

## The Design and Evaluation of Chinese Tourists Support System to Enjoy the Holy Land Pilgrimage in Japan

### 中国観光客向けのロケ地巡礼サポートシステムのデザインと評価

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#### 1 Introduction

Seichi Junrei, a Japanese word, which describes this phenomenon, is accepted by Japanese popular culture that means pilgrimage to sacred places of Japanese animations, dramas and movies. It is also called contents tourism. To most Chinese, Japan is not only an exquisite neighboring country, but also has unique and precious culture that fascinates them. Chinese tourists who are deeply impressed by Japanese comics, animation, movies and dramas start to seek and visit the location of scenes in Japan. The best example is *Slam Dunk*, the most popular Japanese animation in China, when broadcasted in late 1990s that turns almost every teenager a super-fan to it. Nonetheless after around 15 years, those teenage audiences are in their late 20s and early 30s, but the topics of *Slam Dunk* are still quite popular in all Chinese social medias. Moreover, most of them are not aware of that all scenes in *Slam Dunk* are existed in real life until the emergence of Internet and social media, for example the main anime set was originated from Kanagawa. Although there are lots of Japanese smartphone applications or websites are designed to promote Seichi Junrei and to inform users the locations of some important scenes, it is not user-friendly to those foreigners who do not speak Japanese or even do not know the existence of certain products but have strong interest of Seichi Junrei. In addition, searching information before the visit is quite time consuming, and some potential visitors may lose interests over complications. Find a trustful guide is a good alternative, but the cost may scare some low-budget travellers away. Moreover, the information about the movie sets is quite dispersed on Internet thus hard to be collected, which further led to many travellers had to choose a package tour or group tour to meet their demand.

Weibo, a China-based micro-blogging service, was launched in 2009 and became one of the most popular social media platforms in China. Attributes to the prosperous development of Internet infrastructure and independence from big social-media players, the Chinese Internet environment offers fertile soil for Weibo, whom has gained 220 million monthly active users as to Sep 2015[1]. Not long ago, the only channel to obtain information about Japanese comics, animation, movies and dramas was mass media. Nowadays people can search in social media and investigate what other users just post immediately, and even find new friends who share common topics, such as Japan. In China, the use of Internet has reached 90.3% user coverage and far exceeded the use of television and newspapers to get latest information and news that are related to Japan [2]. According to the interviews conducted by Zhou [3], 39 Japanese local governments have opened their official Weibo accounts in order to promote their cities and attract more Chinese tourist. The popularity of Weibo began to change the behavior of both Chinese tourists and Japanese tourism organizations.

This papers aims to find a way to support holy pilgrimage trip for Chinese. Regarding the difficulties of Chinese free tour in Japan, this paper proposes a new media tool to support tourists to find, record and

share distinct routes for location of scenes. The later part will conduct as follows: First, analyze the behavior of Chinese tourists in Japan, followed with description of the concept of the media tool. Secondly, present analyses of five experiments of *Slam Dunk* pilgrimage, by consulting my contents in a reality recording system designed by Utsumi[4]. In the last section, the results and future work will be explained.

## **2 Analysis of Chinese Tourist Behavior in Japan**

For deeper understanding of how to assist Chinese tourists to enjoy the contents tourism, this study conducts three different surveys and interviews to understand why Chinese tourists are traveling in Japan, what are their wishes and expectations. The details are as follows:

### **2.1 Demographical Analysis**

The first survey was conducted during June 12th, 2015 to June 22th, 2015. The number of participants is 42. The study shows that most Chinese chose participating the group-tour as their first tour in Japan. Before their trips, they searched on Weibo or consulted friends who have been to Japan before. For the reason why traveling to Japan, 50% of them claimed the short distance and the other 30% were attracted by Japanese animations, dramas, movies. Moreover, 80% of them expressed that they want to have a look about the locations of scenes.

It shows that most group-tour tourists were also looking forward visiting the locations of scenes, which were excluded from the pre-designed itinerary. Thus, Seichi Junrei will have strong potential among Chinese free independent tourists.

