

Contents Tourism as a Component of Regional Development through Tourism in Kawagoe City, Japan

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Abstract: Kawagoe city in Saitama prefecture is often considered a success story of town (re)vitalisation through tourism and *kankō machizukuri* (tourism-based city development). The preservation of its picturesque Edo-period-style main shopping street began in the 1960s, and its development as a Koedo (‘little Edo’) tourist site began in the Heisei period (1989-2019). This article discusses the development of Kawagoe as a tourist town from the perspective of its heritage, contents, and food tourism resources. While contents tourism has played crucial roles at various points in Kawagoe’s tourism development, ultimately it is only part of a much broader touristification process. The city has been a microcosm of both broader national strategy and also some of the challenges affecting the industry in recent decades, from the large increase in numbers of foreign visitors to the damaging effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Some of the potential downsides of touristification are also discussed, particularly the intractable problem of traffic congestion caused by overtourism.

アブストラクト：埼玉県の川越市は、かつて江戸との交流が盛んであった城下町であり、今も江戸情緒を残す観光地として有名である。しかしその美しい歴史的景観形成は1960年代より始められ、観光地小江戸川越の整備は平成以降である。単純な軌跡ではなかったが、川越は観光地開発による地方活性化に成功した一例と考えられている。

本論文は、川越がいかに町並み保全を行い観光地として発展したかを、ヘリテッジツーリズム、コンテンツツーリズム、フードツーリズムの観点からも提示する。中でも、コンテンツツーリズムは、川越の観光開発において極めて重要な役割を果たしたが、観光地化の全体像を捉えた場合、多岐にわたるプロセスのほんの一部に過ぎない。

川越は、地方創生を目指した観光地化という多角的国家戦略とそれに伴う諸問題を精察できる縮図である。近年の観光業界で見られた外国人観光客の大幅な増加、観光客集中による交通渋滞等のオーバーツーリズム、また、感染症蔓延の際に浮上したマイクロツーリズムについても、川越を通して論じる。

Keywords: Kawagoe, heritage tourism, *machizukuri* (city development), Covid-19, overtourism.

Introduction

In 2011, the Japanese population began to shrink (Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications 2019). Furthermore, population flows from rural areas to urban areas have

generated a phenomenon called *kyokuten shakai* (polarized society), which means that big cities like Tokyo continue to attract young people from rural areas and the population is becoming more concentrated in metropolitan areas (Masuda 2015, p. 33). Concerned at this situation, in 2014 the Act for the Revitalisation of Towns, People and Jobs (*Machi hito shigoto sōseihō*) was enacted. The general principle was to improve regional cities both environmentally and economically in order to tackle the declining birthrate and aging society, and to reduce the concentration of the population in Tokyo (Jichitai tsūshin 2020). The Act included the development of regions through tourism, indicating how tourism has become central to addressing Japan's domestic social and economic problems in the twenty-first century. This thinking has been mirrored in in-bound tourism strategy since 2003, when various campaigns raised foreign visitor numbers from around five million in 2003 to around thirty-two million visitors in 2019 just before the Covid-19 pandemic (Yamamura and Seaton 2021, p. 404).

A White Paper issued by the Japan Tourism Agency (2018, p. 15) trumpeted the successes of this strategy and argued that tourism had become a major engine of the Japanese economy. In reality, tourism policies have enriched some local economies that have succeeded in regional revitalisation through tourism, although there have been some notable failures, too, such as Yubari in Hokkaido (Morishige 2009, pp. 9-12; Seaton 2010). Kawagoe city (Kawagoe-shi, hereafter Kawagoe) in Saitama Prefecture, just north of Tokyo, is said to be one of the success stories. Kawagoe used to have shopping streets near Kawagoe Castle. It was a prosperous centre of commerce from the Edo period to the Meiji period. However, due to the changes in people's lifestyles caused by the rapid economic growth that began in the 1950s, the shops seemed to become inconvenient and old-fashioned. Formerly prosperous shopping streets lost their vitality and began to decline. In order to stop this decline and revitalise the shopping district once again, a *machizukuri* (lit. 'town making', but meaning the creation of a better city environment) project was carried out.

This article focuses on how government-encouraged *kankō machizukuri* (tourism-based city development) was carried out in Kawagoe, leading to regional revitalisation. This *kankō machizukuri* success story is also an interesting example of how contents tourism – tourism induced by works of popular culture such as television dramas, anime and computer games (Seaton *et al.*, 2017) – may be an important component of a broader revitalisation strategy. Whereas many studies of contents tourism focus on the phenomenon in isolation, this article treats contents tourism simply as one part of a bigger story. The study examines how Kawagoe gained brand recognition as Koedo ('little Tokyo'), succeeded in revitalising the local economy, and offers a model for sustainable regional development through tourism.

Regional Development through Tourism

Machizukuri literally means 'town making'. Yasufuku (2016, p. 12) argues that the term '*machizukuri*' is a unique Japanese expression with a specific conception that is different from 'urban planning'. *Machizukuri* implies a continuous effort and time commitment that involves people frequently interacting with a community in order to improve their quality of life. A comprehensive *machizukuri* process involves the tourism industry when external resources – namely people, goods, and money – are incorporated into it (Okamura *et al.* 2009). According to Yasumura, the term '*kankō machizukuri*' began to be used actively in the 21st century. It combines 'tourism' and 'town making' to indicate the creation of a city based on the effects of tourism (Yasumura 2006, pp. 3-4, cited in Yasufuku 2016, p. 1). Morishige (2015, p. 9) defines *kankō machizukuri* as 'activities that increase the attractiveness and value of a region by utilising all local

resources and promoting cultural exchanges led by the local community.’ Although the classification of tourism resources varies according to the situation and/or researcher, Mizuno (2017, p. 345) groups resources into five categories: natural tourism resources, human tourism resources, complex tourism resources, intangible social resources (manners and customs, food, clothing and shelter, art, language), and others.

Japan’s tourism policy has developed significantly since the early 2000s and *kankō machizukuri* has gradually become one of Japan’s national growth strategies in the twenty-first century. The Japanese government’s 2003 Tourism Nation Declaration was formulated with the aim of attracting foreign tourists to Japan, and this movement was closely related to regional revitalisation. According to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications in 2019, the annual consumption per person of the resident population is 1.3 million yen (Japan Tourism Agency 2021, p. 4). It was simply calculated that if the local population decreases by one person, local consumption will also decrease by 1.3 million yen. In order to make up for the loss of one person in the population via consumption by tourists, it is necessary to attract about twenty-three Japanese overnight guests per year, or seventy-five Japanese day-trippers. However, only eight tourists are enough to make up for this loss in the case of foreign tourists.¹ This calculation assumes that an increase in the number of foreign tourists has a significant impact curbing the downturn in Japanese domestic demand caused by population shrinkage.

In 2006, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport announced 100 key points for developing regional tourism.² They included the diversification of attractive resources used for tourism, the creation of places based on local characteristics, the development of places that are not just stopovers, diversification of the actors who are involved with projects, and reconsideration of the role of the government. However, in reality, there have been cases where things did not go well due to the indifference and lack of understanding of residents, the difficulty in discovering tourism resources and generating additional value, and inadequate coordination of activities and insufficient development of human networks (Yasufuku 2016, pp. 34-35).

