

Changes in Japanese Travel Behaviour and Walking Tours from Train Stations

Mami Aoki

History of Travels in Japan

Travelling in pre-Meiji Japan

The forms of travel in modern Japan reflect historical trends as a matter of course. On one hand, like most countries, travel in Japan was originally for business, such as making obligatory trips to the capital to pay taxes, relocating for compulsory labour, or engaging in peddling work. On the other hand, some people travelled for religious reasons, making pilgrimages to temples and shrines.

We get a glimpse of what travel looked like during the Heian period (794–1185) in chronicles and poetry about trips made by government officials to Kyoto, such as the *Tosa Diary* and the *Sarashina Diary*. In the former, a journey from the provincial office in Tosa to Kyoto took about 50 days (the average is said to have been 25 days). The reader can see that this was due to bad weather, as well as the fact that poet Ki no Tsurayuki (872–945) was wary of pirates, because he had captured them frequently during his service as a local governor. In the *Sarashina Diary* too, the trip from Kazusa to Kyoto that normally would have taken 30 days lasts 90 days and its content leaves an impression of difficulties and terrors, rather than the joys and curiosities of travel.

Reasons for pilgrimages included the *saio* procession to Ise Shrine over 60-odd generations from the time of Emperor Temmu (672–86) to Emperor Go-Daigo (1318–39), and pilgrimages to Kumano Shrine, which became popular during medieval times. Under the *saio* system, a princess was chosen from unmarried female descendants of the emperor at the emperor's ascension to the throne, and she served as high priestess of Ise Shrine until the emperor's abdication, or death of her own mother or father. The procession to Ise was a major national event involving hundreds of people. Although this practice was abolished during the Nanbokucho period (1334–92), it is still maintained, as Sayako Kuroda, a former princess married to a commoner, was appointed as *ad hoc* priestess to serve in the *shikinen sengu* (reconstruction and transfer ceremony) of Ise Shrine in 2013.

The Kumano Shrine was visited by many people towards the end of the Heian period when the *mappo-shiso* (end-of-

the-world theory) and Pure Land Buddhism became popular, because people thought that the god enshrined in Kumano was originally the Amida Buddha, promising salvation in the afterlife. It was believed that visiting this shrine would ensure a peaceful rebirth in paradise and multiple visits would accumulate merits, so many emperors made repeated pilgrimages, including Emperor Go-Shirakawa (1127–92) who travelled to the shrine 34 times.

In terms of the types of travel that led to what we see today in Japan, the fundamental patterns of popular travel now are thought to have been formed already during the Edo period (1603–1867). Recent discoveries of writings disprove the common notion held today about the Edo period that it was a society based on a strict feudal system in which people were restricted to their respective classes. The popular belief is that it was mainly an agriculture economy, and that farmers, who were supposed to be subsistent and accounted for 80% of the population, were tied to their farmland and were not allowed to travel unless to visit a shrine. Supposedly, this image was created intentionally during the Meiji (1868–1912) and Taisho (1912–26) periods to reject the Edo period and justify the importance of centralized power and the Imperial regime.

For example, under the uniform registration system established in 1872 called *jinshin koseki*, citizens categorized as artisans and merchants only included those who were living in large cities such as Edo, while artisans and merchants living in other areas or belonging to the primary sector (fishing, forestry, and sericulture industries) but not agriculture were all classified as farmers (or *hyakusho*). As such, wealthy merchant shippers were categorized as farmers who did not possess their own farmland, and urbanized districts that were prosperous through trading and local specialty sales in the Edo period were misconceived as poor areas containing many landless farmers.

