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THE ISLAND CLOSEST TO HEAVEN: JAPANESE ENCOUNTERS WITH FIJI

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The Island Closest to Heaven: Japanese Encounters with Fiji

Chapter 1

Introduction

Previous studies show that a fundamental part of tourism is how political and economic decisions influence the travel industry in creating destinations and types of tourism available. Carlile and Obayashi, the former from a tourism structure perspective and the latter from a tourist gaze perspective (see below), make it apparent that tourists are not entirely free agents and that tourism is a highly structured activity.¹ With their high disposable incomes, Japanese tourists are lured and manipulated by the travel industry, which actively constructs images, desires and expectations of a destination.

Tourist gaze and Tourism Structure

In this study I employ the term “tourist gaze,” coined by Urry, to describe the way that Japanese view the Pacific in a touristic sense.²

¹ Carlile, Lonny. 2000. “Niche or Mass Market? The Regional Context of Tourism in Palau.” *The Contemporary Pacific* 12 (2): 415-436.

Obayashi, Junko. 2000. “Hawai‘i in the Japanese Tourist Gaze” (Master’s thesis, University of Hawai‘i).

² Urry, John. 1990. *The Tourist Gaze: leisure and travel in contemporary societies*. London: Sage

Urry defines the tourist gaze as:

[Part of the experience of tourism] is to gaze upon or view different scenes, of landscapes or townscapes which are out of the ordinary. When we 'go away' we look at the environment with interest and curiosity. It speaks to us in ways we appreciate, or at least we anticipate that it will do so. In other words, we gaze at what we encounter.³

A key component of the "tourist gaze" is the anticipation of sights viewed or imagined through media.

Places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures, either on a different scale or involving different senses from those customarily encountered. Such anticipation is constructed and sustained through a variety of non-tourist practices, such as film, TV, literature, magazines, records and videos, which construct and reinforce that gaze.⁴

A gaze tells tourists how to view a destination. Even after they arrive, experiences are filtered through pre-travel images. Urry says, "And even when the object fails to live up to its representation it is the latter which will stay in people's minds, as what they have really 'seen.'"⁵ Fiji is constructed and imagined in a distinctive Japanese gaze, which I intend to explore in this thesis.

Tourism infrastructure is a prerequisite to creating tourist destinations and it is influenced by a web of relationships between airlines, travel agencies, and governments. Most tourist destinations are constructed from

Publications.

³ Urry, John. 2002. *The Tourist Gaze*. London: Sage Publications, 1.

the top down – by business and government. Carlile points out that after airline liberalization, Japanese tourism to Guam quadrupled from around 153,000 visitors in 1977 to roughly 638,000 in 1990.⁶ With more flights, empty airline seats needed to be filled, and hotels and other tourist facilities had to be constructed. In the case of Guam, the Japanese have ownership of most of the hotels, travel agencies, and airlines. Japanese businesses are also heavily invested in Hawai'i. Thus, in this study I discuss the political and business arrangements that structure Fiji as a tourist destination for Japanese.

The Super-consumer and the Alienated Modernite

Japanese have become notorious for traveling en masse to popular tourist destinations around the world. However, the nature of their tourism is changing and there are several types of Japanese tourists. Although the act of tourism is based on material and/or visual consumption, there is variation in how and why Japanese travel, contrary to common images of a "Japanese tourist." Shopping, sightseeing, and enjoying foreign food are the activities that most commonly motivate travel. But some Japanese tourists also travel to find something more – or to escape from modernity, in

⁴ Urry 2002, 3.

⁵ Ibid., 78.

⁶ Carlile 2000, 423.

something like a pilgrimage – a search for authenticity, truth, and even existential meaning.

Fumiteru Nitta says, in his study of souvenir shopping in Hawai'i, "Japanese tourist shopping in Hawaii suggests that the so-called *kaigai ryoko bumu* (overseas tour boom) is fueled not only by curiosity about foreign countries but also by the desire to consume foreign goods."⁷ Nitta points out that while Japanese continue to buy souvenirs for others according to the custom of *omiyage*, they are also spending a considerable amount of money on themselves.⁸ Modernity and affluence are changing the way Japanese tourists shop – they can afford to indulge themselves as individuals as well as buy *omiyage* for family, friends, and co-workers back home – making their levels of travel consumption higher than ever.

Japanese tourists spend four billion dollars annually in Hawai'i alone.

In her analysis of guidebooks and travel brochures, Obayashi finds that the travel industry creates images of Hawai'i as a capitalist paradise for Japanese – the ultimate in weather and beaches, and also the ultimate in shopping.

⁷ Nitta, Fumiteru. 1992. "Shopping for Souvenirs in Hawai'i." In Tobin et al. *Re-made in Japan: everyday life and consumer taste in a changing society*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 204.

⁸ *Omiyage* are gifts traditionally given upon returning from a pilgrimage to a shrine (see Kanzaki 1992). Today it is obligatory for Japanese to bring back gifts, particularly a specialty of the area they visit for business or pleasure.

Japanese tourism in Hawai'i is based on overwhelming materialism and has emphasized capitalistic desires which can be fulfilled in Hawai'i. The characteristics of the Japanese image of Hawai'i – a physical paradise, its “American-ness” and “Japanese-ness” – are all connected to materialistic dreams of modern Japanese consumers.⁹

The tourism industry promotes this sort of consumption-based tourism that gives tourists access to name brand shopping, while more substantive tour alternatives are not readily accessible.

Pioneered by McCannell in *The Tourist*, the idea of the search for authenticity by individuals who feel alienated from modern society is widely discussed as the motivation for Western travel.¹⁰ Michael Rea points out that until recently it has been questionable whether Japanese tourists fit with this model, “in which alienation at home informs the purpose of one’s foreign trips – the search for meaning and recovery of one’s ‘spiritual center.’”¹¹ He writes that until the 90s, studies on Japanese tourism by anthropologists such as Graburn, Moeran, and Beer generally conclude, as Beer states:

In the case of Japanese overseas packaged tourism, modernity seemed less an issue of false or alienated urbanites searching for authenticity. Rather the Japanese tourists seemed more interested in acquiring status through cultural and material capital, escaping the confines of urban life, cementing social ties and establishing one’s identity as Japanese. ¹²

⁹ Obayashi 2000, 16.

¹⁰ McCannell, Dean. 1976. *The Tourist: A new theory of the leisure class*. New York: Schocken Books.

¹¹ Rea, Michael. 2000. “A *Furusato* Away From Home.” *Annals of Tourism Research* 27 (3): 639.

But Rea argues that Japanese mass tourism to the Beatrix Potter cottage in England, and to the setting of the Anne of Green Gables story on Prince Edward Island represents a search for authenticity that does not fit with the usual type of consumption-based tourism. These settings of popular children's stories serve as a *furusato*, or native place/rural hometown, away from home.

Rea says that "demographics and social shocks have shaken free entrenched notions of Japanese identity and tradition," and that "this state of homelessness is accompanied by a new willingness to seek existential meaning outside of Japan, evident in Peter Rabbit and Anne of Green Gables tourism."¹³ He argues that Japanese tourism to these places is an act of cultural rejection.

Such social trauma, accompanied by the coming of age of the postmodern war generation, has resulted in a new type of Japanese citizen-tourist, one whose modern home has been toppled by earthquakes, chemical terrorism, and economic plight, and for whom "traditional" sources of identity have no purchase. The nostalgia of these children of the city is not for an idyllic countryside of rice-stalks and thatched roofs, but of wondrous premodern (and fictional) worlds encountered in their youth in stories like *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* and *Anne of Green Gables*.¹⁴

¹² Rea 2000, 639 from Beer 1993, 22.

¹³ Ibid., 642.

¹⁴ Ibid.

In his interviews, Rea finds that “throughout every tourists’ testimony there runs a thread of longing, despair, sadness, and even disgust. The general regard of Japan is most dramatically summarized by one young Japanese woman, who said ‘When I’m in Japan I often feel *kurai* (dark) and *kusaru* (rotten).’”¹⁵

Methods and Content

I spent July and August 2003 conducting ethnographic interviews in Suva, Nadi, Pacific Harbour, and Mana Island, in Fiji in order to determine how the structure of tourism and the tourist gaze shape the way in which Japanese tourists experience Fiji. I used participant observation in tours of the Fiji Museum, The Fijian Cultural Centre, and several tours of the Nadi area run by the four travel agencies, or bureaus of agencies, established for Japanese tourists, and one tour in English with the largest agency in Fiji. Most of the interviews were informal, but the informants read through a consent form approved by the Committee on Human Subjects and orally agreed to participate. The names of tourists and all but one village are pseudonyms; I did not include the names of the tour operators as they are competing businesses and confidentially shared information with me.

The Interviews

I interviewed 28 Japanese tourists and 12 western tourists from Australia, New Zealand, Britain, the U.S. and Germany. I also interviewed 50 local tourism staff, 25 of whom were Japanese expatriates, and three informants, two ethnic Fijian, and one Japanese man (a tourism development expert dispatched by JICA) who were linked with the Ministry of Tourism. The interviews lasted between ten minutes to over an hour, depending on the amount of information the interviewees were willing to disclose. I conducted the interviews in English, Japanese, and sometimes used basic Fijian. Being a half-Fijian American who speaks Japanese, locals considered me quite the anomaly, but most informants seemed to be able to identify with me in some way. Japanese were happy to speak their language and be able to articulate their thoughts to a foreigner. Fijian informants treated me hospitably as an outsider, but were also respectful as someone with a *vanua*, a native place or connection with an area of Fiji – and as someone who would understand any Fijian jokes in the background – because Fijians are often facetious.

¹⁵ Rea 2000, 658.

Participant Observation

In most cases I asked permission from the tour agencies to participate in and study the tours. The five agencies I observed gladly obliged, but at the Pacific Harbour Cultural Centre and the Fiji Museum that do not regularly host Japanese tour groups, I paid the fees and joined the mostly Western tourists. I recorded the narratives of the various tour guides on mini-disc. As the guides usually explained that I was doing tourism research, I could approach people on the tour and ask questions. All of the translations are my own, which I transcribed from Japanese to English, and I checked unclear language with native speakers.

In the tour settings, I was natural and relaxed, and attempted to be as least disruptive as possible. I sometimes helped to explain things to one or two people on the tour and taught some locals in the industry a few Japanese words and phrases that would be useful for their specific jobs. I also guided some Japanese tourists in Nadi when the Japanese guides were busy or not present. I added my opinion on things, such as “breadfruit is actually good if you eat it the right way,” and suggested that the visitors tell the villagers in Fijian that the food was delicious. This received a positive response and improved the mood of the visit. I was also lucky enough to be invited to observe the Japan-Asia Tour Operators Committee meeting.

Background Materials

When I first arrived in Suva at the end of June 2003, I spent several days at the University of the South Pacific gathering relevant materials in the library and speaking with professors. I had also obtained materials from the University of Hawai'i library system. I use mostly journal articles and papers for background information and include findings from the Fiji Ministry of Tourism/JICA survey of Japanese tourists from May 2003. As part of my analysis I use Fiji travel brochures in Japanese and English, the novel and film *The Island Closest to Heaven* (only available in Japanese) and travel websites in Japanese and English.

Limitations

The greatest limitation to this research is the amount of time I was able to spend in the field, only two months in Fiji, and that entailed an intensive process of information gathering and talking to several people a day. Fiji's *talanoa*, or "talk story" culture aided me quite well in this process. People like to mill around and talk, but I was still only able to get a taste of the different tourist settings I thought I should explore. Also, because of the nature of tourism, it was not possible for me to follow one person or one family for an extended period of time to develop individual characters to

write about. People came and left within a matter of days, so I had mostly one-time meetings with tourists. I also did not want to intrude on their valuable vacation time.

On one tour I discovered that I was deliberately sent along with their best guide. This made me to question the extent to which the guides might have changed their behavior – and their narratives – because of my presence. What would they do differently if I was not there? One respondent in the Ministry of Tourism – JICA survey wrote that they were disappointed that their Japanese guide was unenthusiastic. No Japanese tour that I observed had unenthusiastic guides; only one English tour was a bit lackluster.

In the following chapters I present my background research, findings, conclusion, as well suggestions and recommendations. The next chapter discusses the context of Japanese tourism in Fiji and describes the structure that links the government, the travel industry, and local people. In Chapter three, I discuss the media representations of the South Pacific and Fiji that create a pre-travel ‘tourist gaze.’ Images which began with the *nan’yo* discourse during Meiji colonial expansion, are also depicted in the popular post-war novel and film, *The Island Closest to Heaven*, as well as

travel brochures. These represent the starting point for Japanese touristic encounters with Fiji. In Chapter four, I discuss my findings from interviews, participant observation, tour narratives, and also present the results of a Ministry of Tourism – JICA survey of Japanese visitors. I discuss travel motivations, the tour site/sights and themes of tour narratives. The last chapter concludes with a discussion of post-encounter images, the nature of the Japanese tourist in Fiji, the Japanese gaze, and offers suggestions and recommendations for future development of the Japanese market.

This thesis seeks to address several questions, including the following: What kind of tourism do Japanese engage in Fiji and is it different from Hawai'i and other popular destinations? How is Japanese tourism structured in Fiji? What is Fiji's appeal for Japanese? Do they get what they expected? How can Japanese tourism to Fiji be improved? Here I will not deal directly with the important issue of Japanese tourism's impact on Fiji but, I will touch upon the issue in Chapter two and in the Conclusion.

Chapter 2

The Mediators

Introduction

Tourism is a highly mediated activity.¹ Tourists are not lone explorers, globe – trotting in search of ‘otherness.’ They are consumers in a multi-billion dollar global business, possibly the largest in the world, in which governments, corporations, tour wholesalers, and tour operators actively shape encounters with the ‘Other.’ As Kent states in his assessment of tourism development in Hawai‘i, “the unmistakable look of the new tourism points to close control over practically every tourist activity.”² Indeed, tourism in the age of globalization has become a tightly structured system of local, national, and multi-national alliances which regulate the movement of people.

Edward Barnet, a planner and ideologist of Hawai‘i’s tourism boom, offers an insightful statement on the mediated movement of tourist bodies:

When Pan Am buys thirty-seven 747’s at over \$20 million a piece, that is capital investment that requires that others or even their own intercontinental hotels must build multi-million dollar hotels to have sufficient slots into which they can place the delivered bodies. Multiply this by all the other major airlines

¹ See Helu-Thaman 1993, Kent 1975, McClaren 1997.

² Kent, Noel. 1975. “A New Kind of Sugar.” *East-West Technology and Development Institute*, East-West Learning Institute 169-198, 175.

and we are talking about a lot of capital. These bodies have to be fed and laundered and smiled at, for they are not just bodies, they are individuals seeking their own souls. Yet to make this pay off and to lower the unit fixed costs of handling one individual on an individualistic basis, there must be volume³

This chapter discusses the ways in which Japanese tourism in Fiji is mediated from the international and national to the local level. There are various entities involved in constructing Japanese touristic encounters and developing the necessary elements to attract Japanese tourist dollars. After all, tourism is an elaborate and complex business that is driven by the motive for profit, and it is also a central component of Fiji's inter-state relations. The main mediators of the Japanese market are the Fiji Ministry of Tourism, The Fiji Visitors Bureau, Japanese wholesalers, airlines, tour operators, local villages, hotels and resorts and the Japan –Asia Tour Operators Committee. In the following sections, I discuss the context of Fiji tourism and the significance of Japanese tourism and describe the mediators and the networks among them.

Tourism in Fiji

It is a common scenario that developing countries with few marketable resources turn to tourism to fuel economic development and facilitate their

³ Barnet in Kent 1975, 175.

integration into the global marketplace. Today, Fiji's sugar industry is in decline due to increased competition brought about by globalization and land disputes. Tourism is being promoted as Fiji's new, main commodity.

Even while serving the British Empire and providing sugar for export, Fiji's tourism industry was also created. Hotels were first established in the 1900s, as it was a stop on the European steamship route. The colonial government solicited foreign investment to build the tourism industry in Fiji, similar to how they established the sugar industry. "The colonial administration saw the growth of tourism in Fiji as a viable economic sector in the hands of expatriate capital with relevant resources including skills of all sorts needed by the industry."⁴ The structure of the tourism industry was thus determined by Fiji's colonial rulers with foreign capital dominating the industry. The structure is not much different today. Some smaller hotels are Fijian owned and operated and most gift shops and restaurants in the tourist hub of Nadi are Indian owned. The management structure of the major hotels is comprised of seventy-three percent whites or Europeans, eighteen percent part-Europeans (mixed Fijian and white), nine percent indigenous Fijians, with no Indo-Fijians.⁵

⁴ Plange, Nii-k. 1996. "Fiji." In Hall, Michael C., and Stephen J. Page, eds. *Tourism in the Pacific: Issues and Cases*. London: International Thomson Business Press, 208.

⁵ Teaiwa, Teresia. 2001. "Militarism, tourism and the native: Articulations in Oceania." (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Santa Cruz), 169.

Most Tourism projects are financed by and for foreigners. However, as Teaiwa describes, the national government and indigenous Fijian interests have ultimate control over the industry since indigenous Fijians own 85 percent of the land and it cannot be bought or sold.⁶ There are land-owning clans who reap profits from leases to resorts and the government, although some clans have also been illegally dispossessed of their land or feel that they are not receiving proper compensation. During the coup d'etat of 2000, some villagers staged an uprising and took tourists hostage in order to demand compensation from the owners of the Turtle Island luxury resort.

