

The relationship between World Heritage Sites and school trips in Japan

T. Jimura

York St John University, York, North Yorkshire, United Kingdom

ABSTRACT: This paper investigates the involvement of WHSs in school trips in Japan. Japan has 16 WHSs and some of them have been visited well by school trips. “*Shuugaku ryokou*” is a unique concept to Japanese school trips. It aims to learn something significant as human beings and contains at least one night stay. The research was conducted by the review of the past related studies, examination of the websites of WHSs and their related agencies, and the visits to WHSs. The research shows that several cultural WHSs have been established as school trip destinations and the information about their history and value are available at their websites and/or on site. Most of them; however, are not especially for school trips and *shuugaku ryokou*. Moreover, not WHSs but tourist association, prefectural government or judicial foundation takes a leading role in the provision of the resources and activities especially for *shuugaku ryokou*.

1 INTRODUCTION

The paper explores how World Heritage Sites (WHSs) in Japan have been involved in Japanese school trips and its implications for the future. WHSs are inscribed by UNESCO and their number has increased every year. As of October 2011, 936 properties (725 cultural, 183 natural and 28 mixed properties) are designated as WHSs in the world (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2011a). WHSs have been examined in heritage and tourism studies since the 1990s. For instance, Shackley (1998) examines the visitor management at WHSs and the case studies from diverse cultural and mixed WHSs (e.g. “Cracow’s Historic Centre” in Poland and “Kakadu National Park” in Australia) are included in the book she edited. Leask and Fyall (2006) cover broader issues which are related to any issues in the management of WHSs (e.g. marketing, generation of income, and policy issues) and the case studies of cultural and natural WHSs from different regions of the world (e.g. “Old Town of Lijiang” in China and “Gondwana Rainforests of Australia”) are also contained. The WHSs in several State Parties (SPs); however, have not been studied well in the previous research and Japan can be seen as one of such SPs. In fact, there are a few heritage and tourism research which investigate WHSs in Japan and are also written in English (e.g. Jimura, 2011), though Japan has 16 WHSs as of October 2011 (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2011a) and this number is not small compared to the number of WHSs many SPs have. This is the first point the research aims to make contribution to knowledge.

UNESCO is the abbreviated form of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. Therefore, it is natural that the issues in education are one of key tasks UNESCO has been tackling with. UNESCO is also responsible for the designation of WHSs. Hence, education and WHSs need to be closely related to each other, guided and supported by UNESCO. Moreover, education and the conservation of WHSs should be encouraged and promoted further for the future generations. In fact, Article 27 of the World Heritage Convention states that ‘The States Parties to this Convention shall endeavor by all appropriate means, and in particular by

educational and information programmes, to strengthen appreciation and respect by their peoples of the cultural and natural heritage defined in Articles 1 and 2 of the Convention' (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2011b). In heritage studies; however, the relationships between education and WHSs have not been well examined in the past. This could also imply that educational tourism at WHSs has not been explored enough in tourism studies. This is the second reason why this research is worth conducting. In other words, this research aims to make contribution to two study areas which have not been studied enough, WHSs in Japan and educational tourism at WHSs, and also tries to bridge a gap exists in these two research fields by examining the involvement of Japanese WHSs in school trips and its meanings for the future.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 *World Heritage Sites in Japan as tourist destinations*

This section looks at the first study area of this research, WHSs in Japan. Japan has 16 WHSs as of October 2011 (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2011a) (see Table 1). Of these, 12 are cultural and four are natural sites. "Hiraizumi" and "Ogasawara Islands" have been newly inscribed as WHSs in 2011. As Shackley (1998) and Smith (2002) argue, a WHS status can bring the high visibility to the designated sites and attract more visitors to the sites. Although this impact is not common to all WHSs, many WHSs have shown an increase in the number of visitors at least temporarily (Asakura, 2008; Hall & Piggin, 2003; Jimura, 2007, 2011). According to Jimura (2010), the impact of WHS designation on an increase in the number of the visitors to WHSs are likely to be very limited, if a WHS was already famous amongst tourists and established as a tourist destination. Of 16 WHSs in Japan, the following two cultural WHSs can be seen as such a site. Most of Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines inscribed as "Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto (Kyoto, Uji and Otsu Cities)" have attracted overseas tourists as well as domestic tourists for a long time before these properties were listed as cultural WHSs in 1994 (Jimura, 2010). "Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara" would also apply to this case with the same reasons to "Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto" (Jimura, 2010). One of the common grounds to these two cultural WHSs is that both Kyoto and Nara are recognised well at least by domestic tourists as old capitals of Japan and the tourists are fully aware that they have rich cultural and historic resources. Other cultural WHSs which have also been established as popular tourist destinations include "Hiroshima Peace Memorial (Genbaku Dome)" and "Itsukushima Shinto Shrine" in Hiroshima Prefecture, and "Shrines and Temples of Nikko" in Tochigi Prefecture.

