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**I Want to Go Far Away: Discover Japan and
Japanese Identity Tourism in the 1970s**

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The Japan of 1970 was caught at the convergence point of two cresting socio-political waves. From one direction surged the optimism of a decade of high-speed economic growth propelled by involvement in Western international trade. Progress towards modernization rushed forward at a lightning clip after World War II with Prime Minister's declaration of the "official" end of the "postwar era" in 1956, the Tokyo Olympics in 1964, achievement of the world's third-highest GDP in 1968, and Osaka's Expo '70.¹ Much of Japan's modern development went hand in hand with Americanization. On a structural level, this meant the Japanese government was forced to reform itself to conform to American Cold War policy. Simultaneously, Japanese society saw the rapid growth of an urban middle-class, popularization of American forms of entertainment, and commonplace consumption of American goods. In the eyes of many Japanese and foreign observers alike, the "New Japan" had finally legitimized itself as a member of the modern global community. However, there came from the other direction a rising tide of disillusionment with urban materialism and the less desirable legacies of a quarter-century of American hegemonic guardianship.

As the material benefits of Showa era high-speed growth became more conspicuous and more pervasive, growing infatuation with American

¹ See Michael Schaller, *Altered States: The United States and Japan Since the Occupation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Carol Gluck, "The Past in the Present," in *Postwar Japan as History*, ed. Andrew Gordon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 72.

consumer-capitalist culture created a “nexus of unease” about the stability of Japanese cultural identity, especially among urban residents.² Due to rapid demographic shifts, industrial development, and the Americanization of middle-class urban Japan, cultural critics increasingly associated modernization with the cost of Japan’s lost national cultural identity.³ In the 1960s, the continued use of Okinawan military bases by the United States military for use in bombing raids in Vietnam, as well as tensions over American nuclear testing practices incensed many across a wide swath of Japanese society.⁴ It is no wonder that Japanese of all political stripes began to look for a way to recover what was lost and extricate themselves from American political and cultural hegemony. Often this meant not just protesting U.S. injustices, but also emphasizing the value of Japanese traditional culture.

Into this atmosphere of cultural soul-searching appeared Discover Japan, an advertising campaign for Japan National Railways (JNR), headed by Fujioka Wakao of the Dentsū advertising agency, in 1970. The campaign was based on the nearly identical Discover America campaign launched in the United States during the late 1960s, yet while Discover America failed to gain much traction, Discover Japan continued until 1978. Discover Japan’s advertising strategy capitalized on a popular desire to reaffirm Japanese identity away from the cultural influence of the United States following a period of intense Americanization of Japanese society in the decades since the end of World War II. Through iconographic imagery of scenic travel destinations, the campaign cultivated nostalgia for

² Marilyn Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 9.

³ Or if Japanese identity was not lost, it was simply seen as weaker than and subordinate to American interests. See Takeo Doi, *The Anatomy of Dependence* (Tokyo: Kōdansha International, 1973); Peter N. Dale, *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 15. According to Dale, “...in the roughly 30 years from 1946 to 1978, approximately 700 titles were published on the theme of Japanese identity, a remarkable 25% of which were issued in the peak three year period from 1976 to 1978.”

⁴ John W. Dower, *Ways of Forgetting, Ways of Remembering: Japan in the Modern World* (New York: New Press, 2012).

Shinto shrines, dirt roads, and the feeling of being simultaneously back home and far, far away. Advertisers sold a “hometown” for the new urban middle-class to return to—a home which in popular memory had remained pure and unchanged throughout decades of dramatic postwar modernization. Using this image, campaign media created a tourist experience that defined what “Japan” was and sought to guide the tourist to an understanding of Japan’s unique cultural heritage and position in the modern world.⁵ I argue that Discover Japan was a movement that contributed to the construction of a Japanese national identity through the use of history and the collective rejection of Western modernity.