Tourism in Fiji flourished through the 1980s but, with three coups in the past 15 years, tourists and investors have been cautious about going there and only recently has tourism made a significant recovery. A new airline with six weekly flights from Australia has been added with plans underway to open at least four major hotels, including a Hilton on Denarau Island, Nadi, and a Marriot at Momi Bay, just south of Nadi. However, increasing problems with crime, substandard tourism infrastructure, such as dilapidated roads, and problems with running and hot water, do not always result in an ideal "paradise vacation."

⁶ Teaiwa 2001, 163-184.

Significance of Japanese Tourism

The Pacific is the most popular destination for the Japanese. Out of the annual 16 million Japanese international travelers, over two million travel to Hawai'i, but Guam, Saipan, Tahiti, and Fiji are popular alternatives. In 1996, before the Asian financial crisis and the coup of 2000 that caused a severe blow to the industry, 45,000 Japanese traveled to Fiji. This is not much when compared to the more than two million who traveled to Hawai'i that same year, but represents a significant number for Fiji which had a total of 340,000 visitors. Most of these tourists were from Australia (80,000), New Zealand (63,000), and after Japan, the U.S. with (39,000). Due to political instability during 2000 and the economic downturn in Japan, arrivals for 2002 dropped to 26,000 out of 398,000 and even further decreased in 2003, to approximately 23,000, despite a total increase to 430,800.⁷ Other markets have more than recovered, but Japanese tourists are still not returning to Fiji. The Japan market in Fiji is comparatively small, but certainly an established and distinct one that the Fiji Visitors Bureau, the Ministry of Tourism, Japanese tour operators, resorts, and host villages would like to see increase.

⁷ Yearbook of Tourism Statistics. 2000. Madrid: World Tourism Organization.
Fiji Visitors Bureau. 2003-2005 Visitor Arrivals Report.

The Mediators

The Ministry of Tourism

The Fiji Ministry of Tourism describes its role:

[R]esponsible for policy, programme, research, statistical review and formulation of tourism development planning. Its principal task is to coordinate and execute tourism development programmes; monitor the effectiveness of incentives provided by Government; promote and facilitate the development of the tourism industry and through the Fiji Visitors Bureau (FVB), mount vigorous and sustained promotional campaigns abroad.⁸

The ministry establishes tax laws, and incentives and concessions for industry investors. It also employs a JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) “Tourism Development Expert” as part of Fiji’s development aid package from Japan. There has been a JICA Tourism Development Expert position for several years and the role is currently filled by a former Japan Airlines researcher. The TDE gives the ministry an insider’s perspective on trends and attitudes in Japanese society. He conducts surveys and analyzes data in order to make development policy suggestions for the Japanese market.

The TDE is the dominant voice out of the Ministry of Tourism for the structuring of the Japanese market. However, like the tourism

⁸ Fiji Ministry of Tourism. Ministry of Tourism Website. <http://www.fiji.gov.fj/ministries/tourism.shtml> (2003)

development plans proposed by the Ministry, lack of capital and political instability has made tourism development goals difficult to realize.

The Fiji Visitors Bureau

The main purpose of the Fiji Visitors Bureau is to market Fiji as a tourist destination using government funding filtered through the Ministry of Tourism. The FVB creates slogans and prepares information to send to travel agencies around the world. It is also involved in promoting events such as carnivals, music festivals, art exhibitions, and sports tournaments – golf and rugby in particular. The FVB has regional branches in Australia, New Zealand, the U.S., Korea, Taiwan, the U.K., Germany and Japan. They provide visitors with general information on travel, accommodation, and activities and might refer potential visitors to airlines and travel agencies in their home country, and to local tour operators for bookings. Since the FVB is a marketing entity, it compiles and analyzes visitor data and employs strategies to construct distinct and appealing touristic images of Fiji. It also works with tour operators to influence tourist demographics by offering different kinds of tour packages.

Wholesalers

According to Carlile, the top five Japanese travel agencies form an oligopoly to control about two-thirds of the outbound travel market. These large agencies, or wholesalers, all purchase tour components in bulk and sell them as outbound tour packages. "The large capital resources of these mega-agencies give them the ability to buy huge quantities of airline seats, hotel rooms, and various other services from suppliers at highly discounted rates, usually via contracts negotiated semi-annually."⁹ Carlile further describes how the bulk-purchasing system influences Japanese overseas tourism:

First, the system has encouraged the participation of the largest travel agencies in the leading overseas travel destinations. Needless to say, bulk purchasing works best where the "raw materials" of travel packages are available in bulk, and precisely for this reason mainstream Japanese overseas tourism has been heavily oriented toward tour destinations with large hotel developments well-serviced by major airlines. Second, the system has encouraged vertical integration. Wholesalers purchase tour package "parts" (e.g., airline seats, hotel rooms, tickets to tourist attractions) well beyond what they need for their own clients, both to reduce unit costs (other things being equal, the larger the purchases, the larger the discounts and commissions received from suppliers) and to assure access to choice seats and rooms for their clients during the profitable peak seasons. The excess is resold to smaller travel agencies and discount brokers for sale in secondary markets. As a result, on the retail side of the Japanese travel industry, numerous smaller industries maintain an "affiliation" (also known as keiretsu tie) with the larger firms that supply them with parts and packages.¹⁰

This system makes alternative travel for Japanese expensive and inconvenient. From the point at which the tourist comes into contact with a

⁹ Carlile 2000, 418.

travel agency, it is quite difficult to transcend the structure of the mediated encounter. According to the Fiji Ministry of Tourism, only seven percent of Japanese visitors make individual travel arrangements compared with 84 percent who travel on package tours.¹¹ However, even individual arrangements usually entail the purchase of cheaper bulk airline tickets from a large wholesale agency.

Airlines

Before Fiji's first coup in 1987, Japan's All Nippon Airways operated flights between Tokyo Narita and Nadi International Airport. Air New Zealand stopped in Fiji between Tokyo and Auckland until 2000. Currently, only Air Pacific, Fiji's only international airline, operates direct flights between Tokyo and Nadi with three Tokyo departures a week (from Tokyo, passengers can also reach Fiji via Seoul on Korean Air). The Fiji government has ownership of 51 percent of Air Pacific and 49 percent is owned by Australia's Qantas Airlines. The airline is one link that directly connects tourism with state interests. Qantas and Air Pacific fly Australians, New Zealanders, Americans, Canadians, Japanese and visitors from other Pacific Islands to Fiji. Air New Zealand flies passengers to Fiji from its home country and Canada, the U.K., Europe, and Los Angeles.

¹⁰ Carlile 2000, 418.

In 2004, Australian owned Pacific Blue airlines began three weekly flights between Brisbane – Nadi and three Melbourne – Nadi flights.

Tour operators

The tour operators are essentially the businesses that act as the final buffer – as cultural liaisons – between the tourists and the ‘other.’ The duties of the tour operator vis-à-vis the tourists are to provide transportation to and from the airport, book optional tours, and transport guests to tourist sites (optional tours), including the Nadi town market, villages, shopping in Nadi town, and nature sites, such as the Garden of the Sleeping Giant outside of Nadi. They also check Japanese guests into their hotel rooms, check them in at the airport, and provide a narrative for the tourists while they ride in buses, vans, or cars. All of the operators own a small fleet of 60-passenger buses, vans, and cars. Employees of the tour companies, called “agents” have multiple functions of guiding, driving, booking tours, and checking guests in at the airport and hotels.

The Japanese operations exist in separate sections, or branches, independent of the larger agencies. The four local operators that handle Japanese tours are subsidiaries of, or affiliated with, “mega-agency” wholesalers in Japan. Three of the operators serving Japanese tourists are

¹¹ Fiji Ministry of Tourism. 2003. *Japanese Visitor Survey Report*

American or Australian – owned agencies that serve other markets as well. Only one agency is Japanese – owned and has only Japanese clients. The largest operator in Fiji, which was founded by a Fijian, once had a Japanese department but stopped handling Japanese tourists to focus on other markets after the 2000 coup.

Local Villages

The villages that Japanese tourists visit on their holiday in Fiji are also chosen quite deliberately. They either have historical significance or are larger, more affluent communities and might have business, political, or kinship links with employees of the tour office. In order to bring tourists to a village, those at the management level of the tour company must first approach the chief bringing *sevusevu*, or offerings, usually consisting of high-grade kava in its root form, and/or a *tabua*, or whale's tooth, which is extremely valuable in Fijian society. It is difficult to refuse any proposition if requests are accompanied with *sevusevu*.¹² Once the chief has agreed, the managers negotiate with the relevant village members on days and times of the tours, what is to be provided for the tourists, and how much they are to be compensated.

¹² This is one reason that Fijian political practices continue to deviate from Western notions of law and

Souvenir Shops

There is a strategic link between the major handicraft and apparel stores in Nadi and the tour operators. Three of the operators each have exclusive agreements with three shops in Nadi town. The shops each have guest lounges and a small bar that serves complementary beverages. When flights arrive from Tokyo, tourists are brought from the airport to shop lounges for an orientation before departing on tours or going to their respective hotels. Even if visitors participate in a tour, there is still time to have a cup of tea and explore the shops before they are shuffled off to a hotel.

Hotels and Resorts

Seventy percent of Japanese visitors stay in only two places: the Sheraton Fiji Resort in Nadi or Mana Island Resort.¹³ Usually the Sheraton serves as a stop-over hotel where Japanese stay only one or two nights when going to and from Mana Island. Sheraton, once owned by Japan's EIE investors and now owned by ITT Corp., is the closest up-market hotel to the airport and Denarau Marina where a shuttle transports tourists to and

from the outer islands for one-day excursions or longer stays at Mana Island.

Mana Island Resort is essentially a Japanese resort, owned and operated by Japanese, although 60 percent of Mana's visitors are from other countries, mainly Australia. The resort staff takes lessons in the Japanese language and every menu, announcement, notice, and advertisement has both an English and Japanese version. The menu includes many Japanese dishes including daily preparation of rice, *nori* (seaweed), and *miso* soup for the breakfast buffet. Everything from the diesel generators that power the island, to the general manager's golf cart and the executive chef himself, have been imported from Japan.

The remaining 30 percent stay at the Tanoa Hotel, a cheaper alternative to the Sheraton near the Nadi airport, or on the Coral Coast, the southern coast of the main island of Viti Levu.¹⁴ The Coral Coast resorts most visited by Japanese include Shangri La's Fijian Resort and The Warwick Hotel. All these hotels have Japanese coordinators either hired from Japan or locals who speak fluent Japanese after studying or working in Japan.

¹³ Fiji Ministry of Tourism *Japanese Visitor Survey Report*, 2003. See Table 1, p. 26.

¹⁴ See Appendix A for map.

Table 1. Hotels and resorts stayed at by Japanese visitors (n 383).

Hotel/Resort Name	Region/Area	Share
Sheraton	Nadi	42.9%
Mana Island	Mamanucas	27.7%
Fijian Resort	Coral Coast	6.6%
Tanoa International	Nadi	5.1%
Dominion	Nadi	3.0%
Warwick	Coral Coast	2.8%
Tokoriki	Mamanucas	1.5%
Outrigger	Coral Coast	1.3%
Matamanoa	Mamanucas	1.0%
Holiday Inn	Suva	0.5%
Treasure Island	Mamanucas	0.5%
Mediterranean Villas	Nadi	0.5%
West's Motor Inn	Nadi	0.5%
Sonaisali	Coral Coast	0.5%
Castaway	Mamanucas	0.5%
Maravu Plantation	Taveuni	0.5%
Mocambo	Nadi	0.3%
Vomo Island	Mamanucas	0.3%
Oarsmen's	Yasawas	0.3%
Natadola Beach	Coral Coast	0.3%
Capricorn	Nadi	0.3%
Club Coral Coast	Coral Coast	0.3%
Peninsula	Suva	0.3%
Royal	Ovalau	0.3%
Beach Resort	Coral Coast	0.3%
Takia	Vanua Levu	0.3%
Martintar	Nadi	0.3%
Hot Spring	Vanua Levu	0.3%
Beachside Resort	Nadi	0.3%

The Network

Airlines

Some in the industry believe that increasing Japanese visitors starts with increasing the number of available airline seats, while others believe they must improve the “product” in order to stimulate the demand for more flights. Representatives from Air Pacific are currently negotiating with the Japanese Ministry of Transport to increase the number of flights from Tokyo to Nadi. Weekly flights between Tokyo and Nadi have slowly been added since the 2000 coup, when all flights from Japan were cancelled for several months. However, according to one industry informant, Narita Airport is extremely congested so the political situation in Fiji must show definite progress before the Japanese government commits to allowing more flights, i.e. more tourists.

Hotels and Resorts

Hotels also have economic links with villages, particularly, the all-inclusive resorts. Members of local villages are employed as service workers and entertainers. In most cases hotels and resorts must employ members of

the land-owning clan they lease their land from. Other villagers have a freer association with resorts and hotels; for example, one entertainment group from a small island in the Mamanucas travels by speed boat to several area resorts performing *meke*, or Fijian song and dance, for nighttime entertainment.

Marketing Mana

As Japanese nationals, the Mana marketers are knowledgeable about how to sell their resort in Japan. The managers at Mana Island informed me that, unlike other resorts in Fiji, they know where and how to run their advertisements. The Japanese encounter with Fiji is structured in such a way that, according to an informant, many Japanese equate Mana Island Resort with Fiji – before and after they travel. Mana Island is an option for all four Japanese tour operators in Fiji and some guests book their rooms via Mana's Japanese website. Another industry informant said that on Japanese websites and chat rooms about travel in Fiji, you hear mostly about Mana Island.

Tour Operators

Most Japanese tourists engage in at least a minimal degree of cultural tourism when they visit Fiji, whether it is touring a village for an hour or two, watching dances or fire-walking at resorts (which might fit better under the category of “local entertainment”), or visiting cultural theme parks such as the Fijian Cultural Centre at Pacific Harbour and Orchid Island. Three out of the four tour operators regularly takes their clients on village tours. The operator that usually does not is the smallest in Fiji. Its affiliate agency in Japan offers the cheapest travel packages and transportation is about the only service they provide. The other three operators receive the highest volume of clients and, while some Japanese opt out of the cultural tours, the majority of them visit villages – with each operator taking the tourists to a different village. Two of the villages have exclusive contracts or agreements with the operators, meaning that their company is the only one that brings in tourists. The village that is under agreement with the largest operator actually cannot enter into partnership with any other operators, even those conducting non-Japanese tours, as the operator has threatened to discontinue their contract should it do so. Another operator seeks out various Nadi area villages to bring tourists to on a seasonal basis. This operator goes by word of mouth, or uses internal

connections to find the “cleaner” and more hospitable villages to bring their tourists.

Tour operators also negotiate contracts with villages, shops, and various sites of spectacle, then relay the information to the affiliate tour office or wholesaler in Japan who then puts together vacation packages into vivid, glossy brochures with appealing slogans, inviting potential tourists to “paradise.” A manager at one tour office told me, “I don’t really know who comes up with these slogans. That is a good question...” Nevertheless, it is not travel industry employees actually living in Fiji.

Fiji Visitors Bureau

Every year the Fiji Visitors Bureau formulates objectives for Japanese tourism development. Some objectives listed in the FVB Japan marketing plan for 2003 include:¹⁵

- Increasing the number of Japanese tourists and their expenditure.
- Addressing the media to promote Fiji tourism products in order to increase awareness of Fiji.
- Addressing the travel trade to create an environment conducive for them to actively sell tours to Fiji.
- Shifting market segments to meet the market trend by developing senior tourism and foreign independent traveler (FIT) products.
- Flattening seasonality.

¹⁵ Fiji Visitors Bureau. 2003. “2003 Marketing Plan: Japan.” Suva: Fiji Visitors Bureau.

- Clearly distinguish Fiji from its competitors by promoting and emphasizing the appeal of Fiji tourism assets.
- Diversify tour products available in Japan – outer island promotion and development of local tour products.

The FVB's role in shaping Japanese tourism is comparatively minimal.

It works with operators to create images of Fiji, advertise tours, and participates in travel trade shows but, it is the operators that are actually responsible for putting together the tours and packages advertised by the Visitors Bureau.

Tourism Development Expert

In the latest Japanese visitor survey the TDE suggested several potential areas for development of the Japanese market:¹⁶

1. Business tourism/ MICE: (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Events) Made possible by:
 - Direct flights from Japan to Fiji
 - Travel time between Japan and Fiji of only 8-9 hours.
 - Adequate facilities to accommodate conferences and meetings.

This is the same as Hawai'i and Australia, which already cater to the Japanese Business Tourist market. Fiji is sitting on great potential in this area.
2. 50 Plus Market

The 50 Plus Market refers to retired or semi-retired travelers, and is a large component of the Japanese tourism market. Although Fiji has established a honeymoon market, it also has good resources and products for Japanese tourists in this age group.

¹⁶ Fiji Ministry of Tourism *Japanese Visitor Survey Report* 2003, 9-10. All suggestions are direct excerpts from the report.