In actuality, by the latter half of the Edo period when the national population was 20–30 million, about 1 million people were making trips on the Tokaido road every year, and 200,000 people visited the Ise Shrine each day. A visit to the Ise Shrine was called *O-Ise mairi* and individuals known as *oshi* played the role of modern-day travel agents arranging

trips. Originally, *Ise-oshi* priests of the Ise Shrine went around to *Ise-ko* (associations of Ise Shrine worshippers) in various parts of the country to hand out calendars and talismans, and, when such worshippers wished to visit the Ise Shrine, *Ise-oshi* served as guides along the way and made arrangements for accommodations, meals, and worship. Ise Shrine was not the only place that had *oshi*. Places such as Mt Fuji and Izumo were also served by *oshi* and some even issued what would we would call travel guides today.

Travels during the Edo period were on foot, took many days, and cost enormous sums of money. Therefore, a group would raise the travel expenses and hold a lottery to select one or more persons to visit a shrine as the group's representative(s). This group was called a *ko* and went on to represent a unit of tour groups during the Meiji period and later. Later travels expanded from those only to Ise Shrine to excursions that also included such places as Kinai (regions around Kyoto) and Konpira Shrine in the Shikoku region, as a once-in-a-lifetime chance. Additionally, since visits to the shrines were made on behalf of a *ko*, travellers were obligated to bring back amulets and talismans for other members of the *ko*. The travellers preferred items that took up little space, such as amulets and pictures, and such things later came to be called *omiyage* (souvenirs). The custom to bring back large numbers of souvenirs from a trip to give to close friends and neighbours still exists in Japan, and probably originated from such Ise Shrine visits.

Travelling in post-Meiji Japan

After the Meiji Restoration (1868), the *oshi* system faded rapidly as the government began promoting Shintoism and the *jingi* system (Ministry of Divinities system). However, the *ko* connection continued and later became a system of group tours paid for in monthly installments. After the Meiji period, the format of large group travels expanded as school excursions and company recreation trips began. The Meiji government made an effort to attract foreigners to visit and tour Japan. The *Kihinkai* (Welcome Society) was established in 1896 and the Japan Tourist Bureau (JTB) was founded under the umbrella of the Ministry of Railways in 1912. JTB worked to attract foreign travellers and offer assistance in their travels, but also contributed greatly to the advancement of domestic travel as it later began working with Japanese travelling within the country. In Europe, a Japanese government tourist agency was established in Switzerland in 1917 and in Italy in 1919, showing the great importance placed on inbound tourism at that time. The number of Japanese people travelling increased exponentially from the late Taisho period to the early Showa period.

After WWII, Japan saw great increases in the number of domestic travellers from around 1955 and over 50 million people every year were taking trips with lodgings by 1965. This number passed 100 million by a large margin in 1970, the year of the Osaka Expo, but then declined and was recorded at 105 million after the oil crisis. Around this time, group tours became the most popular travel format. It was an era of peak mass tourism when people travelled to various events and much-talked-about spots.

From large-group to small-group tours

Later, the general format began shifting. People had been travelling in groups made up of members of the same workplace, neighbourhood, or school, which served as the catalyst or excuse to travel, much like pilgrimages in the Edo period. However, people gradually started to prefer family trips by car and travelling in small groups.

According to Lee O-Young's *Smaller Is Better: Japan's Mastery of the Miniature*, which generated great interest as a book addressing Japanese national and cultural identity, the Japanese are at their best when they are in a small group of five or six—around the number that would fit into a tea room. In order to understand others, they place value not on abstract theories or logic but rather on specific sensibilities represented by expressions such as '*hada ga au*' (compatible) or '*mizu ga au*' (fit-in well). As such, perhaps Japanese are most comfortable when they are with a small number of people so that they can 'keep zeroing directly in on' each other.

In recent years, large-group tours from the same school or workplace are much less popular. During school trips, more students travel in small groups using taxis. Viewing the Japanese character from a cultural and anthropological standpoint, these seem inevitable trends.

