

Mutual Understanding between Peoples through “Border Tourism”¹

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Introduction: Globalization, Mobilities, Tourism

The phenomenon known as globalization has become part of the lives of people in Asia. There is sociological research taking place that sees our current era of ceaseless movement of people, things, capital, information, values, technologies, etc. as the "age of mobilities." In mobilities research, existing reality is seen as constantly generating a new reality because it is not allowed to solidify and consolidate due to this movement that keeps it in continual flux and transformation.²

How have these kinds of mobilities emerged within parts of Asia? Let us take Japan as one example with regard to the movement of people.

1 This paper is prepared for an annual conference of the Taiwan/Japan/Korea Peace Forum, October 7 2018, in Taipei, Republic of China.

2 SUDOU & ENDOU, *Tourism Sociology*, 2018, pp.214-215

According to public statistics from the National Tourism Organization, 17.11 million Japanese people set foot outside Japan in 2016. For the majority of them, Asia was their destination: 2.58 million visited China, 2.29 million visited the Republic of Korea, 1.89 million visited Taiwan, and 1.43 million visited Thailand. However, the single most visited country was the U.S., with 3.57 million Japanese travelers (1.48 million of whom visited Hawaii).³

At the same time, the vast majority of inbound tourists to Japan came from Asia. In 2016, total visitors came to 24 million, 6.37 million of whom were from China, 5.09 million from Korea, 4.16 million from Taiwan, and 1.83 million from Hong Kong.⁴

The breakdown of 2017 statistics for Japanese traveler destinations is not yet available, though the total number of outbound travelers was 17.88 million, an approximate increase of 700,000. Meanwhile, inbound visitors totaled 28.69 million (an approximate increase of 4.5 million), with growing numbers from Asian countries: 7.35 million from China (up 1.02 million), 7.14 million from Korea (up 2.05 million), 4.56 million from Taiwan (up 400,000), and 2.23 million from Hong Kong (up 400,000).⁵

In addition to this human movement, mobilities also cover the fields of technology, finance, and information (mass media, the internet). Considering that the movement of people is almost certainly

3 Japan National Tourism Organization, Tourism Statistics 'Residents'/ Japanese Visits Abroad'

JTB Tourism Research & Consulting Japan, Tourism Statistics 'Residents'/ Japanese Visits Abroad'

4 Japan National Tourism Organization, Tourism Statistics 'Overseas Residents' Visits to Japan'

5 Japan National Tourism Organization, Tourism Statistics 'Overseas Residents' Visits to Japan'

accompanied by the movement of money, things, and information, it is arguable that there is more than a little significance in examining the dynamics of human interaction.

There are various reasons for the movement of people. These reasons can range from individuals with business, labor, academic, and research objectives to refugees who are forced to relocate. The vast majority of the aforementioned Asian visitors to Japan do so with the mindset that sightseeing = tourism. Within this context, this paper focuses on tourism and mobilities while considering social development in Asia.

I. Tourism in Asia: Mobilities across national borders

Tourism, which warrants examination as one of the mobilities in Asia, basically means round-trip travel across national borders. In a narrow sense, tourism is understood as "sightseeing," while in a broader sense, it often refers to non-sightseeing activities including vacationing, convalescence, recreation, homecomings, as well as commerce.⁶

From the perspective of a tourist's intended purpose of travel, Cohen differentiates modes based on the effect of the tourist's travel experience: the diversion mode (simple recreation as an escape from conventional boredom), the recreation mode (recuperating and relieving mental and physical fatigue through a recreational/entertaining-style of tourism), and the experience mode (desiring contact with the lifestyle patterns and values of the people in the travel destination).⁷

6 IWASHITA, *Border Tourism*, 2017, p.164

7 SUDOU & ENDOU, p.44

However, tourists are not the only ones experiencing change through tourism. The local residents in the travel destination incur a significant impact, while there are also those who help produce and coordinate this tourism. These three parties co-create tourism while also being impacted by it, which makes it important to consider the interrelationships of all three parties.⁸

Similarly, a crucial point is whether tourism engenders affinity, or whether it generates conflict, between the travelers and the local residents. For example, if tourism development undermines the daily customs and values of the local residents, the dissatisfaction and opposition from those locals may be directed towards tourism.⁹

The type of tourism that this paper seeks to examine is that which engenders encounters across national borders. The area of focus is Tsushima in Nagasaki Prefecture, which highlights the relationship with local residents affected by a rapid increase in tourism.

