

How Japan Solicited the West: The First Hundred Years of Modern Japanese Tourism

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While substantial research has been undertaken in recent years into the motivations and behaviours of the globe-trotting Japanese tourist, little is known of the history of foreign travel to Japan. This gap in our historical understanding is especially ironic, given that for almost a hundred years the Japanese government was committed to the promotion of inbound tourism for first diplomatic, and later economic, reasons. Our study begins in 1868, when Japan entered the modern age after more than two centuries of self-imposed isolation and ends, almost one hundred years later, in 1964 when the country hosted the Tokyo Olympics, a celebration marked by the total liberalisation of outbound travel. This paper plots the development of the inbound travel during that defining century.

Introduction

Japanese tourism, as a subject of academic inquiry, has received increasing attention over the last decade. The perspectives have included marketing to Japanese tourists (Murphy 2003; Sirikaya, Uysal and Yoshika 2003; Yamamoto and Gill 1999), Japanese tourist behaviour (Reisinger and Turner 1999; Cha, McCleary and Uysal 1995; Reisinger and Waryszak 1994; March 2000), economic and social impacts of Japanese mass tourism (Gilbert and Terrata 2001; Hui and Yuen 1998) and Japanese sport tourism (Nogawa, Yamaguchi and Hagi 1996). In 2000, Haworth Press produced an ambitious monograph titled *Japanese Tourists: Socio-economic, Marketing and Psychological Analysis* and the Tourism Review International published a special issue on Japanese tourism in May 2006. The majority of these studies focused on the overseas Japanese traveller, her impacts and her behaviour. A number of cultural and anthropological perspectives (Graburn 1983, 2004; Ishimori 1989, and Vaporis 1995) have also been offered. This paper extends our understanding of tourism in Japan by examining the nature of foreign travel in Japan and the Japanese response in the first one hundred years of modern Japanese tourism.

This paper covers the period 1868-1964. The year 1868 marks the beginning of Japan's modern era, when the country opened itself to Western influence – and travel – for the first time since the early seventeenth century. The year 1964 is also a watershed year, in two significant ways: the Tokyo Olympics of that year marked Japan's economic re-emergence into the community of nations and, from our tourism perspective, it was the year that the Japanese government began to encourage outbound Japanese travel by totally liberalising outbound travel on April 1, 1964. With trade surpluses mounting with most of its trading partners by the mid-1960s, the Japanese government decided that the promotion of outbound travel – and the de-emphasizing of inbound travel – was a politically commendable means of reducing trade frictions.

The research for this paper was undertaken using extensive primary sources as well as secondary materials. The primary resources were contemporary published diaries and papers written by foreigners living or travelling in Japan and newspaper accounts from the New York Times, The (London) Times and the Japan Times for the period under investigation. The secondary resources include Japanese-language materials not previously cited in English-language accounts of travel in Japan.

Travel In The Early Modern Era

The arrival of the United States naval ships in Tokyo Bay in 1853 awakened Japan from its self-imposed slumber and ushered in the beginning of its modern era which began officially with the birth of the Meiji Era in 1868. For more than two centuries dating back to the beginning of the seventeenth century, Japan had been closed to outbound travel while only a handful of foreign traders were allowed access to the country through the port of Nagasaki.

The early Meiji reforms embraced the liberalisation of long-standing travel regulations. In June 1871 the Meiji administrators declared that passports were no longer necessary for domestic travel by Japanese citizens (Yanagida 1978). There were, however, obligatory for foreigners, since passports were a convenient means of controlling and monitoring the movement and duration of stay of foreigners in Japan. Isabella Bird, in chronicling her famous travels through northern Honshu and Hokkaido in 1878, said that Sir Harry Parkes, the British Representative to Japan at the time, had used his influence to obtain her passport 'which is practically unrestricted, for it permits me to travel through Japan north of Tokiyo and in Yezo [Hokkaido] without specifying any route' (Bird, 1888, p.33). According to Bird, a foreign passport was issued only on the grounds of 'health, botanical research or scientific investigation' (op. cit.)

