Ceren Aksoy Sugiyama
Ankara University, Turkey

Tourism in Japan Reconsidered: Exploring the Link Between Everyday Life and Domestic Tourism

Abstract

In the anthropological studies regarding the tourist practices in Japan it has been insistently argued that the main motivation channeling the tourism industry is based on a feeling of dissolution of the cultural identitiy. This anxiety culminating with the profit incentive manifest itself through tourism campaigns, pamhlets, brochures which in turn give shape to the the tourist experience. However this kind of arguments do not offer an insight into why Japanese show an interest in or emotionally react to certain things. In addition to that, contrary to the studies positioning tourist activities as an opposite of everyday life practices, this study aims to go beyond this dichotomy in order to give a better understanding of the Japanese travel culture.

Introduction

The studies depicting tourist activities as a consumption pattern usually interpret them as an alternative to everyday life practices (Berger 2010, Graburn 1977: 17–31, Smith 1977: 21–36, MacCannell 1976, Nash & Smith 1991: 12–25, Urry 1990: 2). At the same time, within the tourist activities and tourism literature, the word "routine" is somehow considered as an unfavourable condition and treated as something that should be avoided at least during travel and tourism. While studies with a theoretical tendency argue that the aim of the tourist activity is abstaining from the redundancies of everyday life, it should be noted that there might always

be some other cultures which does not necessarily interpret each ritual and the patterns continuing in everday life as 'boring', 'stagnant' and 'estranged'. It can be argued that the everyday experiences in the Japanese context can be rendered as a common perception of a historically constructed social memory which values the ability to be aware of subtle changes in the surrounding, to be able to catch the slightest details and to be able to live without taking for granted the necessities of everyday life.

It might be argued that just like in their everyday life, the awareness of the environmental changes is a meaningful and worthy experience within the travel and sightseeing experiences of the Japanese. In another words, some feelings grounded in the everyday lives are carried to travel and sightseeing activities, too. Both in the everyday life and during travel, seasonal changes arousing the emotions are sought after. When the right time comes, the seasonal changes are being noticed, caught, observed, photographed and even copied. Even beforehand, it is a common practice to anticipate these changes. This anticipation also inspires the imagination in a certain way. The practices which can be felt both while travelling and in everyday practices nowadays, can also found in texts from hundreds years ago. In his famous book *Tsurezuregusa* (1998: 137), Kenkō, the monk living in Kamakura Era (1185–1333 A.D.), mentioned several times these kind of aesthetic perception towards nature. At this point, it makes sense asserting the fact that a theoretical position which draws a line between tourism and everyday life is far from reflecting the experience of Japanese. In this paper I will try to put forward the notion that everyday life practices and tourism practices of the Japanese coincide with each other. Certain examples will be given both from everyday life and tourism practices to support this argument.

A great deal of literature regarding Japan (Creighton 2009: 37–75, Guichard-Angius 2009: 76–102, Oedewald 2009: 105–128) has taken into consideration major trends in the domestic tourism and also the significant qualities of domestic travel culture. In a great many of these studies topics like how the reinvention of culture is repeated by way of tourist practices or how the discourses of nostalgia are constantly repeated so as to redefine a unique Japanese identity are mainly discussed. Usually the tourist campaigns, travel itinaries, sightseeing packages are elaborated on in these kind of studies. In her book Ivy while referring to the tourist campaigns of "Discover Japan" and "Exotic Japan" questions "why the trope of travel arises when Japanese national-cultural identity is at stake" (Ivy 1995: 34). While the author presupposes an explicit threat perception on the Japanese side, neither explain the reason of or the motivation be-

hind this threat perception nor reveal the actors who are supposed to feel a certain threat. Furthermore, most of the time it remains unclear whether a motivation to reinvent tradition or an agenda trying to emphasise a certain type of Japanese identity ever reaches its goal. After all it is rather ridiculous to assume that the whole population will respond uniformly to the same stimulus – discourses of such type – each time they are exposed to them, even though we presume the whole population exposed to it at some point. For this reason, it might bring a new dimension to an understanding of travel and tourism culture if one gives a priority to the experience of Japanese tourists at every age and income group respectively.

