

How metropolis impact the Tourism-Residence Relationship of its suburb

A case study of Naka-Uji area, Uji City, Kyoto Prefecture

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Abstract

Metropolis can influence populations, industries, physical space, living environment, and more of its suburbs. Suburbs serve as a buffer space between urban and towns, carrying a series of problems in urban development. Kyoto is one of the metropolises in Japan which is famous for its long history. Uji, located on the outskirts of Kyoto, has also prospered in tourism because of its long history and the World Heritage Byodoin Temple. Through historical data, ancient map surveys, and statistics, this research concludes that metropolis plays a decisive role in the tourism development of their surrounding suburbs and that their policies about the tourism development will affect the tourism activities in its suburban and then impact on the number, layout, use of buildings and living environment in the suburbs.

Keywords

tourism, residential environment, suburban area, metropolis

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INTRODUCTION

The post-World War II era witnessed a rapid increase in population numbers in metropolitan areas, which in turn fueled the demand for suburban tourism. The development of metropolitan regions has played a favorable role, facilitating the flow of urban resources into surrounding suburban areas¹. Globally, many suburbs situated near metropolitan areas have successfully developed their tourism industries. Examples include Versailles near Paris, Santa Monica near Los Angeles, Potsdam near Berlin, and Uji near Kyoto. These cities have benefited significantly from their geographic locations as suburbs of major metropolises. Accessible, convenient, and sustainable tour transportation network is the prerequisite for tourists entering tourist attractions and completing activities².

Besides, the focus of experienced tourists is moving away from relying principally on exploiting tangible resources like historic buildings or museums and galleries, towards a concern with intangible resources, like lifestyle and image³. The commercialization of tourism in metropolitan areas makes it difficult for tourists to experience the authentic daily lives of local residents. However, in suburban areas, tourists are closer to the everyday lives of the locals, making suburbs a current focus of tourist destinations.

Another distinctive feature of suburban tourism is the relatively short duration of visits. Suburbs' proximity to city centers and convenient transportation options often result in tourists spending only a few hours in these areas during the day rather than staying overnight. This short-stay characteristic sets suburban tourism apart from other types of tourism, highlighting the unique nature of tourism activities in suburban regions

LITERATURE REVIEW

When searching for tourism in suburban areas, there are not a lot of research found. Most research are concerned with other subjects. Sverrild (1992) claims that "The Suburbs are at once the city's extension and its opposite"⁴. Driving tourism into the suburbans seem to demand for development of certain vital factors for the suburban destination. Suburban tourism began gaining attention in academic circles in the early 2000s. One of the earliest academic papers discussing suburban tourism was published in 2003⁵. Karkas (2012) discusses that transportation, capacity, quality, remoteness, isolation, lifestyle, authenticity, nature, service, price and exclusiveness as important factors in suburban tourism⁶. Similarly, Naoto Tanaka, Masashi Kawasaki, and Maasa Moritsu researched the importance of transportation networks to suburban tourism development⁷. During COVID, Bielska(2022) states that in conditions of social distancing, rural and suburban areas can be an attractive alternative to individual short- term tourism, satisfying the need for recreation and mental and physical health restoration of urban residents⁸. Overall, the suburban tourism is a complex and multifaceted issue that requires careful consideration of economic, environmental, and social factors.

RESEARCH AREA



Fig. 1. The Location of Uji City

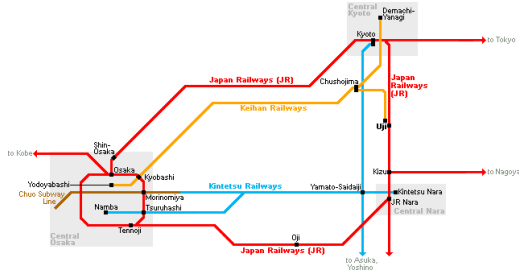


Fig. 2. The Accessibility of Uji City

This research focuses on Uji City in Kyoto Prefecture, Japan, located between the historic cities of Kyoto and Nara. Renowned for its scenic beauty and rich cultural heritage, Uji lies along the Uji River and is celebrated for its association with traditional Japanese tea culture. The city boasts a profound historical background, prominently featured in Japanese literature and history. Uji is home to two UNESCO World Heritage sites: Ujigami Shrine and Byodoin Temple, both dating back to the Heian period (794-1185). Additionally, Uji's connection to "The Tale of Genji," one of Japan's most famous literary works, adds to its cultural significance, with several key chapters set in the city⁹.