### **2.2 Behavior Analysis**

In order to figure out the motivation and behavior of Chinese free tourists, we conducted the following interview and experiment.

#### **Interview in Kawagoe.**

Kawagoe is a small city in Saitama Prefecture, and local residents prefer to call it “The Little Edo”, because most of its architectures are remained in Edo-time style. Chinese tourists are not common there because this city is not in a typical Chinese group-tour’s itinerary. However, with the broadcasting of Japanese animation, *Kamisama Kiss*, younger generation starts to notice it (**Fig. 1**). We managed to interview 10 Chinese tourists there. Two young people are attracted to Kawagoe because of this animation. Even though they understand their trip is alike Seichi Junrei, there was not a Chinese tool could help them to get information, thus they spent a lot of time on searching online and planning, all by themselves.



**Fig. 1.** The animation and the real location of the scene in Kawagoe

In contrast, the other eight middle-aged participants who were brought there by friends, knowing no more information other than “it is a traditional city”. They heavily relied on their friends as tourist guide and interpreter because they do not speak Japanese and manage simple English thus they also have not derived any information from foreign websites in advance.

From our perspective, the lack of a systemized tool in Chinese is inconvenient for most Chinese who wish to have a free trip, not to mention Seichi Junrei.

#### **Experiment in holy land pilgrimage.**

In China, *Paradise Kiss*, *Shitsuren Chocolatier*, and *Lost in Translation* are three well-known movies and dramas about Japan and each of them has numerous fans on Weibo. We requested two groups to have a Seichi Junrei about the three movies and dramas on October 21th, 2015. The Weibo group can search the three mentioned works on Weibo during the progress while the comparison group did not prepare in advance but just visiting some locations of scenes. The result shows that the Weibo group created more topics, took more photos, located more original shooting locations and enjoyed the experiment more than the comparison group.

With the help of Weibo, Chinese tourists could easily recall storyline and original scenes continuously and enjoy recording photos and instant experiences. Regarding the interview and the experiment above, a systemized Chinese media tool that provides great information about Japanese animations and dramas is extremely necessary to Chinese free trip tourists.

### **3 System Concept**

According to the survey of Chinese Tourist above, as a media for supporting holy land trip of Chinese, the following conditions were found to be necessary:

1. A Chinese system;
2. Quoting from Weibo;
3. Recording photograph.

Thus, we propose a media tool for Chinese pilgrims that can record pictures and experiences of the special location in reality, while at the same time can show the virtual world and topics of the same location via Weibo.

The main feature of the tool is, firstly, in order to ensure that Chinese tourists could immerse into a Seichi Junrei journey, a platform with attractive content and rich topics is very important. And Weibo

can play such role. As the previous experiment implies, that if a tourist refreshes a topic about certain animation when who is travelling at the locations, he/she will receive fertile resources of that animation. Forms of those resources could be photographs, video clips, screenshots or texts that could evoke his/her memories of the animation and be better immersed into the joyfulness of Seichi Junrei.

Secondly, we use Whispath, a recording media related to locations, designed by Utsumi. It is different from other social medias due to its unique function of adding location information under the texts and the posts are displayed directly on the Google map. Every user would see all other users even if they have not ‘added’ or ‘followed’ the other. We use the system to support Chinese pilgrims to record photos and texts of their familiar scenes (**Fig. 2**). The tourists could take advantages of pioneers’ recordings when visiting holy land pilgrimages. The photos and texts previous recorders that are showed on the map will guide them to movies sets or original animation scenes when they approaching the right spot.

Every time when users upload photos and texts, they need to type a name of the route and record a Seichi Junrei on the interface. Then they can review theirs or others’ paths by selecting the name.