In addition to this, studies scrutinizing the essences of domestic tourism in Japan, reproduce the main theoretical argument of *The Invention of Tradition* by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983). The articles reproducing Hobsbawm's theory somehow treat "the emphasis on continuity" within Japanese history as a modern invention. On the contrary, it can be argued that this "invention of tradition" is actually a "tradition of invention" within the Japanese context. Japan has always been a loyal follower of Chinese civilization and China has been one of the most experienced civilizations expecially in case of "recording history". This tradition made it possible for the rulers of Japan to maintain a feeling of continuity and a kind of security on the land. The Japanese imperial court quickly realised that the power and benefits of such practices like writing and recording is very high. The consciousness formed to record and to preserve was also utilized to transform and maintain the imported practices of the Chinese high court. Throughout the history aesthetic values of the Japanese aristocracy were defined by certain concepts[1]. During Heian Period (794–1185), the tastes reserved to nobility were adopted by the military ruling class, later on they were also adopted by the peasants and after the Meiji restoration expanded to the rest of the society. During the flow of the history, although the content of these concepts have changed, they still seem to have a certain interaction with the contemporary everyday and tourism practices. To the aesthetic values of the ruling classes, the distinctive aesthetic tastes of urban commoners[2] living in Tokyo and Osaka area during

[1] *Okashi*, *miyabi*, *aware*, *wabi*, *sabi*. For a more detailed explanation of *okashi*, *miyabi* and *aware* (Bary 1995: 43–76). For a detailed explanation of *wabi* and *sabi* (Suzuki 2010: 19–36, 329–397; Okakuro 1989: 33–45).

[2] For a more detailed explanation of the tastes acquired by commoners such as *iki* (Shūzō 2006).

Edo Period (1603–1867) can also be added. These concepts which can still be observed within the contemporary popular continues to be influential with certain nuances. Bary (1995: 34) considering the aesthectic values in Japan, hightlights the expansion of these values from the nobility to the commoners and finds it quite suprising. By reconsidering all of these evaluations it becomes more likely to understand the travel culture in the Japanese archipelago.

A Bit of History

During the Sakoku Era[3], traveling from one domain to another was restricted and was subject to permissons and certain procedures. Within this period, as a part of the Sankin-kōtai[4] system all Daimyōs[5] – with the exception of Satsuma Daimyō[6] – were bound to go from their own domains to Edo with a certain number of samurais under their patronage every other year (Totman 1981: 138–139, 183, 190). By means of this system, certain travel routes have came into prominence. The inns and onsens on the major posts became significant resting and entertainment places for the samurai also increasing the commercial activities of the post town. Furthermore, apart from those bureaucratic trips, by means of travelling monks and poets such as Bashō and pilgrimages to famous shrine and temples the travel culture started acquiring its distinct characteristics. The studies reveal that sole motive of pilgrimages was not purely religious. In another words, what was sought during a pilgrimage was not only a spiritual quest. Therefore, in several studies it has already been highlighted that it is quite impossible to make a distinction between what is sacred and what is profane when travel is the issue (Watkins 2008: 93–110). Even before the Edo Period the places referred in classical literature

[3] The name of the policy enforced to protect the domestic commercial interests from the West between the years 1633–1853.

[4] The precautions taken by the Shogun living in Edo for keeping the control of the feudal domains ruled by the most influential family of the region called *daimyō*. Based on this policy the *daimyō* and his family were to spend each alternate year in Edo.

[5] From the Muromachi Period until the end of the Edo Period (14th–19th centuries) the name given to the ruling millitary class of the feudal domains (*han*).

[6] Satsuma Han (present Kagoshima Prefecture), contrary to the other Hans had the priviledge of applying the *sankin kōtai* duty every two years since it was the most remote area from Edo.

such as Heike, Ise and Genji Monogatari became sightseeing attractions. Those kind of famous sight seeing spots named *meisho* (famous places) were visited by monks, travelers, poets and during Edo Period gained a wide popularity among people. In the *ukiyo-e* (Guichard-Anguis 2009: 8–9; Rodriguez del Alisal, Ackermann & Martinez 2007) of the Edo Period famous waterfalls or bridges were painted.