3. Long-Term Stay Tourists

The number of tourists who want to stay for longer periods is increasing along with the growth in numbers of Japanese retired travelers to Fiji. Fiji has a comfortable climate and rich natural surroundings favourable to long-term stayers.

4. Sports Exchange Programmes

Due to the popularity of sports in Fiji and with the standards of facilities available, Fiji has the potential to carry out sports exchange programmes with the Japanese Market.

5. Tourists Seeking New Experiences

Tourists in search of unspoiled environments, ethnic culture and history are growing in the Japanese Tourism Market. Fiji is encouraging eco-tourism and we can see some success in the European and Australian markets.

6. School Excursion and Training Tours

A different survey conducted by the Travel Journal (Travel Journal School excursion Guide 2003 Summer, 30 June 2003) clearly shows that Fiji ranks highly as a destination choice for high school students wanting to travel abroad. The economical cost of stay and a comfortable climate in which to spend the Japanese summer vacation are attractive aspects of this kind of tourism. A very good opportunity waiting to be developed is the accommodation of big groups (e.g. 100-300 members) such as high school excursions, but due to limited air flight capacity at present, it is not yet possible. However, it is already possible to accommodate universities or private sports clubs' sports training camps, which may comprise of only about 30 members.

Japanese travel agencies and the Fiji government are the mediators that decide whether or not to implement the TDE's suggestions. The first two suggestions are reasonable from the perspective of the hotels and tour operators but, it may take a number of years to introduce the other types of grassroots/exchange tourism.

JATOC

Another entity that actively structures what Japanese experience in Fiji is the Japan-Asia Tour Operators Committee. JATOC is a forum to raise issues, discuss practical problems and share ideas for improving the tourist experience and developing the market. The committee meets monthly and consists of about 20 members representing the four local tour operators, hotels and resorts that receive Japanese visitors, Air Pacific, cruise companies, South Pacific Bridal (arranges most Japanese weddings), the Fiji Visitors Bureau, and the Ministry of Tourism's JICA Tourism Development Expert. They discuss issues such as airport security, the progress of Air Pacific's campaign to increase flights between Tokyo, Japanese language courses, and itineraries for promotional visits from agents in Japan. The ethnic/national make-up of the committee includes seven Japanese representatives, six Australians, and six Fijians – three ethnic Fijians and three Indo-Fijians. Japanese are most represented, and representation from villages is absent. JATOC members might argue that village representation is unnecessary but, from the perspective of the industry, to leave out village hosts is to overlook the value of their experiences with Japanese visitors that could make their "product" better.

Conclusion

There is a complex web of business and political relationships that determines what Japanese tourists experience in Fiji. When most Japanese travel to Fiji they are moved through this intricate system, which most likely does not differ much from other popular tourist destinations.

Japanese tourists experience an even more insular encounter because of the language barrier, so Mana Island's Japanese managers utilize their common language and culture to make their resort the most popular for Japanese.

Japanese touristic encounters with Fiji are structured from the macro to micro level, with tourists and villagers exercising the least agency.

Indigenous Fijians working in resorts and hosting tourists in their villages do not have a great deal of influence on the details of development, but as the villagers did during the 2000 coup who took tourists hostage and demanded compensation – they have the ultimate power to turn tourism on its head.

Chapter 3

Images of Paradise

Introduction

Media representations of a place, such as images depicted in popular literature, films, and travel brochures are fundamental in the construction of a tourist gaze.¹ This chapter will discuss Japanese representations of the Pacific Islands and Fiji. For Japanese, a collective gaze of the 'Pacific as paradise' is influenced by popular media and tourism advertising but, its origins began during the Meiji period (1858-1911) with Japan's colonial expansion into the Pacific. I include a brief discussion on the history of the Japanese gaze, and a summary and analysis of the novel and film *The Island Closest to Heaven*. I also analyze the images and language presented in Fiji travel brochures.

History of the gaze

The South Pacific has long been romanticized in the gaze of the West since explorers believed they had found an Eden-like paradise when "discovering" the islands. Similarly, Japanese colonial interests in the Pacific created a

¹ Urry 1990, 2002.

sense of the Pacific Islands as an idyllic paradise. Travelogues and romantic fiction during the Meiji period and the accounts of colonial settlers in the Pacific created a Japanese gaze.

Upon joining the modern imperial powers, the Meiji government took interest in the Pacific Islands as new territory for the Japanese empire.

Peattie writes:

Thus was born, by the end of the nineteenth century, the concept of a “southward advance,” *nanshin*, whereby the nation would find glory, prosperity, and new territory by moving into the “South Seas,” the *Nan’yo*, a geographical concept as nebulous as the ambitions directed toward it, but which, in the first years of the Meiji era, was generally defined as the tropical pacific, particularly Micronesia. Few Japanese knew much about distant waters in those days, but by the mid-1880s a number of impulses had stirred a sudden interest in the tropical Pacific.²

Peattie also says:

The *nanshin* – the ‘southward advance’ toward tropic lands and seas – existed for many Japanese as a kind of national holy grail, one that was pursued in late Meiji times with romanticism, in the 1920s and 1930s with methodical attention, and in the early 1940s with fatal consequences for the nation.³

Japanese settlers throughout the colonial Pacific, particularly Hawai‘i, and journalists and writers who traveled with the Japanese navy through the Pacific made the public aware of the South Seas, or *nanyō*, through travelogues and novels. Romantic fiction of the South Seas became popular among Meiji youth.

² Peattie, Mark. 1988. *Nanyō : the rise and fall of the Japanese in Micronesia, 1885-1945*. Honolulu : University of Hawaii Press, 2.

³ *Ibid.*, xvii.

[T]he romantic fiction concerning the Pacific did more than anything else to create a fevered excitement about that ocean among Japanese youth in the mid-Meiji period . . . themes were those of adventure, exploration, resurgent navalism, and colonization of tropical utopias. These novels had massive appeal to Meiji youth seeking wider horizons outside Japan.⁴

The Island Closest to Heaven

In the post-war period it is the story of, “*The Island Closest to Heaven*,” a novel by Katsura Morimura, that continues to inform a Japanese ‘South Seas’ gaze. *The Island Closest to Heaven* is arguably one of the most important texts in constructing the image of the Pacific for Japanese today. The story is set in New Caledonia, but the ideas expressed in the book about South Seas “native places” have been significant in constructing a South Seas ‘gaze’ for Japanese that includes Fiji.

The Island Closest to Heaven was mentioned several times during my fieldwork, and in fact, the book was loaned to me by two Japanese informants living in a Fijian village. Another informant, a Japanese diving instructor, asked me, “Have you ever heard of the book *Tengoku ni ichiban chikai shima*?” He said, “It’s about New Caledonia, but a lot of Japanese have read it and they don’t really know where it is . . . they think its Fiji.”

⁴ Peattie 1988, 14.

I asked the couple in the village if they had ever heard of the book and they said “Yes, we have it right here. You can take it.”

Travel agencies have adopted the title of the popular novel as a slogan, and among Japanese “the island closest to heaven” has become a common term for South Pacific Islands. Japanese travelers use the novel, and therefore the author’s romanticized descriptions, as a general travel guide to the South Pacific. Tourism industry management in Fiji refers to the phrase, “The Island Closest to Heaven,” as a fundamental concept in Japanese travel to Pacific Islands.

The Novel

The Island Closest to Heaven was first published in 1969 by Katsura Morimura, a popular writer of young adult novels. The novel is essentially a travel journal that Morimura claims is a true story. In the book, she travels to New Caledonia to find the “paradise” or “heaven” that her father would describe to her as a young girl. Now that her father has passed away, Morimura, then in her early 20s, learns that New Caledonia must be the place her father told her about. She decides to travel there, almost as a spiritual journey. Although Morimura is not considered to be a literary genius, *The Island Closest to Heaven* made her a popular author and she

eventually wrote a sequel to the book, as well as another novel on travel to Okinawa and a New Caledonia picture book/cookbook. According to the book's description (*kaisetsu*) Morimura became so popular from *The Island Closest to Heaven* that bookstores had a "Morimura Corner." Only the famous Yasunari Kawabata, author of *Snow Country* and *The Sound of the Mountain*, had a similar "Kawabata Corner."

Summary

In the novel, Morimura writes that, while she was growing up, her father remarked randomly that he had been to Beijing, Manchuria, Burma, (most likely as a member of the Imperial army) but he had never been to an "aboriginal place." She says maybe because she was quite small she believed it when her father told her: "Take a dug-out canoe on the ocean and go very, very far, then at the end of world there is a little island; made of completely white coral. It's the island closest to heaven, where God is."

Her father tells her:

When there is someone who wants God, from anywhere in the world, God comes down [to the island] immediately and a native gives him a dug-out canoe, and he goes from there to Japan, America, or anywhere. So, on that island in order not to be hurt when God comes flying down, the whole surface is covered with a carpet of flowers. It's near heaven so it's always bathed in sunlight, bright and warm . . . The natives of the island are dark because they get more sun than anyone else in the world. And they can meet with God anytime they like so everybody is happy.

She asked her father the name of the island several times but he would only tell her that when she gets a little bigger he will buy a dug-out canoe and take her there. Her father dies suddenly during her second year of college. Soon after his death she dreams of “tall, soaring papaya trees on a completely snow white island. There is a big yellow fruit shining” and she is “a native girl.”

Working at a publishing company several years later, she hears her boss say that a mining company’s cargo ship from New Caledonia is passing through Tokyo. He describes New Caledonia:

The climate is always warm, the flowers bloom all year long, mangos and papayas are abundant. They say it’s a place where the natives work for two days and idle away for five days, there are no infectious diseases and no thieves.

During that time Morimura had lost confidence in herself. She worked as hard as she could from morning until night, but was often ill and repeatedly failed in her work. Morimura is convinced that this is the island her father told her about. “Since it is always warm, you won’t catch cold, and you can live by only working two days, it is truly an island of one’s dreams.” She thinks that “surely God must have revealed the name of the island” to her.

Morimura travels to New Caledonia on the cargo ship and stays for several months. She is disenchanted at first when she finds that New Caledonia does not seem at all like a place that is close to heaven.

Morimura conveys ethnocentric criticisms by introducing a less than ideal image of the New Caledonians. A Japanese expatriate working at the local office of the mining company tells her:

There are a lot of [natives] who don't work but circulate among friends houses and sponge off them. They look bad. They stink because they go several days without taking a bath. Not only that, here it is only a shower. There are also those who wear coconut oil to cover up the smell. That is all the more unbearable.

Although Morimura is initially lonely and confused by the local culture, she eventually befriends some locals and continues to idealize the island. She comments, "I was moved imagining the time when Captain Cook discovered this warm island." During her stay, she also writes an article for a newspaper in Japan and from her description of the island the editor titles the article, "The Divine Children of a Dream Island."

Morimura eventually finds the place that is closest to heaven. She is on Ouvea Island and wades into the sea. She calls out for her father. It is bright and she cannot open her eyes. She says, "Dad. I've come here. Across this ocean is heaven (*tengoku*). This is the closest place to heaven.' The blueness expanded beyond the horizon." She talks to her father: "Oh dad, please look, please smile, I've come here. What are you doing right now father?" She realizes she is up to her neck in water and returns to the beach calling out, "Goodbye father" (*sayonara otosan*). She does not think she will ever see such color again, so she "will return to Japan with it

impressed in her heart.” She says, “Father, this is the sea closest to heaven. I saw it. I felt that I had to come to New Caledonia to be sure of it with my own eyes.” When she returns to Japan on the cargo ship she is crying, but sees a rainbow over the island as it disappears into the horizon. The rainbow is symbolic of her renewal.

Analysis

Certain themes of the book are appealing to the over-worked post-war generation. Morimura is exhausted, she does not feel like she is succeeding in her work, and believes finding this paradise her father spoke of will give her a new vitality and sense of direction. Initially she is disappointed, but does find her paradise in the end. The story is also of a spiritual journey. Morimura’s theme of finding God and heaven have appeal for those feeling the spiritual void brought on by modernity. Morimura describes travel to a South Seas “native place” almost like a pilgrimage for modern over-worked Japanese living busy urban lifestyles. The novel suggests that travel to the Pacific can have a deeper meaning for Japanese, particularly because in the Shinto religion spirituality is strongly connected with the natural environment, and in Japanese folk religion one’s connection to the

environment defines spirituality.⁵

After some initial culture shock, Morimura continues to idealize life on the island although she also includes negative images of “the natives.” The language she uses is outdated and now considered to be pejorative.

Morimura employs the term *dojin*, meaning “natives,” to refer to Kanaks, the indigenous people of New Caledonia, whereas today a more politically correct term might be *jimoto no hito*, or the local people. In addition, she is almost Orientalist in how she conceives of the island. Morimura is telling Japanese that through travel, specifically to a South Seas “native” place where the environment is beautiful, clean, safe, and friendly they can attain physical and spiritual renewal. The islands are foreign and exotic, but more importantly they are available – untouched places awaiting discovery, serving as a means to revitalize oneself through the natural environment, or getting as close to God as possible.

The Film

A film based on the book was released in 1984, directed by Nobuhiko

Obayashi who has made several films with young people, particularly young

⁵ The Shinto religion began as folk rituals surrounding the rice harvest in pre-modern agricultural society. Today people pray to Shinto Gods for different reasons, such as passing a school entrance exam but, nature is still ordered according Shinto notions of purity and impurity, and one can observe Shinto shrines placed strategically on mountains, beaches, in forests and other important natural places. Also see Ian Reader. 1991. *Religion in Contemporary Japan*.

women as the heroines. There are several differences between the novel and the film, but the basic plot is the same. Scenes in the film show a young girl with her father telling her of a place “at the edge of the world, a small island made from snow-white coral. . . . the island closest to heaven.”

Almost exactly as Morimura writes in the novel, her father tells her “Because it’s the island closest to heaven, the sun is always shining, it’s always bright and warm so all the people of the island are always happy.” They promise each other they will go there together.

Summary

In the film, Morimura’s character becomes 16-year-old “Mari Katsuragi” (Tomoyo Harada). Her father dies suddenly when she is in high school and she travels via package tour to New Caledonia immediately after her father’s death. Initially the trip is to last a week but Mari leaves the tour group for another island in search of the place her father described and misses her plane back to Tokyo.

Unlike the novel, a key element of the story is the main character’s relationships with two men. The main characters in the novel include two locals who befriend Morimura but, in the film Mari interacts mostly with other Japanese. After three days of touring Noumea, a Japanese expatriate,

Fukaya, approaches Mari's tour group at a zoo. He criticizes the guide saying:

What kind of guide is this? Always showing you the same thing you see on the postcards. He always follows the same pattern and gives the same tours. Do you want to fly like a bird? Real travel is finding your own sites yourself. You trust your own heart and discover things with your own hands.

Fukaya asks if anyone would like to go on his tour and only Mari is interested. She hopes he can help her find the place her father told her about. Her adventure with Fukaya (who must be in his late 30s) turns out to be something like a long date. He is unsuccessful in trying to find Mari's 'island closest to heaven' and leaves her back with the tour group.

Watanabe, who is also a character in the novel but a love interest only in the film, is a third-generation Japanese, a descendent of Japanese laborers who came to New Caledonia to work in the nickel mines. Mari meets Watanabe several times and develops a romantic interest in him. Watanabe is looking for Japanese friends since his one dream is to be able to go to Japan someday. He tells Mari the island she's looking for must be Ouvea and makes travel arrangements for her via local transportation.

With its amazing landscape and friendly people waving at her everywhere she goes, Mari suspects that Ouvea is the island closest to heaven. Before she returns to Japan, Mari flies to Ouvea once more to say goodbye to Watanabe. On the beach with Watanabe and his younger sister,

Mari realizes she has indeed found her island closest to heaven: It is right in front of her eyes, in front of her and Watanabe's eyes. Watanabe tells Mari he has found his Japan, and it is her.

Analysis

The film is a coming-of-age story where the audience watches Mari grow and fall in love. Her discovery of "heaven" is not so much a spiritual act as something that she comes to understand through her relationship with Watanabe. In this case "the island closest to heaven" is but a romantic place to fall in love. Simultaneously, the film serves as a travel advertisement for a New Caledonia tour. When Mari first sees New Caledonia, it is on a billboard advertisement in Tokyo for the travel conglomerate UTA's New Caledonia tour. The UTA airplane with its logo is included in an aerial shot during the travel scene from Tokyo to Noumea. The tour guide embodies the stereotypical Japanese guide –shouting through a megaphone, flag propped up, herding around a large group of people. Mari's tour group rides a bus to various sites, stopping to stroll around and take pictures. The audience is shown how to be a tourist: Ride the tour bus, take a lot of pictures and if you are a "real" traveler you might find adventure, love and personal growth.

Fiji in Japanese Travel Brochures

Pre-travel images and expectations are actively constructed through travel brochures. Travel advertisers make use of images present in literature, films, and other media. Goss writes:

It has been argued that tourism advertising forms part of a 'hermeneutic circle' – a closed semiotic system which links the representations of a tourist destination to the actual tourist experience, by creating a set of expectations that the tourist industry is designed to accommodate.⁶

Obayashi finds that Hawai'i is marketed to Japanese as "a landscape without real 'people' – lacking any appreciation for local people's lives and cultures."⁷ And much of Japanese tourism in Hawai'i in fact has very little to do with local people's lives and cultures.