Table 1. List of World Heritage Sites in Japan (Source: UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2011a)

No	Name	Type	Year of Inscription
1	Buddhist Monuments in the Horyu-ji Area	Cultural	1993
2	Himeji-jo	Cultural	1993
3	Shirakami-Sanchi	Natural	1993
4	Yakushima	Natural	1993
5	Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto (Kyoto, Uji and Otsu Cities)	Cultural	1994
6	Historic Villages of Shirakawa-go and Gokayama	Cultural	1995
7	Hiroshima Peace Memorial (Genbaku Dome)	Cultural	1996
8	Itsukushima Shinto Shrine	Cultural	1996
9	Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara	Cultural	1998
10	Shrines and Temples of Nikko	Cultural	1999
11	Gusuku Sites and Related Properties of the Kingdom of Ryukyu	Cultural	2000
12	Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range	Cultural	2004
13	Shiretoko	Natural	2005
14	Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape	Cultural	2007
15	Hiraizumi – Temples, Gardens and Archaeological Sites Representing the Buddhist Pure Land	Cultural	2011
16	Ogasawara Islands	Natural	2011

Compared to cultural WHSs in Japan, the number of visitors to four natural WHSs in Japan is limited mainly due to their locations. Of these, “Shirakami-Sanchi” which extends across Aomori Prefecture and Akita Prefecture is easiest to access for most Japanese and international tourists as it is located in northwest of the Honshu Island (the main island of Japan), though the site is still difficult to access only by public transport and requires tourists a long journey to get to the site (Tohoku Nature Conservation Network, n.d.). “Shiretoko” is situated at the east end of the Hokkaido Island, and “Yakushima” is an island which is located around 60km south of the Kyushu Island. These two are also difficult to access and takes a lot of time for tourists to visit the sites. “Ogasawara Islands” is the most difficult WHS in Japan to access as its main island is located around 800km south of Tokyo. As discussed above, the issues in access have been a main obstacle for tourists who want to visit four natural WHSs in Japan. Furthermore, the size of each natural WHS is very extensive and it is almost impossible for tourists to fully explore the site within the period of short holiday which is common to many Japanese workers. In this sense; therefore, it is no surprises that the four natural WHSs in Japan have not been explored enough by tourists. On the other hand, overall 12 cultural WHSs in Japan can be seen as traditional tourist destinations as most of them are well-known to Japanese tourists, easy to access by public transport except “Historic Villages of Shirakawa-go and Gokayama” in Gifu Prefecture and Toyama Prefecture (Jimura, 2007, 2011), “Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape” in Shimane Prefecture, and “Gusuku Sites and Related Properties of the Kingdom of Ryukyu” in Okinawa Prefecture.

2.2 Educational tourism and school trips to WHSs

This section examines the second study area of this research, educational tourism at WHSs. WHSs can be regarded as destination of educational (or education) tourism, because each WHS has historic, cultural and/or natural significance which is peculiar to each. According to Smith & Jenner (1997), the concept of travel for education and learning is a broad and complicated field. This would be a main reason why this study area has not been investigated well in previous tourism research. Educational tourism can be defined as “travelling to learn” and it is not a modern invention (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999). For example, affluent members of the Greek and Roman elites in the classical period travelled to enhance their understanding of the world. Swarbrooke & Horner (1999) also suggest that there are two types of educational tourism. One is “students’ exchanges” where young students travel to overseas countries in order to learn about and experience the culture, society and language of others. The other is “special interest holidays” where tourists make a trip to learn something new for them (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999). Considering this typology and definition of each type of educational tourism, it can be said that WHSs can be destinations of both types of educational tourism and in general the concept of school trip seems to have some elements from both types of educational tourism.