The objects that are recorded by pilgrims could be an ordinary school or even a crossroad, other than general understanding of a tourist ‘attraction’. Because those objects are junctions of virtual and actual worlds, and from general tourists’ perspective it is meaningless and they would not record them. However the Seichi Junrei recording is taking impressions of a work as a reference to understanding and marking an actual place. General tourists are motivated by online posts of attracting sceneries or recommendations of previous tourists, but pilgrims track clues from virtual worlds and connect to real world or follow previous pilgrims’ experiences.



Fig. 2. Whispath

#### 4 Experiment

According to the user-centered design stories [5], in order to know the record preferences and conventions of Chinese tourists when they are having a holy land pilgrimage, it is important to conduct an experiment with typical users in a real-world environment in the design process.

## 4.1 Methods

As one of the most influential animations and comics, *Slam Dunk* (a story about some basketball teams in different high schools) is a typical work that suits for this test. Thus, Enoshima, where is the location of *Slam Dunk* in Kanagawa is chosen to be the test place. This media is designed for Chinese tourists, therefore the test subjects must be the Chinese who have watched *Slam Dunk* before and are interested in visiting the real location. The Experiments were conducted in December 2015 and January 2016 in Enoshima, Kanagawa, Japan, and five Chinese participants were involved excluding me. The experiment was mainly aimed at the following pilgrims[6]. We created the first recording of *Slam Dunk* in the prototype. The first participant referred on our contents, and the second participant referred on both the first participant's recording and ours. The latter ones referred on all the previous contents. All of them uploaded their own records in the system as they consulted from the existing information.

## 4.2 Supporting System

From the three supporting conditions (A Chinese system, the consultation of Weibo and the picture recording), which are previously identified in the concept we've selected picture recording as the main subject of this experiment. By utilizing Whispath, the experiment aim to discover the subject's problems and effectiveness when being used in the Chinese holy land pilgrimage.

## 4.3 Contents

All of the participants took Enoden (i.e. the Enoshima Electric Railway) as the only transport vehicle, which is also an important element in *Slam Dunk*. Experiments started from the departure station of Enoden, Fujisawa Station. As the initiate recorder, we checked a lot of information about location and station on Weibo and blogs in advance. Also we took some screenshots from the scenes that are related to Enoshima. We were consulting the prepared information, screenshots and Weibo as we were seeking for the right positions in the progress of Seichi Junrei. When we matched the virtual scenes and actual place, the photos and texts were updated to the system. Took our recordings as reference, the system of experiments was ready. Five participants followed contents to start recording their Seichi Junrei.

## 4.4 Results

All of the details of record locations are as below (**Table 1**). The reference locations come from our recording.

Location Testing Subject	Fujisawa Station	Kamakurakokomae Station	Railway Crossing	Shonan Beach	Sloping Road	Kamakura High School	Others	Others	Others	Others
1		●	●			●				
2	●		●			●	Enoshima Station (Tsuritama)	Enoshima Landmark (Tsuritama)	The Gate of Enoshima Shrin (Tsuritama)	Downhill Path (Taritari)
3			●			●				
4		●	●	●	●	●	Enoshima Station	Uniform and Tram (In Enoden)	Students of Community Activities (At the Gate of School)	Gym
5		●	●			●		Enoshima Landmark (Tsuritama)	The Gate of Enoshima Shrin (Tsuritama)	Lighthouse (Tsuritama)

**Table 1.** Location Details

Two participants, first and third recorded less than the author. The second, the fourth and the last participants mark more different locations than the initiate record. Especially the second and the fifth subjects, they not only recorded *Slam Dunk*, but also marked *TariTari* and *Tsuritama*, two animations that also take Enoshima as the background.

The first participant said if this tool will be available in near future, she would not spend any time for preparing a Seichi Junrei trip any more. However, she mentioned even though she found pieces of recordings uploaded by pioneer pilgrim about *Slam Dunk* at the right spot, it is still difficult to match. Moreover, she complained that she had to re-type the user name and path name every time when updating new recording.

The second subject was not only a following pilgrim to *Slam Dunk*, but also a pioneering pilgrim to the other two animations in Enoshima. At beginning, she was upset because no consulting pictures about the two animations (*TariTari* and *Tsuritama*). Then she searched lots of screenshots as consultations and took pictures together with the virtual screenshots and real photos.