The Japanese tourism industry utilizes the *nan'yo* image created by Meiji romantic fiction and Morimura's *Island Closest to Heaven* to sell Fiji. The tour promotions for Fiji are presented in booklets together with those of other "island paradises" such as Tahiti and New Caledonia, as well as the Maldives, Mauritius, and Seychelles, which are not Pacific Islands. The tourism industry exploits the "island paradise" image, delineating a single

⁶ Goss, J D. 1993. "Placing the market and marketing place: tourist advertising of the Hawaiian Islands, 1972-92." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 11: 663-688, 671.

⁷ Obayashi 2000, 25.

type of tourism regardless of the island's culture or geographic location.⁸

Japanese travel brochures for Fiji target different segments of travelers including families, wedding/honeymooners, and young people. But the same themes are prevalent throughout: Fiji is a paradise that is essentially empty, i.e. untouched and available. Travel to Nadi area resorts and outer islands are emphasized over travel to the capital and commercial center of Suva. Fijians are a marginal presence in the brochures and appear primarily as cheerful, friendly natives waiting to serve the tourist. Some slogans exploit an image of a cheerful Fijian attitude that is available for vacationing Japanese to enjoy and emulate but, there is very little emphasis on Fijian culture. Out of the six major Fiji travel brochures published by several Tokyo – based travel companies, only one features Fijian people and Fijian culture. Most of the brochures present vivid photographs of empty white-sand beaches, sunsets, tropical fish, and immaculate hotel swimming pools, all devoid of people. Only in optional village tours is contact with Fijian culture and tradition advertised. The model tourists in all but one brochure are white. Furthermore, travel brochures present no pictures and mention nothing of the Indo-Fijians that make up nearly half of the population of Fiji.

⁸ See Appendix C for images.

The Japan Airlines JALPAK tours brochure is typical. It presents Fiji as being absent of people except a few tiny images of a Fijian dance performance, a waitress serving a “romantic dinner” to a white couple, a miniature picture of several Japanese tourists at the Nadi market, and another white couple gazing at the ocean. These images are almost too small to view in detail and large photographs of deserted white-sand beaches dominate the pages. The introductory blurb says in Japanese, “An endless sea, islands that seem to float in the lagoon. Full of cheerful, smiling faces: A South Pacific paradise.” There are two empty chairs waiting on a deserted beach next to a straw beach umbrella.

The JALPAK tour brochure also includes a section advertising wedding packages. There are several plans to choose from, and scenes of clean white chapels, simply decorated but opening up to the beach. Everything can be rented – from the wedding dress and tuxedo to the priest and the choir. As an example of the “product,” there is a small picture of a priest standing next to a choir in white robes, and a young blonde woman modeling a wedding dress.

Another JALPAK brochure targets families and young women. It advertises discount prices, which are splashed across the front cover. There are illustrated pictures of smiling white children in a “kids at half price” ad. A cartoon shows two young energetic-looking Japanese women with trendy

hairstyles and clothing, smiling and waving with JALPAK AVA tourist tags attached to their shirts. Inside there is a description of a “kids program” in which children can participate in activities directed by the hotel staff, like catching crabs, fishing, and watching cartoons. The sales pitch is emphasizing activity and fun: “Bula! is the beginning of Happiness! Let`s enjoy the extraordinary cheerfulness of the South Pacific paradise of Fiji!!” The text is superimposed over a scene of a lone man paddling an outrigger canoe, illustrating the active and fun vacation geared towards young people and families, but still conveys the image of a sparsely populated island paradise.

The Fiji travel brochures in English provide an interesting contrast. There are scenes of a beautiful uninhabited natural environment, but there noticeably more Fijians, not only smiling and waiting to serve you, but also interacting with Western tourists. In the Fiji Visitors Bureau brochure on activities entitled, “Fiji Islands. Soft Adventure.” tourists can have “adventures” chaperoned by locals. One can visit a village and go on a “Wilderness Ethnic Adventure.” In the FVB brochures, Fiji is “The one truly relaxing tropical getaway.” Brochures in English, while also featuring the landscape, noticeably present more Fijian people, but also leave out Indo-Fijians.

Conclusion

An idyllic Pacific has been on the map of mainstream Japanese since Meiji Japan began colonial expansion into the Pacific. Journalists and novelists helped create among the public a sense of the islands as utopian territories. Japan's link to Hawai'i via diplomacy, immigration, and also contemporary mass tourism, was also paramount in constructing the image of the Pacific, or South Seas, as "paradise." In the post-war period it is the story of "*The Island Closest to Heaven*" that follows the colonial vision of seeking out a South Seas utopia, continuing to inform the *nan-yo* gaze, that includes Fiji. The colonial view, and that presented by Morimura, is that the South Seas is a romantic place, a physical and metaphysical ideal that is available to anyone who can get there.

Travel brochures emphasize the pristine landscape of resort islands, and present a cheerful homogeneous people as a secondary attraction, with cultural aspects non-threatening by their absence. Just as in Morimura's novel, the people and culture of the "paradise" island are secondary to the goals of the tourist. The *nanshin* attitude of the Meiji period also assumed the availability of the islands not considering existing peoples and cultures. These media representations point to a Japanese neo-colonial attitude vis-à-vis Fiji.

While all three modes of representation express a romantic view of the Pacific held by Japanese, representations of the encounter become closer to reality moving from the novel, to the movie, to travel brochures. The novel represents a freer form of travel, similar to the previously mentioned 'lone explorer' in search of 'otherness.' Although her travel motives are self-centered, Morimura expresses some concern for local people and cross-cultural interaction. This becomes less important for the tourist in the film where the idea of a packaged, ego-centric and ethnocentric encounter enters as a way for tourists to experience a place. This is the type of encounter offered by the tourist industry in their brochures and the most accurate representation of what Japanese tourists actually experience in Fiji.

Chapter 4

The Encounter

Introduction

In this chapter I discuss how Japanese experience Fiji once they arrive. I begin by summarizing results from a Ministry of Tourism and JICA survey and interview data on travel motivations. I present the results of my own interviews and then describe the way in which the typical itinerary structures the experience. I then discuss the content of the tour narratives and the village tour experience.

The material covered in this chapter indicates that there is a great deal of cultural overlay, and insularity to the packaged experience. Images of a South Seas “paradise” are maintained by the mediators – and by the tourists themselves. With a short and isolated experience, and little cross-cultural exchange, tour agencies, with their narratives and published materials, become the main source of information in creating and recreating Fiji as a tourist sight/site. Villages are the main tourist sites in Fiji and village tours provide the closest encounter for most Japanese tourists who visit the islands.

The MOT and JICA survey

In November – December 2002, the Fiji Ministry of Tourism and JICA conducted a visitor survey of 254 Japanese and for comparison, 212 Australians. Categories included travel motivations, availability of information, travel cost, shopping, travel duration, evaluation of hotels and resorts, food and meals, places visited, and hospitality. The survey was conducted in the form of a questionnaire with multiple choice and open questions. The results provide a general picture of the characteristics of the Japanese visitor to Fiji and the way in which s/he experiences Fiji.

The following is the profile of the respondents (see appendix B for figures):

- Men accounted for 45 percent and women for 55 percent of the total number of Japanese tourists.
- Tourists in their 20s made up 64 percent, followed by those in their 30s at 29 percent, and tourists in their 50s at 4 percent, and 40s at 2 percent.
- 67 percent of the tourists were office workers, 11 percent were housewives, 4 percent were self-employed, and part-time workers also made up 4 percent.
- Most of the tourists were from the Tokyo area with 67 percent, 10 percent were from the Hokuriku/Shinetsu area, 6 percent were from Hokkaido, and 2 percent from Kansai.

The MOT/JICA survey produced the following results:

Purpose of Travel: Honeymoons accounted for 54 percent of the total (all packages). Vacations as package tours made up 30 percent, 7 percent were individually arranged vacations, and 4 percent of respondents came on business.

Reason for choosing Fiji: The primary reason for choosing Fiji was the environment. Thirty-eight percent of the respondents chose “natural scenery”, 22 percent chose “marine sports”, and 19 percent came to stay at a “hotel/resort establishment.”

Information for the decision: Forty-four percent of the tourists chose Fiji from viewing pamphlets or posters. Twenty-two percent based their decision on print media, and 12 percent received recommendations from family or friends.

Number of Visits: Respondents visiting Fiji for the first time accounted for 95 percent, 3 percent visited twice before and 1 percent visited once before. Most of the tourists, 95 percent, said they would visit Fiji again, but the return visit rate is only 6 percent.

Travel Cost: Travel cost per person was 254,104 yen. Tourists paid 157,349 yen in Japan and spent 96,756 yen in Fiji. Honeymooners spent the most, at 292,000 yen.

Shopping: Of the respondents, 78 percent purchased handicrafts, 74 percent purchased foodstuffs and 50 percent purchased cosmetics.

Composition of party: Seventy-nine percent of tourists traveled in pairs. Groups of 10 or more accounted for 7 percent, and groups of 5-9 made up 6 percent

Travel companions: Tourists who traveled with family accounted for 73 percent and 19 percent traveled with friends.

Travel duration: Trips lasting 6 days were the most common at 40 percent, followed by 8 days at 35 percent, and trips lasting 5 days at 12 percent.

Hotels and Resorts: The Nadi area and Mamanuca Islands were the most popular destinations with 53 percent of tourists staying in Nadi and 32 percent in the Mamanucas. In Nadi, 43 percent of the respondents stayed at the Sheraton hotels. Mana Island Resort accommodated 28 percent of the tourists, and 7 percent stayed at the Shangri-la Fijian. Tourists gave hospitality and service a good evaluation with 43 percent commenting positively, but at certain resorts room cleanliness and rundown facilities were a problem.

Food and Meals: Sixty percent gave positive comments regarding the food, but this category received the least number of favorable comments.

Places Visited: Seventy percent enjoyed the places they visited, “especially areas of natural beauty such as the white sandy beaches, colourful coral life, exotic reef fish and the crystal clear waters.” Thirty percent of the respondents commented negatively, indicating that the service, attitude toward tourists, and food were of poor quality.

Hospitality: The hospitality of Fijian hosts was highly rated with 85 percent of the respondents recording favorable experiences. In particular, tourists liked “the friendly greetings by staff,” “the big Fijian smile” and responded that Fijians are cheerful. Some tourists said they encountered staff who seemed despondent, but only 4 percent had negative opinions of staff.

At least 79 percent of the respondents traveled to Fiji for the natural environment. The report also addresses issues arising from the research and suggests new tourism developments to be implemented, which I will discuss in the next chapter. Comments from my informants support most of the MOT/JICA data, but the interviews add a qualitative perspective, and contribute categories that were not included in the questionnaire.

Motivations

Most tourists come to Fiji to enjoy the pristine environment they see splashed across travel brochures and in other media. I interviewed at least 28 tourists allowing them to use their own language to respond to various questions. I asked the tourists: Why did you come to Fiji? Their answers revealed the images and expectations that Japanese have of Fiji. The interview results confirm that the gaze fostered by the media shapes their expectations of their Fiji experience.

The Ocean

The most common response, given by ten informants, was “I/we wanted to go to a place with a beautiful sea” four people added, “and white sand beaches.” Four informants said they came to Fiji to dive. One hundred respondents to the MOT/JICA survey commented that the best thing about Fiji is the beauty of the ocean.

Penchant for South Islands

The concept of the “south islands” was mentioned by six informants as something that motivated their travel to Fiji. Informants answered that they wanted to go a “south island,” two people said they have traveled to

several countries in the Pacific and “like the south islands.” One young woman traveling with three friends told me, “I longed [to go to] a South Island so . . . [I came to Fiji].” Everyone I asked had heard of or read Morimura’s *The Island Closest to Heaven*.

Informants also listed the places they have been in the Pacific and spoke as though it was natural for them to come to Fiji, for example, Mr. Ishikawa traveling with his wife and youngest son told me in a very matter-of-fact manner, “Well, we are going further and further into the Pacific. We’ve already been to Hawai‘i, Guam, Saipan, and Cebu.” Most of the people I interviewed had already been to Hawai‘i or Guam, as their inaugural trip abroad, or their first stop in the Pacific.

Mrs. Suzuki, traveling with her husband and adult son said they “like the South Islands” and have been to Guam, Palau, Saipan, Bali, Tahiti, and Hawai‘i. They “like the sea and they can relax” in these places. She mentioned they like Club Med resorts and particularly enjoyed the Maldives and Club Med Tahiti. “We’ve been to Tahiti, New Caledonia, Southeast Asia, we’ve been to most of the resorts in Southeast Asia. Only Fiji was left. We wanted to go to Bora Bora in Tahiti. We looked for a tour but the timing wasn’t right. We had never been to Fiji so we looked at a pamphlet and decided . . . because we’ve been to a lot of resorts but never in Fiji.”

Mrs. Suzuki referred to Fiji as a resort; however, during the sightseeing tour she asked the guide, "What else is there about Fiji besides the resorts? We want to figure that out..." The purpose of her family's travels seemed to be resort vacations but she was interested in learning more about Fiji on the sightseeing tour. If she were corralled directly to an outer island, she might have left with the same image of Fiji as just a resort. But the guide hardly came up for air while giving the family information on Fijian society, history, economy, climate, flora and fauna, and souvenir shopping.

Safety

The tourism industry successfully manages to keep information on Fiji's political problems from Japanese tourists. For example, the Fiji Visitors Bureau website in English makes no mention of the coups and the Japanese site only refers to the first coups which occurred in 1987 although, the most recent one occurred in 2000. Despite Fiji's unstable political atmosphere, three informants mentioned they think of Fiji as a safe alternative to other popular tourist areas, and even their own cities in Japan. A mother of a family of four told me that they came to Fiji instead of Niagara Falls because they were worried about the SARS virus and terrorism. They thought "Fiji would be a safe place." Mrs. Ogawa, a grandmother, said her

family chose Fiji, Mana Island, most importantly because her grandchildren can play safely there.

Not too many Japanese

Interestingly, informants also said they chose Fiji because there are too many Japanese in Hawai'i and Guam. Fiji is ideal because it is not somewhere people can travel to anytime, it is not (yet?) mundane or "too much like home" with so many Japanese like Hawai'i or Guam may be. Mrs. Nakazawa, a mother from Tokyo traveling with her two teenage sons (their father stayed back in Japan because he could not leave his job) said, "Hawai'i has too many Japanese... It's the kids' summer break, and there are so many Japanese in Hawai'i. If it was possible, we wanted a place where they don't understand Japanese so it will be educational for the kids, but here [Mana Island] it's o.k. to use Japanese." A young woman traveling with her boyfriend said, "I would prefer it if there were no Japanese, but I'm a little nervous about diving and want to be able to use Japanese language for diving but nothing else." Mai, a Japanese guide told me, "People get tired of Hawai'i and want to go to a smaller country where they can enjoy traditional life."

Price

One couple on their honeymoon, as well as a few others, also mentioned cost. They wanted to go somewhere not too easily accessible, but Tahiti and the Maldives are too expensive. It seems that cost is also a strong reason people get married in Fiji. According to a wedding coordinator at South Pacific Bridal, which coordinates most Japanese weddings, “Japanese get married in Fiji because it’s cheaper than getting married in Japan. You can have a small ceremony with just family and in Japan you need several attendants, but that’s not the case in Fiji.” Thousands of Japanese have been married at Mana Island. Again, it is somewhere besides the now ordinary destination of Hawai‘i with too many Japanese, but the cost is reasonable, especially without the obligations involved in a Japanese wedding.

A place to relax

Fiji is also a place Japanese come to relax and get away from a busy urban lifestyle. A man from Fukuoka city traveling for his anniversary said, “It’s fresh and cheerful, and you don’t have to rush.” Mrs. Ogawa said, “My daughter came when she was still single and said it’s a really good place, it’s quiet, not noisy. In Hawai‘i there are a lot of shops and things... Fiji has

a lot of nature and it's quiet. This is the third time my daughter has been here. I've been to Hawai'i. I don't really like Hawai'i." She continued, "Fiji is beautiful isn't it... I don't like to try and enjoy places where lots of Japanese died in World War II, like Saipan and Guam." Mrs. Nakazawa said, "It's such a relaxing place. Everything runs on Fiji time... Japan is so busy. I wanted to get away from that. It's another world [in Fiji]." I asked Mr. Ishikawa why he wanted to visit a village and he replied, "[We/I] wanted to relax." The Moritas, on their Mana Island honeymoon said, "We've only done snorkeling. No diving or anything. We just want to relax." However, it seems that among Japanese tourists there are different definitions of "relax." A Japanese staff member at Mana Island explained that Japanese come to Mana Island because not only do other islands not have Japanese language there also are not many activities on other islands. He said:

Japanese can't do nothing – it gives them stress if they have nothing to do. I tell them the best thing they can do is take it easy, but they can't. They have to be doing something. The Australians and New Zealanders will be sitting on their decks drinking from noon, then happy hour comes and it's time to drink some more. But the Japanese guests rarely show up for happy hour because that is the time when they are showering after all of their daily activities.

There are two main beaches for the guests at Mana Island Resort, the North beach with little or no activity, and the South beach with the resort's main dock and a flurry of activity. It was entertaining just to watch all the activity at the beach with Japanese tourists snorkeling, kayaking,

swimming, riding on banana boats, going back and forth on dive tours, and playing in the water with other floating contraptions.

