

National Rail and Tourism from the Russo-Japanese War to the Asia-Pacific War: The Rise and Fall of a Business Approach to Rail Management¹

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Through analysis of changes in the passenger transport policies of national rail from the Russo-Japanese War to the Asia-Pacific War, this article provides insights into how war affected the shape of tourism, in particular rail-based tourism, of modern Japan. It finds that international tourism increased and domestic travel/tourism spread between the Russo-Japanese War and the interwar period, giving rise to Japan's greatest pre-1945 tourism boom. This boom continued despite Japan's deepening isolation in the 1930s following the Manchuria (Mukden) Incident and withdrawal from the League of Nations. Head of sales at the Railway Bureau's Transportation Department, Kinoshita Yoshio, established a "business approach" to the transportation system, which put the promotion of leisure travel at the center of policy decisions. However, following the full-scale outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, the situation changed dramatically. Use of the rail network for military-related transportation surged, and long-distance limited express services, sleepers, and dining cars were phased out as the national railway switched to a national policy-oriented transportation system. While mountain climbing, pilgrimage to sacred sites, and other forms of travel were encouraged, the idea of "travel for the sake of travel" that underpinned the interwar tourism boom was abandoned. As this demonstrates, war was a productive force in the development of mass tourism—especially pleasure tourism—until the outbreak of full-scale war with China; but the beginning of the Asia-Pacific War, while giving rise to new forms of tourism seen to benefit the wartime state, had a generally restrictive effect on tourism.

Keywords: National Railway, Russo-Japanese War, second Sino-Japanese War, Asia-Pacific War, Kinoshita Toshio, tourism boom, democratization of travel (tourism), international tourism promotion, national policy

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Introduction

In January 2016, a temporary exhibition on a fascinating, if somewhat uncommon, theme opened at the National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. Entitled *Yōkoso Nihon e: 1920–30 nendai no tsūrizumu to dezain* ようこそ日本へ: 1920–30年代のツーリズムとデザイン (Visit Japan: Tourism Promotion in the 1920s and 1930s), the exhibition focused on the so-called interwar period of the 1920s and 1930s, when Japan enjoyed a massive tourist boom in the years before the outbreak of World War II. During this period, the Japan Tourist Bureau (Japan Tsūrisuto Byūrō ジャパン・ツーリスト・ビューロー), established in 1912, and the Board of Tourist Industry (Kokusai Kankō Kyoku 国際観光局), established in 1930, made efforts to increase inbound tourist numbers. At the same time, public and private organizations such as the Ministry of Railways (Tetsudōshō 鉄道省), the South Manchuria Railway Company (Minami Manshū Tetsudō 南満洲鉄道), Japan Mail Shipping Line (Nippon Yūsen 日本郵船), and the Osaka Shosen shipping company (Ōsaka Shōsen Kaisha 大阪商船会社, or OSK) mobilized a large cohort of painters, illustrators, and designers. Artists such as Yoshida Hatsusaburō 吉田初三郎, Sugiura Hisui 杉浦非水, Kita Renzō 北蓮藏, and Itō Jūnzō 伊藤順三 produced tourist posters, which helped to transmit an image of “beautiful Japan” (*utsukushii Nihon* 美しい日本) to international audiences. As the *Visit Japan* exhibition guide argues, by paying attention to such posters, we can understand the prevalent self-images of imperial Japan during the 1920s and 1930s.²

The tourist boom that occurred during these decades involved not only foreign tourists, but larger numbers of Japanese too. After the Russo-Japanese War and through World War I, Japan experienced massive urban development. In cities like Tokyo and Osaka, this entailed an expansion of professional, salaried occupations, including office workers, civil servants, doctors, lawyers, and teachers. This new middle class increasingly saw tourism as a regular part of their lives. Akai Shōji 赤井正二, discussing the tourist practices that emerged in the modern period, argues that a shift in the motivations for a journey was key. Rather than leisure activities being subsidiary to a business trip or a visit to relatives and friends, “travel” itself became the objective, and practitioners enjoyed a large degree of freedom in choosing when, where, and with whom they traveled. The idea of “travel for travel’s sake” took root, which led in turn to the popularization of travel (tourism) as a mass social practice.³

One obvious reason for this tourist boom was the expansion of transportation infrastructures, especially rail and steamship links, across East Asia. Table 1 compares the length of operational rail tracks in Japan with Great Britain, the U.S., Germany, France, and Italy between 1926 and 1938. Although those in Europe and America show little change, the rail network in Japan expanded from 12,864 to 18,179 kilometers. This 40 percent increase in the rail network between World War I and World War II was one factor in the interwar tourist boom. On the one hand, rail moved large numbers of people at high speeds over long distances, and thus it helped expand the range and scope of tourist travel; on the other hand, tourists were an important source of revenue for the rail industry, and policies to attract them were thus developed.⁴

2 Kida 2016, pp. 6–10.

3 See Akai 2016, especially the introduction.

4 See Soyama 2003. Soyama uses colonial Taiwan as a case study to explore how the improvement of transportation infrastructure through the building of rail lines led to the development of modern tourism in the territory.

Table 1. International comparison of operational rail lines.

| YEAR | JAPAN | GREAT BRITAIN | U.S. | GERMANY | FRANCE | ITALY |
|------|--------|------------------|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| 1926 | 12,864 | 31,066 | 401,403 | 53,336 | 41,679 | 16,549 |
| 1927 | 13,394 | 31,056 | 405,087 | 53,546 | 41,682 | 16,482 |
| 1928 | 13,695 | 31,029 | 406,170 | 53,667 | 41,725 | 16,547 |
| 1929 | 14,152 | 31,004 | 408,256 | 53,820 | 41,845 | 16,640 |
| 1930 | 14,575 | 31,001 | 409,585 | 53,821 | 42,394 | 16,720 |
| 1931 | 15,014 | 30,957 | 418,246 | 53,857 | 42,541 | 16,846 |
| 1932 | 15,372 | 30,929 | 416,927 | 53,885 | 42,536 | 16,886 |
| 1933 | 15,845 | 30,913 | 387,259 | 53,880 | 42,609 | 16,904 |
| 1934 | 16,535 | 30,854 | 384,555 | 53,883 | 42,443 | 16,959 |
| 1935 | 17,138 | 30,798 | 382,915 | 54,240 | 42,451 | — |
| 1936 | 17,530 | 30,695 | 381,219 | 54,375 | 42,473 | 16,653 |
| 1937 | 17,934 | 30,663 | 378,802 | 54,464 | 42,490 | 16,840 |
| 1938 | 18,179 | 30,643 | 377,363 | 61,328 | 42,612 | 16,170 |

Note: Data on Britain, U.S.A., Germany, and France are from Tetsudōshō Unyu Kyoku 1940. Data on Japan are from Unyu Keizai Kenkyū Sentā 1979.

In the case of Japan, figures are for national rail lines only and are calculated on the length of tracks in operation at the end of the year. For rail lines elsewhere, figures show the average length of tracks in operation that year.

This paper investigates passenger service policy developed by the national rail authorities over a period stretching from the Russo-Japanese War, through World War I, to the second Sino-Japanese War and the Asia-Pacific War. It seeks to assess and clarify the extent to which war affected tourism. Significant previous studies by Takaoka Hiroyuki 高岡裕之 (1993) and Kenneth J. Ruoff (2010) have considered this problem in terms of the 1937–1945 period. Noting the continuation of leisure activities such as mountain climbing and hiking into the war years, Takaoka suggests that tourism did not continue *in spite of* the war; rather, tourism expanded *because of* the war. Similarly, while Ruoff acknowledges that the outbreak of all-out conflict between Japan and China on 7 July 1937 did result in a

change in the direction of rail policy, he underlines the fact that tourism was still booming into 1940.⁵ These are fascinating, and important, findings. However, they are mainly based on studies of the years after 1937, and Ruoff especially focuses on 1940, the year of the 2,600th anniversary of the founding of the imperial line. As a result, the real damage that the second Sino-Japanese War dealt to tourism is arguably underplayed. In order to evaluate accurately the influence of the war in China on tourism, it is useful to investigate a broader span of time.

By taking a wide historical perspective, from the early development of rail passenger services after the Russo-Japanese War through the interwar tourist boom and into the Asia-Pacific War, this paper reveals the second Sino-Japanese War as a turning point, generating a significant transformation in the direction of national rail policy.⁶ While it is clear that rail transportation was used for both leisure and military purposes, the beginning of full-scale war in China resulted in an increase in the relative importance of military transportation and a concomitant reduction in the range and size of rail travel for tourism. In arguing that leisure travel underwent an undeniable and important change from 1937, this paper does not claim that tourism disappeared, nor does it argue for the incompatibility of tourism and war. Rather, its interest lies in clarifying how tourism changed with the beginning of war, and the relationship of these changes to the direction of national rail policy.