Marilyn Ivy views twentieth-century Japan as a space of phantasmic, intertwining relationships between tradition and modernity.⁶ In her analysis of Discover Japan, Ivy sees similarities between 1970s mass-tourism and Meiji period (1868-1912) Japanese tourism. Both forms relied on feelings of nostalgia amid periods of rapid and unpredictable change and were positioned within a larger context of lively nationalist discourse and jarring international encounters. The key difference lay in the pervasiveness of Discover Japan’s marketing, which utilized modern mass-media and modern advertising strategies to paint an ideal picture in the consumer’s mind of an “authentic” Japan—the nation of generations past whose soul had been tainted by foreign materialism, war, and ideology. The campaign sought to bring together even the most remote of rice paddies as pure, widespread vessels of Japanese culture, paradoxically uniting modern advertising technique with nativist sentiment.⁷ Fujioka’s

⁵ Dale, *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness*, 25. For Dale, the popular conception of Japanese cultural and ethnic homogeneity goes hand in hand with *nihonjinron* discourse and “Japanese uniqueness.” Both concepts were featured prominently in nationalist political discourse.

⁶ Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*, 20.

⁷ Michael H. Rea, “A Furusato Away from Home,” *Annals of Tourism Research* 27, no. 3 (2000): 642.

team naturally chose the *furusato*—the “hometown” or “old village”—as the seat of Japanese identity.⁸

Of course, the 1970s Discover Japan campaign was not the first instance of mass-tourism in Japan, nor was it the first time tourism could be considered a political act. According to John Urry, “Tourist relationships arise from a movement of people to, and their stay in, various destinations.”⁹ While engaging in leisure activities at a tourist destination, the tourist projects a gaze through which he interprets the landscape informed by an iconography learned from advertisements and sustained by anticipation of a good time. Scholars of modern European and Japanese history have shown that tourism was used by nationalist regimes as a nation-building tool in order to maintain control over ‘scenic’ peripheral regions.¹⁰ By following a designated path through the national landscape, the tourist became integrated into the national narrative, setting foot on the ground where important national figures lived and events took place. Therefore, the intended experience of tourism was educational, and even though Discover Japan was not a state enterprise, it was no less educational or political than other, more overtly state-driven campaigns.

Much of the scholarship on both pre-World War II and Cold War tourism has been framed by the ways in which “tourism and vacations

⁸ Jennifer Ellen Robertson, *Native and Newcomer: Making and Remaking a Japanese City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 27. A twentieth-century *furusato* (故郷 or ふるさと), according to Robertson, held different meanings depending on whether it was written using Chinese characters or Japanese hiragana. The *furusato* in Chinese characters literally means “old village,” while the hiragana *furusato* ideograph connotes the “hometown,” a more temporally ambiguous, emotional image.

⁹ John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage Publications, 1990), 3. Through Urry’s analysis, it is clear that the tourist’s understanding of the land is affected most profoundly by the monuments, museums, etc. through which he sees the land, a fundamentally experiential education.

¹⁰ Anne E. Gorsuch and Diane Koenker, eds., *Turizm: The Russian and East European Tourist under Capitalism and Socialism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006); Michele Mason, *Dominant Narratives of Colonial Hokkaido and Imperial Japan: Envisioning the Periphery and the Modern Nation-state* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

have been constitutive of class, social status, and collective identities.”¹¹ In her study of prerevolutionary Russian tourism, Louise McReynolds shows how vacation activities such as swimming, rock climbing, and roller skating allowed the Russian tourist to pursue both entertainment and health.¹² Likewise, the proletarian tourist of the 1930s was instructed by the All-Union Voluntary Society for Proletarian Tourism and Excursions (OPTE) to follow the “trip regime” in order to strengthen class-consciousness and improve self-reliance and self-discipline.¹³ Even in the United States, mode of travel, destination, and sightseeing activities were all reconceived on an ideological basis.¹⁴ The See America First campaign studied by Marguerite Shaffer, which emerged around the turn of the twentieth-century, was born of nationalist sentiment that sought to convince Americans of the beauty of their own land and discourage them from taking vacation in Europe.¹⁵ The Cold War era family road trip and the Discover America campaign on which Discover Japan was based was the ideal way to see the country’s national parks, support the American auto industry, and fight communism.¹⁶ Tourism may always be political to a certain degree, but it was especially so during periods of prewar nation-building and Cold War conflict.