As discussed above, the school trip can be seen as part of educational tourism and it is not unique to Japan. When school trips in Japan are examined; however, the concept of “*shuugaku ryokou*”, which is unique to Japan, should be taken into account. *Shuugaku ryokou* is carried out as part of school events at primary (six grades: 7-12 years old), junior high (three grades: 13-15 years old) and high (three grades: 16-18 years old) schools in Japan. In many cases, *shuugaku ryokou* includes at least one overnight stay at a tourist destination; and older students become, longer the length of stay becomes. Basically, it is held in the final grade of each school and jointly led by school teachers and tour operators. As what *shuugaku* means in Japanese means, the original and primary purpose of *shuugaku ryokou* is to give students an opportunity for learning something essential as human being and Japanese, typically significant aspects of history, culture and/or nature of Japan.

In light of the nature of school trip, including *shuugaku ryokou*, examined above, overall WHSs in Japan seem to be appropriate destinations for these school trips. As mentioned in 2.1; however, the issues in access have been a main obstacle for tourists who want to visit four natural WHSs in Japan: “Shirakami-Sanchi”, “Yakushima”, “Shiretoko” and “Ogasawara Islands”. Furthermore, the size of each natural WHS in Japan is very extensive (2.2) and it is almost impossible for tourists, especially for school children, to fully explore the site in just one or two days.

In this sense; therefore, it is natural that the four natural WHSs in Japan have not been established well as destinations of school trips, though each natural WHSs is full of rich natural resources which deserve a WHS status, are unique to each site, and are useful for school trips. On the other hand, overall 13 cultural WHSs in Japan can be seen as traditional tourist destinations and have been visited well by students on school trip. Especially “Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto”, “Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara” together with “Buddhist Moments in the Horyu-ji Area” in Nara Prefecture, “Hiroshima Peace Memorial” together with “Itsukushima Shinto Shrine”, and “Shrines and Temples of Nikko” have a large number of school trips every year thanks to their location, size, rich cultural resources and links with Japanese history.

3 METHODOLOGY

There are a wide range of alternative approaches in the research in social sciences and management studies. Of these, the difference between positivist and interpretive approaches is a primary dichotomy (Clark et al, 1998; Veal, 2006) and this also applies to the research in tourism and hospitality studies (Clark et al, 1998). The positivist approach aims to follow the principles of natural scientific research and proceeds by the formulation and testing of hypotheses with a view to making inferences about the causal connections between two or more social phenomena or “facts” (Jupp & Norris, 1993), whilst the interpretive approach puts more trust on the people who are studied to provide their own explanation of their situation or behaviour (Veal, 2006). In addition to positivism and interpretivism, the differences between deductive and inductive approaches are also needed to be addressed. In general, deduction can be regarded as the process which starts with theory and proceeds through hypothesis, data collection, and testing of the hypothesis to deduce explanations of the behaviours of particular phenomena (Clark et al, 1998). On the other hand, Induction can be seen as the process which aims to explore and analyse related observations, and this could lead to the development and establishment of theory which is systematically linked with such observations in a meaningful manner (Clark et al, 1998). In light of the points discussed above, it could be said that this research stems from interpretivism and adopts an inductive approach as the main research approach. This means; therefore, this research investigates mainly qualitative data rather than quantitative data. The research also deals with both primary and secondary data; however, the latter is the main data source. In conclusion, the research is conducted by the review of the previous research about WHSs and educational tourism, including school trips; examination of the information, resources and/or data available from the websites of the WHSs and the agencies related to school trips; and the author’s visits to and observations of various Japanese WHSs and visitors to the WHSs.

The research; however, has various limitations. First of all, the researcher has not been able to visit all of the four natural WHSs and two cultural WHSs: “Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range” in Wakayama Prefecture, Nara Prefecture and Mie Prefecture; and “Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape”. Moreover, some of other cultural WHSs have not been visited in recent years. This is mainly due to the fact that the researcher is currently based in the UK and there are the constraints of time, budget and labour. Another limitation is a lack of collection of primary data from key stakeholders of each WHS. This is also mainly due to the lack of time, budget and labour available for this particular research project.

