

Local Tourism Strategies for the Global Expansion of World Heritage Site Tourism A Case Study of Tanabe City and the Tanabe City Kumano Tourism Bureau, Wakayama Prefecture: From the Invited Lecture of Toyo GIC-SNUAC Joint Lecture Series

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世界遺産地域の国際地域ネットワーク
和歌山県田辺市と田辺市熊野ツーリズムビューローを事例にして
－東洋大学ソウル国立大学ジョイントレクチャーシリーズ招待講演より－

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Keywords: World Heritage Sites, pilgrimage routes, dual pilgrim, Camino de Santiago,
Tanabe City Kumano Tourism Bureau, Kumano Kodo, depopulation.

Introduction

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who is gathered here today and to those who have collaborated to hold this lecture series. Professors Sukki and Ichikawa Sennsei, I really appreciate your efforts. I am also honored to have been invited to today's joint lecture series. My name is Shoko Iwata, and I work at Otemon University in Osaka. My profession is English teaching, and I strive to help language learners improve their English proficiency. Therefore, I suppose this is a good opportunity to interact with each other in the target language, English. To help everyone follow and understand my lecture, I have provided photos, videos, and graphs as visual aids for this presentation. Please feel free to relax, but also please concentrate on the lecture.

First, I would like to introduce a part of a study that I have been involved in. My research focuses on tourism English, which is the use of English for a specific purpose. This is an interdisciplinary field covering such diverse disciplines as sociology, regional studies, linguistics, and psychology, including brain science-related fields (Figure 1). I would like to first consider hospitality in the light an interdisciplinary field. In the hospitality industry, hosts and hostesses must anticipate guest's needs and provide necessary services. This practice is based on empathy. An example of empathy is putting yourself in the shoes of an-

other. Empathy is also closely related to mirror neurons, which are located in the human brain and are activated when people share feelings and emotions with others. The mirror neuron system has a predictive function even when the purpose of someone's action is unclear.

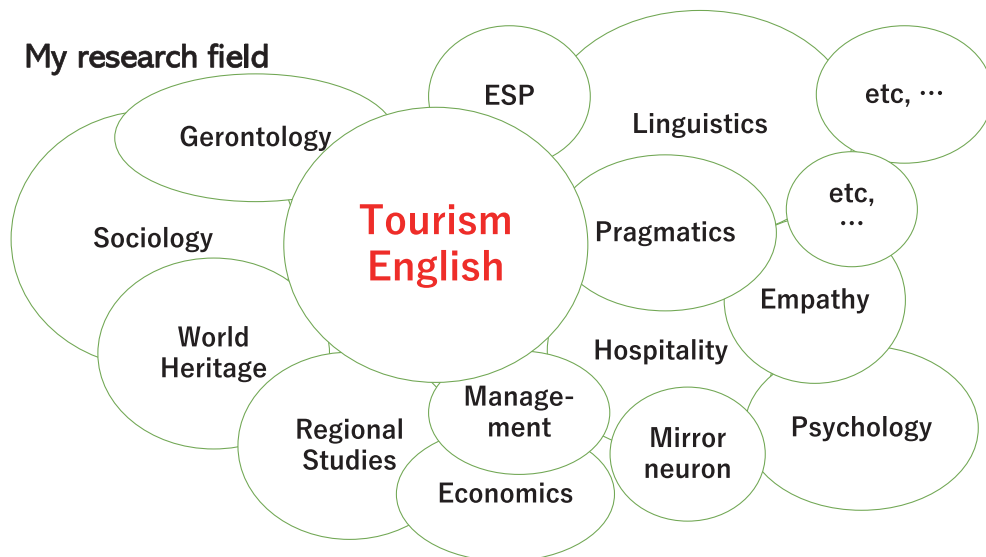


Figure 1 The Research field of tourism English

Next, I will now address the main issue of today's lecture and introduce the related keywords.

1) **Pilgrimage routes** are the roads traveled during a spiritual journey or religion-related journey. 2) A **dual pilgrim** is someone who has walked both the Kumano Kodo and the Way of St. James, which is called Camino de Santiago in Spanish. You may have heard of the word **Pilgrim Father**. In the colonial history of the United States, British settlers made a trip overseas on the Mayflower. 3) The **Camino de Santiago**, which is located in Spain, refers to pilgrimage routes; it is referred to as the Way of St. James in English. 4) **Santiago de Compostela** is the destination of the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage trails. 5) **Kumano Kodo** are pilgrimage routes in Wakayama, Japan. 6) The **Tanabe City Kumano Tourism Bureau** is a Destination Management Organization (DMO). A DMO is an organization that promotes a location as an attractive travel destination. 7) **Syncretism** refers to the amalgamation or combination of different religions and cultures. 8) **Alberge** are hostels for certificated pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago trails.

Today I will discuss a case study of a successful tourism promotion project in Tanabe City, Wakayama Prefecture, Japan and the challenges faced by this project. Of course, this "success" was achieved before the COVID-19 pandemic and the decrease in inbound tourism. Next, I would like to review the outline for today's lecture. First, I will provide some background information on Tanabe City, including the problems

it faces, which are typical for local cities. For example, why did a small city such as Tanabe City have to develop a global tourism strategy? Next, I will discuss a unique project called the “Dual Pilgrim Program.” This program was a collaboration between Tanabe City and Santiago de Compostela, both of which have World Heritage-listed pilgrimage routes. I will discuss the success of this program for Tanabe City and the DMO of the Tanabe City Kumano Tourism Bureau. Before discussing the joint program in detail, I will provide a brief history of the Way of St. James in Spain and the Kumano Kodo in Japan. Then I will discuss the results of a questionnaire I conducted in 2019 to foreigners visiting Kumano Kodo.