Three Informants said they like Fiji because “there is nothing.” There are no large shopping malls with brand name outlets, there is a bit of nightlife, but not much outside of low-key hotel bars and lounges, no established sex industry or hostess bars. Yumi, a young woman from Tokyo, said she had already been to Hawai‘i and Guam but “Fiji is different from Hawai‘i because there is nothing here.” She had been to Fiji before where she met her Japanese boyfriend who works for one of the resorts. A Japanese tour coordinator said, “Fiji is a paradise because there is nothing.” First time visitors might come to Fiji expecting to be able to enjoy what the natural environment has to offer but, they also expect better infrastructure and more commercialization. People complain about unsatisfactory shopping, not having hot water, and sometimes no water at all.

Shopping

Although none of my informants traveled to Fiji in order to shop, or mentioned shopping as a priority, indeed it was almost the opposite, but being able to shop was still important. When Mrs. Suzuki heard that most of the shops are closed on Sunday, the day they arrived, she asked

anxiously, “What? We can’t shop?” The guide reassured her that some shops are open, just not all of them and that there is a shopping bus available that can take them to town from their hotel. In the MOT/JICA survey, the most common complaints were that stores closed too early, were not open on Sunday, although “Sunday is a busy shopping day in Japan,” and that salesclerks were too persistent.

Cultural exchange?

Informants also mentioned nothing about wanting to learn about Fiji. People seemed to be entertained during the village tours and sightseeing, but cross-cultural experiences and gaining an understanding of the place they were visiting was secondary to enjoying the resorts and natural environment, having a tropical honeymoon or a wedding on a sunset beach, and being able to “relax,” whether that entails lounging on a beach or doing every water sport possible. The tour agents spoke of sightseeing and village tours as a time-filler, something for tourists to do while they wait to check in to their hotels. When I asked informants if they had an interest in Fijian culture, my question was met with blank stares or polite smiles. People had little concern for their hosts, however, the industry does not sell Fijian

people as a tourist attraction for Japanese, at least not to the same extent as they do for Western tourists.

According to the MOT/JICA survey, 15 percent of Australians chose to visit Fiji because of an interest in Fijian history and culture compared with 2 percent of Japanese. In other categories, 38 percent of Japanese traveled to Fiji for its natural scenery compared with 24 percent of Australians, 22 percent of Japanese came to Fiji for water sports, compared with 12 percent of Australians, and 19 percent of Japanese primarily chose Fiji to stay at a hotel/resort compared with 30 percent of Australians, and so forth. However, natural scenery and staying at a hotel/resort are overlapping categories. Japanese generally come to Fiji for the environment.

Western tourists

In 2003, there were about 355,000 tourists to Fiji from Western countries, out of 430,800 total tourists. Most of these tourists also travel on packages, only they stay twice as long as Japanese on average and there are more backpackers and other independent travelers that want to visit Fiji for different reasons than Japanese. Even those who join traditional tours, like those I observed, are more interested than Japanese tourists in

discovering 'exotic' native life, which is reflected in the tourist media discussed in Chapter three.

While the government and other industry stakeholders work to try to meet the needs and standards of package tourists, two backpackers from England complained that Fiji's tourism structure is too overdeveloped. Cindy and Edward were in their late 30s, traveling around the world and looking for a place to settle outside of England "to get away from the rat race." Edward said that in Fiji a backpacker cannot go out and do anything on his or her own. "I would like to be able to go up to a fisherman and ask if he goes to some island and ask if he would take him there, not pay \$40 to some tour company." They think Fiji is "becoming too westernized." At the time we were in a western style coffee shop in Suva and Edward said, "Like this coffee shop. It does employ people but... we would like to be able to sit in a little local café." The café seemed to be modeled after the Starbucks chain but there is no such thing as a Fijian café.

These tourists were traveling to find satisfaction in consuming the quaint and primitive. Just as Edward said they were trying "to get away from the rat race." I asked them if they would want to return to Fiji. Cindy said yes, at the same time Edward said, "I don't really want to come back again because it will be too overdeveloped and geared toward tourism."

Sara, a young woman from Germany said she imagined Fiji to be like the pictures of the Beachcomber Island resort, “like a little island with white sand that you can walk all the way around.” Actually, when she arrived in Fiji it was raining and she was pulled into Nadi souvenir shops by aggressive salespeople and thought “What am I doing? I need to get out of here.” Despite feeling a bit bewildered by the hard sellers in Nadi, she said she likes Fiji because everyone smiles on the street and says “Bula.” “Nobody in Germany smiles – time is money, money is time and everyone just wants to make money.”

Other tourists I spoke with from Australia were repeat visitors and enjoyed Fiji as an easily accessible vacation spot with friendly and hospitable hosts. The Australians in particular seemed comfortable in Fiji, as they were joking with tour guides and other tourists, bantering with Fijian staff, and drinking and dancing in resort lounges and local bars. Australians and New Zealanders in Fiji seemed to have much more freedom than Japanese. A couple from Sydney, Mary and Chris, who I met on a tour, said they rented a four-wheel drive and went to the inland villages. After we visited Viseisei village, Mary asked me, “What did you think of that village?” I replied neutrally, “It was nice.” Chris said, “Do you think this is one of the more . . . civilized ones they show you on the tour? Like Edward, Chris was also questioning the authenticity of the tourism structure.

The itinerary

Japanese package tourists are able to see more of Fiji if they spend more money. However, buying more expensive packages and staying at luxury resorts isolates tourists even further from everyday life in Fiji. Japanese wholesalers create mid-priced packages for couples, families and young, unmarried travelers, and plush expensive vacations for honeymooners. The few surfers, backpackers, volunteer tourists, and others will unavoidably buy bulk tickets and possibly arrange transportation from the airport through a travel agency in Japan but many arrange their accommodations and itinerary upon arrival. These independent travelers who spend the least amount of money are forced to negotiate the unfamiliar cultural territory themselves, armed with maybe only a Lonely Planet or a *Chikyuu no arukikata*, a sort of Japanese version of the Lonely Planet. But independent travelers have a much closer encounter with Fiji.

Honeymooners and wedding couples differ from other tourists. They usually stay in Fiji longer – eight days instead of five – and are more isolated from local people and lifestyles. The couples I met on Mana Island were lounging on the beach in between snorkeling or diving trips. I was told that honeymooners also join the sightseeing tours to the villages, although I did not meet any in that setting. Travel agencies also provide separate transportation for certain packages that are more expensive – a comfortable

mini-van instead of the tour bus with 40 other people. Some honeymooners and other package tourists also choose to fly directly to Mana Island after they arrive, missing the mainland tours. I did meet several couples and other tourists shopping or eating out in Nadi the day before they were scheduled to return to Japan. Officially, this would be their only non-resort experience.

Below is a typical schedule for a Japanese package trip to Fiji. Prices vary depending on the quality of the hotel/resort and the number of optional tours and what the tours provide:

Day One:

1. Arrive
2. Pick up by tour bus
 - a. Sightseeing: village, market, botanical garden; or
 - b. Stay in town: shopping, waiting in lounge deciding on optional tours; or
 - c. Fly to outer islands, or drive to Coral Coast resort
3. Lunch with tour guide or hotel check in
4. Free

Day Two – Five:

Golf and/or optional tours: snorkeling, diving, fishing, water sports, day cruise, shopping.

Day Six:

Return to Japan.

Those who stay for six to eight days usually stay on the mainland only one or two days upon arrival and departure. Those who select the

cheaper packages are usually transported to their hotels without touring the Nadi area. A staff member on Mana Island told me that sometimes they take interested Japanese back to their villages to eat Fijian food and drink kava. So there are opportunities for some unstructured experiences, but typically reserved Japanese, with everything planned on their paradise resort island must be willing to step out of the comfort and certainty of a packaged vacation. But as one Japanese resort employee said, "Japanese do as they like when they are out of Japan." However, since Fiji is small and package vacationers are staying in small resort communities there is not the same anonymity of a large foreign city like Bangkok or even Waikiki. Most of what I heard about Japanese from locals was that they are polite, respectful, and even fragile. What I found is that Japanese in Fiji are indeed more outgoing socially, but not necessarily adventurous or deviant.

Tour Narratives

McCannell points out that it is not the object of spectacle itself but the symbolism or marker of the object that creates a tourist site/sight.¹ Any kind of sightseeing in Fiji revolves around *sights*, not *sites*, and there is

little information about Fiji's sights that circulate through the world's media, i.e. things in Fiji are not famous and there is little symbolism attached, maybe except for Tavarua, famous among surfers, and a generic 'South Seas' image. A marker, McCannell says, is the information about the object of spectacle or the person relaying the information. A marker tells the tourist what is to be gazed upon and why. For Japanese tourists in Fiji, tour guides are perhaps the only markers available thus the guides are instrumental in creating a sense of "Fiji" for Japanese.

The tours I observed had varied numbers of people – from only one individual, to families and large groups. They centered on different sites but, had similar themes and narratives. It seemed to be a rule that guides constantly use Japan as a reference point, for example, gazing out of the tour bus window at some children playing in a school yard, the guide said, "The school uniforms are different from Japan because they are colorful."

Other examples are statements such as:

"These tangerines are like the ones in Japan."

"They drive on the left here, like in Japan."

"There are only three McDonald's in Fiji, not like Japan where they are everywhere"

"In Japan we are not so religious . . . but in Fiji people are very devout Christians and Hindus."

¹ MacCannell 1976.

Common topics in the narratives included a description of kava and its uses, sugar cane and its products, flora and fauna, the presence of Japanese cars in Fiji, the menu and prices at McDonalds (all compared to Japan), and what kind of made-in-Fiji souvenirs to buy. All the guides also gave a somewhat lengthy description about the speed bumps in the villages in place of traffic lights. Two guides from different agencies even announced when the bus was proceeding over the humps, giving the tour an adventurous but disneyesque feeling, as if we were on an amusement park ride.

Most of the guides I observed were Japanese, except for one Fijian man and an Indo-Fijian who both spent time studying in Japan. Perhaps it was not intentional but the Fijian guide said nothing about Indians or Indian culture in Fiji. The Japanese-speaking Indo-Fijian guide leading the shopping tour mentioned Fijian cooking but spoke mostly about what products make good Fiji souvenirs. The Indo-Fijian guide on the English tour only discussed Indian culture and left the Fijian side up to the village guide. All the Japanese guides I observed described both cultures, perhaps because they are detached from race politics in Fiji. Japanese guides base their information on personal experiences in Fiji, information from other guides and the internet, altering their narratives according to ages and interests of the tourists.

The Japanese and English tours gave similar information on Fiji's history, culture, climate, flora and fauna. Guides took pictures and pointed out photo ops to reinforce touristic images. One Japanese guide suggested, "Let's take a picture here where we can capture the 'South Seas' mood." The English tour had a lookout point with a sign that read, "Fiji Islands: South Pacific Paradise" as a background for photos. However, there were also important differences. In the English tours, there was more interaction with the guide and little referencing of the tourists' home country. Older Japanese and Japanese children were more likely to ask questions and give responses to the guide. The Japanese guides talked continuously, speaking about any object visible from the bus window, whereas in the English tour a guide might be silent up to ten minutes. Also, the English guides made no suggestions on souvenir shopping in their narratives, except in the village where tourists are asked to browse and buy.

I heard several people who work in the tourism industry say that there is really nothing to see in Fiji but the ocean and beaches. This actually makes it possible for anything and everything to be gazed upon. Fijian villages, markets, and gardens are common sights in most of the tours. There is a bit of variation in Suva, with the Fiji Museum, and the Fijian Cultural Centre in Pacific Harbour, but tour guides can mark any object or person as something worth seeing. Anything can be a sight for tourist

spectacle from a cow grazing on the side of the road to a supermarket. On the tours we gazed at people, animals, plants, cars, and buildings.

Village Encounters

Fijian villages act as the central tourist sights/sites. As I described in Chapter three, each tour agency has an agreement with a village. The agency brings groups to the village to drink kava, eat *lovo* food (traditional Fijian food baked in an earth oven) or watch the *meke* (traditional Fijian dance). I visited Viseisei, Seru, and Dau villages with tour groups and Novoni village for a Fijian mat-weaving tour with one young woman.

Viseisei village might be the most toured village in Fiji because of its historical and political significance. According to legend, the first settlers to Fiji landed in Viseisei, and many important Fijian political figures are from there. Tourists to Viseisei are not entertained with dancing, singing, or a kava ceremony. The English tour to Viseisei was 45 minutes, 30 of which tourists were directed to browse and buy handicrafts from various sellers. The Japanese tour I observed was on a Sunday, so villagers, almost all of them Christian, were participating in religious activities rather than selling handicrafts or engaging in other work. During the Japanese tour, with a Japanese guide, we were outsiders wandering through the village, pointing,

gazing, and snapping pictures, completely disconnected. The Japanese tour consisted only of a family of three – the Suzuki's, and me, so they interacted freely with our guide, especially Mrs. Suzuki, a middle-aged *obatarian* type.² She was amused by the fact the hens roam freely around the village and “*paton to*” lay eggs anywhere.³ “A fresh egg with soy sauce over rice sounds delicious right now doesn't it?” she said. More than anything, Mrs. Suzuki was interested in the flowers and how she might smuggle some back to Tokyo.

The English tour to Viseisei was scripted with contrived humor, and although we might have had a more intimate experience in the village because our guide was originally from Viseisei, we were treated mostly as shoppers. Mary and Chris from Sydney noticed that Viseisei is not like other villages. Another woman on the tour who traveled from London with her family noticed that the Viseisei encounter was “made for tourists” but happily participated in picking out handicrafts for herself and her daughter.

The Seru village tour consists of a more formal and structured performance. This was the village from the brochures advertising ecotourism but, I did not see anything ‘eco’ about tourism here. It was obvious that Seru put much more effort into performance, most likely

² From the Japanese word *oba-san*: a middle-aged woman who is seen as bold, shameless, and self-centered.

³ “*Paton*” is a Japanese onomatopoeia used to describe something dropping to a surface.

because they formed a tourist entertainment group more than 10 years ago. The dancers wore traditional costumes, grass skirts with face paint, and the setting was highly structured. The tourists file into a meeting house and after words of welcome, a male tourist has to drink the kava first to initiate the drinking segment of the ceremony. Almost the entire group of 18 was embarrassed or shy although the guide explained how to drink kava during the bus ride to the village. He told them, "Clap once, say '*Bula!*' like a cheerful South Pacific Islander, take the cup, drink it down, return the cup, then clap three times and say '*Vinaka!*'" The villagers passed around the kava cup, made of half a coconut shell, so all members of the group could taste the kava. Then the entertainment group danced and sang, and pulled all the tourists up to do the "snake dance" in which everyone moves in a line that keeps changing direction. We drank some juice to hydrate after the kava and dancing then, everyone in the group took turns posing for pictures with the entertainment group. We visited the village kindergarten, then went back to meetinghouse patio and watched a boy crack open a coconut, grate it, and squeeze out the coconut milk. Most of the group tasted the grated coconut and some tasted the milk. Then the villagers sang the traditional parting song, *isa lei*, as we boarded the bus.

One informant said later that he thought the village performance was not real. However, Seru's kava ceremony welcoming Japanese guests is

virtually the same kind of performance carried out when not hosting tourists. The group spokesman held up the prized whale's tooth, and in Fijian, welcomed the tourists to village and asked them to tell their friends back in Japan to visit Seru so they can "bring the village more money." The dancing and singing was also real, although it was performed specifically for the tourists. Most Japanese visitors know little about life in Fiji so interpreting levels of authenticity may be difficult, and not something they are so interested in.

Dau village made no attempt at ostentatious presentation, except perhaps singing loudly and cheerfully for the Ishikawa family and I who were visiting that day. The village was clean for the most part but had a few mounds of trash and scattered litter that the other villages did not. We toured the village with our guide and a young man from the village. He made sure we went where we were supposed to, although I did see one person peer out of a window and quickly draw their curtains when we walked by. Toward the end of the tour we met the chief's chuckling wife after narrowly escaping a large cow that was on the loose in the village. Mr. Ishikawa pleased the villagers by participating in more rounds of kava drinking than they asked. The food they prepared in the *lovo* was delicious, and the Ishikawa's were interested and appreciative. Keeping with the theme of cultural overlay, Mrs. Ishikawa said the cole slaw was the most

“Japanese-like” item they served, but added that her son does not like mayonnaise. Mr. and Mrs. Ishikawa wondered why there were so many adults just idling around during the kava ceremony and lunch. “Don’t they have to work?” Mrs. Ishikawa asked. “I guess they are all farmers, right?” said Mr. Ishikawa.

The craft tour was a different kind of tour offered by one operator. I visited a famous mat weaver in Novoni village with Hiroko, a 26-year old independent traveler, who decided to travel to Fiji for a month after she quit her job in Japan. Hiroko and I stayed in the village at the mat weaver’s house for four hours, compared to the other village visits that lasted 30-45 minutes. The tour guide left and I observed Hiroko, the weaver, and her daughter who helped her mother with English. A couple of neighbors popped their heads in the door to see who was visiting then, the father awoke and sat against the wall drinking tea. We all attempted to chat with a mix of Japanese, English and Fijian. The family served us tea and bread when our time was almost up, which they were not required to do in the agreement with the operator.