Uji is especially famous for its tea, particularly Uji matcha. The area's unique climate and geographical conditions make it ideal for cultivating high-quality tea. The city's tea culture is celebrated through various tea houses and ceremonies, offering visitors an immersive cultural experience¹⁰.



Fig. 3. The location of Naka-Uji area

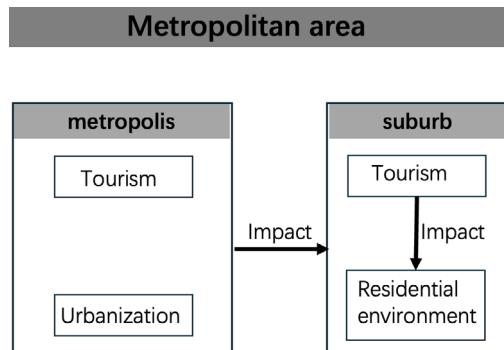


Fig. 4. Research goal

Naka-Uji is a notable area within Uji City. One of the UNESCO World Heritage sites, Byodoin Temple, mentioned above, is located in the Naka-Uji area. The other site, Ujigami Shrine, is within walking distance of Naka-Uji. Both sites date back to the Heian period (794-1185), reflecting the region's historical depth and architectural splendor. These landmarks are religiously significant and attract numerous tourists and scholars interested in Japan's historical heritage.

Despite its historical roots, Naka-Uji has seen considerable development, blending the old with the new. The area has benefitted from Uji City's tourism plans, particularly since the establishment of Uji's independent tourism strategy in 2001. This development aims to balance the preservation of cultural heritage with the needs of modern tourism and residential life.

SELECTION OF THE RESEARCH SUBJECT

Naka-Uji is a multifaceted area, serving as both a suburb of a metropolis and a site rich in historical and cultural resources.

Naka-Uji is centrally located in the Kinki region of Japan. It is within a 10-kilometer radius of Joyo City in Kyoto Prefecture, and within a 20-kilometer radius of Kyoto City and Otsu City in Shiga Prefecture. Furthermore, Nara City is within a 30-kilometer radius, and Osaka City is within a 40-kilometer radius. By private car, it takes up to 45 minutes to reach Naka-Uji from these cities, while the commute time by metro can take up to one and a half hours. This makes Naka-Uji an accessible suburban area for residents of these metropolises.

In addition to its strategic location, Naka-Uji boasts a rich historical heritage, being home to two important UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Byodoin Temple and Ujigami Shrine. Byodoin Temple, located in Uji City, dates back to the late Heian period and is renowned for its architectural beauty and historical significance. Ujigami Shrine, believed to be the oldest standing shrine in Japan, is closely linked to Byodoin Temple and serves as its "guardian shrine." In 1994, Ujigami Shrine, along with other shrines and temples in the Kyoto area, was recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, underscoring its cultural and historical importance.

The blend of these two aspects—its strategic location near major urban centers and its deep-rooted historical and cultural significance—makes Naka-Uji a unique and attractive destination for both residents and tourists.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study aims to explore how a metropolis impacts suburb tourism development and how suburb tourism impacts the residential environment of the local community. Meanwhile, this research is trying to find out the transition of the tourism-residential relationship in suburbs under the impact of metropolises. The focus is on how suburban areas like Naka-Uji adapt and transform in response to the proximity of large urban centers. This transition is analyzed through the lens of historical context, and urban planning, with particular attention to the

implementation of tourism strategies and their effects on local communities.