Promoting the tourism industry in Tanabe City

In 2003, the Visit JAPAN Campaign, which is a global tourism strategy, was announced by the Koizumi administration. This campaign aimed to strengthen the tourism industry to attract tourists to Japan. Foreign tourists, who previously had tended to visit larger cities, such as Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka, gradually began to visit smaller cities. Suffering from population decline, smaller cities aggressively pushed this tourism strategy to increase population transfer. For cities suffering from an aging and declining population, increasing the number of inbound tourists was a method for revitalizing their cities, making city atmospheres more vibrant and creating jobs. Therefore, it was natural that one strategy for revitalizing small towns was promoting the tourism industry.

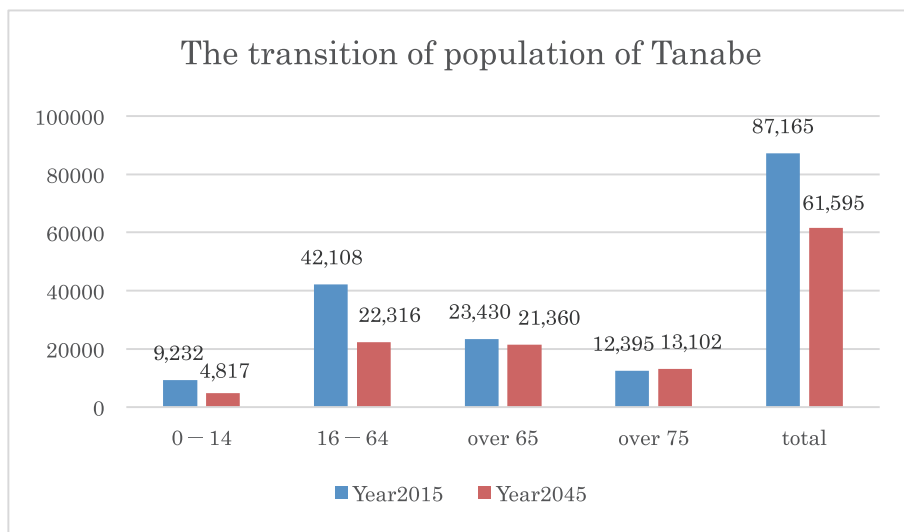


Figure 2 Depopulation and an aging society in Tanabe City

Tanabe City also faced the serious problems of depopulation and an aging society. The graph shows the change in the size of the population. As you can see, it is estimated that the population of Tanabe City will decrease dramatically soon. It indicates that the population is becoming older as well.

In most case, successfully registering a World Heritage Site contributes to local revitalization via an in-

crease in tourism; however, such booms are often temporary and are followed by either a sharp decline or stable increase in the number of tourists. Originally, World Heritage Sites are intended to ensure the permanent protection of a site. Therefore, tourism is a secondary concern. However, because small cities face problems such as aging populations and depopulation, attracting visitors is their top priority. That is, the question of how to keep the local economy healthy is an essential question for cities with World Heritage Sites. According to UNESCO, a World Heritage Site refers to a location that possesses “authenticity” and “outstanding universal value.” Therefore, I will attempt to demonstrate how Tanabe City and the Tanabe City Kumano Tourism Bureau have preserved and managed the heritage site while also pursuing economic growth.

Although the designation of the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage trails as a World Heritage Site helped bring attention to the area, this popularity also brought problems. When kumano kodo were inscribed on the World Heritage lists, as many as 100 sightseeing buses converged on the area in a single day, and rather than appreciating the area’s cultural value, tourists who flocked to the site only spent a short amount of time at the site before moving on to the next sightseeing location. As a result, some tourists felt that kumano kodo were nothing more than some mountain roads. Moreover, local people have witnessed that the sudden increase in visitors has damaged the historical and cultural fabric of the area. This led to the implementation of various awareness-raising initiatives to convey the essence of Kumano Kodo to visitors.

In response to the difficulties caused by increased tourism, the Tanabe City Kumano Tourism Bureau announced a tourism strategy based on the following five principles:

- 1) Treasuring history and culture, not chasing a boom
- 2) Preservation rather than overdevelopment
- 3) Individual rather than mass tourism
- 4) Small impact rather than large impact
- 5) Creating a more sophisticated tourist destination

The aim was to become a “high quality, sustainable tourism destination that is open to the world” by valuing the original landscape, spiritual culture, and interactions with local people.

The Santiago de Compostela Tourism Bureau originally planned to sign a joint promotion agreement with Ise City, Mie Prefecture, where Ise Jingu Shrine is located. Ise Jingu Shrine is the most prominent and sacred place in Japan. The inner shrine is dedicated to the sun goddess Amaterasu, and the outer shrine is dedicated to the agricultural goddess Toyouke-no-Omikami. However, after seeing the large number of tourists on sightseeing buses that visited the shrine for short periods before moving on to the next sightseeing spot, they proposed entering a joint promotion agreement with the Tanabe City Kumano Tourism Bureau. Since then, both bureaus have been mutually promoting the two World Heritage sites at the private sector level. Subsequently, Tanabe City and Santiago de Compostela City officially agreed to share the culture of pilgrimages with the world, and they signed the Tourism Exchange Agreement in May 2014

with the aim of creating a “culture of peace.” They also aimed to use local resources to create a sustainable tourist destination and promote each other’s attractions. In response, a “Dual Pilgrimage Certificate” based on the creative and unconventional idea of the “dual pilgrim” (pilgrims of two paths) was issued, and this idea has resulted in approximately 50,000 foreign travelers visiting Tanabe City in 2019.