In Japan's rush to modernisation and acceptance by the major western powers, the building of the infrastructure for domestic and international travel was a priority. By 1870, the world's four largest steamship companies had offices in Yokohama, as did Japan's largest marine transportation company, Mitsubishi Yusen (contemporary observation by the American, W.E. Griffiths, cited by Shirahata 1996). With the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the completion of the trans-American railway line, and the publication of Jules Verne's "Around the World in Eighty Days" in 1873, around-the-world travel by the rich had become a reality. By the 1880s, travelling time from London to Tokyo was thirty days via North America. The Times of London reported in 1887 that:

'[T]he day cannot be far off when (Japan) will be brought within the reach of any vacation tourist able to spare the three or four months for exploiting a country that offers attractions of the highest order as a holiday resort. Japan, indeed, has the enviable reputation of inspiring love at first sight in the heart of every comer.' (TT, August 20, 1887, 'Life at a Japanese Spa').

While the building of railroads was essential for an ambitious industrial country like Japan, their development sparked considerable debate within Japan. Some people believed a railway system could aid foreign countries in dominating Japan; while there was considerable resentment within the army, who strongly resisted the surveying of land for the laying of tracks. The first railroad was nevertheless completed in May 1872 between Tokyo (Shinagawa) and Yokohama, financed by a loan from England of one million pounds; three months later it was extended to Shinbashi (followed a few years later by the Kobe-Osaka-Kyoto line). The advent of rail triggered a boom in leisure travel. Yokohama became a popular destination for Tokyoites. In calendar year 1874, the number of passengers between Shinbashi and Yokohama was recorded at 1,438,417 (Yanagida 1978:146).

The building of bridges had been banned during the Tokugawa Era (1603-1868) as a strategy to prevent the potential movement of any rebellious armies that might consider challenging the authorities in Tokyo. The early Meiji years witnessed a boom in the construction of bridges that slowly took the place of ferries, formerly the only means to cross rivers. Horse-drawn buses were introduced in the 1870s, and they were particularly popular on long-distant travels, such as between Yokohama and Hakone. For shorter journeys, rickshaws were used as taxis. (In 1872, according to Yanagida (1978), there were some 56,000 rickshaws in Tokyo alone.)

Travellers in Japan were well served in early Meiji Era, in continuation of the growth of domestic travel during the Tokugawa Era (1603-1867). The *Rikuun Kaisha* (Land Transport Company), headquartered in Tokyo, with branches in major towns and villages called 'Transport Offices', was the precursor of the domestic travel agent. It arranged transport of travellers and luggage by pack-horses and 'coolies' to carry the luggage or pull the *kuruma* (later called by the more well-known term *jinrik(i)sha*). Reflecting a tradition dating back to the mid-seventeenth century (Kanzaki 1991), by the early Meiji Era most provinces had picture and guide books, 'illustrated by woodcuts of the most striking objects, and giving itineraries, names of *yadoya* [inns], and other local information' (Bird, 1888, p.71).

Despite the bewilderment that we assume most Japanese must have experienced with the arrival of technologically advanced foreigners from a distant land, Japanese hospitality was widely admired by the earliest of visitors. The Times correspondent wrote in October 27, 1886 that "there is no race more instinctively hospitable, and none so pleasant to watch, or so little obnoxious to be watched by" (p.9). Although signs of insidious western influence were beginning to emerge, with the correspondent lamenting that 'young (Japanese) gentlemen have been seen at Ikao (hot springs) in "stand-up collars"'. Visitors to Japan were invariably complimentary of its attractions and appeal. American businessman Francis Hall, who arrived in Edo in 1859, remarked that "[e]verywhere we had received uniform and marked hospitality without drawback of a single rudeness or churlishness" (Notehelfer, 2001). Watson (1873) was one of many writers, with the notable exception of the later and acerbic Isabella Bird, who praised the friendliness of the Japanese:

I may say that in no country in the world in which I have traveled – in Asia, Europe, or America – have I, wherever I went, been received with such unmistakable and invariable welcome; whilst I never, under any circumstances, was subjected to a single unpleasant look or word.(Watson p.238)

The Reverend E.W. Syle remarked in 1880 that 'no country better repays the traveller, and in none can he be more certain of a courteous welcome' (Syle, 1880, p.236). The intrepid Bird praised the quality of accommodation during her travels through 'primitive' Japan. She remarked that the accommodation 'has been surprisingly excellent, not to be equalled, I should think, in equally remote regions in any country in the world' (Bird, 1888, p.185). The (London) Times correspondent in 1904 observed: 'The quiet enthusiasm of the people...and the obvious desire of all classes to welcome European visitors make Japan at present the most interesting and profitable country in the world wherein to spend a holiday' (London Times, June 30, 1904, p.2 'Good time to visit Japan'). Another contemporary observer, George Knox, remarked upon the Japanese love of mountain climbing and pilgrimage: "So universal is the passion for journeying and climbing, for visiting sacred peaks and shrines, that I do not know another country so provided with admirable resting-places for the traveller" (Knox, 1905, p211). Warming to his task, Knox continues: "We have yet to find another land where vacations are so rational and inexpensive, or where all the needs of the excursionist, for short trips or long, for the outing of a day or for the longest journey, are so provided for" (ibid. p.212-213).

Hot springs had long been a mainstay of Japanese leisure for the elite and by the mid nineteenth century they were perhaps the most popular destination for Japanese and foreigners alike, whether Hakone and Atami around the capital or Arima in the Kansai region. When Isabella Bird stayed at the northern Honshu hot spring resort of Akayu she was told that six hundred Japanese were enjoying the waters (Bird, 1888. p.135) and the owner of her *yadoya* explained that her family had run the business for 'three hundred years' (p.136).

The construction of western-style hotels began slowly. The first such hotel was the Fujiya Hotel in Hakone, built in 1878 as a getaway for foreign dignitaries in Yokohama and Tokyo. A contemporary visitor to Japan in 1904, Walter Weston, wrote many years later that that the

Fujiya Hotel in Hakone was 'the most comfortable and attractive (hotel) in the whole of the Far East' (1926, p 80-81). In Weston's opinion, "in no country has the art of inn-keeping been studied with more care than in Japan, and it is certain that no other land which caters for travellers on a wide scale has brought that art to such a pitch of excitement an even of daintiness" (p.81). By the turn of the twentieth century hotel accommodation was regarded as adequate outside Tokyo but only the Imperial Hotel in the capital was deemed worthy of patronage by foreigners. The (London) Times correspondent of 1910 informed the authorities in the capital that a 'modern hotel with several hundred bedrooms should forthwith be built' (1910, p.69 July 19). Intriguingly, the Imperial advertised itself in 1897 As "The finest hotel in the East (that) all the noted actors, wrestlers and jugglers make...their headquarters" (Japan Times, April 13, 1897, p4). By 1930, there were fifty-three hotels in Japan that each hosted over one hundred foreigners a year (Leheny 2003).

Travel by foreigners residing in Japan developed slowly over the years. Great Britain's first minister in Japan, Sir Rutherford Alcock was the pioneer amongst modern-day explorers of Japan. Alcock had chronicled, for instance, his journey to Mt Fuji and the hot-spring resort of Atami in the summer of 1861: "...a journey into the interior, undertaken for the avowed purpose of recreation and observation, and out of the beaten track, in the exercise of a treaty-right, was yet an unheard-of thing." (P. 329, Alcock's Journey to the Interior, 1861)