In recent years, the government has been promoting cultural tourism, defined as ‘tourism that aims to satisfy an intellectual desire regarding cultural elements such as Japanese history and traditions’ (Japan Tourism Agency 2010, p. 1). This definition prioritises the assumption that cultural exchanges through tourism should not be treated as a one-time encounter with different cultures and customs, but rather they should lead to deep mutual understanding. Cultural resources are any materials that provide clues for understanding the society and culture of a certain era, including both tangible and intangible materials, such as museums, art galleries, buildings, cityscapes, traditional performing arts, and festivals. More specifically, they also include a wide range of experiences, such as austere training at a temple, cosplay, eating gourmet food, and pilgrimages to anime sacred sites (*anime seichi junrei*) or drama locations. The critical point about cultural tourism is that instead of treating culture and tourism as dichotomous, a synergistic effect should be gained by building good harmony between culture and tourism. In the end, the aims are coexistence and sustainable mutual development.

With the enactment of the Cultural Tourism Promotion Act in May 2020, the Agency for Cultural Affairs has identified two challenging issues. The first is that even if there are attractive cultural resources, there has not been sufficient effort to explain and introduce their value in an easy-to-understand manner. The second is that there is insufficient transportation, which impedes visitors from inside and outside Japan (Agency for Cultural Affairs n.d.). These days, tourism promotion in rural areas is being emphasised. There are still many areas that are not ready to accept and accommodate tourists for reasons that go beyond simply the provision of transportation. The shift from ‘consumption of goods’ to ‘consumption of experiences’ makes it all the more difficult to

handle given the ever-diversifying needs of tourists. The 2020 Cultural Tourism Promotion Act, therefore, is aimed at creating a virtuous cycle in which economic effects are reinvested in culture by locating key cultural tourism facilities (*bunka kankō kyoten shisetsu*) at the core of the promotion of tourism and the economy based on culture. The final goal is to realise sustainable cultural promotion and economic development in the local area (Figure 1).

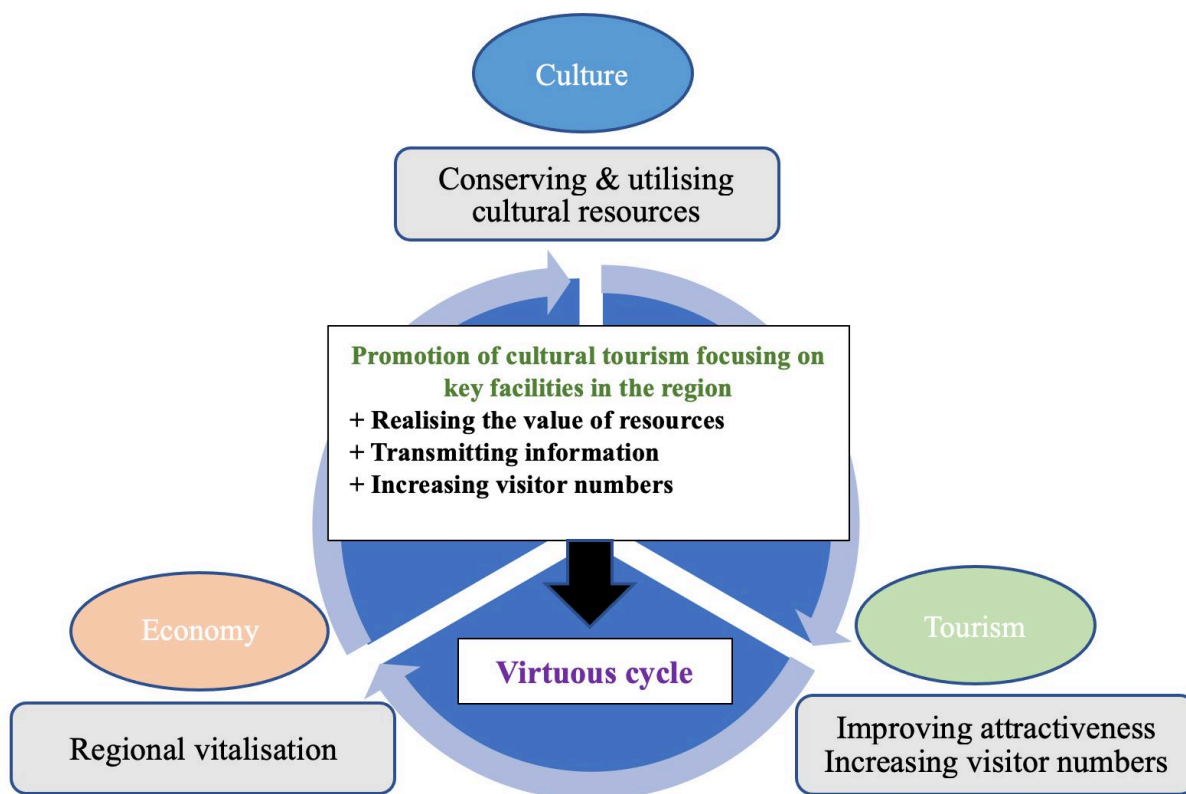


Figure 1: Virtuous cycle of culture, tourism, and economy targeted by the Culture and Tourism Promotion Act presented by Agency for Cultural Affairs (n.d.)
Image created and translated by the author.

Creating a theme for the region

There are various reasons people go sightseeing, such as to enjoy something extraordinary, or to see a place one has heard about in magazines or on TV. It is necessary to convert the interest in the tourist destination into a strong desire to visit the site in person. To increase the attractiveness of the tourist area, branding is strongly recommended by the government. In 2012, 'regional branding' was added to the white paper on tourism (Ōi 2013, p. 9). Furthermore, the Japan Heritage registration that began in 2015 encouraged the branding of a region and reconfirmation of its identity (Suga and Ogawa 2018, p. 203). Japan Heritage emphasises stories that tell the culture and traditions of Japan.

Between 2016 and 2020, the Japan Tourism Agency worked on a project to attract tourists to local areas via the use of theme-based tourism (Japan Tourism Agency n.d.). Theme-based tourism had been gaining attention as a style of travel competing with mass tourism. Examples included ecotourism, green tourism, health tourism, contents tourism, and so on (Takayama 2014, pp. 56-59).

The Japan Tourism Agency (n.d.) encouraged those involved in the tourism industry to work together with other actors, including those in other places related to the same story or a similar theme. Questionnaires and monitor tours were conducted to investigate the needs and satisfaction of tourists. Based on the results of these surveys, the Japan Tourism Agency supported various initiatives, such as strengthening systems for accepting tourists, creating common manuals, strengthening information dissemination, and expanding networks by holding symposiums. These activities had the aim of helping with the refinement of tourism resources and the planning of how to attract tourists to local areas. The premise was that when tourist destinations have a specific theme, it makes it easier for tourists to understand the place and to make travel plans (Japan Tourism Agency n.d.).