In Japan, growing nationalist sentiment and disillusionment with modernization influenced tourism rhetoric that promoted the virtue of Japanese tradition as well as cultural distinctiveness from the United

¹¹ Gorsuch and Koenker, *Turizm: The Russian and East*, 2.

¹² Louise McReynolds, “The Prerevolutionary Russian Tourist,” in *Turizm: The Russian and East*, eds. Gorsuch and Koenker, 17-42.

¹³ Diane Koenker, *Club Red: Vacation Travel and the Soviet Dream* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 111.

¹⁴ See Koenker, *Club Red*; Susan Sessions Rugh, *Are We There Yet: The Golden Age of American Family Vacations* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 4-5.

¹⁵ For an in-depth study on the topic, see Marguerite S. Shaffer, *See America First* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001).

¹⁶ Rugh, *Are We There Yet?*, 2-5.

States. In her monograph, *Identity Tourism, Imaging and Imagining the Nation*, Susan Pitchford has provided a compelling account of how tourism, tourism advertising and imagery, and nationalism intersect in Wales, a phenomenon she dubs “identity tourism.”¹⁷ She argues that the Welsh identity tourist industry in the mid-1990s was actively engaged in defining the meaning of “Welshness” and raising the international image of Welsh culture above the level of English backwater.¹⁸ Fujioka’s Discover Japan employed a similar logic, focusing on a shared pre-industrial history and Japanese cultural distinctiveness to cultivate nostalgic desire in an urban middle-class that supposedly did not know what it meant to be Japanese. Specifically, the campaign emphasized a dichotomy between the traditional and the modern—between the Japanese *furusato* and the Westernized metropolis. Discover Japan, too, was a campaign of “identity tourism” that inspired Japanese cultural nationalism through the rejection of American ideological and material hegemony.

Contextualizing Discover Japan

Following seven years of military occupation by the United States that crippled Japanese industrial and military capabilities, the Truman administration began pursuing a reverse course to integrate Japan into the anti-communist camp. Japan’s adoption of the San Francisco System came with the signing of the 1951 San Francisco treaty that solidified Japan’s alignment with United States Cold War policy. In the domestic sphere, the staunchly conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which would retain power for decades, was established in 1955 through a merger between the Liberal and Democratic parties. In accordance with United States anticommunist containment policies, the so-called “1955 System” of Japanese political and societal reform was characterized by “an internally competitive but nonetheless hegemonic conservative

¹⁷ Susan Pitchford, *Identity Tourism: Imaging and Imagining the Nation* (Bingley, UK: Emerald, 2008), 13. She mentions the weaknesses of conducting a study like this, where it is difficult to gauge the interpretation of advertisements and tourist experiences.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

establishment and a marginalized but sometimes influential liberal and Marxist opposition.”¹⁹ Under United States hegemony and the leadership of the pro-U.S. LDP, the Japanese economy rode the stimulus of post-Korean war industrialization to decades of spectacular development.

The process of improving Japanese cities and industry became highly politicized in the context of Washington’s containment policy. Beginning in the Eisenhower administration, saturation of the Japanese market with American-made goods was not only a business strategy, it was a way for the United States to fight Soviet and Chinese communism without deploying troops. Eisenhower acted upon the premise that wealth and industrial development would be seductive enough to dissuade Japan from engaging in economic or political cooperation with the People’s Republic of China.²⁰ With an imperial house finally humanized, and a nation of TV-watching, Coke-drinking citizens under their umbrella, the United States acting under Eisenhower’s assumption proudly touted Japan as a model for liberal, democratic modernization in East Asia.²¹ However, what Americans saw as the beneficent conversion of a formerly intractable enemy, many Japanese increasingly viewed as overbearing hegemony.