4 STUDY RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 *WHSs in Nara Prefecture*

“Buddhist Monuments in the Horyu-ji Area” has two Buddhist temples, Horyu-ji and Hoki-ji, and each has its own website. The useful information about the temple is available from the websites; however, no information, resources and data particularly for school trips are available at the websites. The researcher visited both temples in March 2004 and July 2011. At both times, groups of students, wearing school uniform and exploring the site by group, were observed at Horyu-ji. Eight cultural properties, including five Buddhist temples and one Shinto shrine, are included in “Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara”. Like Horyu-ji and Hoki-ji, each

of these eight properties has its own website and beneficial information for visitors are available from the websites. Of these, six out of eight properties do not provide any information, resources and data directed at school trips. On the other hand, the website of Yakushi-ji offers the information about the activities available for school trips, especially *shuugaku ryokou* (Yakushi-ji, n.d.), though the resources for and data about such activities are not available at their website. Todai-ji is somewhat different from other properties included in this WHS and their approach is very unique. They have a website for children and it is called “Todai-ji Kid’s” (Todai-ji, 2011). This website offers the basic information about Todai-ji and easy to understand for Japanese children. Although this is not the resources aimed at school trips and *shuugaku ryokou*, school teachers can use these resources for their history class and preparation for the school trip to Todai-ji. The researcher visited most of these cultural properties on his school trip when he was a student of a primary school. As a researcher, he has been to there in July 2011 and observed many student groups there, especially at Todai-ji.

“Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range” spreads across three Prefectures, including Nara. Six cultural properties in Nara are contained in this WHS. The resources and data geared towards school trips cannot be found their websites. This is probably because they have not had many school trips compared to other two WHSs in Nara due to the size and location of each property. In addition to this, most of these properties are linked with “*shugendo*”, a spiritual and mysterious Japanese religion which requires demanding ascetic training in mountains, and this would make these properties less approachable than other properties related to Buddhism and Shintoism. There is evidence which could show that Nara Prefecture is very keen to promote itself as a destination of *shuugaku ryokou*. The tourism promotion section of Nara prefectural government established the website entitled “Nara Shuugaku Ryokou Guide”, and one of the sections on the website is about three WHSs in Nara Prefecture (Tourism Promotion Section of Nara Prefectural Government, n.d.). The detailed information about each of the three WHSs is available there, mainly focusing on its historic aspect and cultural value. The researcher has not been able to visit this WHS.

4.2 WHSs in Kyoto Prefecture and Shiga Prefecture

17 cultural properties inscribed as “Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto” are located in Kyoto-city, Uji-city in Kyoto Prefecture and Otsu-city in Shiga Prefecture; however, 15 out of 17 properties are located in Kyoto-city. Each of these properties has its own website; however, no information and resources beamed to school trips are available there. Kyoto City Tourism Association; however, fully recognises the popularity of Kyoto-city as a destination of *shuugaku ryokou*, and makes “Kyoto Shuugaku Ryokou Passport” available at their website. Groups of students who are going to visit Kyoto-city and its surrounding areas on *shuugaku ryokou* can download the Passport from the website. The passport enables the students to enter many Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines with a concession price, enjoy a discount price at many shops and restaurants and tea houses, and join various programmes which offer diverse experiences peculiar to Kyoto. Except Ujigami Shrine, Kosan-ji, Saiho-ji, Tenryu-ji, Ryoan-ji, Nishi-Honganji, Nijo-jo Castle, other 10 cultural properties included in this WHS join this scheme. The researcher has been to all of 17 cultural properties on school trips and/or as a researcher. It can be said that Kyoto is always the most popular *shuugaku ryokou* destination in Japan, especially in spring and autumn.

4.3 WHSs in Hiroshima Prefecture

Hiroshima Prefecture has two cultural WHSs: “Hiroshima Peace Memorial” in Hiroshima-city and “Itsukushima Shinto Shrine” in Hatsukaichi-city. These two are closely located and can be visited on the same day. In fact, as discussed in 2.2, many school trips tend to visit both sites. “Itsukushima Shinto Shrine” has its own website, but there are no resources and information designed for school trips. The website of “Hiroshima Peace Memorial” is administered by the City of Hiroshima Council. There are no resources and information aimed at school trips; however, the website has a section for peace learning and *shuugaku ryokou*, and the weblinks with the websites of “Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum” and “Hiroshima Shuugaku Ryokou Guide”

are available there (Hiroshima City, n.d.). A wide range of resources and the information about activities are available at the website of Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum for students who visit there on *shuugaku ryokou*. School teachers can also ask the Museum to send them the learning materials which can be used for the classes for peace-learning at their school (Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, 2011).