Although Uji City was not established until 1951, the significance of Naka-Uji dates back to an earlier period, marking the emergence of large residential areas in Japan's suburbs. The earliest map of Naka-Uji, dating to 1963, sets the starting point for this study's timeframe. In 2001, Uji implemented the independent Uji City Tourism Promotion Plan, thus dividing the study period into two stages: 1963-2001 and post-2001.

To investigate the residential environment, this study focuses on the foundations and categories of buildings in Naka-Uji. Quantitative methods are employed to analyze changes in building categories over time, providing insights into how the relationship between tourism and residential areas has evolved. This research takes the Naka-Uji area in Uji City, Kyoto Prefecture as a case study.

RESULT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DEVELOPMENT OF KYOTO METROPOLIS AND THE RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE NAKA-UJI AREA

FROM 1963 TO 2001

In Japan, new towns were developed in the suburbs of cities to address the population concentration in urban areas caused by rapid economic growth and to improve living standards by providing housing and public facilities. The Kinki Area Adjustment Act of 1963 facilitated the municipal government's proactive approach to transforming Kyoto into a cultural center, recognizing the city's fortunate escape from wartime attacks and consequential fires. During this period, Uji developed primarily as a suburban residential area.

AFTER 2001

In 2004, the Law for the Protection of Cultural Heritage was revised to include "cultural landscape" as a new type of cultural property. Under this system, the national government selects the most significant cultural landscapes from those protected by landscape planning areas established by the Landscape Act, providing value and support. In Uji City, the landscape planning area covers the entire city, with critical areas designated as landscape planning priority areas. The city's natural and cultural heritage and traditional industries are concentrated in these areas. On February 12, 2009, a proposal was submitted to designate a total of 228.5 hectares of the Uji city area and its surroundings, which are significant areas for landscape planning, as important cultural landscapes. This proposal was accepted, and Uji City received a selection notice from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology.

In 2010, the Kyoto City Tourism Promotion Plan outlined seven tourism goals aimed at improving the quality of tourists' experiences in Kyoto. The plan aimed to offer tourists an opportunity to experience life in Kyoto, make Kyoto a more equitable city, rediscover the beauty of the city, showcase the inner beauty of Kyoto, eliminate tourists' dissatisfaction with Kyoto, improve Kyoto's charm, and symbolize the acquisition of a new Kyoto. Rather than focusing solely on increasing tourist numbers, the plan aimed to enhance the overall quality of tourism experiences. To achieve this goal, Kyoto City planned to invest in and improve tourism-related infrastructure.

From 2018 to 2027, the "Tea of Kyoto" project was launched, encompassing 12 municipalities, including Uji City. This cooperation in the Kyoto prefecture has strengthened tourism relations between Uji and Kyoto.

In March 2016, the Agency for Cultural Affairs decided to relocate to Kyoto, highlighting the city's cultural significance. To further enhance tourism and promote safety and security, Kyoto City and Uji City entered into a partnership agreement in 2015, valid until 2020. The two cities, known for their historical heritage and tea culture, are committed to working together to attract tourists and boost local communities. The partnership aims to improve safety and security, and both cities will actively collaborate on various initiatives such as improving tourist facilities, sharing information related to tourism promotion, and coordinating events to promote tourism. Overall, the partnership agreement focuses on enhancing the visitor experience and ensuring the safety of tourists and local residents alike.^{5.2} The relationship between Kyoto City Tourism and Uji City Tourism.