For many liberal intellectuals and Marxist opponents of the LDP, no amount of economic growth could alleviate the harm brought by military occupation, environmental destruction, and involvement in an unwanted war in Vietnam. As Martin Dusenberre has shown, Japan’s growing factories and construction industry contributed to a massive exodus of men from the countryside, who flocked to the cities to find stable, well-paying work.²² This new urban population was mobilized by

¹⁹ John W. Dower, “Peace and Democracy in Two Systems: External Policy and Internal Conflict,” in *Postwar Japan as History*, ed. Andrew Gordon, 4.

²⁰ Sayuri Shimizu, *Creating People of Plenty: The United States and Japan’s Economic Alternatives, 1950-1960* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2001), 77.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 226; Daikichi Irokawa, *The Age of Hirohito: In Search of Modern Japan* (New York: Free Press, 1995).

²² Martin Dusenberre, *Hard Times in the Hometown: A History of Community Survival in Modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2012), 125.

left-leaning unionists into labor protest that became increasingly visible with now-ubiquitous television ownership. These groups waged constant political war against the conservative LDP party, which was wholeheartedly backed as an anti-Communist body by the United States and had dominated Japanese political discourse since its inception.

An important political attack against the U.S and the LDP utilized by the Left was the issue of nuclear weapons. This became a major point of contention for the first time in 1954 when the fishing boat, S.S. Lucky Dragon was struck by fallout from a U.S. thermonuclear test at Bikini Atoll. The incident led to widespread anger directed towards the United States concerning its activities surrounding Japan. At no time, though, was liberal resistance to Japan's place in the U.S.-dominated world order more heated than the anti-Vietnam War riots in 1968 and the 1970s. Since the U.S. military was running operations from airbases on Okinawa, many Japanese felt helpless in their passive implication in war.²³ Although many in the LDP ranks had thrown their lot in with the United States, fissures became visible in the relationship by the late 1960s. American military governance of Okinawa was a poignant reminder of Japanese defeat in 1945, something that many Japanese felt was unnecessary since Japan had already been following the "correct" path for decades. By 1970, seeking a Japanese future separate from the United States was an endeavor that cut across political lines.

Therefore, when the Japan National Railway (JNR) initiated the Discover Japan advertising campaign created by the Dentsū Corporation in 1970, its message struck a very tender chord with many vacation planners. Through a series of television advertisements, posters, souvenir booklets, and memorial stamps, travelers were directed not towards the bustling metropolis of Tokyo, nor abroad, but rather towards the *furusato*. Japanese tourists—primarily young urban women—were encouraged to

²³ For a more in-depth analysis of left-leaning protest against the LDP and pro-American policies, see Thomas R. H. Havens, *Fire across the Sea: The Vietnam War and Japan, 1965-1975* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); and Ellis S. Krauss, *Japanese Radicals Revisited: Student Protest in Postwar Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974).

view idyllic scenery, participate in local rituals, and stay the night in a comfortable *ryokan* Japanese-style hotel. Young salarymen, meanwhile, could shed their suits and reconnect with nature and their parents' way of life.²⁴ The Discover Japan advertisements promised that a trip to a *urusato* could not only provide a fun adventure along Japan's own railroads, it could also allow one to reconnect to his or her roots and experience for the first time the meaning of being Japanese. A deeper analysis of how Discover Japan imagined the *urusato* will provide a better picture of how the campaign defined "Japan" and "Japanese."

Imagining the *Furusato* and the Birth of Discover Japan

With connotations of "mother," "long, long ago," and "authentic," the *urusato* of the mid-twentieth century was first and foremost an object of nostalgic desire for the young middle-class urbanite.²⁵ Truly old *urusato* contained the folk culture, history, and ascetic lifestyle that constituted authentic Japanese tradition. Yet it was the "new," constructed *urusato* that provided "a basis for the codification of popular memory" upon which Discover Japan developed.²⁶ Modernized and commercialized monuments and rituals, and *urusato-zukuri* ("*urusato* construction") related media all "traditionalized the new while simultaneously perpetuating seemingly old traditions."²⁷ Discover Japan participated in the reconstruction of *urusato*, promising that the authentic "Japan" could be discovered in this imagined space.²⁸ Furthermore, through exploration of the authentic *urusato*, tourists could reclaim their Japanese identity.