The rest of the article will take into account travel and tourism practices grounded on such a historical background. The places and activities considered and evaluated througout the paper are the most popular tourism activities and the most visited places according to the statistics. While onsen is the first place Japanese tourists would go to, scenery viewing and seeing famous places come next. On the other hand, all of these activities have a side related to cuisine, too. Therefore in the upcoming chapters eating patterns of the Japanese tourists during travel and tourism is also mentioned. Not only castles and gardens are considered as historic spots or *meisho*. Famous architectural structures like bridges will be mentioned, too. Bridges were also thought to be scenic spots since they often appeared in Edo Period *ukiyo-e*[7], too. Througout the article, I will not only highlight historical continuities, but also the activities practiced in everyday life which share a same essence with the tourist activities.

Hotspring Versus Bathtub

Urry argues that "The tourist gaze is directed to features of landscape and townscape which separate them off from everyday experience. Such aspects are viewed because they are taken to be in some sense out of the ordinary" (Urry 1990: 2). If the meaning of the everyday life is restricted to the work/office life, this assumption can be defendable. In the Japanese context, taking a warm bath after an exhaustive day can also be considered as 'daily' and can be compared to a relaxing onsen trip on the weekend. In this case Urry's assertion must be reconsidered.

Onsen travel is significant in both ways: it is an important part of the Japanese culture and one of the most preferred travel choices when Japanese domestic tourism is considered. However, neither in studies regarding Japanese culture, nor in studies regarding tourism and travel, onsen is

[7] *Ukiyo-e* meaning "the pictures of the floating world" started to be printed in the 17th century with woodblock painting.

a frequently researched subject. Onsen culture is not about or limited to staying in the hot spring waters for a certain period of time. Although the experience of bathing is the primary component of an onsen travel, if it includes staying in a ryokan[8] it is impossible to understand the whole ritual without paying attention to the space and the food. In the subsequent paragrahps, the history of onsen and the onsen travel as it is experienced today will be briefly mentioned.

First of all, an onsen is a place where one goes naked, taking off all the clothes before entering in. The place is composed of two parts. In the section closer to the entrance the showers are located. The showers generally are not secluded by a curtain or anything as such. The people sit on a tabure and clean their bodies properly before entering into the pools filled with hot spring water. The procedures regarding onsen are not written down but still there is a consensus on the manners. The onsens located closer to international tourism destinations usually have a signboard at the enterance of the facility illustrating the onsen manners for foreign tourists. Depending on the size of the onsen, the number of hotspring pools change. The temprature and the specialty of the hot spring water can vary. Also each hot spring location has its unique mixture of elements in its water. Onsen can both be a place for relaxation and a place for communication with others. The communication taking place in onsen is regarded as *hadaka no tsukiai* – it is considered as a naked communion. While some people like to communicate with others as a way of relaxation, others might prefer watching the seasonal scenery or the garden outside or simply closing their eyes in a somewhat meditative state for a brief period of time before switching to another pool. In the Japanese archipelago onsens can be found in a wide range of areas from mountain areas located inland to coastal areas by the sea. Based on this geographical circumstances, onsen is situated in the core of several different territories of experiences. This is why in order to understand onsen experience in its totality it is necessary to study and examine its relation to nature, body, religion and hygiene practices. The reasons as to why onsen has not been treated as a significant subject might be various. It is highly possible that the researcher might have found it awkward trying to communicate with the informants when everyone is nude. In such a case embarrasment seems understandable on the part of the researcher.

In Japan onsen has a long history like most travel practices. Based on the archeological evidence, hot spring resources had started to be utilized

[8] Japanese style inn.

6000 years ago. In the two of the oldest eser of the Japanese Literature, *Nihonshoki* and *Kojiki*, visits of emperor Jomei and Kōtoku to Arima Onsen in Hyogo Prefecture are mentioned (Talmadge 2006: 25–30). In Japan, onsens have always been in close contact with buddhist circles. Many onsens were opened and managed by buddhist monks. Throughout the centuries, services provided by hotsprings gradually expanded to the warrior classes and then to the commoners. Particularly during Edo Period onsens were utilized for treatment of illnesses and started to be visited by patients. It can be argued that the purpose and the priorities of onsen travel have changed through time. Although onsen travel is still a prevalent form of tourism in Japan, due to high cost of ryokans and relatively shorter travel period within Japan compared to e.g. Europe, onsen trips have become shorter as a travel practice than before.