As an island sandwiched between the Korean Peninsula and Kyushu, Japan, Tsushima's history has included functioning as a point for negotiation between Japan and the nearby continent. From Japan's perspective, Tsushima is the frontline for mediation with the continent, though geographically, it is some 145 km removed from Fukuoka, Japan, while being approximately 50 km from Busan, Korea. Since a ferry ride to Tsushima from Busan takes about two hours (or even less than one hour by high-speed ferry), the destination offers the most accessible trip abroad and the influx of Korean travelers has continued to grow since the 1990s.

Despite a drop in visitors after the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, there has been an increasing trend since 2012. *The Korea*

8 SUDOU & ENDOU, pp.46-47

9 SUDOU & ENDOU, pp.46-47



(The Graph made by Nagasaki Prefecture’s Tourism Statistics)

JoongAng Daily has reported on the trend saying, "The greatest appeal of Tsushima is that it can offer an overseas trip for only about 50,000 won if you make the best use of specially priced options and (10,000 won) duty-free discounts."¹⁰

Tsushima has been marketed as a destination for Korean tours due to its famous sites with ties to Korea, such as those in centrally located Izuhara. These sites include the marriage memorial commemorating the turbulent life of Princess Deokhye, daughter of Emperor Gojong of Korea and the memorial at Shuzenji temple commemorating the martyrdom of Choi Ik-hyun, a patriot in the final days of the Joseon Dynasty.

Nearly all of the South Korean visitors to Tsushima take part in dining and shopping. The aforementioned *The Korea JoongAng Daily* has carried comments from repeat visitors saying, "I was able to distract myself from my daily life without spending too much time or money. I enjoyed a change of pace while experiencing the feel

¹⁰ *The Korea JoongAng Daily* (Japanese), ‘290,000 Korean Tourists: Why is TSUSHIMA popular among Korean’, March 8, 2013

of a different country. You can save money on the boat fare, too, if you shop around." The article continued, "Despite being so nearby, it's an authentic trip abroad that requires you to show your passport and everything. The duty-free shops are a huge plus to visiting Tsushima. The ones in the Busan passenger terminal are great." Many travelers buy Japanese-made sundries, food, and beverages in bulk on Tsushima, with *The Korea JoongAng Daily* quoting one person saying, "The recent weakness in the Japanese yen makes local prices there feel cheaper."¹¹

At the same time, other comments coming from the concerned representative of a travel company for Koreans crossing over to Tsushima addressed the boom in travelers who have an unabashed interest in shopping. The travel agent noted, "Many cases of visitors just skimming the surface of Tsushima and walking right past the historical sites important to us Koreans." And also remarked, "It hurts the image of Korea when some travelers exhibit bad manners and behavior."¹²

Unfortunately, some tourists' manners and the lack of mutual understanding of values and customs has led to certain shops refusing to serve Koreans and certain local residents developing feelings of opposition. Some of those voicing outright opposition have begun to argue that "Tsushima's travel industry is becoming controlled by Korean capital through the surge in visitors from that country," and, "Local land purchases with Korean money continue to take place. Their intention is to eventually make Tsushima a territory of Korea."¹³

11 *The Korea JoongAng Daily* (Japanese), op. cit.

12 Ibid.

13 MIYAMOTO, 'A Strange Report: TSUSHIMA: the Sakimori's Island' *Sankei*

Since the island's population of about 30,000 people is accommodating more than 300,000 Korean visitors, it is only natural for guests (tourists) and hosts (local residents) to develop mutual grievances when sufficient measures, such as ample infrastructure, are not in place. This is where the importance of additional actors — the producers or facilitators of tourism — comes into play.

The influx of Korean tourists to Tsushima topped 350,000 people in 2017. With infrastructure still insufficient to accommodate these numbers, policies by the Tsushima Tourism Association and the local government are addressing the issue, while efforts with local businesses and Japanese capital are underway to build tourist lodging facilities and the like.¹⁴

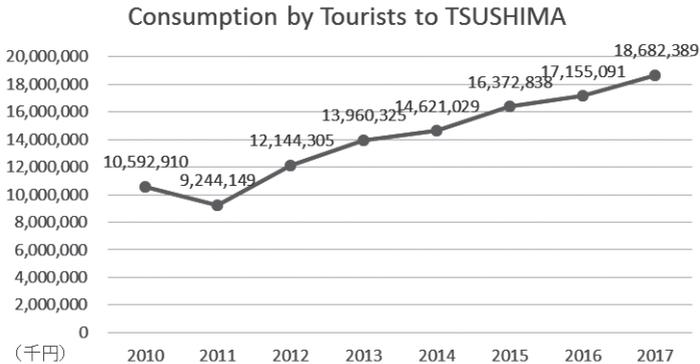
The amount of consumption by tourists to Tsushima in 2017 exceeded 18.6 billion yen, or 610,000 yen on a per resident basis. Considering that in the same year the amount of tourist consumption in Nagasaki Prefecture as a whole was approximately 393.1 billion yen (290,000 yen per capita), the importance of the tourism industry in Tsushima becomes apparent.