This was not a normal tour because it occurred in somebody’s home, for an extended period of time and it was a fairly new tour. The guide was also absent, creating an unmediated but more meaningful experience that allowed Hiroko and the mat weaver and her family to chat and share.

Hiroko did not buy any of the weaver's goods, she left with her own pandanus place mat and an experience of cultural exchange.

Conclusion

Ethnographic interviews and MOT/JICA data shows that most Japanese tourists travel to Fiji to enjoy a "south island paradise" environment. There is little interest in cultural exchange, but this is not because Japanese are more concerned with shopping such as the case of Hawai'i and Guam. Marketers believe that the main attraction for Japanese tourists is the ocean, so Japanese come to Fiji less interested in cultural tourism. Western tourists, who are more independent and familiar with Fiji, have different objectives and experiences than Japanese. They visit villages without guides appointed by tour agencies and can communicate better in English with locals.

Since Japanese tourists spend only a few days in Fiji, mostly isolated at outer island resorts, the narratives presented on tours become the primary source of information for the tourists. Guides act as cultural liaisons and their narratives are key in constructing and reconstructing touristic images of Fiji. The time-filler tours may be the only contact Japanese tourists have with Fijian culture although, only a small percentage of Japanese tourists

travel to Fiji for cultural interests. The smaller scale, and newly initiated tours seemed to provide a closer and more meaningful encounter.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

I conclude by discussing some post-encounter impressions, describing the types of Japanese tourists who travel to Fiji, and summarizing the way in which Japanese gaze upon Fiji. Finally, I offer suggestions and recommendations on how Japanese tourism might best proceed.

The nature of the Japanese tourist is changing, and although there are still those mass tourists characterized by filing in and out of tour buses, herded around by a guide, this is not the type of the tourist who visits Fiji. Some tourists may have a 'mass tourist' approach to their experience but, Japanese tourism in Fiji takes on a different form because there are few tourist sites and comparatively few Japanese tourists. Much of tourism in Fiji, and Japanese tourism in particular, is confined to western Viti Levu, where young romantics can visit the 'islands closest to heaven.'

The Japanese Gaze

Yamashita, in his study on Japanese tourism in Palau, finds that "the South is seen as an easygoing and relaxing place where workaholic Japanese can take their minds off work in a timeless 'paradise' to refresh

themselves.” He suggests, “It may be that a postcolonial version of ‘Japanese orientalism’ is working in the form of tourism.¹ Japanese tourism to Fiji serves a similar purpose for overworked urban Japanese, i.e., alienated modernites, like Morimura’s character in *The Island Closest to Heaven*.

To Japanese, Fiji falls under the ‘South Seas’ gaze that makes it one of the “islands closest to heaven.” Fiji is a paradise because of its supposed “nothingness,” which means that in its lack of capitalist economic development and seemingly untouched nature, it is “authentic.” The notion that Fiji is “nothing” is also appealing to wedding or honeymooners wanting seclusion and romance. “Paradise,” or a place that is “closest to heaven,” means that it is a spiritual place where young romantics may make a pilgrimage and have a wedding or honeymoon.

A paradise with “nothing” implies that it is also a raw and primitive place. Only, this is not the main attraction for Japanese. Among Westerners, the tourism industry appeals to ‘national geographic’ and Orientalist gazes directed at ‘Other’ people but, for Japanese, the industry employs the theme of an uninhabited island paradise and tends to exploit only the natural environment as an object of tourist spectacle.

Whereas Westerners travel to Fiji in part to see an exotic, native culture, Japanese do not consider Fiji as a place with a culture, or cultures, worth exploiting. The irony is that, if anything, it is Europe that many Japanese consider the primary site for learning about “Other” cultures.

Leaving Paradise

Since Japanese touristic experiences in Fiji are packaged, and remain tightly wrapped; most Japanese are able to realize the images they see in brochures and other media. They may see poverty, pollution, and other things they do not see in the media, but with the little exposure to daily life outside of tourist resorts, they take home romantic memories of their resort island paradise.

According to the interviews and the MOT/JICA data, the “south island” paradise perception of Fiji is not necessarily disturbed during the actual encounter. Ninety-five percent of the respondents said they would like to visit again; however, the return visit rate is just 6 percent. Some tourists noticed litter in the streets and thought Nadi town was dirty. Not all the mainland resorts are built near beaches and in the MOT/JICA survey, some were shocked that the Sheraton beach did not have white sand and clear

¹ Yamashita, Shinji. 2000. “The Japanese Encounter with the South: Japanese Tourists in Palau.” *The*

water. However, another respondent who most likely stayed at an outer island said, "The scenery was just as it was shown in the pamphlet. It was very pretty."

A recurring theme among the responses was the need for things Japanese. While some Japanese tourists were surprised at the number of Fijians who could speak Japanese, 21 out of 254, specifically wrote to request more Japanese speaking staff and guides; more Japanese food choices and restaurants; access to Japanese television, books and magazines; and even to better maintain the bathroom because "Japanese like to take baths." Wanting more cultural overlap does not imply dissatisfaction. Japanese like Fiji (the natural environment) and therefore want a smoother stay by making the environment easier to navigate.

The Nature of the Japanese Tourist in Fiji

Contrary to the general assumptions about "Japanese tourists," those who travel to Fiji are not shoppers such as the super-consumer tourists described by Nitta and Obayashi. They are not surfers, sightseers, or seeking cultural exchange. Japanese tourists to Fiji are similar to those tourists described by MacCannell and Rea. They are searching for

authenticity but, in the form of a “paradise” with a clean, safe, and quiet natural environment. Wedding and honeymooners make up over half of tourists to Fiji and tourists in their 20s and 30s made up 93 percent. Fiji is a special place for young romantics, most of which will visit only one time.

The Japanese tourist's experience in Fiji is influenced more by the tourism industry than how the individual might want to experience an 'Other.' The Japanese tourism industry has utilized colonial images and the image of *The Island Closest to Heaven* to create Fiji as a romantic site for Japanese weddings and honeymoons. It is difficult for seasoned tourists to have 'unpackaged' encounters with Fiji because business and government create, recreate, and regulate the touristic environment. Tourism is mediated further by the Japanese travel market, which is based on package travel and dominated by a few major wholesalers in Japan. Tourists can travel more comfortably and economically via this kind of structured package, particularly given language and cultural barriers. In Fiji, mass tourists might find themselves at a loss because shopping and dining is limited, as well as access to things Japanese, and sometimes even basic infrastructure. A few of my informants had meant to travel to Tahiti, Hawai'i, or the U.S., but these packages were booked or they were frightened off by terrorism.

Mass tourists travel to Fiji looking for a similar experience to that of Hawai'i – shopping, restaurants, nightlife, sun/surf/sand – only in a different geographical setting, and seasoned tourists are looking for an alternative – a similar 'South Seas' landscape but with fewer Japanese, and a more secluded, quieter setting. Obayashi and Nitta have pointed out that Japanese tourism to Hawai'i is based on consumption. It is an extension of a modern (or postmodern) capitalist lifestyle. Fiji, however, represents an escape from that lifestyle.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Since I began studying the social sciences I have seen tourism as a fascinating social phenomenon. Living in Hawai'i, where some might say that tourism is out of control, has solidified my belief that tourism is not a panacea. Throughout my research, I came to increasingly dislike tourism and during my fieldwork I often felt a sense of unease and sometimes even disgust at the unawareness and levels of exploitation I witnessed while participating in and observing tours. However, there will always be people who enjoy the packages and performances and those who enjoy playing the roles of "host." Surprisingly, my mother (who is Fijian) told me, "It's nice that Japanese can come here and think of it as heaven. I'm glad we can

provide that for them.” She wants people to think of Fiji as a wonderful place. Is she wrong to feel this way?

Tourism, like “development” and globalization, is a double-edged sword. While tourism in Fiji can provide meaningful exchanges and bring income to villages, lives of the villagers also may be negatively affected. It provides a cash income to village entertainment groups and guides. However, as one of my Fijian informants said; they are saving the money they receive from the tour agency for a shopping trip to Australia. They are offering themselves for tourist consumption so they can themselves be tourist consumers. MacCannell comments that, “Now there appears to be a social mandate: everyone must go somewhere else and spend money in someone else’s home, so that everyone living *there* will be able to go to someone else’s home and spend money...”²

While the ideas of localization rather than globalization, and self-sufficiency rather than relying on tourism are wonderful ideals, I feel that the first steps must be to re-direct tourism to be a more responsible and conscious activity. Academicians like to point out everything wrong with the status quo but, have very little to say or do when it comes to solutions. We can continue to demand alternatives and still meet in order to find solutions. While it is not fair to force people to participate in

tourism/capitalism/modernity without any other choice, it is also unfair to deny people access to modern goods and services they want, or think they want. The suggestions I offer are not alternatives to tourism but alternatives and improvements to tourism that hosts, guests and mediators may be able to agree upon.

Fiji will not become another Hawai'i for Japanese anytime soon and apparently the Fiji government wants to keep it that way. To keep development under control it helps that part of Fiji's appeal is that it is not overcrowded with Japanese. Nonetheless, Japanese package tourists in Fiji still need access to things Japanese.

Tour operators try to encourage shopping in their agreements with the Nadi gift shops, only Japanese tourists are not coming to Fiji to shop. Access to souvenirs is essential, but if the government hopes to increase Japanese expenditure in Fiji, particularly that which will benefit locals, more activities must be provided. Fiji does not need to become another consumer paradise for Japanese. They travel to Fiji to enjoy the natural environment so tourism development should focus on this area as a source of income, and create other activities for tourists when the weather does not hold up. Since Japanese tourism in Fiji is in its early stages in terms of the number of tourists and diversity of tourism "products," it is possible to

² MacCannell, 1976, x.

develop it carefully and responsibly. The key is to keep activities isolated to certain areas in order to limit stress on the environment.

The JICA Tourism Development Expert offers several recommendations that coincide with the findings of this study. These include developing packages for travelers over 50 and long-stay retired travelers. This would be crucial for not only increasing, but also sustaining the number of Japanese tourists considering that tourist demographics will change with Japan's aging population. However, we have seen that much of Fiji travel is for young romantics. Even with a new slogan regarding Fiji as "The healing paradise," Fiji tourism targeting retired travelers must take on a completely new face.³ Tropical medicine and healing could be one potential "product" to attract aging Japanese as well as add to Fiji's image as a place that can offer something valuable to people rather than just "nothingness."

If package tours are essentially the only choice for Japanese tourists to Fiji, different kinds of packages should be made available. Developers of the Japanese sector should consider creating sustainable eco-tourism opportunities with village representation and participation. "Sustainable eco-tourism" projects come with many implications so they would have to be

carried out responsibly and modeled after other successful projects, while adjusting for local variations.

The TDE also points out that there is a potential market for school excursions, sports training camps and sports exchange programs. This suggestion is made with good reason because annual school trips and sports training camps occur at virtually every school in Japan. Homestays and farm stays are also possible as a type of alternative tourism. The economic and educational benefits of these kinds of tours will be much greater for both the hosts and guests.

Developers should consider building a Fijian Cultural Center in Western Viti Levu, similar to the Fiji Museum in Suva, which includes a section on Indo-Fijian history and culture. Although the politics of representation will be a factor, Japanese tourists should have the option to learn about Fiji in a museum setting. Tourists can visit the center on rainy days or during sightseeing tours. They may arrive in Fiji uninterested in anything but a resort beach, they do not have leave that way.

Incorporating village representation in the Japan-Asia Tour Operators Committee could also improve village visits and the relationship between the villages and tour operators. It is necessary to include the villagers in the industry and the development process so their suggestions and opinions

³ Travel Journal. 2002. "*Seijukka sumsumu [iyashi no rakuen] Fiji.*" ([The market] continues to

can be acknowledged and acted upon, and they are informed about the latest plans, news, and events that might affect tourism to the villages. The JATOC members and villagers both hold valuable information that should be shared with each other if they are to improve tourism. After all, it is their lives, their homes, and their public spaces that they put on display to keep the industry's tourists entertained. It may be more beneficial for both tourists and locals if mass tourism types of packages remain centered in Western Viti Levu, the Coral Coast and outer islands such as Mana Island. While it is problematic that Japanese are caught in tourism's romantic fantasy of Fiji as a "nothing" paradise, maintaining this idea may keep tourism from becoming overly invasive. If the industry hopes to maintain this image, wedding and honeymooners, and mass tourists should spend most of their time on the outer islands. Islands like Mana seem to represent the 'island closest to heaven' for Japanese.

For seasoned tourists who want to move beyond the packaged experience, there should be options providing closer encounters and more cultural exchange like those listed above. If possible, the scale of the village tours should be kept small. Operators should seek out new hosts to offer different villages the opportunity to host tourists, if they are interested. This will provide an encounter that will be less scripted and closer to an

actual village visit that occurs among Fijians, adding the potential for more meaningful exchanges.

As package tourists, Japanese encounters with Fiji are highly structured so most people can leave Fiji with positive, idyllic images of paradise. An insular experience may be important for the 'young romantic' majority who are traveling to Fiji. However, the structured, packaged, encounter is not ideal for every Japanese tourist to Fiji, even with the language barrier, alternatives must be made available.

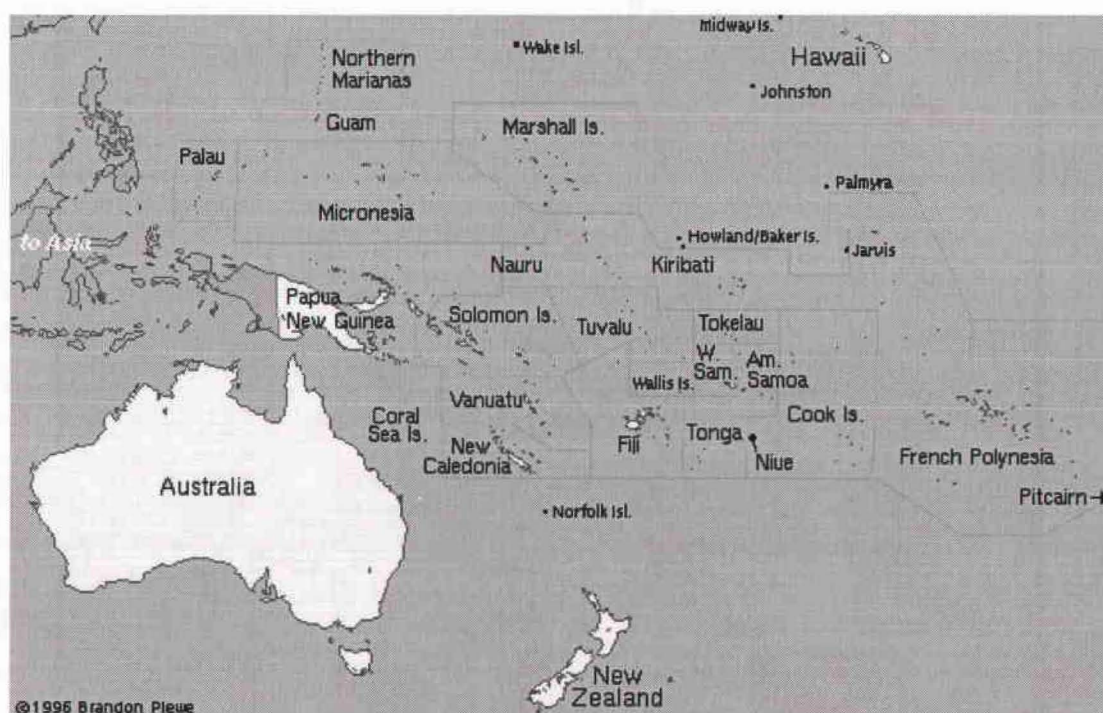
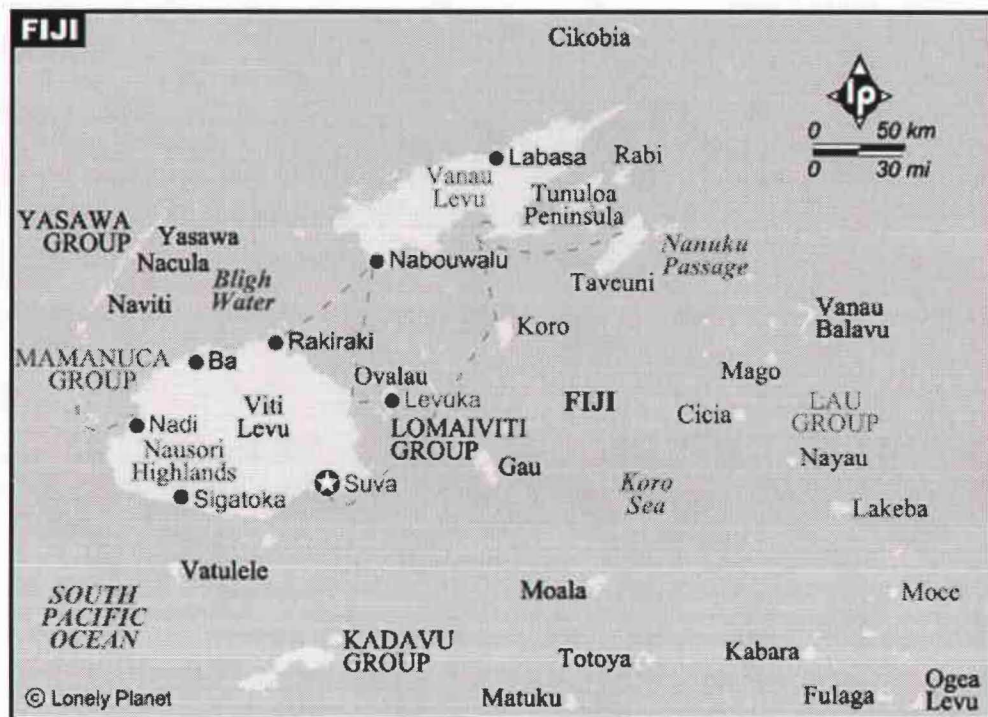
Japanese tourism in Fiji has room to grow but, limits must be put in place. Yamashita, Yaguchi and Yoshihara claim that Japanese tend to maintain neo-colonial relations in their tourism in the Pacific.⁴ Hawai'i and Guam are the extreme cases where this position extends to the entire economic structure of tourism. Yaguchi and Yoshihara argue this for several reasons, including Hawai'i's economic dependency on Japanese tourism investments and spending and Japanese exoticization and exploitation of local people and culture through their style of super-consumer tourism. Japanese tourism in Fiji is not yet characterized by as extensive a degree of neo-colonial exploitation but, with mass tourists

⁴ 1. Yamashita 2000.