In summary, Uji was primarily a suburban residential area due to urbanization and the development of the central city before 2001. After 2001, especially following the proposal of the historical and cultural landscape in 2004, the tourism industries of Uji and Kyoto became interconnected due to the Uji tea policy.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KYOTO CITY TOURISM AND UJI CITY TOURISM

FROM 1963 TO 2001

The preservation of historical and cultural heritage in Kyoto City, an ancient capital of Japan, has directly influenced the conservation of Uji's heritage from war damage. Consequently, Uji's tourism industry has been able to recover relatively quickly. Additionally, the tourism revival plan implemented by Kyoto City post-war has aided Uji's tourism industry. With the resurgence of tourism in Kyoto City, tourists are likely to visit Uji City as well, leading to an increase in tourism activities in Uji.

According to residential maps, the post-war construction of new towns in Kyoto City resulted in a significant population increase in Uji City and the Naka Uji area. The Naka Uji area underwent construction after 1963, and the 1970 Osaka Expo provided a boost to the tourism industry in the broader Kinki region. By the end of the 20th century, following the completion

of the Naka-Uji area's renovation and construction, the number of tourists in Uji City, particularly in the Naka-Uji area, saw a dramatic increase. Initially, tourism in Uji City centered on its historical resources to attract visitors, with Byodoin Temple being a key tourist attraction. Consequently, the Naka Uji area began building parking lots and establishing numerous stores to accommodate the growing influx of tourists.

AFTER 2001

Kyoto has a significant impact on tourism in Uji, particularly in the Naka Uji area. The number of tourists visiting Naka Uji is closely related to the number of tourists visiting Kyoto City. Despite the shared cultural heritage between the two cities, such as tea culture, Kyoto's wider range of accommodation options means that fewer tourists choose to stay overnight in Uji. Instead, they typically opt to stay in Kyoto, which offers more choices, and leave Uji after spending an average of three hours exploring the area.

When comparing the trends in tea culture between the entire Kyoto area and Uji City, some notable differences emerge. In the Naka-Uji area, the majority of visitors are from nearby prefectures, with 35.9% from Kyoto Prefecture, 25.7% from Osaka Prefecture, 12.5% from Nara Prefecture, and 8.4% from Kanto. In contrast, in Uji City, the largest percentage of visitors (34.3%) come from Kanto, which includes Tokyo and the surrounding areas. Regarding accommodation, a higher proportion of guests choose to stay in Uji City compared to the wider Kyoto area. Specifically, 77.7% of guests opt to stay in Kyoto, while 66.7% of guests choose to stay in Uji City.

Finally, transportation is another differentiating factor, with the majority of visitors to the entire Kyoto area arriving by car. However, visitors to Uji City are more likely to use rail transportation to reach their destinations.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TOURISM ACTIVITY AND THE RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE NAKA-UJI AREA

FROM 1963 TO 2001

In 1965, the Uji area still had many vacancies and two large tea fields. There were few retail stores in the entire area, and land use was relatively simple. By 1981, the tea gardens had disappeared, and more commercial buildings appeared in the Naka-Uji area, mainly along the shopping street. This street served as the main route for tourists commuting from the train station to Byodoin Temple and the Uji River. Despite the development of the tourism industry, particularly after 1981, the number of hotels in the Naka-Uji area did not increase. Naka-Uji had a strong preference as a day-trip destination, meaning tourists preferred to stay overnight in Kyoto or Nara City.

During this period, many tourists traveled in groups, and Uji had several hotels capable of accommodating large groups, which have remained popular to this day. The lives of local residents and tourists intersected primarily on the shopping street. This street, lined with shops and hospitals, offered convenient transportation and became a bustling night market that tourists had to pass through when visiting the Central Uji area. This created a space where tourists and residents could interact.

AFTER 2001

In fiscal 2001, Uji City formulated the “Uji City Tourism Basic Plan,” aiming to increase the number of tourists from 4 million to 5 million within 10 years. In 2008, various events were held to commemorate the millennium of the Genji Monogatari, with information disseminated in collaboration with Kyoto Prefecture and Kyoto City. The Genji Monogatari Museum was also renewed. However, the number of tourists temporarily decreased due to the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, renovation work of major tourist destinations in Uji City and the Uji River, and typhoon disasters. Despite these challenges, the completion of renovation work and the increase in foreign tourists led to record highs of 5,598,000 visitors in 2015 and 5,587,000 in 2016.