Passenger Services and the Formation of the Imperial Rail Network

Passenger Services and the Russo-Japanese War

In January 1904, just prior to the beginning of the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), a law came into effect that mobilized all railways—public and private—for military use (Tetsudō Gunji Kyōyō Rei 鉄道軍事供用令). During the first Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), the cost of rail travel for the military had been set at half the regular rate, but for this later conflict, first and second-class tickets were fixed at 1 *sen* 銭 per mile, and third-class tickets at 5 *rin* 厘 per mile. Companies such as Nippon Railway (Nippon Tetsudō 日本鉄道) and San'yō Railway (San'yō Tetsudō 山陽鉄道) that operated extensive rail networks found military utilization to be a profitable venture.⁷

Military rail transportation negatively impacted passenger services for nonmilitary purposes as it entailed intensive and large-scale movement of troops and supplies. During peacetime, a journey by train from Tokyo to Osaka on the Tōkaidō 東海道 line took 14 hours 13 minutes, and 14 hours 39 minutes from Ueno 上野 to Morioka 盛岡 on Nippon Railway. During the Russo-Japanese War, these journeys could take up to 26 hours.⁸ At the same time, rail authorities tried to reduce the disruption to nonmilitary travelers where they could: lulls in military transportation were used to run regular passenger services, for

5 Takaoka 1993, p. 10. Ruoff 2010.

6 Nakamura Hiroshi 中村宏 explores divergences in approaches to tourism between different branches of government in this period, including the Ministry of Railways and the Home Ministry (Naimushō 内務省). But he argues for the second Sino-Japanese War as a turning-point in the underlying direction of tourism policy, when international tourism came to be understood increasingly as a useful propaganda tool, rather than primarily in economic terms; see Nakamura 2007. Also, see the paper by Andrew Elliott in this special issue.

7 Tetsudō Jihō Kyoku 1904.

8 Ōe 1976, p. 515.

Table 2. Report on railway usage of travelers to sightseeing spots, shrines, and temples during the Russo-Japanese War.

| RAIL COMPANY OR LINE | EFFECTS ON PASSENGER NUMBERS* |
|----------------------------|---|
| Hokkaido Railway (北海道鉄道) | Unknown. |
| Nippon Railway | No decline in passengers to shrines, temples, or sightseeing spots. |
| Kōzuke Railway (上野鉄道) | Decrease on some lines, increase on others (for example, lines to Yamana Hachimangū 山名八幡宮 and Ichinomiya Nukisaki Jinja 一宮貫前神社 shrines). Overall, no change. |
| Jōmō Railway (上毛鉄道) | Increase evident. |
| Kawagoe Railway (川越鉄道) | No decline. |
| Sōbu Railway (総武鉄道) | Passenger visiting shrines stable. Sightseers increased slightly. |
| Bōsō Railway (房総鉄道) | Slight decline. |
| Narita Railway (成田鉄道) | 15 percent passenger increase to Fudō 不動 temple. |
| Kōbu Railway (甲武鉄道) | Slight decrease. |
| Nanao Railway (七尾鉄道) | 50 percent decline on routes to shrines, temples, or sightseeing spots compared to average year. |
| Ōmi Railway (近江鉄道) | 30 percent decline on routes to shrines and temples. Few sightseers evident. However, surveys carried out at shrines and temples suggest a 50 percent increase in visitors. Need to observe conditions more widely. |
| Sangū Railway (参宮鉄道) | A clear decline, but difficult to quantify. |
| Kyoto Railway (京都鉄道) | Increase in sightseers from last year. |
| Nankai Railway (南海鉄道) | Increase in passengers to shrines, temples, and sightseeing spots. |
| San'yō Railway | Approx. 50 percent decline in leisure passengers, but significant increase in military transportation. More than 50 percent increase overall. |
| Iyo Railway (伊予鉄道) | No noticeable decline. |
| Hakata-wan Railway (博多湾鉄道) | 20 percent decline in sightseers, but numbers were exceptionally high last year. |
| Ōu line (奥羽線) | Approx. 50 percent decrease compared to average year. |
| Chūōtō line (中央東線) | Approx. 50 percent decline in passengers to shrines, temples, and sightseeing spots on usual year. |
| Tōkaidō line (東海道線) | Decrease but difficult to quantify. |
| Kagoshima line (鹿児島線) | Compared to average year, 30 percent passenger increase to shrines and temples. Slight decline in tourists to countryside, but visitors traveling to see forestry and mining works have been growing yearly, and particularly increased after the start of the war. No change in passengers to onsen. |
| Taiwan Railway (台湾鉄道) | No reduction. |

* Apart from where noted, change is relative to previous year.
Source: Tetsudō Jihō Kyoku 1905a, 1905b, 1905c.

example, while “out of service” trains returning from troop disembarkation were put to civilian use.⁹

In May 1905, the Railway Times Bureau (Tetsudō Jihō Kyoku 鉄道時報局) investigated the impact of wartime disruption on travelers to sightseeing spots, shrines, and temples on sixteen private lines, four government-run lines, as well as rail lines in Taiwan. The results of this qualitative survey (see table 2) show quite diverse effects: San'yō Railway reported that leisure passenger numbers were half that of usual, Nippon Railway reported that there was no reduction in numbers, and the government-run Tōkaidō line that numbers were reduced but to an uncertain degree. Narita Railway noted a 15 percent increase in passengers traveling to the Narita Fudō 成田不動 temple compared to the same period the previous year, while Nanao Railway, in the Hokuriku 北陸 region, noted a 50 percent *decrease* from the usual number of leisure passengers.

By the time the Russo-Japanese War broke out, it was possible to travel by train from Aomori 青森 in the north of Honshu to Shimonoseki 下関 in the south, and the main naval ports like Kure 呉 and Sasebo 佐世保 were already fully connected to the rail network. Therefore, when compared to the first Sino-Japanese War, military transportation by rail was possible on a much larger scale.¹⁰ Nevertheless, it appears that the impact of rail's military mobilization on leisure passengers was, even during a conflict termed the first total war, relatively small.

In March 1906, six months after the formal cessation of conflict between Japan and Imperial Russia, the Railway Nationalization Act (Tetsudō Kokuyū Hō 鉄道国有法) was enacted. From October 1906 to October 1907, seventeen private rail companies, including Hokkaido Colliery and Railway (Hokkaidō Tankō Tetsudō 北海道炭礦鉄道), Nippon Railway, Kansai Railway (Kansai Tetsudō 関西鉄道), San'yō Railway, and Kyushu Railway (Kyūshū Tetsudō 九州鉄道), were brought under national control. This law created in one fell swoop a massive national rail company that possessed 3,004 miles of track (or 4,844 kilometers, including lines not yet in operation), 1,118 locomotives, 3,067 passenger cars, 28,884 freight cars, and 48,409 employees.¹¹ Concomitant with this takeover, structural reorganization was carried out. The national railway was first placed, in April 1907, under the control of a new department in the Ministry of Communications (Teishinshō 通信省), the Imperial Government Railways Department (Teikoku Tetsudōchō 帝国鉄道庁). Then, in December of the following year, control was given to the Railway Bureau (Tetsudōin 鉄道院), a department under direct cabinet supervision. Finally, from May 1920, the national railway was administered by the Ministry of Railways.¹²

National Rail and Transportation Reform

In a diary entry from 30 June 1905, the president of Mitsui Bussan 三井物産, Masuda Takashi 益田孝, records a request he made to Hara Takashi 原敬 and Matsuda Masahisa 松田正久 of the Seiyūkai 政友会 political party to “nationalize the railways and install

9 Nihon Kokuyū Tetsudō 1971a, p. 564.

10 Nihon Kokuyū Tetsudō 1971a, p. 79.

11 Oikawa 2014, pp. 211–12.

12 After coming under control of the Ministry of Railways, the national railway was commonly referred to as “Japanese Government Railways” in English-language publications.

broad-gauge tracks” should reparations be obtained after the war.¹³ There was support for such a plan in economic circles as well: after consideration of the prospects for postwar development, demands were made for the unification of the rail transportation systems through nationalization, and the strengthening of transportation capacity via a broad-gauge railway policy. The latter was not realized, but in unifying the rail network, nationalization brought immediate benefits to passenger as well as freight services, as figure 1 shows.