It is important to be cognizant that most of those who take an alarmist view of the booming Korean tourism to Tsushima, and who maintain that it is a menace to an island on the boundary of Japan, where the population is aging and grey, have neither visited Tsushima (and therefore do not know the needs of the people on the island) nor have they provided support to Tsushima's efforts toward

News, October 29 and 30, 2017

14 *The Nishinihon Shimbun*, ‘The people of Hidakatsu port are embarrassed by 260,000 tourists from Korea’, April 20, 2018

The Nihon Keizai Shimbun, ‘A tourism development is booming in Tsushima’, July 21, 2018



(The Graph made by Nagasaki Prefecture's Tourism Statistics)

regional vitalization. To these voices, Tsushima's important function is as a defensive front on Japan's national boundary, while the future of those living on the island is secondary.

II. Border Studies and Tourism

In the field of border studies, an area like Tsushima is positioned as a border land. The origin of border studies came with the growing importance of national boundaries arising from the spread of sovereign states in Western Europe in the 17th century. Research approaches to the field, however, developed in the 1980s in England and other countries.

Akihiro Iwashita explains current border studies as follows:

Border studies, which handles issues of boundaries and national borders, takes up phenomena surrounding boundaries that bring about differentiation (distinguishing self from other) derived from the spaces themselves where people exist, the spaces that people possess, and elements of collective awareness. In a globalizing

world, this academic field engages in multifaceted analysis of theories of various spaces and boundaries that are formed, transformed, and reorganized.

The field especially examines mechanisms for avoiding conflicts surrounding spaces, including all manner of incidents related to people's lives, ranging from authority, immigration, the flow of goods, and culture. Furthermore, considering that, in the actual spaces of modern society, there are diverse points of conflict, such as areas (borders) where countries come together and ethnic groups oppose or cooperate, border studies sheds light on the people living there, divided by borders or forced to straddle borders. The field also elucidates awareness of self and other in certain places, even as regions and residents are altered by circumstances, and, in varying levels of granularity, traces manifestations of conditions in other places. While embracing disconnects between realities and awarenesses of these boundaries from the very start, to the extent that reproduction continues in an historical context, border studies shares an awareness of the problem of how to decipher boundary phenomena, explores the existence of problems in specific regions, observes their circumstances, considers approaches to resolutions, and offers idea for how to achieve these resolutions.¹⁵

With regard to borders, Yoshihisa Mihara explains that they are dividing lines between countries and between different states; they generally demarcate territory between nations. He also explains that borders differ from boundaries, which refer to the limits created by the spatial jurisdiction of sovereign nations. Borders are specific

15 IWASHITA, *Introduction to Border Studies*, 2016, pp.22-23

edges created by the controlling force of a country, such that other countries opposite the edge come to possess controlling force as well. Furthermore, he introduces Konrad & Nicol, researchers of the Canadian-American borderlands, noting that the concept of borderlands encompasses boundaries, borders, frontiers, and border regions.¹⁶

With regard to the efficacy of the borderlands concept, Iwashita explains that it, in some sense, is a relationship of opposition akin to the relationships of nucleus vs. periphery, centrality vs. regionality in countries, though it allows the operation of spatial border-ness (a peculiar space because it abuts the national border). In other words, by conceiving of the national border as an expanse rather than a line, it allows for identifying practical challenges to be addressed by the border region in the area of politics and economics.¹⁷

These practical challenges for borderlands change relative to the degree of permeability of the border. If the situation is one of a closed border with nearly no cross-border interaction (i.e., alienation, to use Oscar Martinez' classification), then military apparatuses are deployed and commanded. If round-trip, cross-border excursions are allowed, the result is more than simply travel taking place across a border. Challenges arise with regard to forming economic cooperation and hubs of interactions straddling the border.¹⁸

Tsushima's existence as a borderland is a resource and the island fulfills the role of being a gate opening onto and connecting two countries. By visiting the borderland of Tsushima, Koreans who have

16 MIHARA, Yoshihisa, 'A Study of the Actual Circumstances on "Cross Border Tourism"' in *Bulletin of Osaka Meijo University*, Vol.3, 2003, p.71

17 IWASHITA 2016, p.51

18 IWASHITA 2017, pp.65-66

found value in crossing the border are able to receive goods and services, while the residents of Tsushima receive economic activity, in what can be a relationship of mutual benefit.