Travel to Nikko, for example, was not permitted for Europeans until the 1870 visit by Alcock's successor, Sir Harry Parkes (Bird, 1888, p.49). The first recorded travel some distance from the foreign settlement of Yokohama was to Osaka, Kyoto and Nara in April 1871, when a party of Dutch, Spanish and American ministers were invited to Osaka by the Japanese authorities for the opening of the new Mint (New York Times, April 17, 1871, P.5, 'Travel in Japan'). Charley Longfellow, son of poet Henry Wordsworth Longfellow, who travelled in Japan in 1871-73, wrote in letters home that he had been invited by the then United States envoy, Charles E. De Long, to be the first foreigners to travel from Yedo to Yezo (as Hokkaido was then called) by sea and then inland (Longfellow, 1998). R.G. Watson, an early Charge d'affaires in Japan who had travelled to Hokkaido in 1873, chronicled those foreigners who had travelled before him. He cites a Dr. Willis, formerly physician to the British Legation, who in 1868-69 "made a journey under peculiarly difficult circumstances, in the depth of winter, in order to attend the mounded troops at Wakamatsu" (p.237). He also named a Mr. Aston and Mr. Wirgman about the same time. Lawrence and Satow, also of the British Legation, were the first Europeans to travel over and describe the mountain-road (the Nakasendo) between Tokyo and Kyoto (Watson, 1873).

As mentioned above, for foreigners based in Yokohama, Hakone and Miyanoshita were popular destinations, with their hot springs and close proximity to Mt Fuji. "Acting thus independently, untrammelled by etiquette and the petty exactions of society, the traveller will never regret having passed a short time at Hakone" (New York Times, June 24, 1877, p. 4, 'At a Japanese Watering-Place'). Bird (1888) had remarked that in 1878 that 'the Tokaido, the Nakasendo, to Kiyoto, to Nikko' were the 'beaten tracks of countless tourists' (op.cit, p.16). Not all foreigners were enamoured of Japanese cuisine. One traveller in the early 1890s diarised that "it is absolutely necessary for most foreigners to take all their food with them on an inland trip", and mentioned 'canned meats and champagne' as the recommended supplies (Norman, 1893 p. 237).

By the turn of the century, the foreign residents of Japan favoured Hakone, Miyanoshita, Kamakura and Karuizawa as summer destinations and Shuzenji on Izu Peninsula, that Ponting referred to as the 'Riviera of Japan' (Ponting 1910, p.325), during winter. Miyanoshita was a favoured weekend destination by residents of Yokohama, while Karuizawa, a six-hour train journey from Tokyo by the turn of century was a popular escape for Tokyo residents during the hot summer months. Hakone, six miles up the mountain from Miyanoshita, was difficult to

reach. The transport options were limited to foot, on horseback or *yama-kago*, or mountain basket. English-speaking ‘coolies’ could be hired by foreigners in Miyanoshita for ‘three shillings a day’ (Ponting, 1910, p136). Japan offered numerous transport options for the intrepid traveller seeking ‘unbeaten’ tracks. Ponting (1910) chronicled the *basha*, which he described as a small one-horse omnibus.

Welcoming Foreign Visitors

The idea of attracting foreign tourists to Japan for the sake of promoting national interests was first proposed in the early 1890s by concerned politicians and financiers. A fervent desire to correct existing unequal treaties—the most critical diplomatic problem in the Meiji Era (1868–1912)—was apparently behind the proposal. There also was an intention to show visiting westerners that Japan was as civilized as the great western powers, not to mention that the incoming foreign currency would contribute to reinforcing the nation's wealth and military strength. In March 1893, the *Kihin-Kai* ('Welcome Society') was established to promote and support foreign travel in Japan. While Eiichi Shibusawa, famous as the founding father of Japanese capitalism, was General Secretary, the driving force was Masuda Takashi, a powerful Meiji business leader, who had visited France in 1887 and been deeply impressed by Paris and by the structure and advanced nature of the French tourism industry. Upon returning home, he vigorously promoted the idea of Japan putting in place the infrastructure necessary to greet and entertain foreign visitors, including an attempt to systemise the use of foreign-language guides. His study tour of western countries convinced him that if Japan were serious in being accepted as a member of the international community, it needed to showcase Japanese culture as effectively as the French had done in Paris and the Americans in New York.