A key reason for the expansion of the network was revisions to the fare system for rail passengers. Before nationalization, each rail company set its own fares, resulting in nineteen different systems. But from 1 November 1907, the new national railway unified rates and decreased fares across its network. In moves designed to benefit long-haul rail passengers directly, fares were reduced at the rate of one *rin* for every mile traveled on journeys over fifty miles, and prices for first- and second-class tickets were lowered. In addition, from April 1906, a new fare system for express trains came into effect, first on the Tōkaidō main line between Shinbashi 新橋 and Kobe, then later on the San’in 山陰, Kyushu, Tōhoku 東北, and Hokkaido lines. In June 1912, with the opening of the Shinbashi–Shimonoseki limited express service, this system was revised again. While the fare on limited express trains rose after 400 miles of travel, on regular express trains rates were fixed irrespective of distance. At the same time, other services for rail passengers were introduced, including season tickets (*teiki jōsha ken* 定期乗車券), coupon tickets (*kaisū ken* 回数券), and group tickets (*dantai jōsha ken* 団体乗車券). Season and coupon tickets were convenient for those commuting to work or school from the suburbs by train, as well as leisure travelers, but group fares were expressly designed for the benefit of those traveling long distances by rail.¹⁴

When they were first introduced, the discount offered on group fare tickets stayed the same throughout the year, and there was a tendency for group rail travel to be overly concentrated in spring, a popular time for sightseeing and other leisure pursuits. From 1913, the system was changed to allow shifting rates of discounts in an attempt to stimulate group rail travel at times of the year when non-leisure travel was slow. Group fare tickets were divided into different categories, including normal groups (*futsū dantai* 普通団体), student groups (*gakusei dantai* 学生団体), and worker groups (*shokkō dantai* 職工団体). In terms of the latter category, fares were kept at a low price in order to give workers a chance “to escape the daily grind by getting out into the countryside and reviving mind and body.”¹⁵ Other types of group fare tickets were sightseeing tickets (*yūran ken* 遊覧券), which were 20 percent cheaper than regular fares, and excursion tickets (*kaiyū ken* 回遊券), which were 30 to 50 percent cheaper than regular fares and were designed for “tours to scenic spots, shrines, temples, and the like.”¹⁶

The Railway Bureau also began marketing the *Man–Kan junyū ken* 滿韓巡遊券, a combined rail and boat ticket for round-trips to the continent. Travelers departed their station of choice and traveled by rail to Shimonoseki, where they picked up the connecting steamship to Pusan 釜山 (Kr. Busan). From there, they toured Korea and Manchuria on trains operated by the Government Railways of Chosen (Chōsen Sōtokufu Tetsudōkyoku

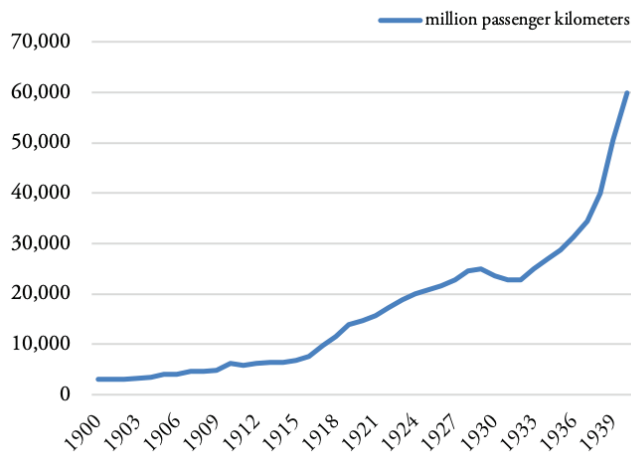
13 Hara 1965, p. 140.

14 Tetsudōshō 1920, pp. 159–64.

15 Tetsudōshō 1920, pp. 164–66.

16 Tetsudōshō 1920, p. 168.

Figure 1. Increases in rail passenger services from 1900 to 1939.



Source: Unyu Keizai Kenkyū Sentā 1979.

Sen 朝鮮総督府鉄道局線) and South Manchuria Railways. Finally, boarding an OSK steamship in Dalian 大連 (Jp. Dairen), travelers returned to Japan via Shimonoseki, Moji 門司, or Kobe. These tickets were valid for sixty days, and were 30 percent cheaper than the regular fare.¹⁷ Through the process of rail nationalization, the Railway Bureau assumed control not only of domestic rail lines, but also of rail lines in Korea and Manchuria. As a result, it was possible to establish tourist routes that connected formal and informal colonial possessions with the main islands.

Compared to rail systems in industrialized Western nations, transportation capacity in Japan was limited by narrow-gauge tracks and a plethora of slopes and bends. Nevertheless, after nationalization, capacity was strengthened through four major reforms: 1. increased speed of trains; 2. increased number of services; 3. improved precision of timetables; and 4. improved equipment. In particular, with unification of the network, systems for managing timetables and the utilization of carriages were simplified, allowing an increase in the number of through-services and a reduction in stopping times. As noted above, express services also went into operation on the trunk line, beginning with the Tōkaidō main line and the San'yō and Tōhoku lines. Then, from May 1912, a limited express service started between Shinbashi and Shimonoseki, reducing the journey from twenty-nine to twenty-six hours.¹⁸

The number and range of passenger services increased significantly as well. There were 4,376 miles of track in operation for passenger services in 1907. Less than ten years later, in 1916, this had increased to 5,551 miles. Over this period, the number of services increased by 27 percent, leading to claims that, “Our railway has achieved equality with the railways

17 Tetsudōin 1912, pp. 5–6. This tour could also be taken in the opposite direction. See McDonald in this special issue for analyses of travelers to the continent on this and similar tours.

18 Tetsudōshō 1920, pp. 133–34.

of the great powers in the West.” The line between Shinbashi and Kanagawa, for example, saw an increase from forty-three to forty-six daily round trips from 1908 to 1913. When electrification of the line was completed in 1915, the number of round trips jumped to 110 per day. Indeed, electrification allowed much more frequent services, and thus led to a rapid expansion in operations.¹⁹

Nationalization also resulted in properly scheduled services. Before this, delays were seen as “an almost normal condition” of some lines; but these decreased after nationalization with the beginning of through services. In order to achieve the “convenience and satisfaction of rail travelers,” national rail authorities overhauled the system to keep trains on time, and refunded fares or offered free return tickets to the departure station when delays led to missed connections. In the case of extraordinary delays on express trains, the price of tickets was refunded.²⁰

Furthermore, nationalization led to attempts to improve the condition of equipment and machinery on the rail network. From 1909, it became policy to fit all new carriages with bogies, and to increase the size of cars and seating. Third-class carriages, previously furnished with wooden or tatami-covered seats, were upgraded with fabric-covered seating, and oil lamps replaced with electric lights. Limited express trains between Tokyo and Shimonoseki were fitted with sleeping and glass-lined observation cars, earning them the accolade of the “best-equipped passenger trains in Japan.” Heating systems using steam were installed on express trains on the Hokkaido line from October 1900 and, by the time nationalization was complete, these had been extended to the passenger and mixed passenger-freight trains on almost all other lines as well. Cooling systems, using electric fans, were previously offered in sleeping cars and dining cars, but nationalization led to them being installed in first-class carriages on principal services. Other measures to increase the comfort and convenience of passengers were directed at overnight rail travelers: first-class sleeping cars were coupled to trunk line trains, and second-class sleeping cars to trains on the Tōkaido, San'yō, Kyushu, Tōhoku, and other lines. In addition, dining cars were provided on through and express services on main lines.²¹

Improvements to the network and trains led to increasing use of rail transportation by visitors to expositions and fairs, or for group trips to shrines and temples. According to the Ministry of Railways, “As leisure travel makes up a remarkable share of passenger services on Japan’s railways, and is a significant source of its income, we are working on developing this market further, reducing prices, adding extra trains for package tours, and increasing convenience for all users.” March to early May were “the busiest time of the year for tourists,” and large numbers of group and independent visitors traveled to shrines and temples in Ise 伊勢, Kyoto, and elsewhere to participate in festivals and memorial services. Yet summer as well saw droves of people “escaping the dirt and noise of the city (*tojin* 都塵)” for the mountains and sea. And come fall, the trains were busy with farmers taking time off to travel in the comfortable months of October and November. Finally, during the New

19 Tetsudōshō 1920, pp. 134–36.

20 Tetsudōshō 1920, pp. 134–35.

21 Tetsudōshō 1920, pp. 137–39.

Year holidays, “devout travelers” took to the rails to visit the Ise Grand Shrines and other sites of pilgrimage.²²

International Rail Connections and Tourism as State Policy

With the formal cessation of the Russo-Japanese War agreed in the Treaty of Portsmouth, Japan acquired most of the southern branch of the Chinese Eastern Railway (Tōshin Tetsudō 東清鐵道), from Lushun 旅順 (Jp. Ryojun; En. Port Arthur) to Changchun 長春, all accompanying rights and property, as well as the coal mines at Fushun 撫順 and Yantai 煙台. In June 1906, the semi-governmental South Manchuria Railway Company (hereafter Mantetsu 滿鐵) was established with a capital investment of ¥200 million to operate the railway and develop the region. Japan already controlled rail lines in Taiwan, such as the main line between Keelung 基隆 (Jp. Kīrun) and Kaohsiung 高雄 (Jp. Takao), and on the Korean Peninsula, such as the north–south Keifu Railway (Keifu Tetsudō 京釜鐵道) and Gyeongui Railway (Keigi Tetsudō 京義鐵道). The addition of lines in southern Manchuria created an imperial rail network stretching across East Asia from the Japanese archipelago.