Japanese travel guides are full of information promoting specific actions at the destination, including special local products and souvenirs, noted historical places, restaurants, and maps. On the other hand, they rarely contain topics such as historical or socioeconomic background to areas of interest. Standard guides from Europe and America, such as the *Michelin Guide* and *Baedeker's*, contain detailed history and backgrounds, while restaurant guides are offered in a separate booklet. The formats of guides obviously reflect the needs of the travellers. Japanese travellers tend to have a strong desire to try foods and local products that they cannot experience in daily life, and to visit as many places as possible.

The baby boomers born between 1946 and 1950 have started passing 65 to become the senior generation, causing the format of travelling in groups to visit historical sites and landscapes and enjoy various foods to shift even more.

Travel Behaviour by Active Seniors and New Tourism

The WHO defines an active senior as someone who is 65 or older and is actively involved or participating in, or has a desire to be involved in, social, economic, spiritual, cultural, and political affairs, and to contribute to family, friends, neighbourhood, and society through such affairs. They are expected to make up an important segment of the population as we consider the future of Japanese society.

Such seniors already have many travel experiences and are not easily satisfied with the ordinary. They are now looking toward travel as an opportunity for so-called self-realization. At the same time, the number of overnight trips and amount spent on tourism have dropped consistently since 2005. The average number of nights of lodging per person has dropped from three (2.92) nights to two (2.17), and consumption expenditure related to domestic travel has dropped from ¥28.7 trillion to ¥23.8 trillion, indicating people's inclination toward cheaper, closer, and shorter trips. Rather than seeking extravagance that takes them away from their everyday lives, people are now looking more for things in the everyday that are interesting and significant.

The Japanese government calls the new trend 'new tourism' in the Tourism Nation Promotion Basic Plan, listing the following items.

- Ecotourism (e.g. experiences in nature)
- Green tourism (e.g. experiences in agriculture)
- Health Tourism (e.g. hot springs)
- Forest Tourism (e.g. walks in woods)
- Sport Tourism (e.g. marathons)
- Food Tourism (e.g. eating local specialties)
- Cultural Tourism (e.g. cultural heritage sites)
- Industrial Tourism (e.g. industrial heritage sites, factory tours)
- Urban Tourism (e.g. walking around city, viewing nightscapes)
- Flower Tourism (e.g. flower fields)
- Anime and Film Tourism (e.g. visiting film and stage locations)
- Fashion, etc. (e.g. visiting specific fashion hotspots)
- Study Tourism (e.g. observation tours and lectures)
- Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, Exhibitions (MICE, e.g., international meetings, exhibitions)

Unlike conventional travel, which involved being guided by agents and guidebooks to famous tourist spots that are divorced from everyday life, new tourism involves various local areas whose residents become aware of their own attractiveness (or are made aware of it by outside visitors) and take the initiative to actively entice visitors. It is also designed for the visitors themselves to make various

'discoveries' and find their own unique 'sense of fun'.

At the same time, because tourists will be pouring not only into famous tourist spots but also into spaces where locals spend their daily lives, such areas face the need to reconsider the modalities and development of their community.

Community Tourism and Development of Tourist Cities

In urban tourism, towns and cities themselves become the tourism targets whose attractions include 'beautiful city streets and cityscapes, chances to enjoy local cuisine, historical and cultural heritage sites, and community hospitality'. In the past, cities were expected to function as places of work or residence, but we must adjust our views about them as 'places for enjoying life' and as 'fun and beautiful places where people want to live'. In other words, urban tourism offers an opportunity to show the attractions of a city to others, as well as for residents to reaffirm the appeal of their own city.

Interest in urban tourism started at the beginning of the 21st century. However, what touched off the boom in *machi aruki* (city walking tours)—a specific form of urban tourism—was probably the *Nagasaki Saruku Haku* (Nagasaki Urban Walking Tour Expo) in 2006; *saruku* is a Nagasaki word meaning 'to stroll around leisurely'. The Expo was held to attract visitors to Nagasaki City when tourist visitors dropped dramatically after Mt Unzen-Fugen erupted. Unlike conventional expos, the Nagasaki Saruku Haku built no large buildings or held any major event, but instead encouraged visitors to stroll around and explore the city.