There are several motivations while choosing among various onsens. The mineral composition of the water is an important factor. Whether the onsen has a *rotenburo*[9] or not, the view of the *rotenburo*, the view from the window of an indoor onsen, the distance of the particular onsen to one's hometown and the distance from the onsen to other historical sightseeing spots can all contribute to the choice. An onsen trip can be planned solitary, with a bestfriend, with someone from the family and as a couple. It can be arranged by a company for its workers and sometimes groups of friends can arrange an onsen trip, too. In case there is a larger group, amusement performances can take place during and after dinner which are considered as a form of *enkaigei* (banquet performance). While this kind of entertainment is not a requisite of onsen culture, it reveals much about entertainment patterns of the Japanese. In these kind of entertainment, drinking is usually involved and most of the time male members are expected to showcase their "abilities". Attempting to put a toothpick into one's nose, wearing women's clothing and singing half-naked are common forms of entertainment. Contrary to this kind of entertainment, an onsen trip can much more serene. In either case bodily relaxation starting with the onsen pools continues into other directions. Based on the interviews conducted in places such as Arima Onsen in Hyogo Prefecture or Gero Onsen in Gifu Prefecture reveals that feelings and experience associated with onsen and bathtub at home are similar to some extent. In Japan, where the central heating system is not a common option, informants occasionally stated that during winter soaking into a hot bath or a hotspring is a good

[9] Open-air part of an onsen.

way keeping warm. On the other hand, entering a warm bath in summer means soothing the body and chilling out. Some informants emphasized both experiences as most relaxing practices and called the experience 'resetting one's mind'.

The advancement in technology made it much easier to extract hot springwater from underground and this paved the way for the increase in the number of onsens around Japan. New onsen destinations brought a mobility to otherwise unknown countryside locations. Although older people claim that younger generations do not show an interest in onsen, young people have their own way of onsen travel patterns. Based on my field observations young couples actually enjoy taking a day off and going to an onsen resort. However, the same trend cannot be observed regarding *sentō* (Japanese public bath) culture, which can be considered having close ties with onsen culture and more generally speaking – with the unique bathing culture of Japan. Before mentioning changes in *sentō* practices, it seems necessary to make a brief explanation. The most obvious difference between *onsen* and *sentō* is probably the source of water used in these places. The water used in *sento* is tap water instead of hot springwater. *Sentō* as a space should be considered as a part of the city life. The lack of bathing space in houses directed the townsmen to public baths in their neighbourhood. During Edo Period *sentō* became places suitable both for cleaning and socialization. It can be argued that sento was much more like today's *onsen*. Nowadays, *sentō*'s popularity is constantly decreasing. Each year public bath houses around Japan are steadily shutting their doors down. The government fundings are not enough to keep them operating anymore. This is due to the fact that each house now offers a hot tub, no matter how small that hot tub is. One other reason might be a possible trend of merging both *sentō* and *onsen* of the past under the same roof. Today's onsens – especially the city ones – show a characteristic of both *sentō* and *onsen* with a hint of spa.

The reflection of this bathing culture in the everyday life of the Japanese could easily be observed in the bathing practices at home. The department stores offer and market shelves display a large variety of salts and minerals to bring a particular onsen water from anywhere around Japan right into one's bathtub. During summer bathtubs are filled half for chilling out; in winter it is filled fully with hot water in order to warm the body. In Japan – except Hokkaidō – where central heating system is absent, the time spent in the hot tub provides a sophisticated way of relaxation. Going into a hot tub each day and spending there between twenty

minutes to one hour is a common practice among Japanese. And onsen travel as a tourism practice has much in common with the everyday bathing practice.

Local Foods... Reflecting Local Histories?

Another attraction in Japanese domestic tourism is local specialty food. The literature on food concentrates on it as a medium or symbol of identity and how the "national" cuisine is reinvented in order to be able to imagine the nation (Cwiertka 2005: 415–428). From a different perspective, it can be argued that the discourse on local specialties is in fact an extension of local allegiances of the people, reflecting the feudal past. The rivalry within the prefectures such as "which ramen/rice is the most delicious" is in fact a significant and contrary argument to the nationalist discourses which are generally presumed to supress all other. Just like onsen, local tastes are usually ignored as a topic of study since both of them require close contact with unfamiliar tastes and spaces that can be restrictive on the part of the researcher.