Even before peace was declared, Gotō Shinpei 後藤新平, soon to become the first director of Mantetsu, argued for a system of territorial management in Manchuria centered on the rail network.²³ In Gotō’s dual vision, Mantetsu could become a pivot of the world economy by linking Japan, Manchuria, Russia, Europe, and America in a global transportation network. At the same time, this would promote order and help revitalize China, and provide “a base from which to execute *Weltpolitik*.”²⁴

Postwar developments like the Russian–Japanese accord, the bilateral promotion of peace in China, and the establishment of connections between Japanese and Russian sections of the Chinese Eastern Railway, the West Siberian Railway, and European and Asian train lines were all elements of Gotō’s vision for rail in East Asia. In short, he attempted to locate Mantetsu on a “Europe–Asia highway,” one link in a “massive trunk line” (*dai kansen* 大幹線) encircling the globe.²⁵ In thus reorganizing the rail system in East Asia around Mantetsu, Gotō helped reshape the foundations of international tourism in the region and beyond.

Travelers greatly benefitted from the introduction of the connecting services between Europe and Asia that the Ministry of Railways started from 15 May 1913. Previously, the journey time from East Asia was 45–46 days to Paris and 50 days to London via the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, or 25 days using transcontinental railroads in America. In contrast, new through-routes from Tokyo were about a third faster: 13 days to Berlin, 14 days to Paris, and 15 days to London. In addition, fares were cheaper: where a journey by ship could cost around ¥1,800, travel even in a first-class sleeper car was about ¥800 to ¥900. The increased frequency of rail services, compared to ship, was another advantage: steamships bound for Europe departed only once a month, or two to three times at most via America, whereas the connecting train service operated once a week.²⁶

22 Tetsudōshō 1920, pp. 122–23.

23 Gotō 1944, p. 76.

24 Gotō 1944, p. 71.

25 Tsurumi 2005a, pp. 580–81. See also Oikawa 2013.

26 *Kokumin shinbun* 1913.

As these changes in intercontinental rail connections were taking place, national rail authorities began working to attract foreign tourists to Japan and its territories. The head of sales, Kinoshita Yoshio 木下淑夫, and others at the Railway Bureau's Transportation Department were instrumental in setting up the Japan Tourist Bureau (hereafter JTB) in March 1912, which soon became one of the principal agents of the interwar tourist boom. Four years had passed since operations began at the Railway Bureau but, in the wake of the end of the war with Russia, commodity prices had risen and the balance of trade turned unfavorable. Kinoshita hoped that growth in the number of inbound tourists would bring in much-needed foreign capital, encourage consumption, and lead to an increase in exports. In short, economic objectives were key to the establishment of JTB.²⁷ The Economic Research Institute (Keizai Chōsa Kai 経済調査会) agreed that the development of a policy to attract foreign visitors was an urgent task. At the time of World War I, though a growth in exports had led to an improvement in the balance of trade, they predicted that “the end of war would bring a renewed surplus of imports.”²⁸

In his arguments for the necessity of state involvement in tourism, Kinoshita focused on economic imperatives. Yet he also recognized the diplomatic uses of tourism. With military victory over Russia, negative images of Japan as an aggressive nation and a potential threat to the present world order had emerged in some quarters in the West. For Kinoshita, the main reason for such images was a lack of understanding of Japan, its politics, socioeconomics, and culture among the great powers. For that reason, it was necessary to develop and deepen mutual understanding, especially with China, Russia, and the USA. State involvement in tourism is necessary, Kinoshita argued, in order for “our country Japan to be properly understood by peoples around the world, and the position of our citizens raised.”²⁹

The outbreak of World War I led to a fall in the number of foreign visitors. In particular, the twelve months from the end of 1914 saw a massive slump. However, the situation gradually improved so that over twenty thousand foreign arrivals were recorded in 1916, and numbers eventually returned to their prewar levels.³⁰

Tourist businesses performed consistently well, and, as seen in figure 2, foreign visitor numbers tended to increase throughout the interwar period despite repeated fluctuations. Amidst this enthusiasm for attracting international visitors, Gotō Shinpei—now head of the Railway Bureau—ordered the publication of an English-language travel guide in five volumes. *An Official Guide to Eastern Asia: Trans-continental Connections between Europe and Asia* covered Japan, colonial territories controlled by Japan and European powers, regions of informal empire, and independent states. The five volumes published between October 1913 and April 1917 were divided into Manchuria and Chosen, southwestern Japan, northwestern Japan, China, and the East Indies.³¹ Defeat of Russia in the Russo-Japanese War brought acknowledgement of Japan's status as a world power, and prompted the government to appeal to the sympathies of Western nations. Furthermore, with rail connections between Europe and Asia improving through the development of the South Manchuria Railway,

27 Kinoshita 1924, p. 153.

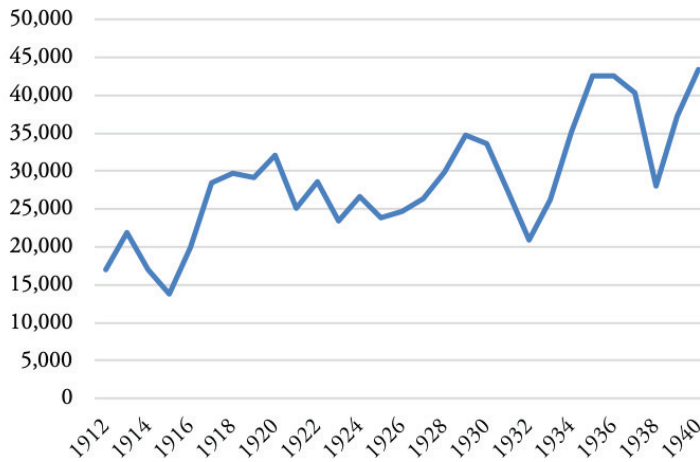
28 Kinoshita 1924, p. 154.

29 Kinoshita 1924, p. 171.

30 Japan Tourist Bureau 1917, p. 1.

31 Oikawa 2008.

Figure 2. Fluctuations in foreign visitor numbers to Japan.



Source: Unyu Keizai Kenkyū Sentā 1979.

Siberian Railway, and Chinese Eastern Railway, demand for a guidebook series on these regions increased among western travelers.

An Official Guide to Eastern Asia was thoroughly researched and edited. After receiving Gotō's directive, the Railway Bureau budgeted ¥200,000 for the compilation of the series, and between 1908 and 1909 experts were dispatched to Korea, Manchuria, China, Indochina, and islands in Japan's South Pacific Mandate (Nan'yō Shotō 南洋諸島) to collect huge amounts of material. The guidebooks were first written in Japanese, then translated into English after being checked by two British reviewers, before finally being published.³² The level of descriptive content, accuracy of maps, as well as the distinctive pocket-guide format of the red jacket, is said to have been inspired by Karl Baedeker's well-reputed travel guidebooks, but the true attraction of the series stemmed from its effective application of research, in providing the latest data and most up-to-date information.

The tourist routes established in this period reflected common practices among international tourists, especially reasons to travel, not just within Japan, but also in nearby destinations such as Korea, Manchuria, China, and Taiwan in order to "see the unique climate and culture of the Orient before returning home."³³ *An Official Guide to Eastern Asia* established a reputation for itself as an "authority among Far Eastern guidebooks." JTB made a contract for consignment sales with the Railway Bureau and started selling the series in 1915. In 1916, 1,062 copies were sold, which amounted to ¥4,832.55, approximately double the previous year's sales figures.³⁴ In 1917, JTB sold the guide through Kelly and Walsh, the general vending agent for *Murray's Handbook: Japan*, and sales for the year

32 Mikuriya 2007, p. 52.

33 Arai 1931, pp. 176–77.

34 Tsurumi 2005b, p. 24.

increased to 1,458 copies or ¥6,336.50.³⁵ The Railway Bureau began revising the volumes on Japan following the Great Kantō earthquake, a job that was soon taken over by the Board of Tourist Industry, earning it the accolade of “the most trusted guide for international travelers.”³⁶

A “Business-Approach” to Rail Transportation Management

Travel Promotion Policy and the Ministry of Railways

The Ministry of Railways was established in May 1920. After taking over jurisdiction of the national railway from the Railway Bureau, it initiated various policies to promote travel. First, it decided to provide reduced second and third-class fares for tour groups on special trains (*rinji ressha* 臨時列車) to destinations popular with domestic tourists, including famous sightseeing spots, shrines and temples, exhibitions, and sporting events. Furthermore, from October 1925, sightseeing tickets for travel around established tourist sites were set up and sold through JTB for the convenience of those traveling by train, steamboat, car, and other types of transportation. Next, between 1929 and 1936, *Nihon annaiki* 日本案内記, an eight-volume guidebook series, was published for Japanese tourists. This introduced scenic, historical, industrial, economic, human and cultural, geological, and other attractions of various regions in Japan (Hokkaido, Tōhoku, Kantō, Chūbu, Kinki (1 and 2), Chūgoku/Shikoku, and Kyushu). In order to ensure the accuracy of the content, the Ministry of Railways commissioned the historian Kuroiwa Katsumi 黒岩勝美 and geographer Yamazaki Nao 山崎直 to oversee its compilation. The series established a reputation as a “detailed and scrupulous work without comparison in Japanese-language travel guidebooks.”³⁷

From September 1925, the ministry established railway tourist information centers one after another in major cities, which became important hubs for railway advertising and campaigns to attract travelers. Railway employees were dispatched to these centers to provide travelers with information about baggage and to sell tickets. In April 1930, the National Railways Travelers and Baggage Transportation Regulations (*Kokuyū Tetsudō Ryokuyaku oyobi Nimotsu Unsō Kisoku* 国有鉄道旅客及荷物運送規則) were revised, resulting in the utilization of the metric system in transportation management and the reclassification of group travel from fifty people to thirty people and above.