The problem is people who try to avoid cross-border visitors without understanding these possibilities for Tsushima. Border tourism is an attempt to make people like this notice the similarities and differences that they have with people and communities across the border.

Ryu Shimada offers the following explanation of the objective for promoting border tourism in Japan:

Border tourism is sightseeing with borders and national boundaries as the entryway; however, for Japan, which is surrounded on all sides by water without visible national border lines, this has not been pursued much to date. As many regions on the border, including outer islands near the border, struggle with shrinking populations and industrial activity, the objective is to generate appealing tourism in the local area, then connect that to a greater number of visitors.

By creating new travel-related appeal through experiences that leverage the qualities of the border region, and by boosting tourist numbers arriving with that target in mind, the goal of border tourism promotion is to have this contribute to local economic vitalization, mainly centered on the travel industry.¹⁹

In Japan, the Japan International Border Studies Network (JIBSN)

19 SHIMADA, ‘Development of Border Tourism between Tsushima and Busan’, 2017, pp.11-12

is an organization of border-region municipalities and research bodies planning and implementing Tsushima-Busan tours, as well as preliminary border tourism activities between Wakkanai-Sakhalin, Taiwan-Yaeyama, and elsewhere.



(IWASHITA 2017, p.18)

Shimada divides border tourism into the three categories of viewing, crossing, and combining and viewing. For example, the quintessential case of border tourism that involves viewing is the experience of

standing at the Panmunjom Joint Security Area on the impassable, military border between North and South Korea.

If the border area is at peace, it becomes possible to take commemorative photographs straddling the two sides of the border. In the case of the Singapore-Malaysia border, travelers can cross the border in a standard bus from the border town of Johor Baharu. Border tourism that involves crossing the border is where travelers traverse into a border region and follow the same itinerary on either side of the border.

Shimada's third category, border tourism that involves combining and viewing, is particularly relevant in a place like Japan where there are no visible borders. Tours of this variety combine observations of the cultures on the opposite sides of the border, allowing for the study of commonalities, differences, transformations, etc. of cultural elements on either side of the border.²⁰

One example is Tsushima-Busan tour participants from Japan who see the history of Edo-period Korean delegations to Japan, as observed through local historical materials in Tsushima, as a symbol of how friendly relationships were recovered and Japan-Korea affinity restored through the efforts of Tsushima residents after ties were lost following the Imjin War (1592-1597). In a challenge to this opinion, visitors to the Busan historical museum covering the Korean delegations to Japan see how the "same" historical event can have different interpretations on each side of the border, learning how the activity involved the introduction and propagation in Japan of the historically advanced culture of the Korean Peninsula during that day and age. Reported results include travelers being surprised when

20 SHIMADA 2017, pp.11-12

gaining this awareness.²¹

The preliminary efforts at border tourism by the JIBSN only just got off the ground in 2013 and have not yet developed into full-fledged travel packages. Going forward, it will be necessary to continue expanding and enhancing their content so that it attracts repeat visits to Tsushima by Koreans, while increasing the number of Japanese tourists as well.

III. The Possibilities for Border Tourism

The aforementioned border tourism that involves combining and viewing can be described as a type of study tour. On this point, Masatoshi Takeuchi indicates that peace studies, which, like border studies, is characterized by interdisciplinary and practical aspects, presents structural violence as a new analytical framework and adopts exposure visits as an approach to tours that foster an awareness of problems through actual experiences. He notes that, as tours and participants increase, the significance of border studies for tourism appears to have possibilities for educational benefits for travelers, in addition to communicating problem awareness and viewpoints that cannot be elicited by academic dialogue alone.²²

Today, as a means of research and education on problems related to peace, human rights, and the environment, various study tours are being developed, such as eco-tours focusing on observing natural forests and mangroves, as well as so-called "dark tourism" expeditions visiting sites of past massacres and disaster-afflicted areas.

An important characteristic of these types of study tours is

21 IWASHITA 2017, pp.35-60

22 TAKEUCHI, 'Book Review: Iwashita, Border Tourism', 2018, pp.159-160

the substantial educational benefit they have for participants; however, due to their nature, they are small scale tours for a limited number of participants. In other words, while such tours have a significant impact in terms of transforming and fostering the views of participants, their overall social impact is, in many cases, not particularly significant. One can say that border tourism in Japan at present, which is in a trial and error phase, is confronting similar issues.