Each culture has its distinct obsession with food. In Japan, the emphasis on food can be conspicuously observed in the television programs from day till night. Food can be a main theme or side theme of any kind of television program including quiz shows. Guests and hosts speak about the seasonal foods and the proper places to eat them. Each meal is zoomed on and tasted by the presenter of the television program. Funny sounds are made during tasting and onomatopoeic words appear on the screen. The audience can even have an idea about the form and consistence of the food. Apart from television programs, various type of foods and food sets are always illustrated in the tourism brochures for domestic tourists, too. In this brochures most of the time the food pictures are displayed next to onsen pictures. The promised pleasures are presented side by side. The food is also an indispensable part of festival atmosphere. Througout the year the local festivals get even livelier with food and rituals. As a part of the travel culture, the traveler is supposed to bring local specialties to his home town on the way back. The sweets bought as souvenirs in their fancy boxes are easily found in the airports, train and bus stations so as to make it easy to remember to buy one on the way back. Even the food brought back as *omiyage* (souvenir) is shared with the dead and with the *kami*. After all, the food is not only for the living in Japan.

Interaction with Environment Throughout the Year

The meaning attributed to nature by the Japanese has divided the academics into two different camps. While some writers argue that the Japanese perceive themselves and nature as a whole (Kasulis 1990: 433–449, Suzuki 2010: 329–397), other oppose such a view and claim it to be a fictive assertion (Martinez 2005: 185–200). In fact, neither nature nor technology can be separated from the being. As a matter of fact, the Western discourse assertion of a human versus nature dichotomy can be valid for neither Japanese not any other culture. Nevertheless, in social sciences – perhaps due to lack of connection between theory and actuality – "nature", "technology" and "human" are taken as independant concepts excluding one another. At least for Japan it can be said that the understanding brought by a unique fusion of shintoism and buddhism gave an awareness about the destructiveness, versatility and temporariness of nature and surroundings of the inhabitants of the archipelago. The seasonal calendar of the Japanese also manifests this lively interaction and communication with nature in the daily life. The cyclical and repetetive rituals taking place all year long inspire a continuous recollection and reminding both on an individual and collective level. The seasons give a special meaning to these inspirations and multiply them. It feels like the seasonal rituals ceaselessly continue one after another, making each of them redundant to a foreign eye. The gardens are organised in a manner that makes the mobility and temporality apparent. One kind of flower blooms after another so as to keep track of time and season. The patterns and the colours of the kimono, the flower arrangement in the tea room, the patterns of the dinnerware are all expected to be in harmony with the season. Nowadays kimono is worn only on special occassions but in everyday life a similar tendency regarding colours and occasion/season harmony is of importance. It can be further argued that this tradition underlies the idea of cosplay and the love of costume wearing during Christmas and Halloween – both relatively new ocassions in Japan.

The unique characteristics of each season and an awareness and love of change reveals itself in the domestic tourism, too. The rhythm of tourist activities is closely related to seasonal and monthly events througout the year. Generally speaking, from the end of October until the beginning of December the leaves of *momiji*[10] trees turn red. At the same time, in the

[10] A species of tree native to China, Korean peninsula and Japanese Archipelago, Eastern Mongolia and the South East Russia. It is famous of its leaves turning red in Autumn.

mountains different kind of trees start to change their colours forming an autumn foliage with shades of yellow, orange and red, attracting a large number of domestic tourists to temples and hiking trails. Changes in the colour start from northern prefectures gradually going down to the south of the archipelago. For the tourists it is a stroke of luck to be able to make it on time to see the leaves bright red which is referred to as *migoro* (viewing time). Whether they are just turning red, have fallen on the ground or start to decay turning into a bitter shade of red, each scenery seems to arouse different feelings. Just to experience those feelings Japanese tourists moves from North to South like a Mexican wave.