In addition, the trunk line network (*kansenmō* 幹線網) reached completion. Express and semi-express trains were reestablished on all these lines, and train numbers were increased. Prior to this, express trains on the trunk line were running in each region, with Tokyo and Osaka as central hubs. From this time, there were connecting routes for express trains to Honshu, Hokkaido, Shikoku, Kyushu, and other regions, and trains connecting to Siberia Railways, which ran through Korea and Manchuria, also began full-scale operation.

In Honshu as well, a through-route express train had been running between Kobe and Aomori since 1925, following the opening of the north–south Japan Sea coastal line

35 Tsurumi 2005b, p. 42; Nakagawa 1979, p. 237. Describing *An Official Guide to Eastern Asia* as “a product of the ambitions of imperial Japan,” Nagasaka Keina 長坂契那 emphasizes the nationalistic background of the series; however, it can also be seen as emerging out of heightened interest in the West about Asia. Nagasaka 2011, p. 63.

36 Kokusai Kankō Kyoku 1940, pp. 103–104.

37 Nakagawa 1979, pp. 199–200.

(*Nihonkai engan jūkansen* 日本海沿岸縦貫線); but with the beginning of full-scale operations on the Uetsu 羽越 main line, other through-route services began. On the Tōkaidō main line and San'yō main line, express and limited express services linking Tokyo, Osaka, and Kobe, as well as Tokyo and Shimonoseki, were reorganized. From July 1923, a third-class limited express service joined the first- and second-class limited express already in operation between Tokyo and Shimonoseki. From September 1929, the first- and second-class service was labelled *Fuji* 富士 and the third-class *Sakura* 桜. These became iconic trains given the task of connecting Japan to Korea and Manchuria.

On 1 October 1930, the super-express service (*chōtokkyū ressha* 超特急列車), *Tsubame* 燕 (Swallow), started running between Tokyo and Kobe. Its remarkable speed made it popular, and led to renewed appreciation among passengers of rail's ability to move people rapidly. In December 1931, a *Tsubame* service departing ten minutes earlier than the regular began on a temporary basis, and was soon after included in the regular schedule. With only seven cars, the *Tsubame* could make the run between Tokyo and Kobe in nine hours, reducing the journey time of the limited express train by two hours and forty minutes.³⁸

The *Tsubame* was the product of technological developments made in various sectors of the national rail industry from the mid-1910s.³⁹ Most important was the appearance of the C51-type steam locomotive. This had a driving wheel diameter of 1,750 mm, and could run at speeds exceeding ninety kilometers per hour even when pulling a five-hundred-ton carriage, making it one of the world's most powerful engines for a narrow-gauge train. By adopting new technologies such as the automatic coupler, air brake, automatic traffic light, fifty-kilogram rail, three-axis bogie truck, and steel passenger car, this locomotive, the *Tsubame*, recorded a fixed speed of 67.6 kilometers an hour. The *Tsubame* demonstrated the strength of the railway as a high-speed, mass transportation system, and was thus an important component in the Ministry of Railways' attempts to reform rail management.

At the same time, the Ministry of Railways enhanced passenger services in other ways. In order to improve the ventilation and lighting inside the passenger car, they installed freely rotatable seats in the first-class section of express trains. In 1931, a third-class sleeper car was added to trains between Tokyo and Kobe. Their number increased yearly, and by the end of 1936 they were added to express trains on the trunk line.

Generally, superior-class trains (*yūtōsha* 優等車) were reduced, and facilities for the benefit of a wider range of passengers were advanced. Improvements were made through the manufacture and remodeling of cars to combine second and third-class seating, second-class seating and sleepers, second-class seating and dining cars, and third-class seating and baggage cars. Furthermore, third-class trains were upgraded and enlarged, curtains installed, airtightness boosted through the use of rising windows, and additional improvements were made in seating, lighting, and other facilities. Thus, third-class cars reached internationally high standards.

On 26 November 1929, the cabinet deliberated how to promote inbound travel. As a result, for the first time, government recruited businesses to attract international visitors as part of a policy to “improve international goodwill and the balance of foreign debt.”⁴⁰

38 Harada 1988, p. 20.

39 Harada 1988, pp. 31–32.

40 Arai 1931, p. 2.

Then, on 19 April 1930, the Board of Tourist Industry was established as an external bureau of the Ministry of Railways, to direct, oversee, foster, and regulate all inbound travel.⁴¹ At the same time, the Ministry of Railways was also active in attempts to attract international tourists to Japan.

Timetable Revisions of 1 July 1937

Military-related industrialization advanced rapidly following the Manchurian (Mukden) Incident on 18 September 1931, and rail traffic, in decline since the 1928 depression, increased again from 1932. The Japanese economy reentered a stage of positive growth from 1933, in turn stimulating passenger and freight services. In order to boost rail traffic further, from 1934 the Atami 熱海 line and other important shortcut lines were opened, revisions were made to nationwide train schedules, and improvements were made to services and facilities. The latter included enhancements to train speed, passenger cars, beds, and other facilities; remodeling of freight cars; an increase in the number of express trains; the opening of new connections between Japan and Manchuria; and the expansion of discount fares. As a result of these measures, as well as the upturn in the economy, railway transportation volume continued its steady growth.

Major changes in trunk line routes took place with the completion of the Tanna 丹那 Tunnel in Shizuoka prefecture in December 1934. These included track alterations between Kōzu 国府津 and Numazu 沼津 on the Tōkaidō main line, and between Hizen-Yamaguchi 肥前山口 and Isahaya 諫早 on the Nagasaki main line 長崎本線, as well as the opening of the San'yō main line between Marifu 麻里布 (currently Iwakuni 岩国) and Kushigahama 櫛ヶ浜. Along with this, train routes were further improved, limited express and express services on the trunk line were increased, and its transportation capacity strengthened. Robust operational systems capable of responding to changing transportation demands were established on the Tōkaidō and San'yō main lines, where express services were increased, and irregular express trains departing at around ten-minute intervals were introduced alongside regular express trains. The speeds of express trains on all other lines were also improved.

Responding to the decline in demand since the depression, the Ministry of Railways reduced the number of superior-class trains. Except for limited express trains and some express trains, the ministry abolished first-class carriages on the Tōkaidō and San'yō main lines, and added third-class carriages to *Fuji* limited express services between Tokyo and Shimonoseki. At the same time, second-class carriages were added to the *Sakura*, making it a second and third-class limited express service.

The business-approach of the national railway's passenger and freight transportation system was, as shown above, maintained following the Mukden Incident. When schedules were revised on 1 July 1937, there were five limited express services (including irregular trains) in operation, the most in the prewar period, as well as the highest standards of service facilities in the so-called superior-class express and other trains. Tourism and leisure services such as seasonal discounts and circular trips (*shūyū* 周遊) continued as before, and these types of consumer demands on rail tended to increase rather than diminish.

41 Tōkyō Nichinichi Shinbunsha 1940, p. 600.

The schedule revision also established a new limited express named *Kamome* かもめ (Seagull) on the route between Tokyo and Kobe. The *Kamome* was introduced because the *Fuji* and *Sakura* services were extremely crowded following the Manchuria Incident. It was innovative in enabling a longer visiting time in the Keihin region of Tokyo, Kawasaki, and Yokohama than the *Tsubame* limited express. By this time, the transportation system for express and long-distance train services had reached completion.⁴²

Questions remain about the impact that policies and campaigns to attract passengers had on the operation of national rail. Table 3 shows changes in passenger numbers and revenue of the national railway between 1920 and 1936, divided into non-regular (*teikigai* 定期外) and regular (*teiki* 定期) passengers. As can be seen, the number of regular passengers—primarily commuters to work and school—increased rapidly during this period. In 1920, there were over 111 million regular passengers, but in 1931 this increased to more than 400 million, surpassing the 386 million non-regular passengers, and making up 51 percent of total passengers. Despite stagnating during 1930–1935, the number of non-regular passengers, including long-distance travelers such as tourists, increased from a little over 294 million in 1920 to approximately 465 million in 1936.