This trend of utilising a theme is reminiscent of the ‘Disneyization’ often seen in global society. Disneyization is a term coined by Alan Bryman (2004, p. 5) to describe ‘the process by which the principles of Disney theme parks come to dominate various sectors of society and the world.’ The concept of Disneyization has four aspects: theming, hybrid consumption, merchandising, and performative labor (2004, p. 2). This process permeates the tourism industry as well. Bryman (2004, p. 15) states that ‘theming provides a veneer of meaning and symbolism to the objects to which it is applied. In infusing objects with meaning through theming, they are deemed to be made more attractive and interesting.’ Second,

hybrid consumption is the form of consumption associated with different institutional fields and they become interlocked with each other. [...] The goal of hybrid consumption is to give people as many reasons as possible for staying at the sites. The more needs that can be met, the longer visitors will stay and the more money they will spend.

(Bryman 2004, pp. 57-59)

Meanwhile, a typical example of merchandising in Japan is ‘Hello Kitty.’ Kitty appears in various outfits as a local character. And finally, examples of performative labor include people who take the roles of ninjas in front of famous castles to please tourists (even if ninjas did not actually exist there), and people who pull rickshaws in historic tourist spots.

In short, the assumption underpinning the theming of regions, or perhaps their ‘Disneyization’, is that themed tourist sites are more impressive, encourage tourists to stay longer, and induce them to come back again.

Microtourism

The massive effort put into developing tourism strategy between 2003 and 2019 at all levels of the Japanese government hit a brick wall in 2020. During the Covid-19 pandemic, inbound tourism was heavily regulated from March 2020 to May 2023 and the tourism industry suffered great financial hardship. In domestic tourism, in order to avoid the ‘three Cs’ – closed spaces, crowded places, and close-contact settings – people stayed away from public transportation and the number of tourists decreased sharply. However, travel fever did not disappear. Given the strong government pressure not to travel outside one’s home prefecture, people in the Japanese travel industry started promoting a style of travel called ‘microtourism’. One formulation of this idea by Hoshino Yoshiharu, CEO of Hoshino Resorts (Hoshino 2020), positioned microtourism as a form of short-distance travel, mainly by private car, to local tourist spots about one to two hours away from home. Some of the

definitions of microtourism do not specify the means of transportation, but automobiles were said to be better in terms of eliminating the risks of the three Cs.

This type of short-distance travel has existed ever since family trips became popular after the advent of private cars in the period of rapid economic growth from the 1950s. The period from the 1960s to 1970s was called '*kankō yusō kakumei*' (tourism transport revolution) as tourism behaviour developed amidst expanding transportation infrastructure (Ishimori and Yamamura 2009, p. 8). For example, the Tokaido Shinkansen opened in 1964, and with the introduction of the Boeing B-747 in 1970 overseas travel accelerated (Higashide 2011, p. 27). For the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, many roads such as Izu Skyline were opened, which opened up new domestic travel options. Between 1960 and 1970, family trips were primarily for viewing natural scenery or visiting hot springs (Morishita 2015, pp. 57-59). Therefore, small-scale short-distance trips similar to 'microtourism' existed using both public transport and private cars from the 1960s and arguably even further back.

However, the microtourism proposed by Hoshino added a new dimension to such previous travel patterns. While packaged as travel to know better the charms of one's local area, in essence it was a means of promoting tourism under Covid-19 travel restrictions. It was argued by its proponents that if bonds could be built with local people and if the attachment of tourists to the area could be increased, there was a high possibility that the number of repeaters would increase because it was short-distance travel rather than long-distance travel. This would enable the area to revitalise and bring a stable economy to the region. Promotion of microtourism was an understandable move by an industry being devastated by the Covid-19 pandemic, and the allusion to regional revitalisation added an altruistic element to tourism behaviour. However, while tourist sites/destinations within one to two hours of major population centres could conceivably recover (or perhaps stave off bankruptcy) through microtourism, areas heavily reliant on travellers from outside the region, particularly Hokkaido and Okinawa, could not. Among the many Hoshino Resorts facilities, occupancy rates in these areas did not recover during the early period of pandemic travel restrictions (Yamamoto 2021, p. 12).

With the abolition of Covid-19 restrictions in May 2023, microtourism as a means of helping out the travel industry under pandemic conditions lost its significance. Things quickly returned to 'business as usual'. However, the microtourism debate did shine a spotlight on the potential benefits of short-distance tourism within *kankō machizukuri* discourse. This is relevant to the Kawagoe case because of the city's close proximity to central Tokyo, and therefore its heavy reliance on day trips rather than overnight stays. This is why the microtourism concept – characterised by short-distance travel with a purpose of deepening attachments to local places and driving regional (re)vitalisation – is pertinent in communities with *kankō machizukuri* policies well beyond the pandemic restrictions under which microtourism as tourism strategy emerged. As will be seen in the upcoming sections, these three issues of community building through tourism, the creation of a theme for the destination, and the nurturing of primarily short-distance travel have been central concepts within the development of Kawagoe as a tourism destination since the 1990s.

Kankō Machizukuri in Kawagoe

Kawagoe, located in the southwestern part of Saitama Prefecture, has a population of approximately 350,000. Kawagoe has three major train stations and is easily accessible from Tokyo. Kawagoe city (*shi*) was born on 1 December 1922 when Kawagoe town (*chō*) in Iruma county (*gun*) absorbed Senba village (*mura*). It was the first municipality in Saitama to become a city (*shi*). The population

of Kawagoe was 104,612 in 1955 when it merged with nine neighbouring villages (Kawagoe city 2022b). Compared with the overall depopulation trends in Japan, Kawagoe's growth is remarkable.

Kawagoe marked its centenary in 2022. Even during the Covid-19 pandemic, its streets were bustling with crowds (see Figures 2 and 9). However, Kawagoe's contemporary vibrancy is in contrast to previous periods of decline. Kawagoe's high streets situated far from the main railway stations struggled during the period of high economic growth, and the collapse of the focal point of the community caused a municipal crisis. Kawagoe, which had maintained its position as a local centre of commerce since the Edo period, utilised historical resources such as festivals, temples, and its Edo period townscape for revitalisation of the area by the community. In this way, Kawagoe successfully transformed into the tourist city it is today (Nogimura 2008, pp. 148-149).

This section examines how the city was developed and how it transformed into a well-known tourist city. The discussion focuses on local activities after the decline of the city centre to identify the policies pursued and the effects achieved via *kankō machizukuri*. The tourism development process is described within the context of three archetypal forms of tourism in Japan: heritage, contents, and food.

Heritage tourism

The foundation of Kawagoe's contemporary tourism industry is its historical significance as a castle town during the Edo period and the use of that history as a tourism resource today, in other words, heritage tourism. The prominence of heritage is obvious from the way Kawagoe divides its tourism resources into four sightseeing areas as shown in Table 1:

Table 1: The four areas of Kawagoe. Source: Kawagoe city 2022c.