While hiking is a good way to enjoy *kōyō* (red leaves); gardens of temples and castles are preferred. Pictures of gardens and castles taken during each season are usually displayed in the tourist brochures, detailed maps indicate location of different species of trees and flowers within the garden. The gardens reveal its seasonal beauty when the flowers are in full bloom. The rest of the scene belonging to other seasons are left to the imagination of the tourist. Japanese tourists can always "fill" a naked tree with sakuras or plums in their imagination as long as they can differentiate the species. Once owned by the ruling classes to enjoy or entertain their guests, gardens still host various guests from different age groups and genders. Regardless of various modern discourses or myths, one sure thing is the fact that although the pattern of sightseeing carries an essence of the past, what viewers feel today and what they enjoy looking at indeed constantly changes. The only remaining thing is the existence of people still visiting the garden. Although the direction of looking is marked on the map, imposition of a certain idea or feeling and when to feel it seems hardly possible.

During *momiji* season, tourists check the colour of the leaves online daily and plan their trips according to the information found there. Some of them prefer to see the red leaves in their *migoro* state, while others prefer seeing fallen leaves covering roads and trekking routes. Especially temple gardens are crowded with Japanese tourists in every age group. Some tourists carry professional cameras and try to catch a dramatic moving scene, recalling a sense of joy, solitude or despair. During the *momiji* season several places in Shiga Prefecture and Kyoto were selected to make on site observations and interviews. In Shiga prefecture, Genkyuen Garden located at the foot of Hikone Castle is a popular scenic spot of domestic tourism almost all year round. Being one of only four castles which are national treasures, Hikone castle has one of the *daimyō* gardens kept in

its original form. The castle and its premises attract especially many tourists during maple viewing and cherry blossom viewing season. During the maple viewing season Genkyuen Garden offers after dark illumination attracting couples to enjoy the garden. Around the Biwa Lake there are other scenic spots popular among Japanese tourists such as Keisokuji in Nagahama. During *momiji* season free buses take tourists from Kinomoto Station to Keisokuji amd other popular viewing spots in the area. Based on the interviews conducted with domestic tourists in popular spots such as Keisokuji in Shiga Prefecture and numerous temples of Kyoto such as Daigoji, Kiyomizudera and Nison-in, the output of travel always seems to be about the emotions aroused by the scene. The way the tourists express their emotions can vary from solitude to joy and everything in between.

Just as it is not quite possible to fully comprehend the onsen travel without understanding the meaning of bathing and water to the Japanese, the sightseeing itself should not be interpreted as merely a tourist activity. On the way back home from work or while wandering the streets, one notices the leaves turning red, seasonal flowers are just starting to bloom; a seasonal bug or bird can also be spotted. All those changes are read as a sign of time passing and perceived as a harbinger of a new beginning. This way they arouse various emotions. When the red leaves covering the roads like a red carpet perish and the end of the year comes, the cities become cheerful with the Christmas lights. The houses are decorated with the lights, too. Contrary to the rest of the world, the end of the year and the first three days of the new year pass quietly. The temples become crowded with people coming to pray during *oshōgatsu* (New Year). The winter brings its own beauties. The gardens covered with snow once again call domestic tourists. Some mountain villages like Shirakawa-gō in Gifu Prefecture attract many tourists during winter. The fealings evoked in the mountain village by view of snow covered thatched roofs of farm houses resemble the ones expressed during maple tree viewing. The visitors described their feelings using words such as “terrific”, “unbelievable” and “calming”. Both for the visitors in these villages and skiers coming to the ski resorts in the region, nothing can be as relaxing and warming as an onsen in the middle of the winter. It is rather easy to stop by an onsen resort since there are many famous onsens close to these places.