Overall, it appears that the establishing of the Welcome Society was viewed more as a diplomatic strategy than economic advantage. The main objectives of the Society were: (1) generate methods to assist *ryokan* owners upgrade their facilities, (2) institute a travel guide system, (3) plan listing of tourist attraction such as ruins, buildings and parks, and (4) publish reliable travel information and maps. (Shirahata (1996:26-27), using statistics released by Yokohama and Kobe authorities, estimates that less than 10,000 foreigners were visiting Japan each year.) Masuda and Shibusawa persuaded hotels and inns to improve their buildings and facilities, urged upgrading the quality of tour guides and interpreters, and arranged tours of noted and historic places. English guidebooks and maps were written and distributed to arouse foreigners' interest in visiting the country. *Kihin-Kai* was funded by donations from railways and international shipping companies, hotels and inns, department stores, profiting from foreign tourists. However, in 1906, all major railway companies were nationalized into government railways in line with the Railway Nationalization Bill, radically slashing the resources of *Kihin-Kai* and disrupting its operation. However, the imminent collapse was averted by Yoshio Kinoshita, an enlightened government railway official who had studied in Europe and was well aware of the necessity for promotion to attract foreign tourists. Kinoshita may have been the driving force behind the 1907 passage of the Hotel Development Law, which enabled the Railway Bureau to begin the construction of an integrated network of publicly owned and operated hotels around the country. Without doubt Kinoshita's most enduring legacy was the Japan Tourist Bureau (predecessor of Japan Travel Bureau (JTB)) which was founded in March 1912 under his leadership.

With the onset of the depression of the late 1920s, the government sought measures to earn foreign currency. Demands from the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry resulted in the decision to establish the Board of Tourist Industry within the Japanese Government Railways whose was to maintain scenic spots, and develop tourist resorts, accommodation facilities, and transportation. The Board also took charge of tourism promotion including revision of guidebooks and distribution of posters. Overseas promotion offices were opened in New York, Paris and London.

The Japanese tourism authorities used different strategies to generate interest in Japan by, principally, Americans. Foreign sporting teams had begun visiting Japan from the beginning of the twentieth century. The first visit was by the New York Giants and Chicago White Sox baseball teams in December 1913. Major league baseball teams followed in 1921, 1931 and 1934, when the appearance of Babe Ruth drew 100,000 to Tokyo's Meiji Stadium (Holiday, op cit. p.146). Another strategy used was sponsoring tours of key decision makers to Japan. In 1937, eight American high-school teachers were sponsored on a month's tour by the Board of Japanese Tourist Industries to 'acquaint themselves with Japan's social, cultural and economic achievements' (New York Times October 28, p.28).

Japan's investment in inbound tourism promotion was widely acknowledged and admired. In 1928, the Japan Tourist Bureau reported that some 55,000 overseas visitors had spent US\$25 million during the spring holiday season (New York Times p.32, April 15 1928). According to the New York Times, the season was also marked by a nostalgic 'revival' of the jinricksha, which 'cheap bicycles and automobiles were fast driving to the wall', and the revival of 'native costumes' over western dress (New York Times, op cit). By 1936, spending by foreign visitors represented Japan's fourth largest source of foreign exchange revenue after cotton, raw silk and silk products (Kimura, cited by Leheny, p. 61).