A	<i>Kurazukuri</i> area (Ichibangai-dōri)	The traditional <i>kurazukuri</i> townscape gives off the atmosphere of Edo. Furthermore, there are buildings and shops that symbolise the four eras of Meiji (1868~), Taisho (1912~), Showa (1926~) and Heisei (1989~).
B	Honmaru Goten area (the palace where the Lord of Kawagoe Castle resided and government affairs were conducted)	Kawagoe Castle was built in 1457. During the Sengoku and Edo periods, it was an important military and political site. In 2006, it was selected as one of Japan's top 100 castles.
C	Kita-in Temple area	Various cultural properties are exhibited at Kita-in Temple, such as some remains of Edo Castle. Some of them are nationally designated important cultural properties.
D	<i>Taikengata</i> (experiential) area	Green tourism is conducted around Isa numa (pond) and visitors enjoy nature during the four seasons

The area that prospered as the castle town around Kawagoe Castle in the Edo period (1603-1867) is now famous for its *kurazukuri* (*kura* storehouse) townscape that seems to retain the atmosphere of Edo (what is now Tokyo). *Kurazukuri* was a popular architectural style in the Edo period. The charm here is that the atmosphere of the past and the present can be appreciated at the same time

(Figure 2). However, this townscape did not exist in this location during the Edo period. Construction of the *kurazukuri* townscape was triggered by the Great Fire of 1893. Only the Ōsawa residence (Figure 3) built in *kurazukuri* style was able to survive the fire. Consequently, the merchants of Kawagoe recognised the durability of *kurazukuri* and introduced the style to create the existing townscape (Suzuki 2019, p. 66).



Figure 2: The Kurazukuri townscape of Kawagoe and the famous bell tower. Note the Starbucks in a modern building using old architectural styles. The street was thronging with masked tourists in January 2023, while Japan was still under Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. Photo: Philip Seaton.



Figure 3: The Ōsawa residence, Kawagoe. Photo: Toyozawa Chikako

In 1895, the first railway was constructed in Kawagoe. The introduction of the railway service made it easier to access the Tokyo metropolitan area. People began to move to Kawagoe and it became a commuter town. Shopping areas and banks were built around the station, and people considered living near the station to be convenient. As a result, the centre of the city shifted to the area around the station and away from the Kawagoe Castle area. During the period of rapid economic growth that began at the end of 1955, many *kurazukuri* storehouses were torn down because they gave a dark, outdated impression. Another indicator of the lack of consciousness of Kawagoe's heritage as a tourism resource is pointed out by guides today in the Honmaru Goten Palace: marks on the ceilings of one of the rooms are a reminder that this historical site was used for many years by schoolchildren as a room for practicing volleyball (Figure 4).

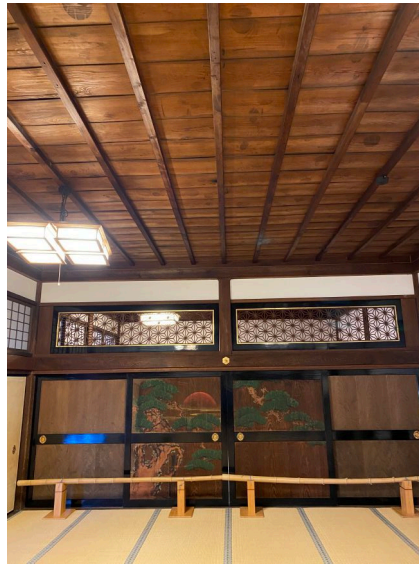


Figure 4: A room inside the Honmaru Goten Palace.

Note the marks on the ceiling caused by volleyballs. Photo: Philip Seaton

However, attitudes towards heritage in Kawagoe changed significantly from the 1960s. In around 1965 the townscape preservation movement began. In 1971, the Ōsawa residence was designated as an important cultural property and storehouse-style houses were highly evaluated, although many citizens of Kawagoe were still skeptical about preserving traditional cultural properties (Nogimura 2008, p. 149). A civic group called Kawagoe Kura no Kai (Kawagoe Kura Building Association) was established in 1983.³ Nogimura (2008, p. 150) states that this was the starting point of community development (*machizukuri*) involving local people. In 1985, Kawagoe was certified as a model city of the Community Mart structure led by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry. The concept was to form a city where people could gather, relax and have fun, rather than just using the city centre as a shopping district. In 1987, the Ichibangai Shopping Street (the *kurazukuri* area) launched a Townscape Committee (Machinami Iinkai) (Nogimura 2008, p. 150). Maintenance of traditional buildings began and electric wires were put underground to create a better landscape in 1992 (Ichibangai area) and 1994 (Kanetsuki-dōri area) (Katō n.d.). The main streets were repaired and tidied up. Kawagoe was selected as an Important Preservation District for Groups of Traditional Buildings in 1999. All these activities were to increase the number of visitors and for the revitalisation of the area.

In 1989, the NHK taiga (historical) drama *Kasuga no Tsubone* (Kasuga the Court Lady) was broadcast. Suzuki (2019, p. 69) states that it was the direct trigger for the birth of Kawagoe as a tourist destination (see Figure 5). Kita-in Temple located in Kawagoe was deeply connected to Edo Castle because it preserves some remnants of the castle (Figure 6).⁴ They include the room where Shogun Iemitsu was born and the dressing room that belonged to Iemitsu's nursemaid, Kasuga no Tsubone (1579-1643). Those who saw *Kasuga no Tsubone* on television and wanted to see things related to her or Edo Castle visited Kita-in Temple in Kawagoe. NHK's dramas have long been recognised as tourism drivers (see Seaton *et al.* 2017, p. 153-154) and some local governments, seeing the positive impact of historical dramas on tourism, started active campaigns to become drama locations around the latter half of the 1990s (Kitamura 2016, p. 21).

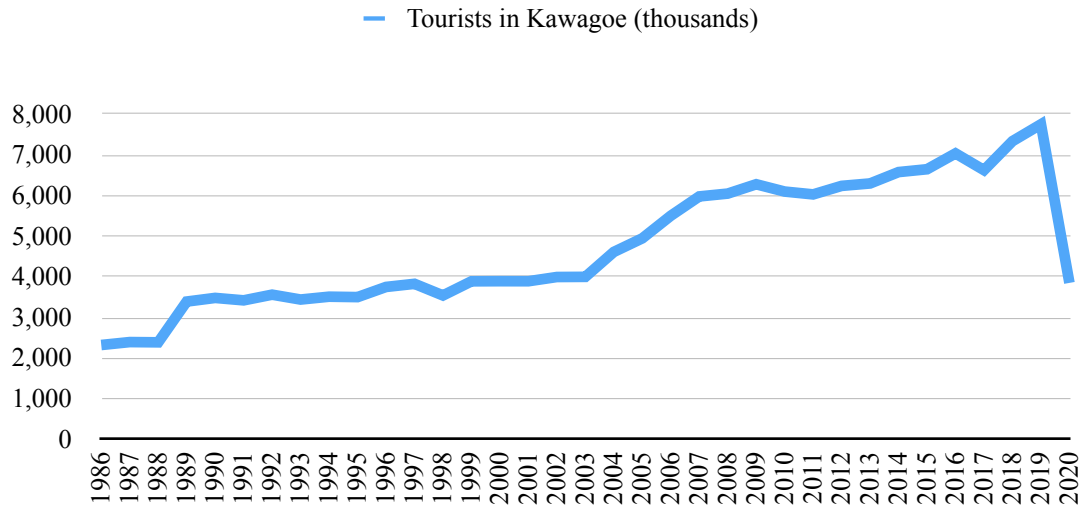


Figure 5: Visitor numbers to Kawagoe, 1986-2020 (thousands of people)
Compiled by the author from various Kawagoe city documents