2. Yaguchi, Yujin and Yoshihara, Mari. "Evolutions of 'Paradise': Japanese Tourist Discourse About Hawai'i." *American Studies* (forthcoming).

wanting more shopping, Japanese language, and more cultural overlap, Fiji could become a potential neo-colonial playground. The challenge is to develop the Japanese market keeping Fiji's appeal to the 'South Seas' gaze, widening the gaze into one that is more informed, and not over-developing into a neo-colonial playground for tourists.

Appendix A. Maps of Fiji and Oceania.



Appendix B. Fiji Ministry of Tourism and JICA Japanese visitor survey results from 2003.

Figure 1. Visitor by Gender (n 249). (MOT/JICA 2003)

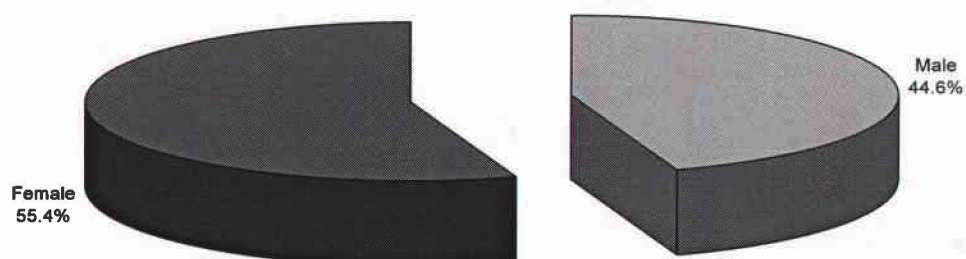


Figure 2. Visitor by Age Group (n 252). (MOT/JICA 2003)

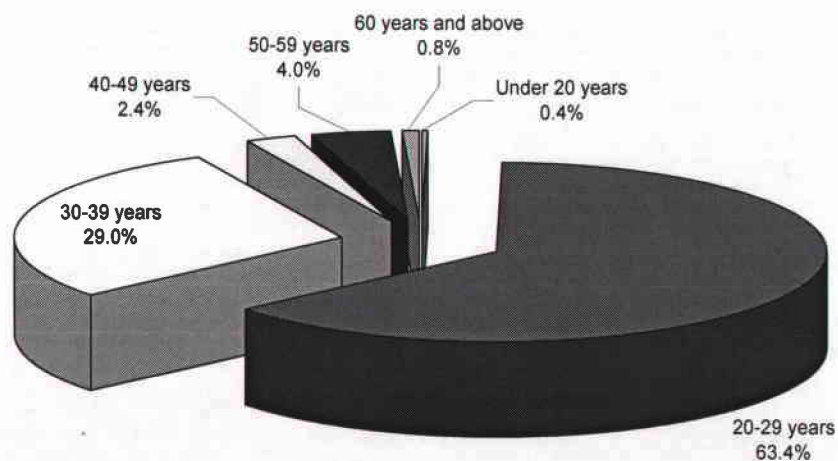


Figure 3. Travel cost per person by purpose of travel. (MOT/JICA 2003)

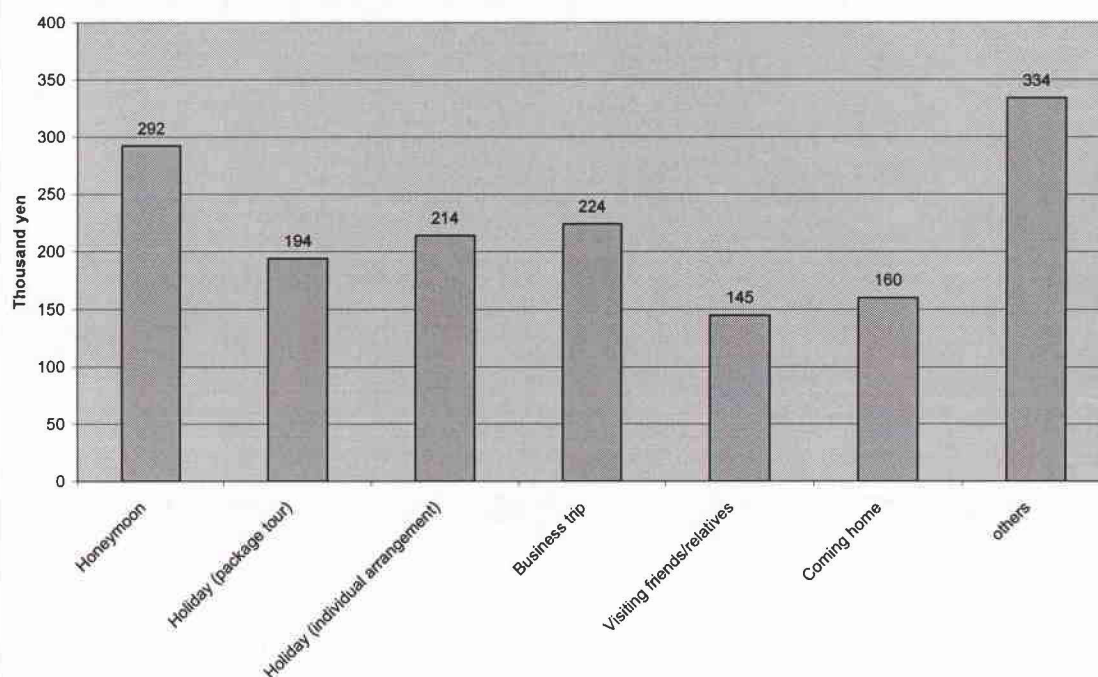


Figure 4. Visitors' Occupation. (MOT/JICA 2003)

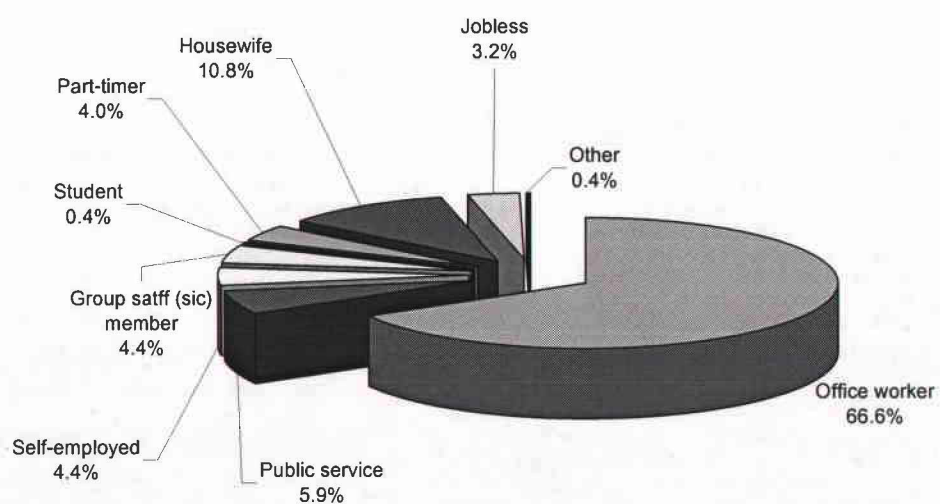


Figure 5. Area of Residence in Japan. (MOT/JICA 2003)

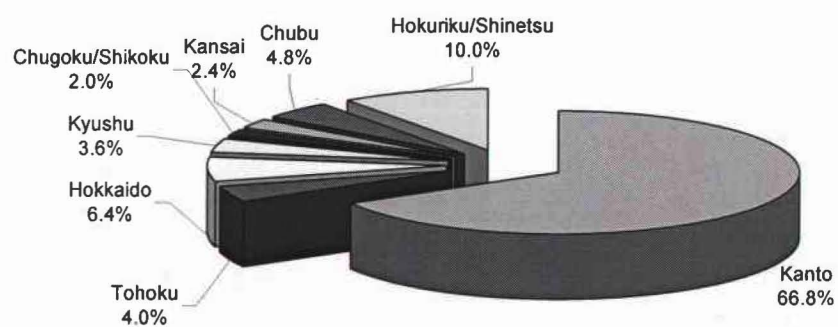


Figure 6. Purpose of Travel (n 254). (MOT/JICA 2003)

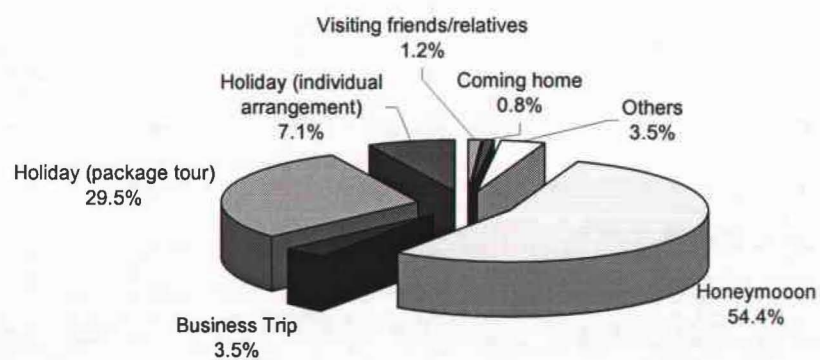


Figure 7. Reasons for choosing Fiji (n 447). (MOT/JICA 2003)

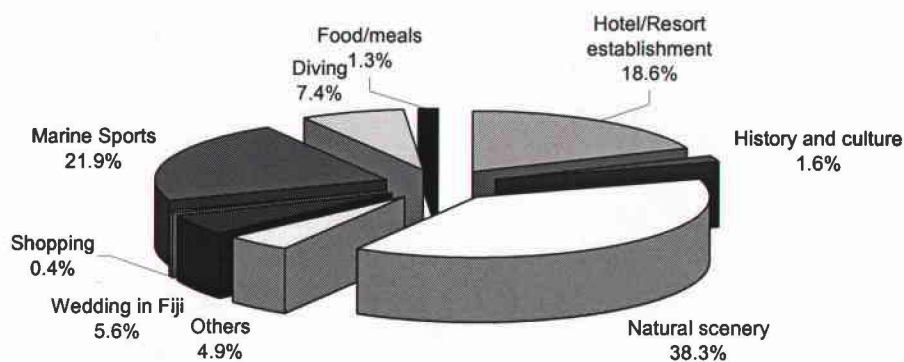


Figure 8. Information influencing the decision to travel to Fiji (n 258). (MOT/JICA 2003)

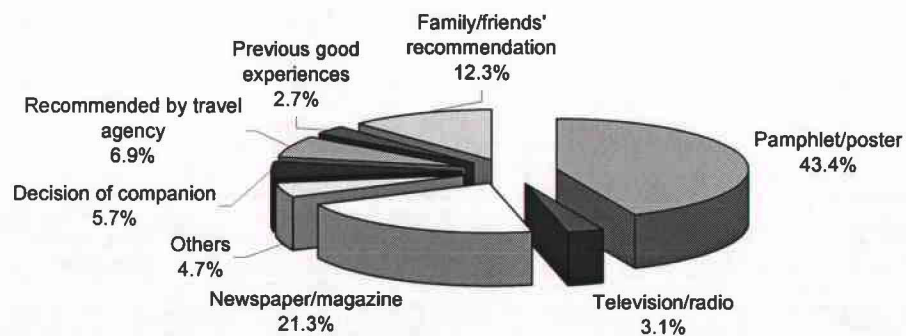
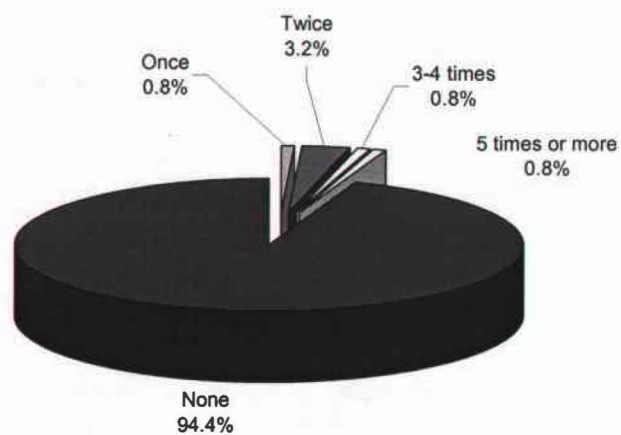


Figure 9. Number of Visits to Fiji (n 253). (MOT/JICA 2003)



**Figure 10. Approximate amount spent on travel to Fiji (n 217).
Total = 254,105 yen. (MOT/JICA 2003)**

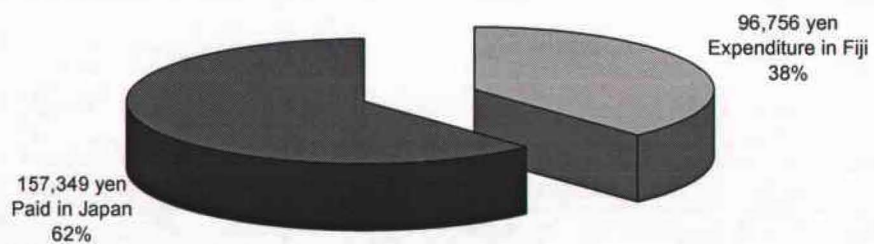


Figure 11. Average amounts spent in Fiji (n 217). (MOT/JICA 2003)

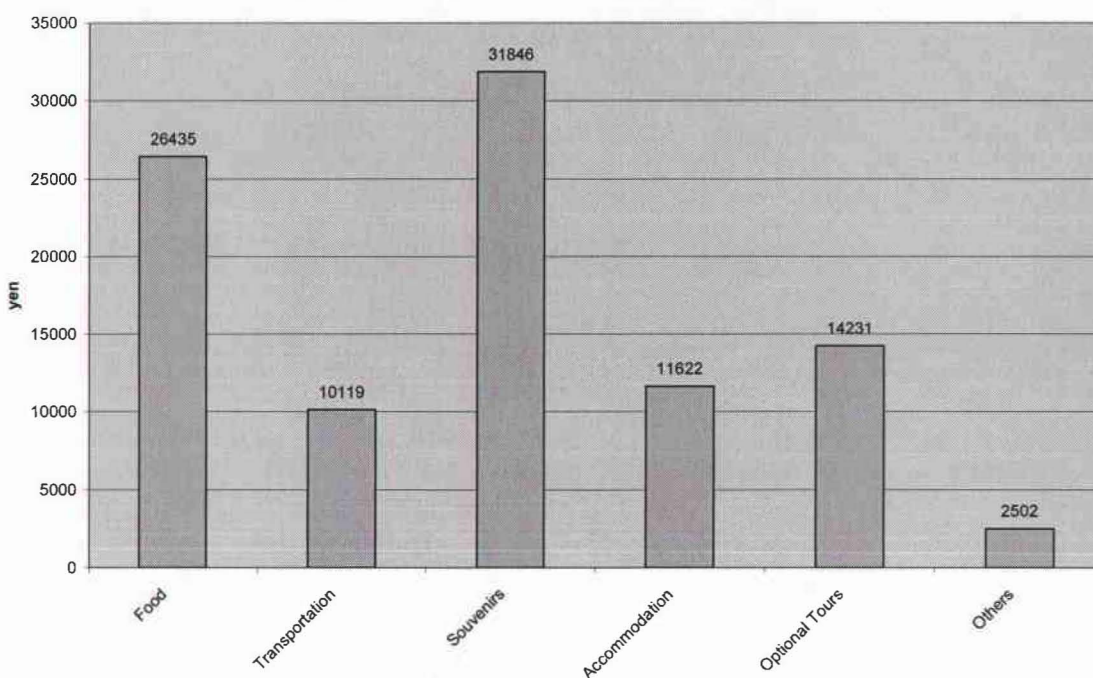


Figure 12. Travel Companions. (MOT/JICA 2003)