The walking courses were not designed simply by connecting temples, shrines, and other prominent sites, but also included interesting and enjoyable scenes, such as old traditional Japanese homes (*kominka*) and storehouses mainly with earthen walls (*kura*), back alleyways, hills and stairways, large trees, wayside *jizo* statues and small shrines, and shopping streets and markets. Regular local citizens were trained as guides and over 10 million people visited in more than 200 days. Interestingly, because there were many different walking courses, tourists followed an average of five courses per visit and many people returned, some coming back more than 10 times. In this way, city walking tours have the potential of 'getting people hooked'. City walking tours called *Mai-mai Kyoto* offer over 30 courses every spring and autumn in Kyoto, and most who come are repeat visitors. The enrolment limits of 10 to 15 people are filled immediately as soon as courses are announced. Although the resorts that used to depend on large-scale facilities during the bubble economy were only a transient boom and have long since disappeared, if a resort is defined as a place to visit

Figure 1 JR East Ekikara Hiking & Walking Event Pamphlet (Japanese)

The pamphlet is titled "駅からハイキング & ウォーキングイベント" (Hiking & Walking Event from Stations). It features two main event courses: "冬まつり" (Winter Festival) and "ひなまつり" (Hinamatsuri). The "冬まつり" course is held from February 8th to 11th, and the "ひなまつり" course is held from February 9th to 11th. Both courses are free of charge and open to all. The pamphlet includes detailed maps, photos of past events, and information about various stations and landmarks. A table at the bottom lists the specific routes and distances for each course.

開催日	ルート	イベントコース名	距離
2月9日(日)~3月9日(日)	20	駅が本線一帯のいろいろなところからスタートする特別コース	約10km
2月11日(火)~3月11日(日)	11	駅が中心のコース	約5km
2月11日(火)~3月11日(日)	20	駅が中心のコース	約5km
2月22日(土)~3月23日(日)	20	駅が中心のコース	約5km
3月1日(日)~3月31日(日)	21	駅が中心のコース	約5km
3月8日(土)~3月23日(日)	21	駅が中心のコース	約5km
2月8日(土)	29	駅が中心のコース	約5km
2月16日(日)	14	駅が中心のコース	約5km
2月22日(土)	20	駅が中心のコース	約5km
2月23日(日)	21	駅が中心のコース	約5km
3月1日(日)	32	駅が中心のコース	約5km
3月2日(日)	32	駅が中心のコース	約5km
3月15日(土)	34	駅が中心のコース	約5km
3月15日(土)~3月16日(日)	34	駅が中心のコース	約5km
3月29日(日)	10	駅が中心のコース	約5km

<http://view-web-magazine.eki-net.biz/hiking/20140103/#page=1>

(JR East)

from time to time, Japan's cities are now turning into resorts, thanks to the city walking tours.

Koji Chatani, who produced Nagasaki Saruku Haku, also established *Osaka Asobo* to promote walking tours in Osaka in 2008 with the support of Osaka prefectural and city governments. This project places greater focus on shifting the residents' thinking, rather than attracting tourists. The aim is to reform the self-image held by the local people of Osaka being a 'cluttered, dirty city', and to break away from the predictable catchphrases related to this city, including 'comedy, takoyaki (octopus dumplings) and the Hanshin Tigers baseball club'.

The difference between ordinary city tourism and the city walking tours proposed by Chatani and others is the guides. Currently Nagasaki offers around 40 courses and

over 400 residents are registered as guides. Guides are being trained for Osaka Asobo while the courses are being established.

City walking tours are about residents recognizing the appeal of their city, and developing a desire to share these appealing aspects. Acting on these desires makes concepts like 'urban development with a focus on tourism' and 'reviving city centres' a reality.

City Walking Tours from Stations — Possibilities and Issues

In response to the popularity of city walking tours, many railway companies are distributing maps and guides for hiking and walking tours that start and end at train stations.