Table 2: A chronology of notable tourism events in Kawagoe

1983	Kawagoe Kura no Kai established	1999	Designation as an Important Preservation District
1985	Community Mart concept launched	2003	Kawagoe Festival Hall opens
1987	Townscape committee (Machinami Inikai) launched	2009	<i>Tsubasa</i> broadcast on TV
1989	<i>Kasuga no Tsubone</i> broadcast on TV	2016	Kawagoe Hikawa Festival becomes UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage
1992~	Electric wiring placed underground	2020	Covid-19



Figure 6: Kita-in Temple. An important site of contents tourism related to the drama *Kasuga no Tsubone*. Photo: Toyozawa Chikako

Kawagoe is now famous as a tourist destination and known as Koedo ('Little Edo'). It is one of about forty places nationwide using this nickname because of its historical connections to Edo and an atmosphere reminiscent of that period. Kawagoe prospered through trade with Edo (Japan's centre of political power in the Edo period), has a townscape in the style of *kurazukuri* that retains the atmosphere of Edo, and has a float festival that was influenced by the Edo Tenka Festival. However, Kawagoe was not a tourist spot up to the late Showa Era (1926-1989). It changed into 'Little Edo Kawagoe' during the thirty years of the Heisei Era (1989-2019). By placing electric wires underground, building cobbled roads, preserving buildings, and landscaping, the city developed the theme of 'Koedo' in a space reminiscent of a theme park (Suzuki 2019, pp. 71-74). Since 1996, a Koedo Summit has been held together with Tochigi City and Katori City in Chiba Prefecture (formerly Sawara City), two other cities with similar connections to Edo, to promote the charm of Koedo (Kawagoe city 2020c).

A majority of the historical townscapes in Japan have their origins in the Edo period or earlier. However, some changed their appearance substantially during modernization, some became run down, and some are themselves modern (re)constructions. Furthermore, many historical townscapes were changed or lost during the period of high economic growth, although some have since been restored based on the parts that were left behind (Okajima and Tadokoro 2018, p. 27). Kawagoe fits into this process of social change and the construction of a historic townscape while accepting the changing times. In 1999, Kawagoe was selected as an Important Preservation District for Groups of Traditional Buildings. Building a historic townscape and being selected as an important preservation district also form part of the branding process. The more landscape brand value the city has, the more it helps to attract additional tourists. Kawagoe has made good use of this phenomenon. However, as Koike points out, the selection process for an Important Preservation District for Groups of Traditional Buildings was originally created for the purpose of protecting cultural heritage, but now it seems to function as a branding tool or advertisement for tourism development (Koike 2018, p. 185).

In addition to Kawagoe's physical heritage, there is also intangible heritage in the form of festivals. Various festivals (*matsuri*) are held in Japan every year. Many have their roots in Shinto rituals, although some modern festivals have lost such ritual aspects. *Matsuri* nowadays have diversified and in addition to any historical Shinto meanings may have the function of revitalising local communities, confirming identities, and developing the regional brand (Kanno 2011, pp. 18-22). In Kawagoe, the Koedo Kawagoe Spring Festival, Kawagoe Hyakumantō Summer Festival, and Kawagoe Festival in autumn are famous. Kawagoe Hyakumantō Summer Festival is said to have started when Kiriko lanterns were hung at the entrance to people's houses in memory of the head of the Kawagoe domain, who passed away in 1850. The Kawagoe Festival has a history of more than 370 years and has preserved the style and atmosphere of the Tenka Matsuri of Edo. In 2005, it was designated as a National Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property; and in 2016 it was registered as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, as one of the thirty-three selected festivals with processions of floats called *yama*, *hoko* or *yatai*. Both of these festivals have long traditions. On the other hand, Koedo Kawagoe Festival started only in 1990. Suzuki (2019, p. 70) has pointed out that in 1989, the year the taiga drama *Kasuga no Tsubone* was broadcast, the establishment of the Koedo Kawagoe Festival was proposed in a municipal document. The introduction of this festival was part of the development of the area as a tourist destination. During the 1980s, Kawagoe was focusing on preserving the scenery of Ichibangai Street in the *kurazukuri* area following the establishment of Kura no Kai in 1983, the Community Mart initiative from 1985, and the launch of the Townscape Committee (Machinami Iinkai) in 1987 (Sawasaki *et al.* 2012a, p. 2).

Contents tourism

Contents tourism was first defined by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport in 2005. It was argued that municipalities could promote tourism and related industries via the use of media contents – such as the narratives of films, TV dramas, novels, manga, games, and so on – which are connected to specific regions. The essence of contents tourism was the addition of a ‘narrative quality’ (*monogatari sei*) or ‘theme’ (*tēmasei*) to a region, in other words, an atmosphere or image particular to the region generated by the contents, and the use of that narrative quality as a tourism resource (Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport *et al.* 2005, p. 45). Examples of works inducing contents tourism mentioned in the report included NHK’s drama *Kita no kuni kara* (From the Northern Country), the film *Love Letter*, the novel/TV drama *Sekai no chūshin de ai wo sakebu* (Crying out Love, in the Centre of the World), the Korean drama *Fuyu no sonata* (Winter Sonata), the NHK taiga drama *Shinsengumi!*, and the Mizuki Shigeru Museum (Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport *et al.* 2005, pp. 51-53), and these cases also went on to feature in early academic research into the phenomenon (for example, Masubuchi 2009, p. 34).

Examples of contents tourism in Kawagoe during this early phase of contents tourism research (roughly 1990-2010) include NHK’s taiga drama *Kasuga no Tsubone* in 1989 and NHK’s morning drama *Tsubasa* (Wings) in 2009. They are representative examples of taiga drama tourism (Seaton 2015) and *asadora* (morning drama) tourism respectively (Scherer and Thelen 2017). Nakamura (2003, cited in Maehara 2008, p. 136) has categorised the effects of such dramas in three ways: temporary (*ikkasei*), long-term increase (*bēsu-appu*) and irrelevant (*mukankei*). The temporary effect is when the number of visitors increases from around the year before the broadcast.⁵ After peaking, the number of tourists decreases and returns to the level before the drama. When there is a long-term increase, visitor numbers increase during the year of the broadcast and reach a peak. After the drama there is a slight decrease, but the long-term level of visitors after the drama is higher than before. The irrelevant effect is when the number of visitors shows little change and it is unlikely that the drama has had any significant impact on tourism levels (Nakamura 2003, p. 94, cited in Maehara 2008, p. 136). *Kasuga no Tsubone* attracted tourists from throughout Japan and resulted in increased name recognition for Kawagoe (Suzuki 2019, p. 70). Thereafter, tourists visiting Kawagoe did not drop and plateaued at a significantly higher level than before (Figure 5). This exemplifies the long-term increase pattern. A small rise can also be seen in 2009, the year *Tsubasa* aired, followed by a slight drop in tourism numbers the next year. Kawagoe city identifies the diminishing effects of *Tsubasa* as one of the factors for the decrease in tourists (Kawagoe city 2011). *Tsubasa*, therefore, exemplifies the temporary peak pattern.

In recent years, Kawagoe has promoted animations related to Kawagoe and supported filmmakers shooting in the city (Kawagoe Tourism Division Staff, interview 28 October 2022). For example, Kawagoe launched the Kawagoe Location Service in cooperation with the Kawagoe Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Koedo Kawagoe Tourism Association (Kawagoe city 2022d). The service provides information on locations and procedures for those who want to shoot movies and dramas in the city. Meanwhile, Gochi NAVI Kawagoe is a list of affiliated stores that prepare *rokeben* (‘location *bentō*’, or lunch boxes for people working at shooting locations). These initiatives help the economic benefits of contents production to be felt even by small local businesses in the city, and provide an economic boost in advance of any contents tourism benefits.