It seems necessary to consider collaboration with mass tourism as a means of strengthening the social impact of this kind of border tourism. Let us look at the example of tourism from Taiwan and Hong Kong to Okinawa and Yaeyama.

In recent years, the number of tourists to Okinawa has continued to increase, with 9.39 million (surpassing the number for Hawaii) in 2017. The Yaeyama Islands are approximately 410 km from the southern edge of Okinawa's main island. Ishigaki, centrally located within Yaeyama, is some 280 km from Taipei, while the outer island of Yonaguni is only 110 km from Hualian, Taiwan.

There are an ample number of airline routes connecting Taiwan with Okinawa and Ishigaki, though a characteristic of visits is the increasing popularity of cruise ships due to the proximity to Ishigaki.

The number of visitors to the Yaeyama Islands in 2017 grew by more than 130,000 year on year, exceeding 1.38 million people. Foreign visitors from abroad also reached an historical high at 2.17 million (84,440 from Taiwan, 29,869 from Hong Kong, and 24,035 from China). Port visits by foreign cruise ships totaled 132 (with 0 visits from domestic cruise ships), carrying more than 350,000 passengers.²³

²³ *The Yaeyama Mainichi Shimbun*, ‘1.38 million tourist visited Yaeyama’, February 3, 2018

Reasons for tourists choosing to take part in cruises include the travel time and the price. In the case of Busan — Tsushima, the appeal lies in the speed and affordability of high-speed ferries, while the Taiwan — Yaeyama route requires a three-day trip. However, passengers can ride for only 50,000 yen and can spend the trip enjoying dining and entertainment on the ship.²⁴

The Yaeyama Islands are still a popular destination for domestic tours in Japan. While foreign visitor numbers are increasing, Japanese visitor numbers still remain high. The current situation is one in which foreign travelers, mainly from Taiwan, receive a cross-border experience through the visit, while nearly all Japanese travelers stop at Yaeyama and lack this recognition of the place as a borderland.

It seems that Japanese people are visiting to seek out the atmosphere of the Yaeyama Islands, and Yonaguni (the westernmost part of Japan) in particular, as a destination on the edge of the map. However, there are really no "edge of the map" destinations on the planet — another part of the world always continues beyond. Border tourism is a type of tourism that brings about this realization.

Although we see the world as being demarcated by borders, such as national borders, this is a type of fiction; most borders are not accompanied by physical obstacles or marks such as walls or actual lines. This is particularly evident for maritime boundaries. On maps and charts, there are clear lines showing territories and exclusive economic zones, while in real life, we can cross back and forth over these lines without seeing any marks in the water.

Okinawa Prefecture, Tourism Statistics 'Visitors to the Yaeyama area'

24 TAMURA, 'Taiwan in the Yaeyama, the Yaeyama in Taiwan: The journey seeking the exchange of cultures and peoples', 2016

Ocean tours can convey the concept that our world is not separated by water, but is instead connected by it. The reputation of the 15th century Ryukyu Dynasty, an island state, included the label of being a "Bridge of Nations." Following this concept, it is possible to have broad expectations for trips crossing oceans, encountering different communities and people, and forming connections.

The vessels calling at the port in Ishigaki are mainly large ships with 1,000 to 2,600-passenger capacities, which is an example of mass tourism. While the main target of the cruises appears to be amusement and recreation on the ship, sightseeing at the port of call is also an important aspect. If tours can engender awareness of the connections between the origin (Taiwan) and the port of call (Ishigaki), which, for example, could include Taiwanese people communicating that pineapple is the main product of Ishigaki today, then many participants can gain an opportunity to experience the process of developing mutual understanding through awareness of others and changes in outlooks.

However, in order to pair mass tourism and study tours, initiatives are needed to build up destination areas in a way that will allow them to accommodate large groups of observers and visitors. In doing so, it is important to pay sufficient attention to preserving the authenticity of the destination as it undergoes development.

Conclusion

In considering tourism and mobilities in Asia, the proposed examples of Tsushima and Yaeyama may be special cases. Although both are borderlands that developed in peaceful ways, they share the feature of hosting exceedingly few Japanese visitors who use

the destination as a point for crossing the border. Hence, they are apt regions for a consideration of border tourism targeting Japanese people.

Border tourism is arguably able to provide effective study opportunities for deepening mutual understanding to help tourists exhibit behavior conducive toward a positive reception in the destinations they choose to visit, and in order for them to be able to appropriately welcome tourists into their communities.

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