The website of “Hiroshima Shuugaku Ryokou Guide” is administrated by Hiroshima Convention and Visitors Bureau, a judicial foundation. The content of this website is basically similar to that of “Nara Shuugaku Ryokou Guide” (4.1): the detailed information about the two WHSs is available. However, there is a notable difference in the content between the two websites: “Nara Shuugaku Ryokou Guide” focuses mainly on the historic aspect and cultural value of their three WHSs; whilst, “Hiroshima Shuugaku Ryokou Guide” put their primary focus on peace-learning though the visit to “Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park”, including “Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum”, and “Hiroshima Peace Memorial” rather than the historic aspect and cultural value of these two WHSs in Hiroshima Prefecture. The researcher visited “Itsukushima Shinto Shrine” in 2011; however, only some student groups were seen in 2011 and it was not sure whether they came to the site on school trip or not. When the researcher was a student of a primary school, originally the destination of his *shuugaku ryokou* was Hiroshima, including both “Itsukushima Shinto Shrine” and “Hiroshima Peace Memorial”, but it was changed due to a long distance from the city where his primary school is situated. The researcher visited the Memorial, Park and Museum in August 2009 and July 2011. At both times, there were a lot of groups of students as well as school teachers and a tour conductor. In 2011, it was also observed that students from a private primary school based in Tokyo had a lecture about Hiroshima’s atomic bomb experience at a hall in Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum.

4.4 *WHSs in Tochigi Prefecture*

The website of “Shrines and Temples of Nikko” is managed by the City of Nikko Council. In addition to the information about its history and cultural value, the conservation activities are also presented well at the website. No resources and information aimed at school trips are available from this website; however, another website about tourism and the WHS entitled “Nikko Kyouiku Ryokou”, which means educational trips to Nikko-city in English, is administered by Nikko Tourist Association. The website has a list of quizzes about each cultural property included in the WHS. If people answer the quizzes online and send their answers via the website with their email address, the website will send them the correct answers by email (Nikko Tourist Association, n.d.). This seems to work as a good gateway for people, especially for children who are going to learn about “Shrines and Temples of Nikko”. The researcher has been to the WHS in July 2009. There were a lot of visitors; however, no groups of students were observed at that time.

4.5 *Other cultural WHSs*

“Historic Villages of Shirakawa-go and Gokayama” consists of the Ogimachi district in Shirakawa-go, Gifu Prefecture and the Ainokura and Suganuma districts (the Gokayama area) in Nanto-city, Toyama Prefecture. Each of the three districts is fallen into the “group of buildings” categories of cultural WHS and located in a mountainous area (Jimura, 2007). The websites of the tourist associations of Shirakawa-go and Nanto-city seem to be most visited ones by tourists. A lot of information about their visitor attractions, accommodation facilities, local restaurants and access to the sites are available at the websites. The history of the sites and unique local culture, especially their historic “*gassho*-style” houses, are also explained well. However, no resources and information directed at school trips are available at the websites. The website of Shirakawa-go Tourist Association offers the information about various experiences peculiar to Shirakawa-go visitors can join. For example, visitors can enjoy making local crafts and cooking Japanese *soba* noodle (Shirakawa-go Tourist Association, n.d.). Hence, students who visit there on school trip may also be able to have such experiences in order to be familiar with local culture. The researcher stayed in Shirakawa-go for three months in 2004 for fieldwork and at that

time also visited Gokayama. Most visitors were not students but middle-aged people and came to the sites on coach trip.