Under this strategy, major animation releases include *Kamisama hajimemashita* (Kamisama Kiss) in 2012 and 2015, *Tsuki ga kirei* (As the Moon, So Beautiful) in 2017, and *Koisuru shōwakusei* (Asteroid in Love) in 2020. Several anime pilgrimage location guides have appeared on

the city's website and promote contents tourism. They have contributed to the broader upward trend in visitor numbers during the 2010s. However, none of these works have had a decisive, long-term effect that can be discerned from the tourism data (Figure 5) – indeed, works triggering a long-term increase are not very common (Kitamura 2016, p. 21). But, there is a cumulative effect by which multiple works slowly build a local brand of a place that inspires many stories. The result is that Kawagoe has become a site of 'complex contents tourism' in the manner of other cities boasting many local works, such as Matsuyama in Ehime prefecture (Seaton *et al.* 2017, p. 36). And the more that this brand gains attention in travel magazines, television travel shows, social media posts, and so on, the more there is general *media tourism* triggered by reportage about Kawagoe overlapping with the *contents tourism* triggered by animes, dramas, and so on set in Kawagoe.

Food tourism

Food tourism is when people visit a region for the explicit purpose or motivation of enjoying the local food and food culture (Yasuda 2012, p. 103). According to a JTB survey regarding domestic travel activities, visiting hot springs was the most popular activity with 64.4 per cent of people across all age groups answering that they enjoy it. In second place was food and gourmet at 55.0 per cent (Kankō keizai shinbun 2017). Ishida, Maruyama and Kurihara note that the advantage of using local food culture as a tourism resource is that it does not require a large initial investment, unlike hot spring resort development. It can become a tourism resource even in rural areas or small cities with limited financial resources (Ishida, Maruyama and Kurihara 2015, p. 193).

Food culture in Kawagoe is one of the reasons why people visit (Mizoo and Sugawara 2000, p. 92). Kawagoe is famous for eel and sweet potato, which have been eaten in Kawagoe since the Edo period. This food culture features prominently on the Koedo Kawagoe Tourist Association (n.d.) website as one of the city's attractions. However, with such a wealth of local cuisines around Japan, inter-regional competition is fierce. The target market of food tourism is also spreading beyond domestic tourists to include foreign visitors to Japan, too (Yasuda 2012, p. 108).

Another aspect of food tourism in Kawagoe is the growing reputation of the local craft beer, COEDO. From the 1990s there was a local beer (*ji bīru*) boom as the relaxation of regulations allowed the proliferation of local microbreweries. However, local beer gained something of a negative reputation for being expensive, not tasty, and sold simply as a souvenir item. Local breweries seeking to avoid such a reputation often call themselves craft beer these days (Tabi labo 2016). COEDO brands itself in this way by featuring the beer-making expertise behind the production process, in particular how German *braumeister* Christian Mitterbauer IV spent five years from 1997 teaching company employees the art of beer-making (Coedo Brewery n.d.). COEDO has transcended the negative image of 'local beer' by winning many awards at global beer competitions held in the United States and Germany. It has also been exported to twenty-five countries around the world (Nissho Assist Biz 2022). The COEDO (beer) brand, therefore, adds value to the Koedo ('little Edo') brand, and the beer features prominently in shop displays along Kawagoe's tourist streets and on the menus of local restaurants (Figure 7).



Figure 7: COEDO beer on sale in a shop on Kawagoe's main tourist street. Photo: Philip Seaton

However, COEDO beer also includes a sustainable concept. According to CEO Asagiri Shigeharu of Kyōdō Shōji, the company that produces COEDO, the beer business originated as a way to use substandard sweet potatoes destined for disposal (one of the signature beers to this day is Beniaka, 'Imperial Sweet Potato Amber'). The company is now preparing to grow their own barley so that they can use not only local sweet potatoes but also locally-produced barley for beer (Nissho Assist Biz 2022). This philosophy connects to ideas of sustainable tourism and green tourism, another keyword featured in the Koedo Kawagoe Tourist Association website. This integration of concepts across various forms of tourism and among various actors within the tourism industry contributes to the development of a coherent overall local brand.

Kawagoe's Successful Tourism Development and the Problems it Raises

From the perspective of the tourism industry, the steady upward trend over three decades in tourist numbers (Figure 5) constitutes a clear success story. Heritage, contents, and food/drink might be the pillars of the local brand, but other external factors are involved in the Kawagoe story, too.

First and foremost, Kawagoe's tourism development has ridden the wave of national tourism policy and promotion. Indeed, it might be categorized as an archetypal success story of the type envisaged by the government. In April 2003, the government declared that Japan would become a tourism nation based on the philosophy of 'creating a country that is good to live in, good to visit' (*Sunde yoshi, otozurete yoshi no kunizukuri*) (Kankō rikkoku kondankai 2003). Between 2007 and 2016, Kawagoe developed as a tourism city using this very slogan, 'Good to live in, good to visit'. In its second tourism promotion plan for the period 2016-2025, Kawagoe has stoked the pride of citizens with the slogan, 'Let's tell the world! Stylish Koedo Kawagoe' (*Sekai ni hasshin shiyō! Edo ga ikizuku machi Koedo Kawagoe*). There are four basic policies: (1) Creating new tourism, (2) Making Kawagoe a tourism destination where foreigners can enjoy themselves, (3) Creating an environment where tourists are able to enjoy sightseeing with peace of mind, and (4) Promoting *kankō machizukuri* from the citizens' point of view (Kawagoe city 2016, pp. 1-3).

The rationale for and results of the new focus on international visitors are evident in foreigner visitor numbers (Figure 8). According to official Kawagoe statistics, the total number of tourists visiting Kawagoe in 2007 was 5.981 million and by 2019 (the year before Covid-19) this had increased to 7.757 million. In 2007, the number of foreign tourists in Kawagoe numbered only 31,000 (about 0.5 per cent of the total), but in 2019 numbers increased ninefold to 313,000 (about 4.0 per cent of the total). The largest number of tourists came from Taiwan (40.2 per cent), followed by Thailand (13.1 per cent) and Hong Kong (11.0 per cent) (Kawagoe city 2008, p. 2; Kawagoe city 2020b, p. 21-22). The Kawagoe Tourism Division believes that this abrupt increase is largely due to the fact that the Kawagoe Hikawa Festival float event was registered as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2016 and has gained international attention (Kawagoe city 2017, p. 2).