An American transport executive regarded Japan as 'the leader among Oriental countries in recognizing the value of tourist money' (New York Times, p.N8, January 4, 1931). Indeed, Japan was well-placed geographically for travel in the early twentieth century. As early as 1910, The Times of London called Japan "the centre of the Orient in the field of the world's intercourse' (The Times, 1910, July 19). All steamships between Hong Kong and the Americas stopped at Kobe and Yokohama. The Times correspondent argued that the Siberian Railway was the best mode of travel from London to Tokyo, since it took only sixteen days, compared to six weeks by steamer through the Suez or four weeks by steamer to the US, train across the continent and the steamer from San Francisco.

Improvements in passenger ship construction saw the introduction of tourist class accommodation on Pacific liners by 1930. When Japan's largest ship operator, the NYK Line, launched the Hikawa Maru in 1930, company officials said that the new class of travel 'will open the Orient to thousands of Americans who have been unable to travel because inexpensive and comfortable accommodation were lacking (New York Times May 30, 1930, p.59, 'New Tourist Liner has Tourist Service'). As late as June 1940, tourism between Japan and the US was being promoted, this time with the maiden voyage to San Francisco of NYK Line's latest Pacific passenger liner, the Nitta Maru (New York Times, June 9, p.10).

Gathering war clouds over Japan from the early 1930s impacted gradually on the tourist trade. From around 1931, the Japanese authorities classified numerous areas of its coastline as 'strategic zones' and forbid the taking of photographs. According to the New York Times, 'every year scores of foreign tourists submit to detention, hours of questioning and confiscation of films because they have unwittingly used a camera in one of these zones' (New York Times, December 16, 1934, p.E2). Despite these restrictions inbound tourism in 1934 was a record which was expected to be surpassed the following year. The same newspaper article reported on the growing tension between the Japanese 'merchants and hotels', who benefited from the international tourist trade, and the Japanese authorities who were becoming increasingly paranoid about foreign spies. Many tourists complained to Japan's Foreign Office of overzealous questioning of new arrivals in Japan, which often came into conflict with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry charged with improving the quality of tourist operations and the government-funded Bureau of Tourist Industry that promoted Japan overseas. The outbreak of WWII in 1939 forced the cancellation of the scheduled 1940 Tokyo Olympics and

although tourism was promoted as late as early 1940 the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour threw Japan into four years of war.

Postwar Tourism Revival

On August 30, 1945 General Douglas MacArthur, appointed Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP), arrived at Atsugi Airfield outside of Tokyo as one of Japan's first foreign 'visitors' in the post-war era. Interestingly, for the first week he stayed at the Yokohama Grand Hotel before establishing headquarters in Tokyo. Yokohama was the location where the first foreign ambassador to Japan in 1853 first settled. For two years, travel into and out of Japan was strictly regulated. No foreign businessmen were allowed entry until August 1947. Inbound pleasure travel was forbidden until December 1947 when American tourists travelling to the Far East on board the liner President Monroe were allowed to disembark at Yokohama for twenty-four hours. While a visit to Tokyo was not allowed, the tourists visited Kamakura and the US Army base in the port city (New York Times, 1947, p.41). The first tour that included Tokyo was a one-week package excursion two months later when the New York Times carried two large photographs of American tourists inspecting the outer precincts of the Imperial Palace (New York Times, 1948, p.3).

Throughout the immediate postwar era, or at least until the Japanese manufacturers began to successfully export overseas, the tourism industry was regarded as a major foreign-exchange earner and the Japanese government invested substantially in the development of tourist infrastructure. There was insufficient hotel accommodation for westerners even by the mid-1950s, prompting the New York Times to describe Japan as "being one of the most expensive places in the world" (New York Times, 1955, p.32). Such was the importance of inbound tourism at the time that a Japanese government delegation on a visit to the US in June 1956 announced a five-year tourism plan (New York Times, p.3, 1956). A report by the Tokyo correspondent for the New York Times wrote in March 1, 1959 that 'everyone concerned with tourism here has become conscious of the vast dollar mine in this industry' (p.14).