When the third recorder re-entered the name of the path to upload more pictures, he miss-spelled it and some recordings were showed under another path, without his notice. Resulted to an uncompleted path of Seichi Junrei. Also she mentioned that the user interface does not match smartphone application and not easy to use.

Some subjects felt more easily to find the locations of scenes with the help of the system, but they also experienced inaccurate marking location due to imprecise navigation.

## 5 Behavioral Analysis

As a unique feature of Japanese culture, ACG (animation, comic and game) absolutely becomes one of the best selling points to attract people from all over the world, especially Asian youngsters who prefer free tour than package tour. From the research of Benjamin [7], many Hong Kong youth care more about pop-culture tourism than heritage tourism or nature tourism. They may visit Tokyo University or small infamous shrine or *Koshien* (a baseball game) that relate to animations or comics, instead of visiting any traditional tourist attractions. According the behavior of the five Chinese participants, we picked up the typical three of them to analyze.

- The tourist who has never been to Enoshima

The first participant, she had never been to Japan but still chose the free tour. She did not do any preparation in advance and only accounted on the recordings that were created by me. She got off at the Kamakurakomae Station where is the spot of Ryonan High School Station in *Slam Dunk*. Nonetheless the appearance of the real station was exactly reproduced in the animation, however, she did not recognize the scene in the real world until she found the comic pictures updated by us was right in there. When she suddenly realized what in front of her is the scene that she has watched numerous times in the animation, the tone of her comments are with amazement as dream come true. 'I could not believe I am at the crossing!' 'That is the legendary Ryonan high school!' She was so happy to be enlightened with the comparisons of comic picture and the real scene. After she checked all the previous location recording there, she chose to take pictures of the station, the railway crossing and Kamakura high school that the three most presented scenes on Weibo(**Fig. 3**). In early 2000s, internet assisted spreading digital production and sharing contents to the mass[8,9]. Here the media plays a

prominent role in leading pilgrims. Especially with the prosperous development of social media, personal contributed information possesses vital referencing value. The previous recording left by us recalled her some scenes of *Slam Dunk*. In addition, information on Weibo also has a significant impact on Chinese tourists' behaviors of Seichi Junrei marking.



**Fig. 3.** The first recording

- The tourist who has been Enoshima many times

The Second recorder is a big fan of many animations and comics. This was not her first time visiting the locations of *Slam Dunk*; nevertheless, she still wanted to take pictures on the railway crossing which always appeared in opening theme song (**Fig. 4**). She commented with strong emotion, 'Not every Enoden met Hanamichi Sakuragi (the main character of *Slam Dunk*) is the green train', shows her high request of details in Seichi Junrei. Different with those who were first time there, because she had been many times there, she did not focus on finding out the exact location but devoting to maximize reforming the scenes in reality. The differences of her pictures and comments from others' also verify her special request that she wants her path to be separated from 'normal' recordings. However, as she had been there many times, she lost the fresh feeling and did not record all the scenes marked by prior participants. Because of the imprecise navigation results to incorrect location mark, and the repetition of re-entering user name and path name, both affect the entire experience of Seichi Junrei and reduce her impetus to record. She only recorded typical two scenes that had deep impressed her and less motivated to record more. As a chance went to Enoshima again, she is absolutely not just satisfied with *Slam Dunk* tourism. Some landmarks reminded her of the other two animations that also took Enoshima as a background. Thus she began to enjoy another Seichi Junrei and continued to make notes in the system after she finished all her recording about *Slam Dunk*. To a certain extent, she was also a pioneering pilgrim[6] and became the reference to the last participant.