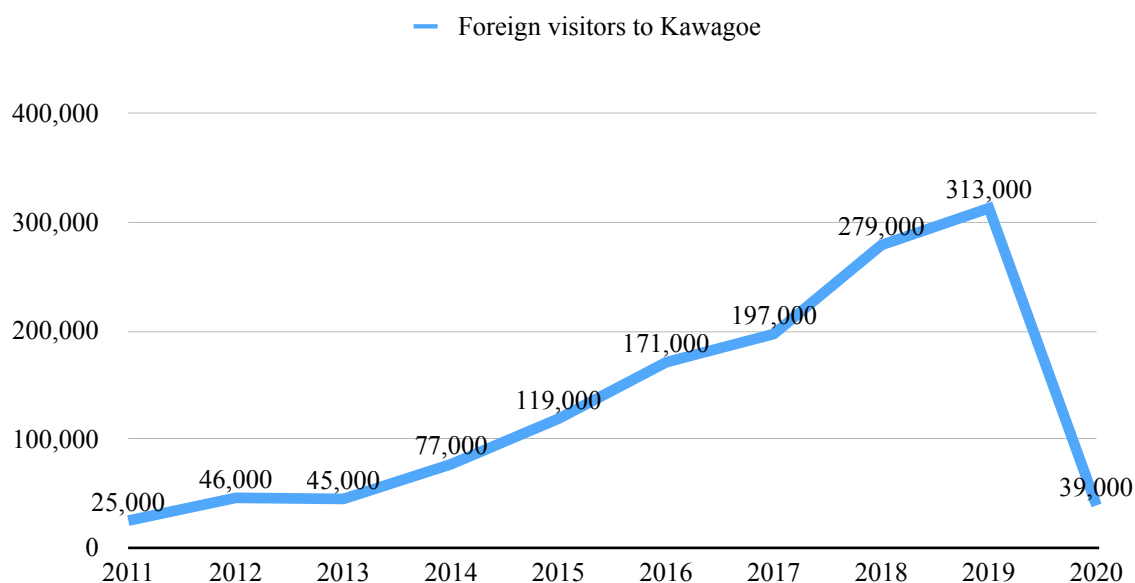


Figure 8: Foreign Visitors to Kawagoe, 2011-2020
Source: Kawagoe city (2021)

Kawagoe's specific municipal initiatives for foreign tourists include: (1) Utilizing SNS to disseminate information, (2) Providing multilingual support at tourist facilities and information centers, and (3) Educating tour guides who can understand cultural differences and respond to foreign tourists' needs (Kawagoe city 2016, p.4). The significant increase in foreign tourists is evidence that tourism promotion aimed at foreigners has produced favorable results (Figure 8). However, once again these local initiatives ride the wave of national policy and other regional developments. The massive increase in foreign tourists in Kawagoe from 2007 to 2019 reflects the major growth in aggregate inbound tourism, which rose from 8.3 million to 31.9 million people in the same period. Kawagoe is easily accessed from central Tokyo (the fastest connection being 26 minutes from Ikebukuro on the Tobu Line) and there is plentiful information in multiple foreign languages for tourists based in Tokyo, including on the websites of the train companies serving the city. The train companies have responded by increasing services and making special offers, such as the Seibu Kawagoe Pass. Furthermore, foreign visitors (who are counted when they visit the tourism information centre) are not just inbound tourists. They also come from the local resident population in Japan. Kawagoe itself was home to 5,909 foreigners at the 2020 census. Tokyo International University has over 1,400 international students and since 2014 its E-track program

(bachelor's and master's degrees taught in English) has been based at the Kawagoe campus. Kawagoe's international tourism profile, therefore, exists within the broadening international make-up of the local population and Japanese society as a whole.

Tourism-induced problems

The impacts of tourism on a region are not limited to the economy, but also extend to society and the environment, and these impacts may be negative as well as positive (Kanezaki 2019, p. 51). The environmental pollution, destruction, noise, and garbage problems generated by tourism have become widely discussed within the discourse of overtourism. In the Japanese context, discussion of *kankō kōgai* (literally 'tourism pollution') has focused on Kyoto and Kamakura. However, Kawagoe risks becoming another example in this category. This section discusses tourism-induced problems in Kawagoe from social, local environmental, and global environmental perspectives, and how tackling these problems are part of *kankō machizukuri* that is genuinely *sustainable* rather than simply a temporary or unsustainable version of regional revitalisation (*chiiki fukkō* or *chiiki shinkō*).

Kanezaki points out that when there is overtourism, there is a danger that the residents will lose their sense of identity and local culture. Areas with high levels of tourist activity tend to have a growing population and, if not properly managed, there is the risk of fundamental change to the social character of the community (Kanezaki 2019, p. 52). Finding a balance between the community receiving the economic benefits of tourism and not having the social fabric of their community undermined by tourism is the key. This largely depends on the efforts of residents. In Kawagoe, since the establishment of the Kura no Kai association in 1983, the residents have taken the initiative to develop the city and contribute to the development of the local community. Activities promote consciousness of the '*machi*' (town) and are based on preserving and passing on traditional culture, and the preservation of historic buildings and their utilization. Kura no Kai frames its mission as undertaking sustainable *machizukuri* with a focus on history and culture through dialogue with a wide range of citizens and organizations (Kawagoe Kura no Kai n.d.).



Figure 9: Traffic and tourists compete for space on Kawagoe's narrow roads.
Photo: Philip Seaton.

The second issue in Kawagoe is common to most sites of overtourism: traffic congestion (Figure 9). Every year the municipal government conducts a detailed tourism questionnaire covering the

purpose of visitors' trips, forms of travel, means of transportation, length of stay, tourist spots visited, requests for improvement, and so on. The major requests are ensuring traffic safety, developing free rest areas and toilets, and increasing parking lots (Kawagoe city 2016, p. 2). Traffic safety, including solving traffic jams, always ranks first. This problem affects not only tourists but also residents. This difficult issue has been dubbed 'the last problem of *kankō machizukuri* in Kawagoe' (Sawasaki *et al.* 2012b, pp. 328) because the interests of stakeholders clash, rendering a solution difficult to find. For example, tourists say that the popular Ichibangai-dōri road is dangerous to walk down because there are too many cars and that traffic restrictions should be implemented and a pedestrian zone created. Local residents, meanwhile, say that a car-free zone would be inconvenient and cause problems, such as delays in product deliveries. Some residents have resented sacrificing their livelihoods for tourism, and some suspect that the city was neglecting residents in its drive to develop through tourism (Sawasaki *et al.* 2012b, pp. 330-331). A solution to this intractable problem has yet to be found, but there are ongoing attempts to find a resolution through an active process of consensus-building via consultation. Various initiatives and experiments are listed in Table 3, and from 2012 the city has published regular traffic report newsletters (*Machinaka kōtsū tsūshin*, 20 editions as of November 2023) on its website (Kawagoe city 2020a).

Table 3: Stages in the Traffic Problem Consultation Process. Source: Compiled by the author based on Sawasaki *et al.* (2012a, pp. 326-328) and Kawagoe city 2020a

Year	Positive actions
2000	Park and ride experiment
2001	Park and cycle experiment
2003	Public awareness survey on traffic
2007	Starting up the Review Board for Transportation
2009	Pedestrian zone experiment
2011	Proposal to the mayor from the Review Board for Transportation Publication of <i>Machinaka kōtsū tsūshin</i>

The third issue is the macro environmental picture. Humanity has entered an era of climate breakdown triggered by fossil fuel burning and excessive resource extraction/use. Tourism is a significant contributing factor to climate breakdown and the industry faces ever-louder demands to respond. In May 2021, the municipal government announced the Koedo Kawagoe Decarbonization Declaration signed by Mayor Kawai Yoshiaki. The aim is net zero carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 and the local government has sought the cooperation of citizens, businesses, and private organisations (Kawai 2021). Furthermore, the 'Eco Action 21' program established by the Ministry of the Environment certifies companies that both reduce the environmental impact of society as a whole and revitalise the economy. Thirty-three companies in Kawagoe city have already been certified (Kawagoe city 2023).