“Himeji-jo” is the only WHS situated in Hyogo Prefecture and an excellent example of Japanese-style castle. Its website is administered by the City of Himeji Council and the information about its history, restoration work in recent years and cultural value is presented well at the website. The information for visitors to other visitor attractions in Himeji-city as well as those to “Himeji-jo” is available at the website of the City Council; however, these resources are not directed at school trips. The researcher has been to the site in July 2011; however, no groups of students were observed. “Gusuku Sites and Related Properties of the Kingdom of Ryukyu” is located in Okinawa Prefecture. The site does not seem to have its own website and the website of Agency for Cultural Affairs seems to be the only website about the site administered by an official agency. The researcher’s visit to the WHS was held in 2001 and no groups of students were observed at that time. “Hiraizumi” is located in Iwate Prefecture and has its own website administered by Iwate prefectural government. A wide variety of resources about the WHS is available at the website; however, it is not especially for school trips. The researcher has been to the site in April 2008 before the site was inscribed as a WHS. There were not many tourists and no groups of students were confirmed.

“Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape” is located in Shimane Prefecture. The researcher has never been to the WHS. The website of the WHS is run by Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape World Heritage Centre. The WHS is happy to receive school trips and this policy is clearly noticed at the website. The WHS asks each school, which wants to visit the WHS on school trip, to prepare and submit a plan of the educational programme and/or activity they want to have at the WHS before their visit to the WHS (Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape World Heritage Centre, n.d.). This could also be used as part of *shuugaku ryokou*. As discussed in 2.2, what *shuugaku* means is to learn something essential as human being, typically significant aspects of Japanese history, culture and/or nature. As Benesse (2003) implies; however, such an original aim was weakened and *shuugaku ryokou* often turned into just a long school trip for sightseeing in many schools. Hence, the meaning of *shuugaku ryokou* has been reviewed by schools, teachers and researchers (Benesse, 2003). In other words, the main focus of such reviews has been to consider what to learn and how to learn through *shuugaku ryokou*. The above-mentioned approach towards educational programmes and activities taken by “Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape” might be seen as a somewhat demanding task for each school. In light of the above arguments about the meaning of *shuugaku ryokou* stated by Benesse (2003); however, this approach should be understood as a good opportunity for students as well as schools to carefully think about what they want to learn and how they want to learn through *shuugaku ryokou*.

4.6 Natural WHSs

Japan has four natural WHSs. As discussed in 2.1 and 2.2; however, the number of visitors to the natural WHSs is much smaller than the number of visitors to cultural WHSs. This tendency also applies to the number of school trips, including *shuugaku ryokou*. The main obstacles for the natural WHSs are their location far from the metropolitan areas such as Greater Tokyo or Greater Osaka, the difficulty in access by public transport, and their extensive size which would not allow visitors to fully explore the sites in only two or three days which are the typical length of *shuugaku ryokou*. “Shiretoko” has its own website and it is managed by Shiretoko Nature Foundation. They run a one-week educational outdoor programme for children every summer since 1980 and in total around 1600 children joined this programme (Shiretoko Nature Foundation, 2011). Although the programme does not seem to be run for each school, it could be used as a main activity of *shuugaku ryokou* if the length of the programme, one week, permits. As for “Shirakami-Sanchi”, the website of its visitor centre can be seen as the official website at least in terms of tourism. No information and resources aimed at school trips are available at the website; however, they provide visitors with three kinds of educational programmes entitled “interpretation programmes”. These three types are categorised by the venue where and how the programme is held and delivered: indoor at the visitor centre, outdoor, enjoying trekking in Shi-

rakami-Sanchi; and outdoor at field of Shirakami-Sanchi (Shirakami-Sanchi Visitor Centre, n.d.). These educational programmes are open to the public older than 6 years old, 8 years old or 10 years old, depending on the content of each programme (Shirakami-Sanchi Visitor Centre, n.d.). Like the programmes offered at “Shiretoko”, these programmes are not geared towards school trips, but the interpretation programmes available at “Shirakami-Sanchi” seem to match well the purpose of school trips and *shuugaku ryokou*.