Histories of the two pilgrimage routes

Next, I will provide a brief introduction to the rich history of the pilgrimage tradition. I discuss Camino de Santiago first and Kumano Kodo second. Both ancient routes developed simultaneously as pilgrimage routes and became connected to these two cities, Santiago de Compostela and Tanabe City, as Tourism Partnership Cities.

Santiago de Compostela is located in Galicia in the northwestern part of Spain, and, as of 2018, the population was 96,400. In 813, the previously unknown tomb of St. James was “discovered,” and a cathedral was built to house his remains. In the 12th century, guidebooks for pilgrims were written, and these guidebooks included information such as distances between cities, food, language, and travel hazards. At that time, half a million people a year were said to have traveled to the Holy Land.

Later, with the collapse of feudalism in the 14th and 15th centuries, people began to pay attention to tourism and leisure travel instead of religious travel, and Camino de Santiago became a prototypical mass tourism destination that attracted large numbers of people. However, after the Protestant Reformation led by Martin Luther in the 16th century, the number of pilgrims began to decline. In 1985, the old town of Santiago de Compostela was registered as a World Heritage Site, and people began traveling to the pilgrimage site again. There are many pilgrimage routes to Santiago de Compostela, but currently most pilgrims walk the “Way of France” (also known as the “French Way”) from Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, a vil-

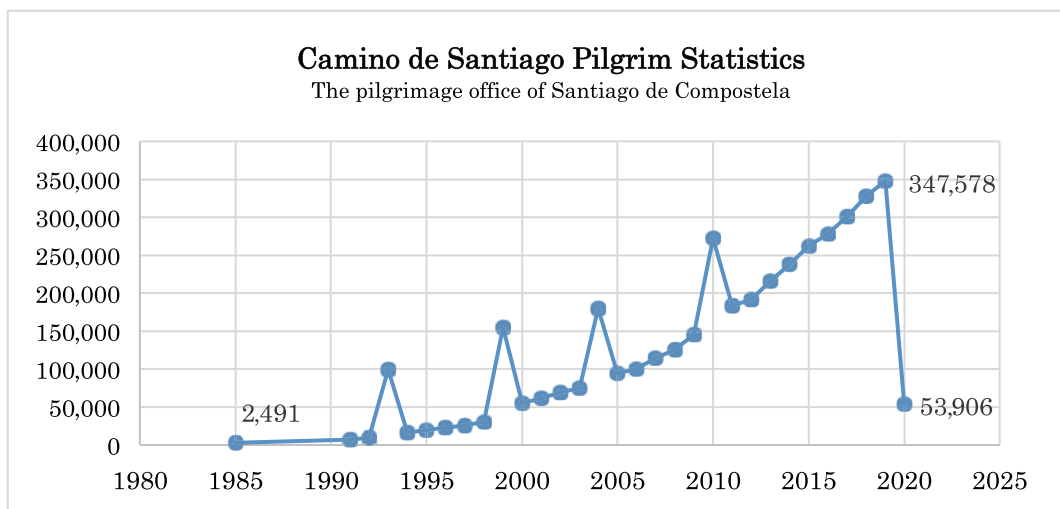


Figure 3 The number of pilgrims traveling to Camino de Santiago

lage in the southwest of France, to Santiago de Compostela. This route is about 780 km, and it takes 30 to 40 days.

In 2019, over 300,000 pilgrims walked the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage trail. Pilgrims from Spain account for half of all pilgrims, followed by pilgrims from Germany, Italy, France, Portugal, and the United States. Among Asian countries, Japan ranked 25th and South Korea ranked 15th in 2019. The number of Japanese pilgrims increased fivefold from 257 in 2004 to 1,452 in 2019; this increase was largely due to the establishment of the Japan Camino de Santiago Association in 2008, which provides Japanese-language information on the Camino de Santiago trails. The number of pilgrims from South Korea, which has a large Christian population, has increased approximately 500 times from 18 in 2004 to 8,224 in 2019. In Korea, the popularity of books about the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela has influenced Korean people to travel to this area, and according to Korean anthropologist Kim Ryangu, many young Korean people travel to Camino de Santiago after completing their mandatory military service. I also met several Korean travelers on the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage trails, but I did not meet any Japanese on my way to Santiago de Compostela in 2015.

Pilgrims traveling the Camino de Santiago trails travel with their pilgrim credentials and stamp them at churches, souvenir shops, bars, and religious facilities along the way. The photo on the left shows pilgrims waiting for Albergue Hostel to open. This hostel provides pilgrims with inexpensive accommodation for one night only, and pilgrims provide a donation of up to 10 euros.



Picture 1. 2 Camino de Santiago

The Parador, a gorgeous semigovernmental hotel near the Cathedral, still provides free food for certificated pilgrims arriving in Santiago de Compostela on a first-come, first-served basis, and at the evening mass in the cathedral, there are seats for pilgrims who have obtained a pilgrim certificate. During the mass, the priest reads the names of those who have completed the pilgrimage. Outside of the cathedral, some pilgrims weep after arriving at their destination.

The city of Santiago de Compostela values the pilgrimage routes for their historical significant and tourism value. They are also appreciated for their economic value and ability to generate employment. More-

over, the above-mentioned rituals related to the pilgrimage are a strategic component of “religious tourism,” which has been a means of earning foreign currency since the Middle Ages.