Tourism in the post-Covid-19 era

The Covid-19 pandemic was devastating for the tourism industry worldwide. In Kawagoe, inbound tourism from overseas stopped almost completely for around two years, although tourism by resident foreigners still continued to be registered (Figure 8). In the period of Covid-19-related travel restrictions (March 2020 to May 2023), microtourism was promoted by the industry as a means of mitigating the effects of Covid-19. During the pandemic, a certain tendency toward microtourism was observed with 80 per cent of tourists in 2021 coming from neighboring areas such as Saitama prefecture (57 per cent) and Tokyo (22 per cent) (Kawagoe city 2022e, p. 20). For comparison, visitors from these two prefectures were 57 per cent (Saitama 34 per cent and Tokyo 23 per cent) in 2018 (Kawagoe city 2019, p. 6). Kawagoe urged tourists to avoid the three Cs (crowded places, closed spaces, and close-contact settings) and suggested new sightseeing styles, include a ‘maranic’ (combination of marathon + picnic), a leisurely barrier-free course, and a greenery road course where tourists and residents could walk with their pets (Kawagoe city 2022a).

All travel restrictions were lifted on 8 May 2023 when Covid-19 was reclassified as an infectious disease in the same category as influenza, thereby ending the Covid-19 pandemic as a constraint on the tourism industry beyond its impact as an ongoing health hazard. With the original rationale for microtourism now over, the extent to which microtourism transitions from pandemic response to climate change response will become apparent in the coming years.

Conclusions

Since 2003, the Japanese government has made tourism an important area of potential growth. It anticipates large economic ripple effects that will revitalise regions and increase employment opportunities, particularly in areas affected by depopulation and economic stagnation. The national plan is for regions to use local heritage, narratives, and other resources to create tourist areas that enrich the local economy. But, it is not so easy to make such strategies succeed in practice. There have been multiple cases of regions that have tried to revitalise through tourism but have had limited success, or even had failed spectacularly. Conversely, too much success in stimulating the tourism economy can overshoot into ‘tourism pollution’ (*kankō kōgai*) or overtourism.

Within the above parameters, Kawagoe is often said to have succeeded in developing itself as a tourist town. In terms of community development activities, the Kawagoe Kura no Kai association was established in 1983, the Community Mart initiative was launched in 1985, and the Townscape Committee began in 1987. These were the foundations of Kawagoe’s *machizukuri* (town making) process. In 1989, Kawagoe became known nationwide as a result of the NHK taiga (historical) drama *Kasuga no Tsubone*. Around this time, the city became highly conscious of its tourism potential. In 1999, it was selected as an Important Preservation District for Groups of Traditional Buildings. In 2009, the NHK morning drama *Tsubasa* was aired. The branding of Kawagoe via local heritage and stories was strengthening just as the Japanese government’s tourism policy was strongly recommending the branding of tourist destinations in such ways. The touristification process, however, was never completely smooth. There were conflicts of interest between residents, tourists, and those involved in the tourism industry. Sustainable development through tourism, or *kankō machizukuri*, can generate many contradictions.

Since the area had a deep connection with Edo, the theme of Koedo was used to add a sense of ‘narrative quality’ (*monogatari-sei*) to the town. This, combined with the significance of popular

culture within the Kawagoe brand, makes the city an important case study of contents tourism. In his revised and updated definition of contents tourism, Takayoshi Yamamura has highlighted the role of tourists in the development of the site that they are visiting. He writes:

Contents tourism is a dynamic series of tourism practices/experiences motivated by contents—such as narratives, characters, locations, and other creative elements—that has been produced and edited in popular cultural forms and that brings enjoyment when it is consumed. Contents tourists access and embody ‘narrative worlds’ that are evolving through ‘contentsization’, namely the continual process of the development and expansion of the ‘narrative world’ through both mediatized adaptation and tourism practice.

(Yamamura 2020, p. 9)

Unlike other ‘Little Edos’, Kawagoe has become like a theme park that allows visitors to go back and forth between the present and not only the Edo period, but also the Meiji, Taisho, and Showa periods. The townscape, with a sense of unity, was set up like the stage of a historical drama, and tourists became the main characters (Suzuki 2019, pp. 76-77). For example, in 2023 the top images on the website of the Koedo Kawagoe Tourist Association (n.d.) include images of female tourists in kimono enjoying the sites on foot or in a rickshaw. This phenomenon of tourists embodying the ‘narrative world’ they are themselves visiting as tourists, and by doing so becoming part of the appeal of the tourist attraction, is a characteristic of contents tourism.

Ultimately, this article has demonstrated how contents tourism is only one component of a much more diverse and integrated tourism strategy that also encompasses heritage tourism, food tourism, sustainable/green tourism, and other forms of tourism that have not been discussed explicitly in the paper – such as the family/friends of the over one thousand international students based in the city who visit Kawagoe as ‘inbound tourists’, albeit to visit people rather than sites per se. The lessons from and value of the Kawagoe case study are twofold. From the perspective of contents tourism research, it offers an alternative perspective to case studies in which contents tourism was clearly the central pillar of a revitalisation strategy or the primary driver of a tourism boom. The two major NHK dramas (and subsequent anime) have undoubtedly played a valuable role in publicising the city and enhancing Kawagoe’s name and brand value. Kawagoe’s success would not have been possible without them. However, contents tourism plays a supporting role rather than being centre stage. And the second conclusion, from the perspective of Japanese tourism policy in the twenty-first century, is that Kawagoe is a model case and microcosm of the approach that the government has been advocating. At the heart of Kawagoe’s touristification is the concept of *machizukuri*, literally ‘town making’, in which the key is for locals and tourists alike to be proud of their community and strengthen their attachment to the town. This sort of emotion contributes to achieving the virtuous cycle of cultural, touristic, and economic (re)vitalisation that the Culture and Tourism Promotion Act (2020) aims for. While by no means free of problems or challenges, touristification in Kawagoe can nevertheless be considered a relatively successful form of sustainable tourism and *kankō machizukuri* with the characteristics envisioned by the government when it coined the phrase ‘Good to live in, good to visit’ in 2003, the year that Japan embarked on its national strategy of becoming a tourism nation.

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Notes

- ¹ Travel expenditure per person per trip is assumed to be 158,531 yen for foreign visitors to Japan, 55,054 yen for domestic traveler overnight trips, and 17,334 yen for day-trippers.
- ² The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, as it was known in 2006, became the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism after the Japan Tourism Agency was established in 2008.
- ³ It was incorporated as an NPO in 2002.
- ⁴ Edo castle was the home of the Tokugawa shogunate, which was the centre of politics and lasted for 265 years. When the Edo period ended in 1868, Edo castle became the residence of the Meiji Emperor, and is now the imperial palace. Buildings from the Edo period were damaged by fire and torn down. However, there are still remnants of Edo castle, such as Sotobori (outer moat of the castle).
- ⁵ The topic of the next taiga drama or morning drama is announced to great fanfare in the Japanese media. As a result, there is typically tourism in anticipation of the drama to known locations in the period leading up to the broadcast.

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