the purpose of this essay I refer to it throughout as the JTB.

2 *Tōa Ryokōsha Manshū* Shibu 1940.

other words an approach that avoids the island nation framework or, for that matter, the framework of studying the colonies independently from the mother country. Such a book-length project would almost surely provide numerous examples of the multi-directional interplay between the mother country and the colonies (“new territories”) and between the colonies themselves. But it should not be a top-heavy organizational history. One would need to get down to the local level to document how the numerous JTB information offices worked with the diverse actors who constituted the “tourism world” in localities throughout the empire. There are various questions, some unpleasant by today’s standards, that could be researched about imperial tourism. For example, some travel guidebooks from the imperial era recommended certain brothels over others. What was the role of the JTB and other agents in codifying which brothels were best suited for Japanese tourists and for what reasons (for example, standardized pricing)?

The JTB has already been featured in various histories of tourism in twentieth-century Japan—how could it not be? But there is no study of the JTB when its network extended to the farthest reaches of the empire. A comprehensive study of the JTB would be positioned to remedy the fact that, in comparison to work on Manchuria, Korea, and Taiwan, not to mention Japan proper, there has been little written about tourism to the peripheries of the empire, about leisure travel to Karafuto and Nan’yō (Micronesia), for example.

But it is also important to remember that the imperial peripheries were not static. The territorial size of the empire of Japan increased dramatically from 1937 on, first as Japan encroached upon China, and thereafter as it claimed various Euro-American colonies as new territories, especially in Southeast Asia. The collapse of the empire of Japan only eight years later should not obscure the fact that even as Japan was at war with China and then with the United States and Britain, the JTB went to work with remarkable speed to promote tourism to newly incorporated areas of the empire. This rapidity of action may reflect the important role tourism had come to play in fostering among the citizenry an attachment to new territories. The wartime JTB continued to preserve and develop tourist sites (in part to make imperial Japan the “museum of Asiatic civilization”) and to promote tourism, even as the empire teetered on the verge of collapse. What were these promoters of tourism thinking?

There are limits to how much one project can cover, but another issue would be the postcolonial legacies of the tourism infrastructure that Japan developed in the colonies. In this case I use the term “infrastructure” in the broadest sense to include cultural capital as well. A study revolving around the JTB would benefit from contextualizing the experience of imperial Japan in global history, a recommendation that applies to additional suggestions below for future areas of research. Furthermore, many aspects of tourism, certainly tourism promotion, tend to be visual. Studies of tourism should examine and introduce to readers these visual aspects, even in this era of penny-pinching in the publishing world.

There are fine essays in this collection that bridge the divide of 1945. A more ambitious project would be a comprehensive book-length study of national heritage tourism in Japan across the twentieth century. Perhaps such a project would have to be partially a work that synthesized existing scholarship even as it broke new ground. Such a study would show the evolution of tourism and also of national heritage sites in imperial Japan and postwar Japan, examining how much continuity and discontinuity there is between these eras.

There are still sites dating from imperial Japan, such as monuments commemorating Emperor Jimmu's eastward expedition, that drew droves of tourists during wartime but which attract almost no visitors today. But we know that once the postwar recovery took hold, the Japanese again engaged in mass national heritage tourism. It is important to stress that the war itself did not curtail leisure travel. The approximately decade-long hiatus (1943–early 1950s) in mass leisure travel by Japanese was the result, first, of the deterioration of the war situation (rather than the war itself), and, second, of the deprivation that continued into the early years of the postwar era.

How has the national heritage landscape, in other words the landscape of sites that define Japan's heritage, changed (or not changed) as the result of defeat in 1945 and also because of ongoing social change? We would no doubt find that certain master narratives (for example, "peace" for the postwar era) have been so pervasive that even the most incongruous of heritage sites, including the renamed "Peace Tower" in Miyazaki City that was built in wartime Japan and houses visually spectacular examples of the use of imperial myths to justify Japan's military expansionism, came to be draped in the postwar fabric of peace.³

The postwar rebranding of such preposterous examples of wartime propaganda, supposedly to symbolize peace, should remind us that where wartime tourism could be justified as dutiful consumption if it served to elevate national spirit or to cultivate physically fit citizens (by hiking, for example), it is also likely that various agents of the tourism world employed the nomenclature of the day simply to do what they really wanted to do, namely to promote travel. Anyone who studies wartime tourism in Japan should also introduce to readers contradictory messages, including even those being offered by officialdom, about tourism. Confusion was more the norm than was the sort of consistency that might have been the case if a master political-economic-social plan had in fact been in place, which it was not.