Next, I will discuss the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage trails in Japan, a network of pilgrimage routes located 10,000 kilometers from Santiago de Compostela. The Kumano Kodo pilgrimage trails were listed as a World Heritage Site in 2004 as one of the “Sacred Sites in the Kii Mountain Range and Their Pilgrimage Routes.” These sites form a cultural landscape reflecting the fusion of Shintoism and Buddhism, and they constitute a persistent and well-documented tradition of sacred mountains that has been maintained for over 1,200 years.

An approximately a two hours’ ride on the limited express train from Shin-Osaka Station or the Kansai International Airport will bring you to Tanabe City, where you arrive at the gate of Kumano Kodo. The city, which is 80% covered by forests, is located in the steep, lush mountains of the Kii Peninsula. As I stated earlier, the city is facing the problems of depopulation and an aging society. This has pressured the city to adopt a local tourism strategy and encourage nonresidents to engage with local people in diverse ways. After arriving at the starting point of the Nakaheji route, which is the most popular pilgrimage route among the Kumano Kodo trails, it is a 39 km walk to Kumano Hongu Taisha Grand Shrine and Kumano Hongu Taisha Shrine. Those walking the pilgrimage must spend two or three days walking along narrow and steep mountain roads while carrying a stamp card.

This area has developed over a long period of time, and it is part of a Japanese religious culture that combines Shintoism, a form of nature worship, with Buddhism. Here, these two religions have influenced each other amidst the rich nature of the Kii Mountains. The Kumano Kodo is an extensive network of interconnected pilgrimage routes in the Kumano area. At the center of the Kumano Kodo is the Kumano Hongu Great Shrine in Hongu-cho. For over 1,000 years, people from all levels of society, including retired emperors and aristocrats, have made the arduous pilgrimage to the sacred sites in Kumano. These pilgrims used a network of routes, now called the Kumano Kodo, which stretched across the mountainous Kii Peninsula, weaving their way through remote villages and forests on a network of well-worn trails and ancient stone paths.

In ancient times, Japanese people believed that mountains were places where gods lived or that the mountains themselves were gods; therefore, they have treasured and worshipped mountains (extract from “Tourism Japan” English by Nan’nun-do). This belief system is called animism, and it was the basis of Shintoism. The combination of Buddhism and Shintoism enabled Buddhist monks and ascetics who climbed mountains by walking these routes to become spiritually awakened. There are some groups that still follow these ascetic practices. With the support of imperial patronage, the Kumano area, including Kumano Kodo, prospered. During the Edo period, the popular trip to the ancient Shinto centered such as Ise Pilgrimage placed less emphasis on the original meaning of pilgrimage, and instead, the pilgrimage seemed at times to become an organized pleasure trip. In 1868, the coexistence of Shinto and Buddhism was abol-

ished by the Meiji Government. Kumano Kodo also faced difficulties similar to those experienced by Camino de Santiago (Pilgrimage pp 127).

Off topic, but I would like to mention here the hot springs in the Kumano area. One of the most famous onsen is Tsubo-yu located-yu at the central Yunomine Onsen. This small hot spring, which can only accommodate two people, is the only hot spring registered as a World Heritage Site. Since ancient times, many pilgrims have purified themselves by bathing here; they have healed their wounds or injuries before visiting the sacred Kumano Hongu Great Shrine. In Kumano, there are several *onsen*, meaning hot springs. At Kawayu Onsen, near Kumano Hongu Taisha Shrine, if one digs a hole in the bottom of the river, a unique hot spring that can also heal travelers gushes out.

The “Dual Pilgrim Program” as a successful tourism strategy

After the Kumano area was registered as a World Heritage Site in 2004, the local government and the incorporated associations the DMO worked together to promote sustainable tourism, and foreign visitors to Japan, mainly from Europe, United States, and Australia, began to visit this area to walk along the pilgrimage routes. In 2003, the Japanese government and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism launched the Visit Japan Campaign to promote foreign tourism to Japan and only 819 foreigners stayed in Tanabe City (including the four former towns and villages). However in 2019, about 50,000 foreign visitors came to Tanabe City. As I mentioned before, immediately following the registration of a World Heritage site in 2004, Tanabe City had a bitter experience due to the pursuit of profit, which had a negative effect on the livelihoods of residents. Subsequently, the local people in kumano raised awareness