Regarding passenger transportation revenues, revenue from non-regular travelers was over ¥181 million in 1920, far higher than the almost ¥5 million received in regular passenger revenue, and accounted for 97 percent of total passenger transportation revenues. While, from this time, growth in transportation revenue from regular passengers continued to exceed growth in revenue from non-regular passengers, in 1936 revenues from non-regular passengers still accounted for 91 percent (around ¥260 million) of total transportation revenue. From this perspective, interwar strategies to attract passengers clearly made a significant contribution to the operation of the national railway.

Rail Transportation and the Shift from Passenger Promotion to National Policy

National Rail during the Second Sino-Japanese War

Born out of the nationalization of railways following the Russo-Japanese War, the national rail authority established a sales-oriented passenger transportation system and actively developed measures to attract passengers. The schedule revision on 1 July 1937 aimed to further develop this sales-oriented approach. However, a few days later on 7 July, the situation changed dramatically when the Marco Polo Bridge incident triggered the second Sino-Japanese War. The full-scale dispatch of troops began on 27 July. A year later, by July 1938, it is estimated that two million troops and almost two and a half million tons of military supplies had been transported. The Tōkaidō and San'yō main lines played an especially central role. On average the equivalent of at least four round-trip freight trains ran on these lines every day.⁴³ Following the outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese War, therefore, rail traffic increased sharply in response to the war situation.

The national railway gave priority to military transportation as it made a significant operational transition from a “passenger promotion model” to a “national policy transportation model.” The transition was not total, however, as seen in the widespread prevalence of fare discounts for participants in a range of meetings and expositions until

⁴² Harada 1988, p. 117.

⁴³ Harada 1988, p. 126.

1938. Indicative of this transition was the founding of the magazine, *Kankō hōkoku shūkan* 観光報国週間 (Tourism Patriot Weekly), on 18 April 1938. Its purpose was “to emphasize the spiritual side of working in tourism, to extol and secure the Japanese spirit, and show a sincerity of service through the business of tourism.” This objective was also reflected in their slogan: “Love and protect the nation, emphasize public virtue, and train both mind and body” (*kokudo aigo, kōtokushin kyōchō, shinshin tanren* 国土愛護、公德心強調、心身鍛鍊).⁴⁴ In the 1 January 1939 edition of *Tetsudō jihō* 鉄道時報, the chief of the Transportation Division of the Ministry of Railways (Tetsudōshō Unyu Kyoku 鉄道省運輸局), Yamada Shinjūrō 山田新十郎, further clarified the Ministry of Railways’ transition away from travel promotion:

In accordance with present circumstances, we will reform previous policy in regard to advertising passenger travel; newly establish a national movement aimed at appreciating the fatherland, respect for gods, veneration of ancestors, and mental and physical training; extend the period of discount fares for youth walking tours; discount or waive fares for bereaved family members attending extraordinary assemblies at Yasukuni Shrine; carry out special hiking discounts and other services during National Spirit General Mobilization Health Week; and through this contribute to the defense of the home front.⁴⁵

National railway shifted from a business model focused on the promotion of passenger services for profit to one that primarily saw rail transportation in terms of national policy. It continued to work on attracting passengers, but promotional campaigns emphasized the railway’s ability to mobilize citizens for activities connected to religious worship or ancestor veneration, as well as mental and physical training such as shrine visits, youth walking tours, alpine walking (*teizan tozan* 低山登山), and hiking.

National railway’s perception of the tourism industry also changed significantly at this time. After World War I, businesses such as railways, shipping lines, and hotels developed numerous means of converting travelers’ mobility into monetary gain. However, by 1940, with the formation of the Advanced Defense State (Kōdo Kokubō Kokka 高度国防国家), the tourism industry was given an important role. As stated in one contemporary newspaper, “Japanese tourism is entrusted with a great mission: to give shape to an advanced international consciousness that, founded on an ethnic spirit inherited from our ancestors, will be the driving force of a new East Asia; the extolling of our brilliant 2,600 years of imperial culture; and the fortification of industrial trade and the national economy.” As demonstrated here, tourism was endorsed in two ways: first, as a force to “promote national culture widely abroad and contribute to international goodwill”; and second, as a way to “improve the international balance of payments, not through trade but via the income received by welcoming tourists.”⁴⁶

Not only was tourism’s cultural and political efficacy emphasized—such as its promotion of national culture and the auxiliary support it offered to foreign policy—but

44 Nakamura 2007, p. 188.

45 Nihon Kokuyū Tetsudō 1973, pp. 723–24.

46 Tōkyō Nichinichi Shinbunsha 1940, p. 594.

Table 3. Passenger numbers and income of the National Railways (1920–1936).

| YEAR | NON-REGULAR PASSENGERS | | | | | |
|------|------------------------|-------|---------|----------------------|-------|---------|
| | PASSENGERS TRANSPORTED | | | TRANSPORT REVENUE | | |
| | NUMBER (1,000) | INDEX | PERCENT | EARNINGS (1,000¥) | INDEX | PERCENT |
| 1920 | 294,390 | 100 | 73 | 181,603 | 100 | 97 |
| 1921 | 312,071 | 106 | 69 | 185,844 | 102 | 97 |
| 1922 | 338,409 | 115 | 66 | 199,447 | 110 | 96 |
| 1923 | 373,436 | 127 | 65 | 213,246 | 117 | 96 |
| 1924 | 393,245 | 134 | 62 | 219,986 | 121 | 95 |
| 1925 | 402,272 | 137 | 59 | 222,102 | 122 | 95 |
| 1926 | 420,933 | 143 | 57 | 223,382 | 123 | 94 |
| 1927 | 440,407 | 150 | 56 | 227,596 | 125 | 94 |
| 1928 | 463,945 | 158 | 55 | 240,362 | 132 | 93 |
| 1929 | 460,724 | 157 | 53 | 234,054 | 129 | 93 |
| 1930 | 418,561 | 142 | 51 | 211,641 | 117 | 92 |
| 1931 | 386,267 | 131 | 49 | 198,582 | 109 | 92 |
| 1932 | 368,305 | 125 | 47 | 192,894 | 106 | 91 |
| 1933 | 393,911 | 134 | 47 | 211,053 | 116 | 91 |
| 1934 | 417,464 | 142 | 46 | 226,573 | 125 | 91 |
| 1935 | 437,953 | 149 | 44 | 239,478 | 132 | 91 |
| 1936 | 465,358 | 158 | 44 | 260,138 | 143 | 91 |

| YEAR | REGULAR PASSENGERS | | | | | |
|------|------------------------|-------|---------|----------------------|-------|---------|
| | PASSENGERS TRANSPORTED | | | TRANSPORT REVENUE | | |
| | NUMBER (1,000) | INDEX | PERCENT | EARNINGS (1,000¥) | INDEX | PERCENT |
| 1920 | 111,429 | 100 | 27 | 4,697 | 100 | 3 |
| 1921 | 142,465 | 127 | 31 | 6,274 | 134 | 3 |
| 1922 | 171,400 | 154 | 34 | 7,588 | 162 | 4 |
| 1923 | 203,036 | 182 | 35 | 9,039 | 192 | 4 |
| 1924 | 242,210 | 217 | 38 | 10,852 | 231 | 5 |
| 1925 | 274,813 | 247 | 41 | 12,269 | 261 | 5 |
| 1926 | 314,774 | 282 | 43 | 14,037 | 299 | 6 |
| 1927 | 349,542 | 314 | 44 | 15,544 | 331 | 6 |
| 1928 | 383,356 | 344 | 45 | 17,124 | 365 | 7 |
| 1929 | 402,215 | 361 | 47 | 18,379 | 391 | 7 |
| 1930 | 405,592 | 364 | 49 | 18,542 | 395 | 8 |
| 1931 | 400,955 | 360 | 51 | 18,338 | 390 | 8 |
| 1932 | 412,844 | 370 | 53 | 18,821 | 401 | 9 |
| 1933 | 447,405 | 402 | 53 | 20,447 | 435 | 9 |
| 1934 | 496,100 | 445 | 54 | 22,584 | 481 | 9 |
| 1935 | 547,088 | 491 | 56 | 24,854 | 529 | 9 |
| 1936 | 593,273 | 532 | 56 | 26,930 | 573 | 9 |

Source: Nihon Kokuyū Tetsudō 1971b, pp. 84–85.

so was its economic significance in improving the balance of payments through tourism revenue. Tourism, framed as an “invisible trade” and an “invisible export” was positioned as an important industry within national policy.⁴⁷ The tourism industry, seen by policy makers as a way to strengthen national defense, was “increasingly charged during this state of emergency with duties related to broader national defense.”⁴⁸