Meanwhile, the US Occupation authorities in Japan had moved slowly to open up the Japanese airline industry post-WWII. General MacArthur did not allow the establishment of domestic civil airlines until February 1951, and only then by chartering planes and pilots from foreign carriers (New York Times, 1951, p.114). By 1958, Japan had eighty scheduled domestic air services linking twenty-one principal cities; roughly twenty percent of air passengers were foreigners, mostly Americans (New York Times, p.40, July 21).

As for international air services, July 1947 saw the commencement of Northwest Airlines services to Tokyo, followed two months later by Pan American. Then in October, SCAP allowed private Japanese companies to engage in foreign trade. By the end of 1947, foreign businessmen had begun travelling to Japan. In 1948, Nihon Tourist, the predecessor to Kinki Nippon Tourist (KNT), and Hankyu Tourist were established. From the outset, both companies, as well as the recently renamed JTB, targeted group travel. Because of a number of unethical operators in the tourism industry in these early days, the government passed the Travel Intermediary Law in 1952 to ensure fair and ethical trading. In 1953, as a result of this 'boom' in inbound travel, IATA (International Air Transport Association) gave approval to seven Japanese travel firms to operate as travel agencies. At this time, the overwhelming bulk of the travel companies' business involved arranging domestic tours for foreigners - usually U.S. military personnel - visiting or staying in Japan. The only Japanese allowed to travel abroad were government officials, government-sponsored students studying abroad and migrants.

It was not until January 1950, that the Occupation authorities allowed Japanese to travel abroad for business purposes. The first overseas group tours concerned sporting teams. The first overseas group tour of the post-war era were the Japanese athletes attending the First Asian

Games in New Delhi in 1951. In 1952, Japan participated in the Oslo Winter Olympics and the Helsinki Summer Olympics. Under the passport law of 1952, Japanese citizens were issued passports valid for one overseas trip; failure to take the trip within six months of issuance rendered the passport invalid. Wealthier Japanese circumvented the restriction on reasons for travel by the guarantor system. Under this scheme, a guarantor living abroad would guarantee all expenses by paying the all expenses in foreign currency.

In February 1954, Japan Air Lines flew its first commercial service to San Francisco, which was hailed by a Japan Air Lines official as “the biggest single step” that had taken since 1945 to improve Japan’s economic performance (New York Times, February 4, 1954, p.49). On May 26, 1959 the International Olympic Committee announced that Tokyo would host the 1964 Olympics. The major English language-daily Japan Times described it as ‘like being voted into the United Nations twice’ (May 27, 1959, p.5).

Japan's staging of the Olympic Games in 1964 marked the country's re-emergence into international society. In keeping with its higher status the government decided to liberalise the outbound market. Until 1964, the Japanese government banned placed severe restrictions on overseas travel, which was only allowable for business, government officials, technical study missions or sporting teams. On April 1, 1964, all Japanese were free to travel overseas. Three days later, in an exclusive uptown New York hospital, the first foreigner to visit Japan after WWII, Douglas MacArthur, passed away. The liberator of Japan had lived to witness the liberalisation of Japanese outbound travel.

Conclusion

This paper has, arguably, offered the first historical narrative of a century of foreign travel in Japan that coincided with the first one hundred years of Japan’s modern era. Whereas studies of Japanese tourism have almost entirely been investigated from the viewpoint of overseas travel by the Japanese themselves, this paper reveals the considerable efforts of the Japanese authorities to facilitate and encourage travel by foreigners until economic circumstances dictated a reversal of policy. The Tokyo Olympics of 1964 ushered in Japan’s miracle years of economic growth and rejuvenation following the catastrophe of WWII. For the decades that followed, it was to be overseas travel, and not inbound tourism, which focused the attention of Japanese policymakers. The more Japanese travelled overseas, the more they would help reduce the country’s burgeoning trade surplus with virtually every developed country. It was not until the beginning of the new millennium that the government, faced with the challenges of sluggish economic growth and simmering tensions with its north Asian neighbours, once again turned its attention to the benefits of inbound travel.

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