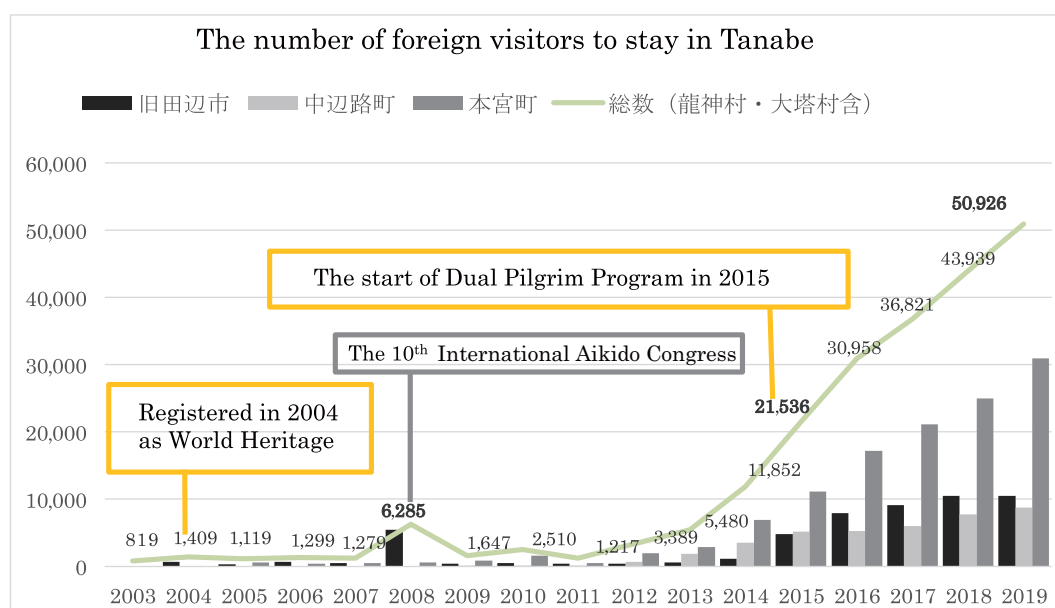


Figure 4 The number of visitors to Tanabe City

regarding the need to convey the authenticity and outstanding, universal value Kumano to travelers.

In 2015, the Dual Pilgrim Program tourism strategy was created in Tanabe City. In the same year, the Paris Agreement was signed, which is a legally binding, international treaty on climate change. This agreement led to the development of the sustainable development goals. The Paris Agreement was a landmark event in the history of multilateral efforts to deal with climate change. For example, the agreement discussed low-carbon solutions and new markets. Especially, the movement to address climate change issues is most noticeable in the power and transport sectors, and it has generated many new business opportunities for early movers. Slow tourism and reduced carbon tourism experiences, such trekking the Kumano Kodo, are also examples of new business opportunities generated by this new trend. Kato and Prozano (2017) state that visitors walking the Kumano Kodo trails have a minimal impact on the local environment, community, and culture.

Therefore, these sustainability strategies of the Tanabe City Kumano Tourism Bureau are founded on community-based preparation for foreign visitors to Kumano. This is a prominent example of a successful DMO. Moreover, Canadian Brad Towle has been a key factor in Tanabe City's international tourism strategies, and he is responsible for the bureau's promotional projects. In order to create a sustainable, high-quality tourist destination, Tanabe City needed to attract Western and Australian foreign independent travelers who prefer independent travel experiences, such as trekking, and popularize the Kumano Kodo trails among such travelers. In accordance with Brad Towle's guidance, the staff have been working on various projects, such as creating signage for the Kumano Kodo trails, drafting a guidebook, and writing multilingual pamphlets and brochures. Brad Towle has stated that such elaborate preparations are essential to promote such a tourism destination to foreign visitors.

The relationship between Japan and Spain goes back 400 years, and in 2013, Japan and Spain held the "400th Anniversary of Japan-Spain Exchange." The year before, in 2012, Wakayama Prefecture signed a Comprehensive Partnership Agreement with Galicia to strengthen friendly relations and collaboration. Despite the vast distance between them, connections were being formed between Wakayama Prefecture and Galicia and between Tanabe City and Santiago de Compostela City. The Dual Pilgrim Program initiative was proposed as a means of connecting "pilgrims to pilgrims." Brad Towle, the originator of the idea, expressed pride in being a common pilgrim, stating, "I'm a dual pilgrim. Are you a dual pilgrim?" He said that he intended to celebrate the pride of the common pilgrim as something special. For this reason, the Dual Pilgrim Certificate was a tangible and necessary element of this new promotional project.

The Dual Pilgrim Credential is a type of passport for pilgrims. Pilgrims can use it to collect stamps along the trail as a record of their journey. Moreover, a "dual pilgrim" pin badge is sent to pilgrims who complete both pilgrimages. For more information, please refer to the Common Pilgrimage Website (<https://www.tb-kumano.jp/kumano-kodo/dual-pilgrim/>).



Picture 3. 4 Pilgrim Credential The distance between two pilgrimage routes

These two pilgrimage routes, which are both UNESCO World Heritage Sites, are more than 10,000 kilometers apart, and traveling between them takes about 18 hours by airplane. This Dual Pilgrim Credential is officially recognized by the Santiago Cathedral Pilgrimage Office, and the words “Official Credential” and “Dual Pilgrim Credential” are printed on the stamp book, which is available at multiple locations, including the Turismo de Santiago Information Center, government offices in Spain, tourist associations, and lodging facilities in Tanabe City.

The criteria for successfully completing both pilgrimage routes are as follows.

Way of St. James Options

1. At least the last 100 km on foot or by horse, or
2. At least the last 200 km by bicycle

Kumano Kodo Options

1. The gate of Kumano Kodo, Takijiri-Oji to Kumano Hongu Taisha Shrine on foot (approximately 38 km), or
2. Kumano Nachi Taisha to/from Kumano Hongu Taisha on foot (approximately 30 km), or
3. Koyasan to Kumano Hongu Taisha on foot (approximately 70 km), or
4. Hosshinmon-Oji to Kumano Hongu Taisha on foot (approximately 7 km) and a visit to Kumano Hayatama Taisha and Kumano Nachi Taisha

Only walking is allowed on the Kumano Kodo. No bicycles or horses are allowed.

The fourth condition of the Kumano Kodo, which reads, “pilgrimage from Hashinmon Oji to Kumano Hongu Taisha (7 km) and visit Kumano Hayatama Taisha and Kumano Nachi Taisha,” appears to be much easier to accomplish compared to other options; however, this is the intention of the common pilgrimage. According to Brad Towle, the goal is simply to encourage people to visit the Kumano Kodo, and these less difficult conditions can serve as a “positive marketing promotion” for both the Kumano Kodo and the Santiago trail. Indeed, it can be said that the Dual Pilgrim Program is a tourism promotion initiative.