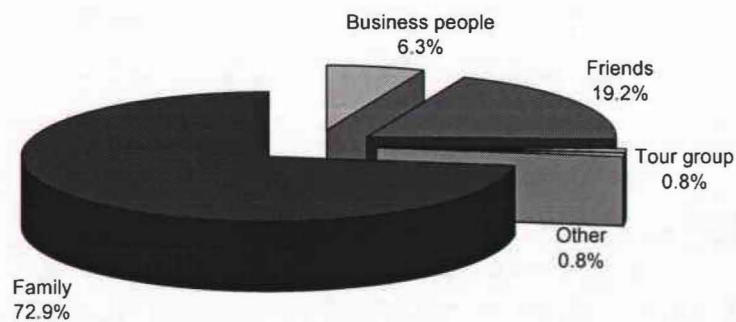


Figure 13. Travel Duration (n 254). (MOT/JICA 2003)

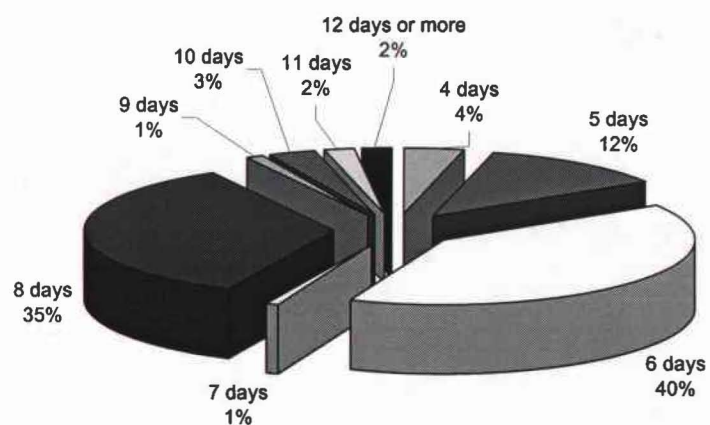


Figure 14. Areas Stayed in Fiji (n 383). (MOT/JICA 2003)

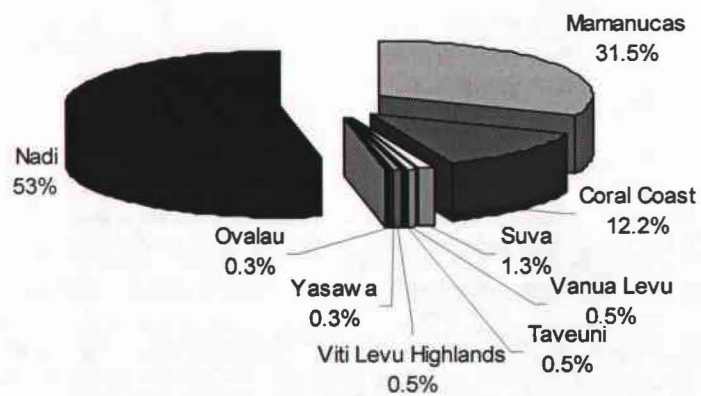


Figure 15. Hospitality and Service ratings. (MOT/JICA Fiji 2003)

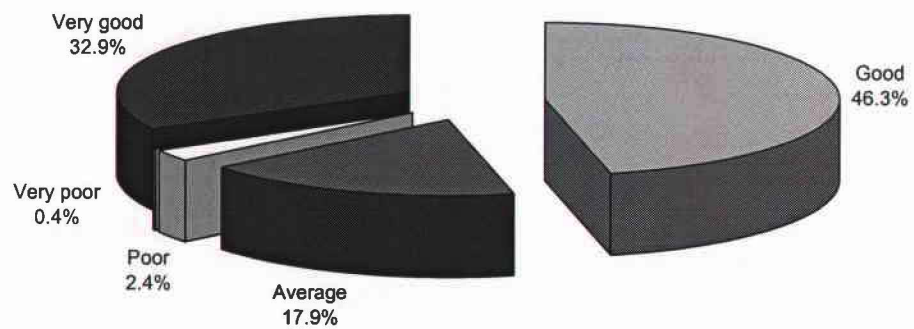


Figure 16. Ratings of food quality. (MOT/JICA 2003)

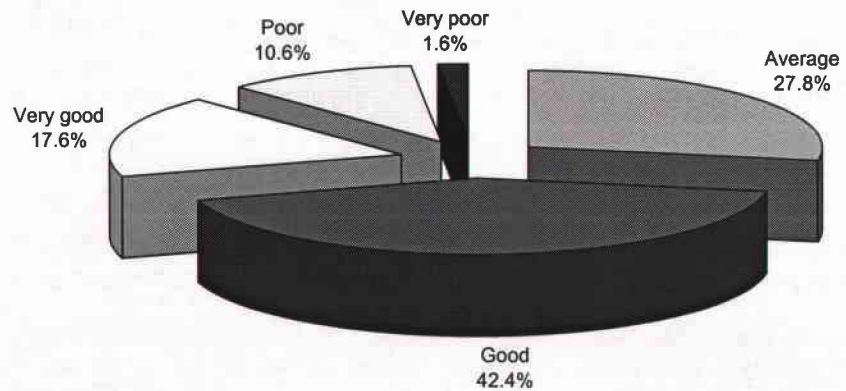


Figure 17. Areas visited in Fiji (n 533 answers, n 254 respondents). (MOT/JICA 2003)

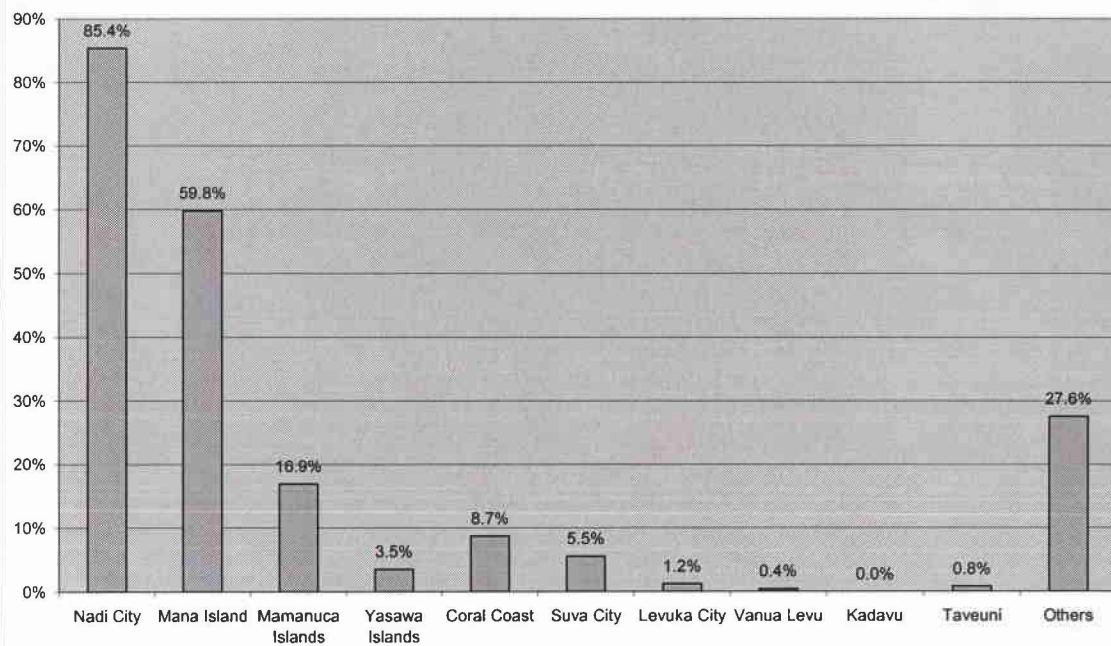
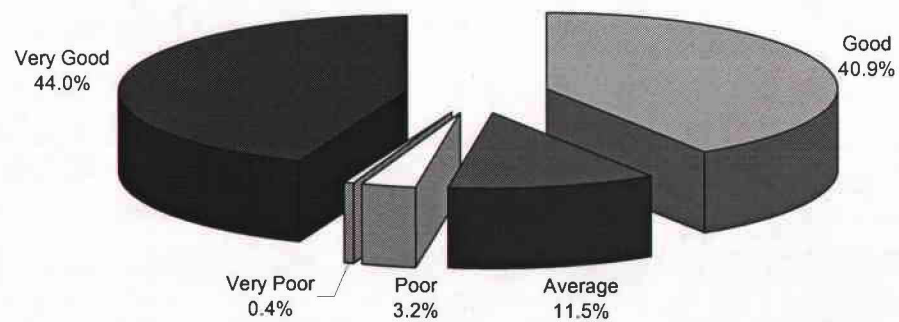


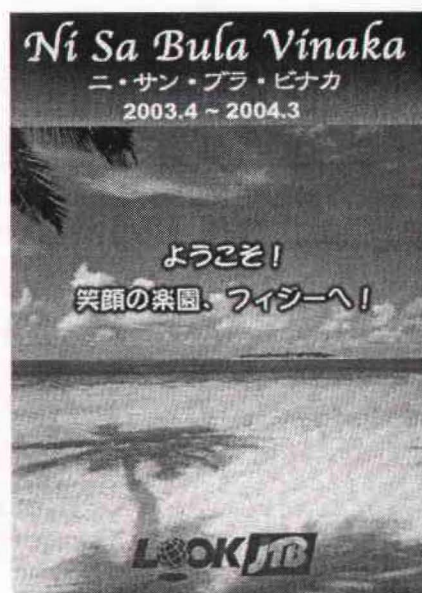
Figure 18. Impressions of Fijian hospitality. (MOT/JICA 2003)



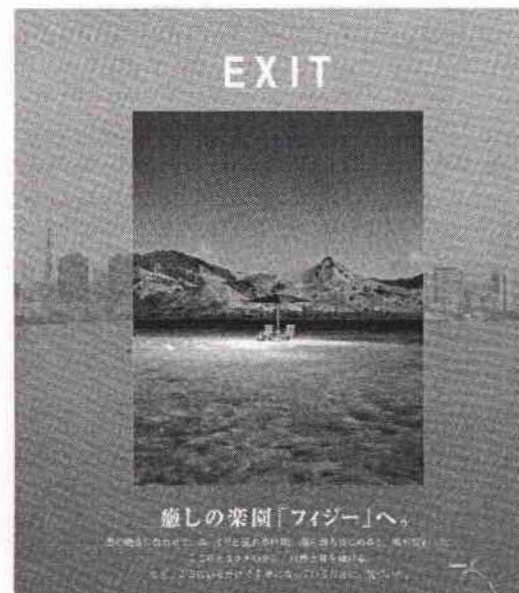
Appendix C. Images and Photos.



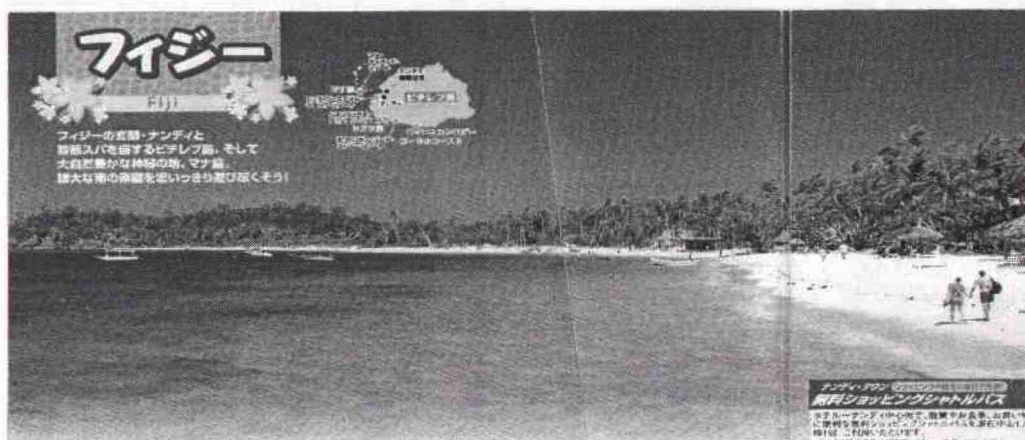
1. Images from the film, *The Island Closest to Heaven*.



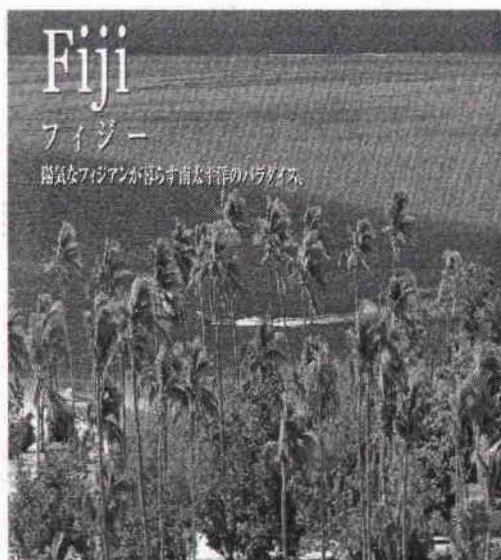
2. "Welcome to Fiji, a paradise of smiling faces."



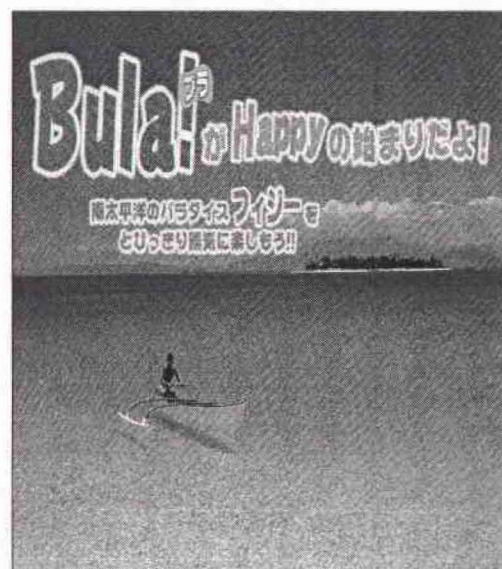
3. An Air Pacific brochure:
"To the healing paradise of Fiji..."



4. "On the island of Viti Levu is Nadi, the gateway to Fiji, and the capital of Suva. There is also Mana Island, a magical place with abundant nature. Let's thoroughly enjoy this majestic Southern paradise!"



5. "The South Seas paradise where the cheerful Fijian people live."



6. "Bula! Is the beginning of happiness! Let's enjoy the extraordinary cheerfulness of the South Pacific paradise of Fiji!!

〈追加プラン〉フィジー・マナ島 イージーオーダードレスプラン

SF1990B 188,000円

一生に一度の最良の時だからドレスにはこだわりたいもの。デザイン・素材をお好みに合わせオーダーいただけます。あなただけの一着でリゾートブライダルを美しく演出してみたいはいかがですか。

イージーオーダードレス(約20着からお好きなデザインをお選び頂きます。)小物(現地レンタルのネックレス・手袋・パニエ)、生花のブーケ(ラウンドとキャスケードの2種類からお選びください)とブートニア
*詳しくはP.33をご参照ください。

様々な歌声で二人を祝福するフィジー・トップクラスの楽団。

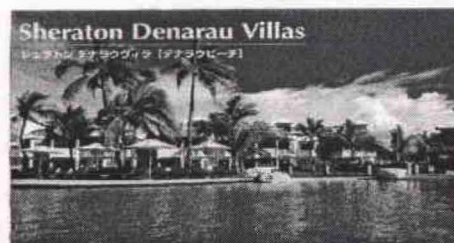
イメージ



10. Wedding advertisements.



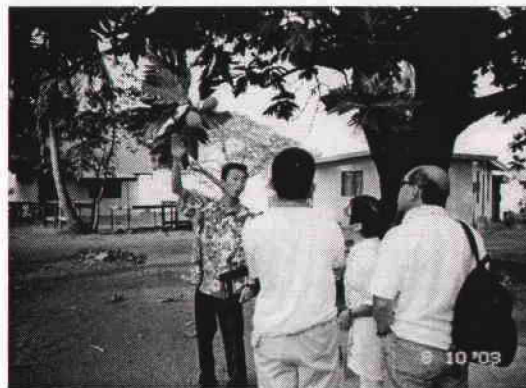
11. "An island wedding in a Southern paradise."



12. Resort images (top left is Mana Island).



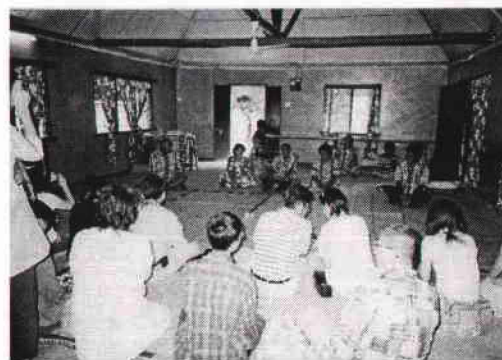
13. Touring the village with a Japanese agent and village guide.



14. Japanese guide describes breadfruit.



15. The entertainment group representative offers a whale's tooth to visitors.



16. The kava ceremony begins.



16. Tourists pose with the entertainment group.



17. A "warrior" guards the tour bus.



18. A mat-weaving tour.



19. Selling handicrafts in Viseisei.



20. English tour photo op: "Fiji Islands. South Pacific Paradise."



21. The South beach at Mana Island.

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