Tourism in Japan was the foundation of this vision of international tourism as foreign policy, and thus domestic tourism businesses were urged to “work towards the improvement of facilities, including accommodation, sanitation, and entertainment, encourage wholesome travel by the general public, cultivate public virtue, and emphasize the beautification of the country.” Domestic tourism businesses assumed two important roles: first, “strengthening national defense through the improvement of citizens’ health,” and second, “developing a mutual feeling of affinity among the people, cultivating local and national patriotism.”⁴⁹

In November 1941, the Land Transportation Control Order (Rikuun Tōsei Rei 陸運統制令) was enacted. Article 2 declared that, “The Minister of Railways has the right to refuse to transport certain persons or goods, and may designate the sequence, method, or other criteria for transportation.” Furthermore, Article 10 of the Passenger Hand-luggage Transportation Rules (Ryokuyaku Tekonimotsu Unsō Kisoku 旅客手小荷物運送規則) gave the Ministry power to restrict or suspend the sale of passenger, express, and sleeper train tickets. However, this step was regarded as a “last resort,” as its abuse could result in “many harmful effects.” Therefore, “the only way” to transition to a national policy-oriented transportation system “is through a mass national movement arising out of the conscious spirit of the nation.” This problem was not limited to transportation; rather, across all areas of social life, there was an avowed necessity to light “the spark of a multitude of new order lifestyle movements (*seikatsushintaisei undō* 生活新体制運動).”⁵⁰

At the same time, the Minister of Railways, Terajima Ken 寺島健, consulted with the Railway Fare Council (Tetsudō Unchin Shingikai 鉄道運賃審議会) about raising passenger fares. In order to “fulfill the mission of the railway,” Terajima recommended “rethinking the rate of passenger fares.” This would “help absorb the expendable income [of passengers], as well as strengthen wartime financial resources, and modulate rail transportation capacity.” Passenger ticket prices had last been changed more than twenty years before in 1920, when fares were increased by around 27 percent in response to soaring inflation after World War I. Terajima argued now that ticket prices should be raised to bring fares into line with passage tax (*tsūkōzei* 通行税), which *had* increased. With passenger revenues totaling approximately ¥700 million a year, a price increase of about 27–28 percent was expected to increase earnings by nearly ¥200 million.⁵¹ In order to strengthen the wartime regime, therefore, the national railway abandoned its low fare policy designed to attract passengers.

National Rail during the Asia-Pacific War

On 8 December 1941, war between Japan and the United States broke out with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The second Sino-Japanese War expanded into the Asia-Pacific War,

47 Tōkyō Nichinichi Shinbunsha 1940, p. 593.

48 Tōkyō Nichinichi Shinbunsha 1940, p. 594.

49 Tōkyō Nichinichi Shinbunsha 1940, p. 597.

50 Takeuchi 1942a.

51 Nihon Kokuyū Tetsudō 1973, p. 721.

and the establishment of a wartime rail transportation system became urgent. Passenger fares were raised by about 28 percent from 1 April 1942, and the system of price reduction for long-distance journeys (*enkyori teigensei* 遠距離通減制) was readjusted. Express and sleeper prices had already been revised up on 1 January of this year. The criteria for calculating express fares had changed from the conventional three-zone system (400 km, 800 km, over 800 km) to a two-zone system (400 km and over 400 km), and the passage tax imposed on the express train was also increased from a general tax of 10 percent to a tiered system of 10 percent for third class, 20 percent for second class, and 30 percent for first class. Sleeper prices also rose by anywhere from 10 to 50 percent, and passage taxes were newly imposed at 20 percent for second-class and 30 percent for first-class sleeper tickets. Table 4 shows passenger fares, express surcharges, and sleeper fares for journeys from Tokyo to all major destinations, and reveals that first and second-class fares on regular express trains between Tokyo and Osaka rose by nearly 40 percent.⁵²

Takeuchi Itsuki 竹内齊, an official in the Passenger Section (Ryokuyaku Ka 旅客課) of the Ministry of Railways' Transportation Department, commented that the national railway had once "espoused travel culture ideals, and worked enthusiastically to attract passengers." However, recently it had "taken the opposite course, calling for the end of unnecessary and low-priority travel, restricting the sale of tickets and so on, taking all kinds of measures to restrain travel, and starting to behave as if travel were uncultured." He further argued that the policy switch that had occurred in relation to passenger service did "not itself deny the cultural value of travel," but rather was aimed at "securing the capacity to transport essential materials for the Defense State." For this reason, the "suppression of travel occurring at present is like 'putting a mended lid on a cracked pot' (*warenabe ni tojibuta* 割れ鍋にとぢ蓋): it fails to improve the state of passenger transportation, which at 60 percent makes up over half of the total amount of rail traffic."⁵³

In October 1942, on what happened to be the seventieth anniversary of the beginning of rail services in Japan, the cabinet declared a Wartime Land Transportation State of Emergency (Senji Rikuun Hijō Taisei 戦時陸運非常体制), which called for the complete transfer of responsibility for transporting large freight from shipping to rail. The Kanmon 関門 Tunnel between Shimonoseki and Moji was opened in June 1942, and freight trains were able to pass under the strait from July. Additionally, following timetable revisions in November, the tunnel was also used by through-route passenger trains running between Honshu and Kyushu, including services from Tokyo to Moji or Hakata, and the *Fuji* express, which could now run from Tokyo to Nagasaki. The *Sakura* limited express was extended to run from Tokyo to Kagoshima, but in the process it was downgraded to an express service. Also, a considerable number of passenger services were abolished following the timetable revision of February 1943: first, the limited express *Kamome* service, and then all express services including *Tsubame*, and third-class sleeping and dining cars on all lines.

In this way, passenger services on the national railway were considerably reduced. In a wartime issue of the travel magazine *Tabi* 旅, author and former army general Sakurai Tadayoshi 櫻井忠温 writes about the "desire to travel during an extended war" (*chōkisen-ka no tabikokoro* 長期戦下の旅ころ). "In the past," he continues, "the national railway used

52 "Kokutetsu kyūkō ryōkin shindai ryōkin no kaisei" 1942.

53 Takeuchi 1942b.

Table 4. Comparison of national railways express and sleeper train fares before and after the price revision of 1942 (JPY).

| ZONE | TRAIN OR CARRIAGE TYPE | CLASS | EXP./ | | | | | | | | | | PRE-REVISION PRICE | PRICE RISE |
|-------------------|--|-------|------------|------|--|---------------------|------|--|-------------------|------|-------|-------|--------------------|------------|
| | | | BASIC FARE | | | LIM. EXP. SURCHARGE | | | SLEEPER SURCHARGE | | | TOTAL | | |
| | | | FEE | TAX | | FEE | TAX | | FEE | TAX | | | | |
| Tokyo-Nagoya | Regular Express | 1st | 13.20 | 1.80 | | 4.50 | 1.35 | | | | | 20.80 | 17.20 | 20.9% |
| | | 2nd | 8.80 | 90 | | 3.00 | 60 | | | | | 13.30 | 11.10 | 19.8% |
| | | 3rd | 4.40 | 30 | | 1.50 | 15 | | | | | 6.35 | 5.40 | 17.6% |
| Tokyo-Osaka | Limited Express | 1st | 17.85 | 2.40 | | 9.00 | 2.7 | | | | | 31.95 | 26.85 | 19.0% |
| | | 2nd | 11.90 | 1.20 | | 6.00 | 1.2 | | | | 20.3 | 17.5 | 16.0% | |
| | | 3rd | 5.95 | 40 | | 2.00 | 30 | | | | 9.65 | 8.55 | 12.9% | |
| Tokyo-Osaka | Regular Express Overnight Sleeper (lower bunk) | 1st | 17.85 | 2.40 | | 6.00 | 1.80 | | 11.00 | 3.30 | | 42.35 | 30.55 | 38.6% |
| | | 2nd | 11.90 | 1.20 | | 4.00 | 80 | | 8.00 | 1.60 | | 27.50 | Ω19.80 | 38.9% |
| | | 3rd | 5.95 | 40 | | 2.00 | 20 | | — | — | | 8.55 | 7.45 | 14.8% |
| Tokyo-Shimonoseki | Regular Express | 1st | 28.65 | 3.00 | | 6.00 | 1.80 | | | | | 39.45 | 35.75 | 10.3% |
| | | 2nd | 19.10 | 1.50 | | 4.00 | 80 | | | | 25.40 | 23.35 | 8.8% | |
| | | 3rd | 9.55 | 50 | | 2.00 | 20 | | | | 12.25 | 11.40 | 7.5% | |
| Tokyo-Shimonoseki | Limited Express, Sleeper (lower bunk) | 1st | 28.65 | 3.00 | | 9.00 | 2.70 | | 11.00 | 3.30 | | 57.65 | 46.90 | 22.9% |
| | | 2nd | 19.1 | 1.50 | | 6.00 | 1.20 | | 8.00 | 1.60 | | 37.40 | 30.60 | 22.2% |
| | | 3rd | 9.55 | 50 | | 3.00 | 30 | | — | — | | 13.35 | 12.80 | 4.3% |
| Ueno-Aomori | Regular Express | 2nd | 8.60 | 90 | | 3.00 | 60 | | | | | 13.10 | 10.90 | 20.2% |
| | | 3rd | 4.30 | 30 | | 1.50 | 15 | | | | 6.25 | 5.30 | 17.9% | |
| | | 2nd | 14.60 | 1.20 | | 4.00 | 80 | | 6.00 | 1.20 | | 27.80 | 21.00 | 32.4% |
| Ueno-Aomori | Regular Express Sleeper (upper bunk) | 3rd | 7.30 | 40 | | 2.00 | 20 | | — | — | | 9.90 | 8.80 | 12.5% |