The effectiveness of the “Dual Pilgrim Program”

In response to the Dual Pilgrim Program—connecting two routes that are 10,000 km apart—people in Tanabe City began to wonder how many people would be able to accomplish such a program. At first, they regarded the Dual Pilgrim Program as simply a romantic, dream-like idea; however, they enjoyed the idea of a long-distance tourism exchange. The greeting for both routes of this dual pilgrimage is “I’m a dual Pilgrim. Are you a dual Pilgrim?” Moreover, both routes

1. have been historical pilgrimage routes since ancient times.
2. are the only two long pilgrimage routes registered as World Heritage Sites.
3. have welcomed pilgrims ranging from emperors and nobles to common people.
4. are connected to other pilgrimage routes.
5. have a place for pilgrims to kneel and worship.
6. rebounded robustly after being destroyed or abandoned.

The Cathedral of Santiago, where the Santiago pilgrims gather, and the Kumano Hongu Taisha Shrine, where the Kumano Kodo pilgrims gather, both have sacred places where the pilgrimage routes converge, and both pilgrimage sites have a history of accepting men and women, from both noble and lowly classes.

Among all overnight visitors in Tanabe City, the percentage of foreign visitors increased from 0.3% in 2004 to 11% in 2019. Compared to other tourist destinations in Japan, in Tanabe, most visitors are from Europe, the United States, and Australia. People with knowledge about Tanabe City state that the driving force behind this increase of foreign guests is the 2014 tourism exchange agreement between Tanabe City and Santiago de Compostela and the subsequent Dual Pilgrim Program initiative.

Since the Dual Pilgrim Program was launched in February 2014, the number of dual pilgrims has increased tenfold. Despite the spread of COVID-19 and the declaration of a state of emergency in Japan, people, including foreigners living in Japan, registered themselves as dual pilgrims. When the Dual Pilgrim Program started, it was expected that there would be just a few pilgrims per year; however, the number of pilgrims has steadily increased every year, and as of the end of April 2021, there were 3,517 pilgrims. Among all pilgrims, 951 were Japanese, who constitute the largest portion; this was followed by pilgrims from European countries as well as Australia, the United States, and Spain. Europeans and Americans accounted for 60% of all pilgrims. This success is the result of the Tanabe City Kumano Tourism Bureau’s promotion that targeted foreign independent travelers; however, in recent years, the number of dual pilgrims from Asia has also been increasing, and they feel that Asia possess a large, untapped potential. I recently heard a staff member or owner of an inn state, “The number of Muslims is also increasing.” Now, owners of inns are considering providing not only vegan but also Halal food.

The registration of Dual Pilgrims and the nationality (as of April 2021)

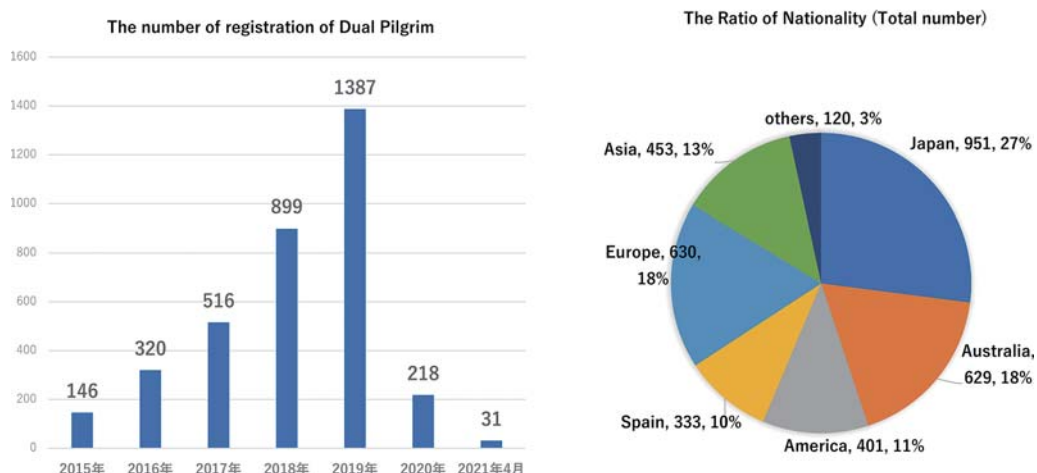


Figure 5 The registration of dual pilgrims

Furthermore, the Tanabe City Kumano Tourism Bureau has been actively providing English information on transportation, unifying English notation, improving the ability of tourism workers to provide help in English, and more. The Tanabe City Kumano Tourism Bureau has improved the reception system, which has contributed to the increase in visitors from Europe, the United States, and Australia. In addition, the number of visitors from Asia and other countries has also been increasing, and currently, information is provided not only in English, French, and Spanish, but also in Chinese and Korean.

Reflecting the success of the local tourism strategies of the Tanabe City Kumano Tourism Bureau, the Kii Peninsula, including Wakayama Prefecture, was ranked fifth among the “Top 10 Regions to Visit in the World” in the 2018 edition of the *Lonely Planet* travel guide. In addition, Tanabe City was introduced as follows:

Tanabe, a small city on the west coast of Wakayama, is the main gateway to the Kumano Kodo. The government of this friendly town has made huge efforts to welcome foreign tourists with lots of info in English and English-speaking staff members at the tourist office. Recently Kumano Travel, the travel agency of Tanabe City Kumano Tourism Bureau has handled credit card transactions with foreign visitors in advance for ryokan or family-inns. Preparation has already done to welcome visitors from the world.