Figure 2 Keihan-sen Walking Map (Japanese)

京阪沿線 ウォーキングマップ

東山周辺編

●鴨川・高瀬川コース ●蹴水・哲学の道コース
●豊国神社・八坂神社コース ●清水山コース
●清水寺・平安神宮コース ●大文字山コース
●白川・黒谷コース

歴史と文化、自然があふれる東山周辺。「京都の四季」を満喫する多彩なコース。なだらかな東山の山登り、ゆるやかな鴨川の流れ、世界文化遺産に登録された清水寺、願願寺をはじめ、多くの社寺が点在する東山周辺。歴史と文化が薫る町並みをはんなり歩く。思案にふけりながら、蹴水沿いを散策する。豊かな自然の中で山歩きを楽しむ。さまざまなコースから、あなたに合った歩き方を見つけてください。このエリアには、四季折々の魅力があふれています。

京阪沿線ウォーキングマップ
東山周辺編

鴨川・高瀬川コース

豊国神社・八坂神社コース

清水寺・平安神宮コース

白川・黒谷コース

清水山コース

蹴水・哲学の道コース

大文字山コース

京阪沿線ウォーキングマップ
おすずのヒツクアツク
見どころスポット

桜や華やか、山々の緑満ちる夏、紅葉が鮮やかな秋、景観が深遠と佇む冬……。東山周辺は、京都の四季を彩る自然と、悠久のロマン漂う社寺・史跡など、見どころにあふれています。さあ、あなただけの京都を見つけ出しましょう。

町歩きコース	 京都市庁舎 (鳥の子の宮) 京都市庁舎 (鳥の子の宮)	 豊国神社 (KAMAGATA) 豊国神社 (KAMAGATA)	 一之鳥居 (山崎の鳥居) 一之鳥居 (山崎の鳥居)	 五条大橋 五条大橋	八坂・山崎コース
	 八坂神社 (YASAKAJI) 八坂神社 (YASAKAJI)	 願願寺 (KAMAGATA) 願願寺 (KAMAGATA)	 清水寺 (SHIMIZU-dera) 清水寺 (SHIMIZU-dera)	 八坂神社 (YASAKAJI) 八坂神社 (YASAKAJI)	
	 ねむの湯 (NEMU no YU) ねむの湯 (NEMU no YU)	 内山公園 (NAYAMA KOUEN) 内山公園 (NAYAMA KOUEN)	 紅葉院 (KOUYOU-IN) 紅葉院 (KOUYOU-IN)	 青蓮院 (SHOJIN-IN) 青蓮院 (SHOJIN-IN)	
	 白川 (SHIRAKAWA) (一休庵付近) 白川 (SHIRAKAWA) (一休庵付近)	 平安神宮 (HEIANJINGU) 平安神宮 (HEIANJINGU)	 くろびん (KUROBIN) (金戒壇明寺) くろびん (KUROBIN) (金戒壇明寺)	 西田神社 (SHIRADA JINJA) 西田神社 (SHIRADA JINJA)	
蹴水コース	 蹴水 (SHIMIZU) (山崎) 蹴水 (SHIMIZU) (山崎)	 大覚寺 (DAIKAKUJI) 大覚寺 (DAIKAKUJI)	 醍醐天王寺 (TACHIBANAJI) 醍醐天王寺 (TACHIBANAJI)	 蹴水の道 (SHIMIZU no MI) 蹴水の道 (SHIMIZU no MI)	山歩きコース
	 清水山 (SHIMIZU YAMA) 清水山 (SHIMIZU YAMA)	 大日寺 (OHINIKUJI) (野合法付近) 大日寺 (OHINIKUJI) (野合法付近)	 大日寺 (OHINIKUJI) 大日寺 (OHINIKUJI)	 願願寺 (KAMAGATA) 願願寺 (KAMAGATA)	
山歩きコース	 大文字山 (OHINIKUJI) 大文字山 (OHINIKUJI)	 日向日大塚 (HIMODATE OUKAZAKI) 日向日大塚 (HIMODATE OUKAZAKI)	 山和方面の湖景 (YAMAWAKI no URA) 山和方面の湖景 (YAMAWAKI no URA)	 大文字山 (OHINIKUJI) 大文字山 (OHINIKUJI)	