Source: "Kokutetsu kyukō ryōkin shindai ryōkin no kaisei" 1942.

to say things like ‘Hey, go to this festival tomorrow, go see this view,’ or ‘Go ahead, get on. We will give you a discount.’ Now they say things like, ‘Don’t let people on,’ and ‘Don’t bring on baggage over one *shaku* and one *sun* [*issshaku issun* 一尺一寸, approximately 33 cm] square.”

Yet this did not mean that all travel was forbidden. Hiking and alpine walking, for example, were promoted: “There is nothing as enjoyable and liberating as visiting mountains, rivers, lakes, and fens, and exploring the emotional life and customs of people in the countryside.” Long-distance leisure travel by train—typified in slogans such as “Let’s go to Nikkō 日光 and have a drink,” or “How about going with friends to see the sights in Osaka?”—may have been discouraged; but short-distance trips by train for walks in the country and mountains were promoted as a means to train body and spirit.⁵⁴ However, in February 1944, when the cabinet passed the Outline for Emergency Measures to Win the War (Kessen Hijō Sochi Yōkō 決戦非常措置要綱), permission from the Travel Control Office (Ryokō Tōsei Kan 旅行統制官) became necessary to purchase a ticket for all travel over one-hundred kilometers.⁵⁵

In the shift from passenger services to military-related freight that occurred over these years, the following episode is illustrative. In December 1938, nearly six months after the outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese War, the Ministry of Railways argued that “the lands of Japan and Korea must be connected by all means.” This prompted the ministry to formulate plans, first, to construct a tunnel between Karatsu 唐津 in northern Kyushu and Pusan in Korea, and second, to develop a broad-gauge Tōkaidō and San’yō line to “deal with a sudden transportation increase,” and link Tokyo and Shimonoseki in 9 hours 50 minutes (Tokyo to Osaka in 4 hours 50 minutes).⁵⁶ The broad-gauge train between Tokyo and Shimonoseki was called the “bullet train” (*dangan ressha* 弾丸列車), and originally “aimed to transport travelers at high speed.”⁵⁷ However, it was revised to a freight service in response to changing geopolitical conditions, as revealed in a comment by Minister of Transportation Communication (Unyu Tsūshin Daijin 運輸通信大臣), Hatta Yoshiaki 八田嘉明: “If you consider the transportation situation of Japan, Manchuria, and China, both now and in the future, we need to shift to prioritizing freight, and be able to transport a large quantity of freight at high speed.”⁵⁸

As the wartime situation developed, and freight was prioritized over passenger services, the national railway switched from promoting travel to supporting national policy. This shift provided the context for the discouragement of long-distance leisure travel on trains and the encouragement of alpine walking and hiking. The change in direction gave rise to new forms of tourism, yet we should not lose sight of the fact that the national railway had by this point become a central part of military-related transportation, and had abandoned the business orientation that had driven the creation and development of the railway in previous decades.

54 Sakurai 1942.

55 Harada 1988, pp. 215–16.

56 *Asahi shinbun* 20.12.1938; *Asahi shinbun* 28.12.1938.

57 On the “bullet train” plan, see Kushner 2016, pp. 45–46.

58 *Asahi shinbun* 24.1.1944. While work began on the bullet train in 1941, it was not completed. Likewise, the plan to build a tunnel below the Korean channel never reached completion. However, the concept of the bullet train is likely to have become the basis for the Tōkaidō Shinkansen developed after the war.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the relationship between war and tourism in relation to the passenger service policy of the national railway from the Russo-Japanese War to the second Sino-Japanese War and Asia-Pacific War. In closing, I would like to summarize what the study has verified. During the period of the Russo-Japanese War, there was only limited impact from military usage of the rail network on the transportation of general passengers, visitors to shrines and temples, and other nonmilitary travelers. The nationalization of the railways that followed the Russo-Japanese War, as well as the establishment of the South Manchurian Railway, led to the formation of an imperial railway network, and an unprecedented boom in tourism during the so-called interwar period of the 1920s and 1930s. The travel magazine, *Tabi*, began publication in 1924 and, to quote Akai, “travel for the sake of travel” became widespread.⁵⁹ In this context, the national railway lay the foundations of its express and long-distance rail transportation system. Furthermore, along with efforts to attract international tourists, national rail authorities encouraged the new middle class—which developed following the Russo-Japanese War—to travel to tourist attractions throughout Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Manchuria, and other formal and informal territories of the empire. In this way, the national rail network emerged out of a business approach to the management of rail transportation, and this helped orchestrate the interwar tourism boom.

In the 1930s, due to events such as the Manchuria Incident of September 1931 and withdrawal from the League of Nations in February 1933, Japan’s international isolation grew, and right-wing imperialist movements including the Kokutai Meichō Undō 国体明徴運動 made ground. The Ministry of Railways—at a meeting of regional rail passenger leaders at the end of 1935—encouraged pilgrimage to sacred places (*seichi junrei* 聖地巡礼) through measures such as providing a 30 percent reduction for private travelers visiting mausolea of successive emperors or Shinto shrines.⁶⁰ The timetable revision of 1 July 1937 led to the further development of a rail transportation system oriented towards business objectives.

However, the situation changed dramatically following the outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese War on 7 July 1937. The use of the rail network for military transportation increased considerably, and the policy direction of national railways switched from promoting travel to supporting national policy. When the second Sino-Japanese War expanded into the Asia-Pacific War, and the Wartime Land Transportation State of Emergency was declared at the end of 1942, self-restraint in leisure tourism using trains was encouraged, and travel for recreation criticized. Restrictions that were imposed, for example, on the sale of tickets, laid the foundations for a system of rail transportation in which passengers refrained from travel.⁶¹ A January 1943 edition of *Tabi* included the following opinions: “The railways are for the war, and should mainly be used by those working in official public business, or for the transportation of military supplies and other essential goods”; “In these times, we do not have the luxury to conceive of travel as an activity for the pleasure of citizens.”⁶²

59 Mori 2010; Akai 2016, p. 5.

60 Mori 2010, p. 84.

61 Mori 2010, pp. 92–93.

62 Arai 1943. On the strengthening of travel restrictions during this period, see Miyawaki 1997.

Takaoka and Ruoff have argued that, while national rail policy changed direction to support military objectives following the outbreak of the second Sino-Japanese War, the tourism boom continued even into the 1940s through pilgrimage to sacred sites, alpine walking, hiking, and other leisure practices.⁶³ However, this paper has shown that the beginning of all-out war in China triggered a rapid shift in the management of rail transportation from the business approach that formed in the interwar period to an approach focused on supporting national policy. From this time, as Akai and others have pointed out, the overt practice of “travel for the sake of travel” disappeared.⁶⁴ In other words, with the second Sino-Japanese War, the tourism boom—centered around the new middle class that emerged between the wars—collapsed as the national railway turned away from the promotion of leisure travel by train. That is, the wartime tourism explored by Takaoka and Ruoff emerged out of the repudiation of “travel for the sake of travel.”

Of course, while travel, or tourism, seemed to disappear during the war, the reality was less simple. A January 1943 edition of *Tabi* notes that “it is unavoidable that the railway restricts passenger transportation. What is troubling, however, is that the world looks disapprovingly (*hakuganshi suru* 白眼視する) on travel for the sake of travel because of this.”⁶⁵ Like an underground stream, demand for “travel for the sake of travel,” which provided the basis for the interwar tourism boom, continued to flow even as the war situation worsened. However, the national railway did not yield to such demands. The limited express, first-class car, scenic car, sleeper car, and other luxury services were abolished; and, with the rescheduling of the timetable in March 1945, the return train between Tokyo and Shimonoseki became the only passenger express train remaining in operation.⁶⁶

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63 Ruoff 2010; Takaoka 1993.

64 Akai 2016.

65 Baba 1943.

66 Oikawa 2017, pp. 206–207.

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