According to the Development Bank of Japan, this destination received such a positive evaluation because of its combination of Shintoism and Buddhism as well as its magnificent natural scenery, hot springs, traditional culture, and modern conveniences. Moreover, it has smaller crowds than most popular

tourist destinations. Because congestion can detract from satisfaction, it is expected that the number of visitors will continue to increase. This is also the result of travelers' tendency to prefer less densely populated areas, such as rural and outdoor destinations (Kansai Inbound Tourism in the Age of Whiz Corona, 2021, 6).

However, as a consequence of excessive connectedness, the misunderstandings of traveling Kumano kodo between home countries and Japan due to cultural differences have occurred among foreign travelers to Kumano Kodo despite the fact that they already possess knowledge about Japanese traditions and culture and are well traveled. Through various partnerships between Spain and Japan, Galicia and Wakayama Prefecture, and Santiago de Compostela and Tanabe City, Tanabe City has been able to connect pilgrims in Spain and Japan. However, Brad Towle (See p.23) stated that the connection of pilgrims in both countries has grown so close, which may cause foreign travelers to Kumano kodo to have wrong perceptions. For this reason, it was necessary to provide a new notification to educate foreign visitors. For example, in Spain, I often saw travelers sleeping outside; in Kumano Kodo, however, sleeping outside is not recommended.

KUMANO KODO Lodging Overview

IMPORTANT CULTURAL NOTE:

The Kumano Kodo is very different from the Way of St. James in Spain and the Shikoku 88 temple pilgrimage route in many ways. Specifically, the style of accommodations. In the Kumano Kodo area there are no temples or albergues hostels along the way, but rather family-inn minshuku guesthouses and ryokans/hotels in the hot spring area.

I will demonstrate some of the historical, cultural, and infrastructural differences between these pilgrimage routes. The paths of Camino de Santiago are relatively flat with some gentle slopes; therefore, even travelers with strollers or people with disabilities can walk these routes. However, Kumano Kodo features many steep mountain paths. It is essential to bring water when walking either route. However, although there are water stations interspersed along the Camino de Santiago routes, there are few water stations on the Kumano Kodo trails. There are many cafés and bars along the Camino de Santiago trails, which provide lunch or beverages for many pilgrims, and they are sometimes overcrowded. At Albergues in Camino de Santiago, basic accommodations are available where pilgrims can share a room, kitchen, and other facilities. It is comfortable to communicate with the staff in English. At most Japanese inns in Kumano Kodo, the staff and owners provide excellent service and hospitality but their English is basically conversational level only. Sometimes it is hard for them to make themselves understood.

Until the beginning in 2020, it was believed that increasing the number of inbound tourists would boost regional revitalization in areas suffering from depopulation and an aging society. However, with states of

emergency and lockdowns being declared due to the COVID-19 pandemic, travelers have nowhere to go. With the hope that the COVID-19 pandemic will subside, local governments should steadily promote tourism among both domestic and foreign travelers.

A 2019 questionnaire targeting foreigners visiting Kumano Kodo

I am nearly finished with my presentation. I am going to discuss some of the results from a 2019 questionnaire targeting foreigners who visited Kumano Kodo. Foreign visitors reported deriving the most satisfaction from nature experiences, including walking, trekking, and forest bathing. Food-related satisfaction was slightly lower. I heard that staff members of inns wanted to make APP (application) for food and emergencies. Therefore, I am currently conducting a new questionnaire targeting staff members to collect information about food service and the emergency situations they have faced.

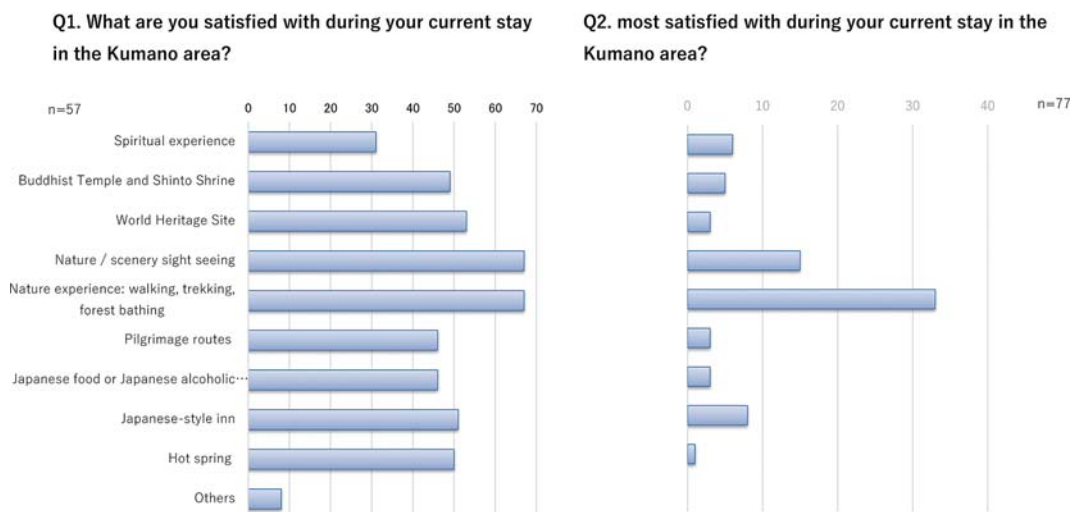
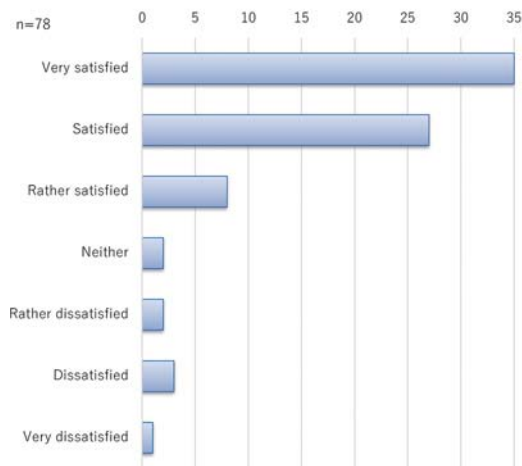


Figure 6

Questionnaire to foreign visitors walking Kumano Kodo in 2019

Q3. How satisfied are you generally with the service of the inns you stayed at in the Kumano area?