Regarding “Ogasawara Islands”, the website of Ogasawara Village Tourist Association can be regarded as the official website in terms of tourism. No resources and data for school trips or any other educational tourism are available at the website, mainly because the WHS is too far from the Honshu Island. The information about conservation of natural heritage of “Ogasawara Islands” is available at the above-mentioned and other websites. At the moment; however, such calls for awareness-raising do not seem to be linked well with educational tourism, especially with school trips. The website of Yakushima Tourism Association seems to be a main gateway to the island for visitors to “Yakushima”. The level of current provision of the information and resources for school trips available at their website and websites of related agencies are very similar to “Ogasawara Islands”. In short, the information to raise visitors’ awareness of conservation of natural heritage of “Yakushima” does not seem to be integrated enough in school trips and *shuugaku ryokou*. Any of these four natural WHSs has not been visited by the researcher.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

The research tells that several cultural WHSs have been established as the destinations for school trip, including *shuugaku ryokou* and the information, resources and data about their history and value are available at their websites and/or on site. Most of such information, resources and data; however, are not aimed at school trips and *shuugaku ryokou*. Yakushi-ji and Todai-ji, which are part of “Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara” (4.1), and “Hiroshima Peace Memorial” together with Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park (4.3) are a few examples of the case that WHSs themselves arrange some information and resources geared mainly towards school trips. As a whole, not WHSs but tourist association, prefectural government or judicial foundation takes a leading role in the provision of the resources and activities aimed at *shuugaku ryokou*. In case of the WHSs in Kyoto Prefecture and Tochigi Prefecture, the local tourist association plays a key role in offering of such resources and activities: Kyoto City Tourism Association prepares a unique scheme aimed at *shuugaku ryokou* (4.2) and Nikko Tourist Association administers a website beamed to *shuugaku ryokou* (4.4). In Nara Prefecture, Nara prefectural government developed the website called “Nara Shuugaku Ryokou Guide” (4.1) and in Hiroshima Prefecture, the website of “Hiroshima Shuugaku Ryokou Guide” is managed by Hiroshima Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Of the school trips to Japanese WHSs, those to “Hiroshima Peace Memorial” together with Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum would have somewhat different focus from those to other WHSs. The school trips to these sites would focus much more on learning about Japan’s atomic bomb experience and various activities to realise world peace rather than learning about the historic and cultural importance of the sites. This would be especially true to *shuugaku ryokou*. All the agencies related to “Hiroshima Peace Memorial” are very keen to offer the resources and opportunities useful for peace-learning and, in fact, arrange a wide variety of activities for school trips, especially for *shuugaku ryokou* which aims to learn about world peace (4.3). “Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape” (4.5), “Shirakami-Sanchi” (4.6) and “Shiretoko” (4.6) are very eager to provide educational programmes and activities with students, though these programmes do not focus primarily on *shuugaku ryokou* but visits of general public and students as a whole. Of these, the approach adopted at “Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape” is especially noteworthy as they require schools which want to visit the WHS to develop and submit a plan about what to and how to learn at the WHS before their visit to the WHS. In light of the discussions in recent years about the meaning of *shuugaku ryokou* (Benesse, 2003), the approach taken at “Iwami Ginzan Silver

Mine and its Cultural Landscape” seems to be an appropriate and effective measure which gives an opportunity to schools and their students to consider the purpose of school trips and *shuugaku ryokou*. Hence this type of approach should also be adopted by other WHSs in Japan.

In light of the above-mentioned key findings of the research, three key points which should be essential for the effective and meaningful involvement of Japanese WHSs in school trips are identified through this research. They are:

- (1) Comprehensive and cooperative approach to school trips and *shuugaku ryokou* amongst a WHS, regional and/or local government, and local tourist association
- (2) Further development of a wide variety of educational resources and activities available at the website and on site
- (3) More voluntary and positive contribution of schools to the development and improvement of educational programmes they want to have at a WHS

In conclusion, the combination or integration of the above-mentioned three key points could lead to the more effective and meaningful involvement of the Japanese WHSs in school trips, especially in *shuugaku ryokou*.

5.2 Recommendations for the further research in the future

As discussed in 3, the different limitations are involved in this research and most of them are related to the volume of the research and the fact the researcher is based in the UK since it looked at all of 16 WHSs in Japan. In the further research in the future; therefore, the number of the WHSs studied needs to be limited based on the results of this research. In other words, only the WHSs which are linked with key findings from this research should be examined further. Another issue needs to be overcome is a lack of primary data. For instance, the collection of primary data from key stakeholders who are in charge of education, tourism and WHS management at selected WHSs could make the study about this theme more meaningful and insightful.

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