

Differences in the Quality of Experience and Viewing Direction of Guided and Non-Guided Walkers toward the Local Community Living in the Town Area

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It has been six years since the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011. In the affected areas which suffered from the tsunami, local governments and companies are planning “recovery tourism” tours in which visitors travel through areas that were affected by the disaster. In many cases of the recovery tourism tours local storytellers and survivors are employed as guides to allow tourists to see the reality facing communities in northeast Japan. However, reconstruction following the disaster induced big change in tsunami-hit areas and many buildings damaged by the tsunami have been taken apart and moved to other areas. With these points taken into account, recovery tourism is changing drastically and not only guides but also local governments should reconsider what to tell visitors in the future.

On the other hand, community-led tourism is paid most attention to and large positive effects both on local economic growth and understanding of local community in Japan and town walking as well. Citizen guides interpreting the attractiveness and uniqueness of the area is anticipated as possible methods for promoting the community-led tourism (Chatani, 2012) and community planning to allow tourists see the community living in the town area is regarded as being very important (Nishimura, 2003).

From the viewpoint to obtain the indication of the probability of guided tours interpreting community living and of the application of tourism in tsunami-hit areas, this study treats Morioka city as a case study area; it aims 1) to grasp the differences in the awareness and quality of experience between guided and non-guided walkers in the town area, and 2) to consider the tourism program and its walking routes based on walkers’ viewing direction for toward local community lives.

In order to grasp the awareness of visitor to the center of Morioka city, two questionnaires were distributed to Japanese over 17 years old from June 21th through December 23th. One is a survey on the visitors who applied for the guided tours conducted by Morioka Tourism & Convention Association. The other is on the non-guided walkers who visited the center of Morioka city.

The survey focused on the following aspects: (1) visitor attributes (e.g. age, gender), (2) characteristics of visit (e.g. number of visits, group size, objective of the trip, walking time, walking distance, walking area, conversation with local people), (3) awareness of town walking (e.g. attractiveness of Morioka city, expectation for the town walking, intention to see local community living, impression evaluation of walking space, evaluation of walking route), (4) satisfaction and intention to revisit.

The results indicated that the walkers’ intentions differed such that guided walkers expected efficiency and the non-guided expected time consumption. However, walking in living space among the traditional townhouses was expected by both types of walkers. It is thought to be useful to take the tranquility and the complexity of town into account when the viewing direction for local community lives is introduced into tourism. The guide was easy to understand for the first visitors, introduces town, and subsequent visitors, it was considered effective to create a two-step construction that to know the local community living, regardless of a guide or non-guided. By introducing a stop point away from the station on the walking route of the guided town walking.

It is thought that tourism needs to change as reconstruction advanced and town spaces changes in tsunami-hit areas. There is a possibility that not only nature but also culture including local community living would be the attractiveness and uniqueness of the areas. We hope that the unique nature and

history of the areas will provide a valuable insight into post-disaster reconstruction.

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