Fig. 4. The second recording

- The tourist who likes Seichi Junrei

The fifth participant has rich experience of Seichi Junrei and has been following several blogs which updating notes and commendations of holy land trip regularly. He is familiar with getting information solely from blogs thus we spent a long time to explain the functions of Whispath, the study cost and switch cost is for experienced pilgrims are significant. What he marked for *Slam Dunk* is as same as the first participant did. He commented of the gate is ‘I really want to see the school’s basketball stadium, whether it is the same as that in the comic.’ But Kamakura high school prohibits entry of travellers, thus we can see that even though his comment is under the picture of the school’s gate, it is actually related to the gym, and none of other participants ever mentioned that. Without other referencing contents of *Slam Dunk* for him to explore, he found the third participant’s sharing of *Taritari* and *Tsuritama*, and decided to follow her. He also experienced imprecise navigation issue, resulting in incorrect locating information of his marks (Fig. 5). It is clearly to see that his photos are deviated from the third participant’s marks nevertheless they recorded at the same location.



Fig. 5. The fifth recording

To the tourist who has never been to Enoshima, she could find out the scenes by utilizing the supporting system. It combined the image with the location information rather than a mere description of the location. Media and film provide a wealth of real or imagined meaning to signify the attraction



of a place where is made to be more attractive, through constructing or reinforcing particular images of those places, and acting as ‘markers’ [10,11]. From the details of **Table 1, one can easily identifies the railway crossing and Kamakura high school are the only two locations that have been taken photos or recorded texts by all participants.** They considered these two places as main elements of the animation that appeared too many times in the animation. The first participant told that she could recall plenty of scenarios while seeing the typical two places. Thus these two places are the most emotional for people-place bonding. The other explanation attributes to the influence of media. Contents tourism is of particular use in an age of ‘multi-use’ or the ‘media mix’ [12]. Yamamura summarized three periods. The first is in the 1990s, when multi-use started to grow among comics, animations and games; second is in early 2000s when internet assisted spreading digital production and sharing contents to the mass[8]. These two locations are the most commented, reviewed and forwarded *Slam Dunk* topics on Chinese media. **The supporting system provided both comic scenes and real photos as a consultation. As the combination of virtual world and real world, the participant could recognize the scenes easily.**

However, it is also obviously that there are many problems in Whispath when it is used in Chinese holy land pilgrimage. The first one is that the system, especially it is in English and Japanese, confused some participants. Since we explained a lot about how to utilize it, some Chinese subject has felt upset and bother. Second, since Whispath needs to re-enter user name and path name when users want to update a photo or comment, it gives the bad influence to the experience of Chinese Seichi Junrei, and reduces the motivation of recording. Even some users miss-spelled the path name, it results the records were separated. Third, the imprecise navigation has to be fixed; otherwise the supporting system could not have effectiveness because of the incorrect location mark.

## 6 Conclusion

This paper introduced the Japanese pop culture’s influence to young Chinese tourists, and clarify Weibo can motivate them to participate Seichi Junrei. There is substantial evidence, expanded in this paper, which the great potential of Seichi Junrei in Chinese tourism market and the deficiency of a Chinese Seichi Junrei tool. We clarified the concept of the proposed media tool. We also identify issues from the result if the experiment of Chinese holy land trip.

According to the experiment of Chinese young pilgrims by utilizing the supporting system, we analyzed their behavior and found the some problems and effectiveness of the system, which is based on Whispath. Such as the consultation of the virtual and real pictures, the imprecise navigation and re-typing has great negative impact on their entire experience and recording desire.

Enlarging the experiment, there are several promising avenues for further research. We must fix the problems that influence the experience of Chinese holy land pilgrimage. And if it is possible to receive copyright authorization of certain work and sends original pictures to travellers automatically when they approaching a location, we also want to test it would help travellers to match the virtual with the actual or not. For those Chinese fans that lack of Japanese official information channel, If Japanese works related Weibo API could be used in my record system, we wonder users would be motivated to find out more actual scenes in their memories or not. In addition, in order to make system user-friendlier to Chinese, it is necessary to keep on working on the user interface. a simple user interface in Chinese is necessary. Moreover, it should make more Chinese tourists to test the system and adjust the design is ok or not.

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