【お問い合わせ】
 京阪電気鉄道株式会社
 鉄道営業部事業課
 〒753-0032 枚方市東町25番9号
 ☎072-841-0533

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 ●歩きやすい服装や靴を選びましょう。
 ●歩く際には、ルートをよく確かめてから歩きましょう。
 ●交通ルールを守り、車道等に充分注意してください。
 ●犬のリードを必ずしっかりと握り、歩道に歩かせる場所でお散歩してください。
 ●犬や歩きやすい服装を身につけてください。

Many related events are also held to attract visitors.

Japan has seen various patterns of station development. Some stations were built at the heart of a city, some in the outskirts, and some were newly constructed in locations with no large population and the railway company undertook nearby urban development. In all these cases, there are no fears about the station environs being dangerous or having high crime rates as sometimes occurs in Europe or America. The basic premise of stations in Japan is that they are safe and conducive for people to gather, so participating in tours starting at a station is naturally acceptable.

For example, in Kyoto, railway stations belonging to JR West, Hankyu, and Keihan offer city walking tours starting from stations using maps with titles like *Eki Kara Sansaku Eco Map* (Eco map for strolling from station, JR West), *Hankyu Kyoto-Sen Ensen Kanko Aruki* (Walking tour along Hankyu Kyoto Line, Hankyu), and *Keihan-sen Walking Map* (Keihan).

Walking tours starting from train stations, which are easy-to-find landmarks, seem clear-cut and many people take advantage of them, but they actually present some issues.

Because city walking tours are considered community tourism, simply connecting famous sites scattered about the city does not create a course. A course must be fun to walk and offer visitors an opportunity to get a sense of the local lifestyle. In doing so, visitors enter the local residents' living space, so course planning must involve the participation and agreement of these local residents.

To create a city walking tour starting from a train station, the railway company must seek the cooperation and agreement of the city's people (the residents). However, so far, railway stations have been passive about cooperating with local residents, because the companies are confronted with issues, such as the need to meet local residents' demands for improving the structure of stations, station squares, and railway crossings, and the competition issues between shops in the station and businesses in surrounding areas. Seen against this background, the railway companies' hesitancy is understandable. However, one-way delivery of information just by stations neither creates development of urban tourism nor a collaborative relationship between stations and their surroundings. What is worse, station-driven city walking maps could draw too many visitors who disrupt the local residents' daily lives, in turn leading residents to reject the walking tours altogether.

Walking tours can serve as a way for local residents to gain awareness about and appreciation for their city. In the same way, in considering walking tours starting at train stations, efforts should be made to rebuild relationships between stations and their local areas and to create stations that are gathering places within neighbourhoods as centres of activities for local communities. ■

Further Reading

Yoshihiko Amino, *Nihon to wa nani ka*, (*Nihon no rekishi 00*), (Tokyo: Kodansha Ltd, 2000) pp 251-256.

O-Young Lee, *Chijimi shiko no Nihonjin* (Tokyo: Kodansha Gakujutsu Bunko, 2007) (first edition published by Gakuseisha, 1982) pp 218.



Mami Aoki

Dr Aoki is a professor at Doshisha University Faculty of Commerce. Prior to her current position, she served as a Director of Research Information Services at the Institute of Transportation Economics in Tokyo. She is co-author of *Transport and Welfare-Experience in Europe and the United States* Bunshin-Do; *International Comparison of Railway Reform* Nihonkeizaihyoron-Sha; and *About the Basic Law for Transport in Japan* Kamogawa-Shuppan.