The earliest signals of spring are the blooming plums. With their colours changing from white to shades of pink, plum is the subject of many *ukiyoes* painted in Edo Period. But their guests are not as much as the cherry blossoms which bloom about a month later. Sakuras start to bloom

when the weather gets warmer in early April starting from the South of the archipelago. Sakura petals fall like snow flakes in the middle of Spring and cover the roads in white. During these periods people have picnics and drink alcohol under the blossoming trees. Most of the onsen places receive more visitors during *kōyō* and cherry blossom seasons. Wisterias follow the cherry blossoms in late April and early May. Tourists feel like under a purple waterfall inside the wisteria tunnels. Once again, image of the wisteria falling from the sky evokes feelings and excites the tourists. In certain parks besides plums and cherry blossoms wisteria was also pictured in various ukiyo-e. Hiroshige's *Inside the Kameido Tenjin Shrine* pictures the wisterias in Kameido Tenjin Shrine. This shrine located in Tokyo still hosts the wisteria festival taking place in early May, attracting Tokyoites and tourists alike. Other famous domestic tourist destinations regarding wisteria viewing are located in Kawachi Fuji Garden in Kitakyushu, Fukuoka Prefecture and Ashikaga Flower Park in Tochigi Prefecture. All of them are crowded with tourists during the wisteria viewing season.

In July once the rainy season comes to a halt the firework festivals called *hanabi taikai* starts in nearly all of the cities throughout Japan. These shows attract large number of people from the suburbs to city centers. The cities compete with each other in terms of the quantity and quality of the fireworks. The theme of one of Hiroshige's *ukiyoe* is fireworks at Ryōgoku Bridge. This festival still continues in Tokyo at the end of July under the name of Sumidagawa Fireworks Festival. One of the biggest firework festivals of Western Japan is the one takeing place simultaneously on both sides of Kanmon Strait. The fireworks thrown from the cities of Moji and Shimonoseki both facing the strait attract millions of visitors mostly from Fukuoka and Yamaguchi Prefectures. The firework festivals, just as gardens and bridges, have several viewing points. Attending the festival and knowing these points is an important conversation topic during the festival season. During this season leading to Obon Festival[11], partypacks of colorfully wrapped firecrackers are sold concurrently in the grocery stores. Although trivial for parents, they are great entertainment and summer highlight for kids. The word *hanabi* which is written with fire and flower kanji can be argued to reveal the love of Japanese to remember things by way of some-

[11] Period of time usually between fifteenth of July and fifteenth of August when graves are visited and cleaned by families of the deceased. Even though it usually lasts three days, Japanese take couple of days off from work and go back to their home towns during Obon.

thing else. It is highly probable that the Japanese imagine something else behind the blooming and suddenly vanishing fireworks. Just like the *sakura* leaves floating in the wind and fireflies with their very short span of life, fireworks might bring melancholia in the middle of entertainment. However idealistic it may seem, living life to the fullest, exploding and fading away into oblivion within seconds is still a way of life to be praised in Japan. Although people do not live like that, the idea of such a life can make a Japanese weep inside. Overall, the viewing practice itself – whether it is flower viewing, leaf viewing or bug viewing – is an activity that continues in paralel with the rhythm of nature. The cyclical continuation of the events enchants the viewer adressing all five senses. One can catch these phenomenon not necessarily during travel but also in the course of daily life.

However, not only nature viewing with its annual cycle has a repetitive side in Japan. Also recollection and repetition regarding the souvenirs collected from several touristic spots is a constant theme. Usually each famous spot has various mobile phone gadgets, e.g. straps with popular anime and manga characters appearing alongside the symbol of the place. In Ise this can be a Hello Kitty character holding a big pearl[12] in its hand, while in Fukuoka it can be a chopper man carrying *hakata ramen*. One other significant practice is collecting stamps at entrances of sightseeing places such as castles, gardens, museums and even train stations. The stamps are usually stamped in special booklets or specifically designed spaces on tourist pamphlets. The origins of this collecting can be found in booklets sold in temples. In exchange for a certain amount of money, calligrapher signs one page of the booklet for the visitor. While in the past it had religious connotations such as proving one's faith by showing the number of visited temples, modern versions of this practice triggers a recollective tendency.

Conclusion

In the anthropological studies regarding the tourist practices in Japan it has been insistently argued that the main motivation channeling the tourism industry is based on a feeling of dissolution of the cultural identitiy. This anxie-

[12] As Ise is famous with its pearl islands, local noodle of Fukuoka region is known as 'Hakata Ramen'. In souvenir shops only versions of gadgets related to the particular place can be found. That makes it a memorable collection item bought provided one had visited that particular place.

ty culminating with the profit incentive manifest itself through tourism campaigns, pamhlets, brochures which in turn give shape to the the tourist experience. However this kind of arguments do not offer an insight into why Japanese show an interest in or emotionally react to certain things. In addition to that, an absolute and dichotomic distinction made between everyday life and tourism activities might lead us to overlooking some areas of life. Examples such as couples and elderly people going for a walk alone to see fallen red leaves, people spending a great amount of the time in a bathtub or their interest in holidays in an onsen would not fit in these respective categories.