For example, *Shashin shūhō* 写真週報 was one of the most subscribed organs of government propaganda in wartime Japan. By 1940, certain issues of this magazine made it seem as though any Japanese who was consuming more than the bare essentials was unpatriotic. And yet at the same time one finds, for example, in the 21 February 1940 issue, an advertisement by the South Manchurian Railway Company urging Japanese to visit Manchuria to understand their country's "continental policy," in other words, to travel dutifully to the continent in order to understand their nation's imperial project—and maybe to play a few rounds of golf while there.⁴

There is little question that an account of transwar national heritage tourism would show that there has been significant change to the national heritage landscape beyond rebranding, and would need to take into account which sites have been popular and why. The national heritage landscape, after all, has evolved during the twentieth century to suit the changing national identity. Moving bodies around to scripted sites can be very useful in providing a sense of nation, or of an "imperial nation-state" for that matter, and Japan's experience in this area is broadly similar to many modern nation-states, particularly those that were also imperial powers. Such a study would have to trace first the expansion of the national heritage landscape beyond Japan proper during the imperial era followed by its

3 Special permission is required to enter inside the tower where the best visuals can be seen.

4 *Jōhō Kyoku* 1940.

abrupt shrinkage as a result of the loss of the empire, even as it traced how that landscape in Japan proper evolved over time.

Continuing with suggestions for broad, comprehensive projects in both topical and chronological senses, a transnational study of “Confucian tourism,” namely tourism to sites related to the lengthy and complex heritage of Confucianism throughout East Asia, would provide a fascinating window into the intersection of Confucianism, the glue that traditionally made East Asia a shared cultural sphere, and modernity. Various agents in imperial Japan leveraged Confucianism in support of the imperial project. This leveraging extended to preserving and codifying key sites related to Confucianism throughout East Asia, and then promoting tourism to these sites. The take-home message from these sites, and the discourse invoking Confucianism in general, tended to justify various hierarchies at work in imperial Japan. The “proper place” of Japan and the Japanese was at the top.

The story of the intersection of Confucianism and modernity is not only transnational, but cuts across various turning points in East Asia (for example, 1945). Where imperial Japan left off, various other regimes took up. Park Chung-Hee’s regime (1961–1979) sought to employ Confucianism, including Confucian tourism, to justify an authoritarian political and social order. After all, Koreans are wont to claim Korea as the most Confucian of all the East Asian countries. Confucianism has been fundamental to the polity of North Korea, a country flush with national heritage sites supportive of the regime.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) initially pursued a negative stance in reference to Confucianism (a “bad old”), and many Confucian heritage sites were vandalized during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966–1976). In recent decades, however, the CCP has come to embrace, even trumpet, these same sites as well as Confucianism in general as fundamental to China’s heritage, indeed, as defining the great civilizational legacy that China has bequeathed to the world. And how does this embracing of Confucianism work to define the proper place of the CCP in China’s polity?

A study of the history of Confucian tourism in East Asia, which predates the modern era, might also serve as a correction to a tendency to apply in overly generous portions what typically tends to be Euro-American theory regarding tourism to the case of Japan. Is more theory always the answer to writing better history? I have my doubts. Of course, Japan was an imperial power, and most of the other modern imperial powers were Euro-American, although Thailand is an interesting exception. It is meaningful, in fact imperative, to compare the case of imperial Japan with other modern empires based on careful empirical research. But there are histories of tourism specific to East Asia, such as Confucian tourism, that deserve telling, and likely do not require the application of supposedly cutting-edge theoretical writings about Europe or the United States, which often are accompanied with gobs of jargon that negate the possibility of a wider audience taking an interest in the final product.

Historians are well aware that when it comes to all historical narratives, including those put forth at heritage sites, what is left out of the story is often as important if not more relevant than what is included. Examples from this collection of essays of “absences” from tourist sites include nostalgia for the Imperial Navy (for example, recipes said to have originated with the navy) in Maizuru—a navy separated from dying and killing—and memorialization of the kamikaze in Chiran in a way that conveniently avoids unpleasant

questions, for example what sort of top-down oppression led the pilots to “volunteer” for their suicide missions.

But there is another aspect to heritage tourism to which scholars must be sensitive, namely that at a macro level not everyone accepts the predominant narrative of the time, and at a micro level not everyone who visits a particular site accepts the message provided there, and in fact sometimes specifically rejects the message. The following might provide an avenue for a separate project, but at the very least it is a sub-theme about which all who write about national heritage tourism should be sensitive, namely what might be called “heritage tourism of resistance.” An example of nonacceptance of the predominant narrative of the time would be colonial-era tourism by Koreans to sites meant to instill in them a pride in Korean heritage, precisely in opposition to the dominant emperor-centered heritage of imperial Japan.⁵ There are likely other examples of heritage tourism of resistance within the empire of Japan.

Heritage tourism of resistance at the level of an individual site is evident in the critics of Yasukuni Shrine and of the Yūshūkan 遊就館 who lead tours of these sites specifically to educate participants about what is wrong with the “Yasukuni narrative of history.” Similar examples of contemporary heritage tourism of resistance no doubt take place in reference to sites throughout East Asia—and the world for that matter—as visitors call into question site-specific narratives, be they of the right-wing, left-wing, conservative, or progressive variety.

The above suggestions are, needless to say, subjective recommendations by one scholar. No doubt there are other avenues for studying tourism, including new and creative approaches. I look forward to seeing the results.

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⁵ See McDonald’s essay in this special issue.