Comparing the characteristics of tourists visiting Uji City between the 2016 survey and the 2011 survey, there was a decrease in the proportion of men, with an increase in men aged 70 and over and those in their 20s. The percentage of people in their 30s and 60s decreased. Regionally, the percentage of tourists from Kinki Kansai increased, and the percentage using private cars rose to 30.9%, while the percentage using JR and Keihan railways decreased to 53%.

Tourists’ arrival times peaked around 10 a.m., with most returning as early as 4 p.m., indicating that daytime sightseeing was predominant, and nighttime tourist activity was minimal. The average stay in Uji was 3 hours and 34 minutes. The per capita tourism expenditure increased by 614 yen between the 2011 and 2016 surveys. A survey of 1,460 visitors to Kyoto City revealed that 43.9% (about 640 people) had also visited the Uji area.

There is now greater overlap between the daily travel of residents and the routes taken by tourists, not limited to the shopping street and Omotesando. Increasingly, tourists are interested in experiencing the local way of life, exploring residential areas to understand the daily lives and travel environments of the locals. The presence of Roji and Hokora in the Naka Uji triangle further attracts tourists, encouraging them to explore more of the local culture.

For residents, the influx of tourists into their living environment has directly affected the distribution of commercial shops. Previously, shops and souvenir stores were located along the shopping street and Omotesando. Now, more restaurants and souvenir shops are choosing to open in the interior spaces of Naka Uji, even in less geographically advantageous and accessible locations, to cater to the growing number of tourists venturing into these areas.

CONCLUSION

This paper examines two distinct categories of relationships. The first category is the relationship between Kyoto, the mother city, and Uji, the affiliated city. The second category is the relationship between tourism and residential space within Uji City.

Uji has long been a city that serves as a connection point between the ancient capitals of Uji and Kyoto. After World War II, the development of tourism in Japan was hindered due to economic restrictions. However, since Kyoto was not affected by the war, plans for tourism revival and development were initiated immediately after the war. As a result, Kyoto became the first city and area in Japan to begin revitalizing tourism during the post-war recovery. Simultaneously, the Kinki Area Improvement Act was promulgated in 1963, leading to the construction of infrastructure throughout the entire Kinki area, including Kyoto Prefecture, Osaka, and Nara. In response to the post-war population increase, many new towns were built in the suburbs to alleviate housing pressure.

Policies and tourist demand play a significant role in shaping the development of a place. The central Uji area has garnered attention due to its rich historical and cultural heritage. Additionally, the policy to develop the local tea culture has prompted many shops and souvenir shops in the central Uji area to incorporate tea-related products into their offerings. Tourists' mode of travel, activities, and demand for destinations can significantly impact the living environment of these locations. For instance, the development of tourism has created more job opportunities for the local area, meaning that tourists' activities are closely intertwined with the living environment of the residents in the tourist destination.

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DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The author declares that she has no relevant or material financial interests that relate to the research described in this paper.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTOR(S)

Shuailing Cui is a PhD student at the Department of Urban Engineering, at the University of Tokyo. She has a master's degree in Engineering from the University of Tokyo. Her scholarly research examines the influence that tourism development brings to suburbs.

Nakajima Naoto is a Professor at the University of Tokyo, Japan. His research is designed in Planning Heritage Studies for Urban Design. Postwar Planning History, Planning Heritage, and Place Making. His publications include articles in Planning Perspective, Urban Research and Practice, and AIJ Journal of Technology and Design.

ENDNOTES

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IMAGE SOURCES

Figure 1 <https://www.travel-around-japan.com/k62-00-kyoto-city.html>

Figure 2 <https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e3976.html>

Figure 3 Edited by author based on the figure from <https://www.kyoto-uji-kankou.or.jp/access-en.html>

Figure 4 Made by author