Within the discourse, it is practically inevitable to make a distinction between tourism and daily life. But the continuation of seasonal themes found in daily life practices of Japanese which can also be found in their domestic tourism practices makes it impossible to treat these concepts as seperate things – at least from a methodological point of view. Therefore it can be argued that daily life practices of Japanese and their domestic tourism activities are not necessarily opposing activities. On the other hand it can be argued that the relation of Japanese to the concept of routine is somehow peculiar. For the Japanese an awareness of continuity, perishability and dual potential of imagination and remembering directed both towards the past and future evokes various feelings. The surroundings ready at hand are the medium through which this arousal occurs. In the Japanese context, the nuance between daily life and tourism depends not necessarily on the type of activity but lies in the intensity of feeling evoked by the environment. While in daily life the level of such awareness is relatively low, during touristic activities it rises.

Overall, it can be suggested that from a historical perspective and considering the connections between travel and domestic tourism and daily life one can also gain a deeper understanding regarding many other practices taking place in Japan.

Bibliography

Bary W. M. T. (1995), "The Vocabulary of Japanese Aesthetics I, II, III", *Japanese Aesthetics and Culture: A Reader*, Albany: State University of New York Press.

Berger A. A. (2010), *Tourism in Japan: An Etno-Semiotic Analysis*, Bristol: Channel View Publications.

Creighton M. (2009), "The Heroic Edo-ic: Travelling the History Highway in today's Tokugawa Japan", *Japanese Tourism and Travel Culture*, New York: Routledge.

Cwiertka K. (2005), "Culinary Culture and the Making of National Cuisine", *A Companion to Anthropology of Japan*, London: Blackwell Publishing.

Graburn N. H. H. (1977), "Tourism: The Sacred Journey", *Hosts and Guests: The anthropology of Tourism*, ed. V. Smith, Philadelphia: University of Pennyslvania.

Guichard-Anguis S. (2009), "Japanese Inns (Ryokan) as producers of Japanese Identity", *Japanese Tourism and Travel Culture*, New York: Routledge.

Hobsbawm E. & Ranger T. (eds.) (1983), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ivy M. (1995), *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kasulis T. P. (1990), "Intimacy: A general orientation in Japanese Religious Values", *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 40, No. 4.

Kenkō Y. (1998), *Tsurezuregusa*, trans. D. Keen, New York: Columbia University Press.

MacCannell D. (1976), *The Tourist*, New York: Shocken.

Martinez D. P. (2005), "On the 'Nature' of Japanese Culture, or, Is There a Japanese Sense of Nature?", *A Companion to Anthropology of Japan*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Nash D. & Smith V. L. (1991), "Anthropology and Tourism", *Annals of Tourism Research*, 18.

Oedewald M. (2009), "Meanings of Tradition in Contemporary Japanese Domestic Tourism", *Japanese Tourism and Travel Culture*, New York: Routledge.

Okakuro K. (1989), *The Book of Tea*, Boston: Turtle Publishing.

Rodriguez del Alisal M., Ackermann P. & Martinez D. (eds.) (2007), *Pligrimages and Spritual Quests in Japan*, London: Routledge.

Shūzō K. (2006), *Reflections on Japanese Taste: The Structure of Iki*, trans. J. Clark, Sydney: Power Publications.

Suzuki D. (2010), *Zen and Japanese Culture*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Talmadge E. (2006), *Getting Wet: Adventures In the Japanese Bath*, Tokyo: Kodansha International.

Totman C. (1981), *Japan Before Perry: A Short History*, California: University of California.

Urry J. (1990), *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*, London: Sage Publications.

Watkins L. (2008), "Japanese Travel Culture: An Investigation of the Links Between Early Japanese Pligrimage and Modern Travel Behavior", *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, 10, 2.