Q4. If you have found something inconvenient or troublesome in the inns, please check the number. (multiple answers)

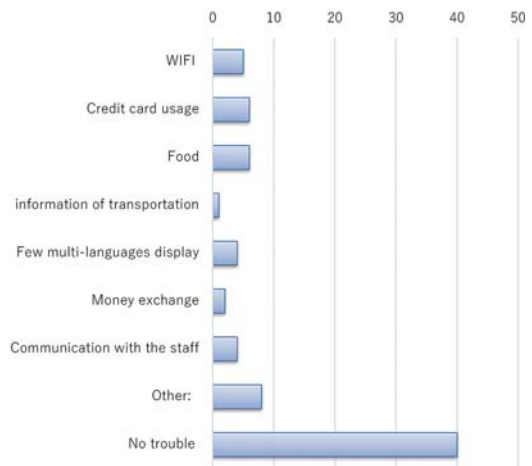


Figure 7

Q5. Please rate your satisfaction about the communication / expression of the staff in the inns.

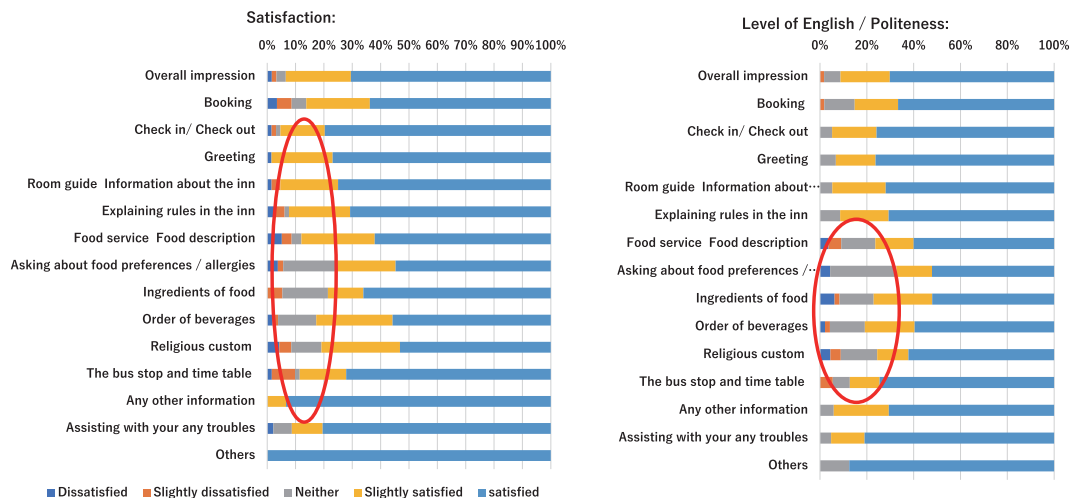


Figure 8

The following conclusions can be drawn from the results of this survey:

1. Nature experiences, such as walking, trekking, and forest bathing, were reported to be the most satisfying experiences. This means that for foreign visitors who responded to the questionnaire, the immersive experience of Kumano Kodo was their most satisfying experience (Figure 6).
2. In general, most visitors are satisfied with the inns and their interactions with staff (Figure 8).
3. It is necessary to provide more stable Wi-Fi and water stations as well as the ability to use credit cards

at more places (Figure 7).

4. There are less food-related services provided in English compared to other places (Figure 8).

Although many foreign travelers were satisfied with their experiences of the Kumano Kodo trails, some visitors experienced decreased satisfaction in relation to the service of the inns and communication with staff, including food-related services. To maintain the attractiveness of this area for the world, it is advisable to improve of these factors related to satisfaction. Therefore, during these hard times for the tourism industry, I suggest that Tanabe City actively work with people related the tourism industry to promote local food specialties to foreign travelers from the perspective of, for example, food-related satisfaction.

Due to the spread of COVID-19, there are few foreign visitors walking the Kumano Kodo and Camino de Santiago trails. However, in preparation for the day when people can return to the trails, it is essential to make sufficient arrangements to welcome travelers. This is the end of my lecture. Please let me know if you have any questions.

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概要

東洋大学グローバル・イノベーション学研究センターおよびソウル国立大学アジアセンターによる「Toyo GIC-SNUAC レクチャーシリーズ 2021」が、2021 年 5 月より 6 週連続で実施された。その内容は、Post-Covid 19 における政治・経済・社会の課題について日韓両国の研究者によるレクチャーを行い、オーディエンスとともに議論する（東洋大学グローバル・イノベーション学研究センター HP より）というものであった。筆者は、その 6 回目に登壇し「世界遺産地域における国際的拡張に向けたローカリズム戦略」をテーマに、熊野古道のメインルート「中辺路」や熊野本宮大社、闘鶏神社など世界遺産を有する和歌山県田辺市の、世界に開かれたインバウンド観光政策と、田辺市を訪れた外国人宿泊者に対する満足度アンケートの結果について報告した。

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