²⁴ Fujioka Wakao, *Disukabā Japan yonjūnen kinen katarogu* (Tokyo: PHP Kenkyūjo, 2010), 23-28. Discover Japan was an incredibly diverse advertising strategy. It covered not only standard television and print advertisements, but also featured spreads in women's magazines and product placement, specifically targeting young women.

²⁵ Robertson, *Native and Newcomer*, 25-30.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 35.

However, the folk-modern *furusato* created by the 1970s *furusato-zukuri* movement was not just a cultural phenomenon invented by advertisers. As Dusinberre and Roberts have shown, changes to the Japanese countryside came as the result of real political and economic processes originating as reactions to postwar modernization policy.²⁹ In Martin Dusinberre's detailed work on the port town of Kaminoseki in southern Japan, he reveals that the depopulation of rural areas due to urban migration prompted local administrators to take action to revitalize their crippled economies. Other *furusato*, like the remote Tōno and the city of Kodaira in the not-so-remote Tokyo metropolitan prefecture, took a different approach. These places each remade themselves to conform to the ideal *furusato* model for tourist consumption. By memorializing a virtuous history in museums, initiating marketable rituals, and reconstructing themselves using *furusato-zukuri* symbolism, these *furusato* found economic viability in conformity with 1970s conceptions of Japanese traditional culture.

Despite Discover Japan's emergence in 1970, much of the logic underlying the phenomenon had its roots in post-Meiji Restoration modernization. Like the *furusato* boom of the mid-twentieth-century, the Meiji period interest in the *furusato* occurred during a time of similar anxiety surrounding modernization and foreign influence.³⁰ In response, the Meiji state retained domestic stability and legitimized its authority internationally by constructing a relationship between the Japanese periphery and center that emphasized the unique virtues of Japanese culture and ethnicity. The 1970s Discover Japan campaign, however, elevated the cultural and historical status of the periphery. Far from being

²⁸ Benedict R. O'G. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 163-185.

²⁹ Robertson, *Native and Newcomer*, 38-42; Dusinberre, *Hard Times in the Hometown*, 150-167. Roberts emphasizes the degree to which local government remade public festivals to attract tourists, while Dusinberre shows how a town that failed to capitalize on the booming tourism economy turned to public works for economic growth.

³⁰ Dusinberre, *Hard Times in the Hometown*, 137.

secondary to the metropole, the *furusato* was now imbued with purifying and self-realizing powers. Still, what remained constant throughout the history of *furusato* representation was its role in refuting the all-powerful force of Western modernity and strengthening Japanese nationalism.

After the 1868 restoration, the Meiji state committed their modern state-building efforts to centralizing Japan politically and economically around the Tokyo metropole in order to model Western nation-states.³¹ By doing so, they systematically united Japanese society around the nationalist ideal of Japanese ethnic supremacy and cultural superiority. From this point forward “modern” in Japan often shouldered the added meanings of “progressive, Western, scientific, rational, technologically advanced, and so on.”³² In their quest for modernization, the Meiji state constructed rail lines out to the geographic periphery, reformed “backwards” local institutions, and standardized language. This assimilating mission stood in paradoxical juxtaposition with the parallel agenda to reinforce racial colonial order. The geographic periphery of Japan during the Meiji era was seen by many Japanese in social Darwinist terms; it was “perceived as a muted, peaceful land... a wild wonderland, an island resort, a huge natural amusement park.”³³ The natives, as they were called, “should be exposed to Japanese culture so that the weak will die and the strong become civilized.”³⁴ In the Meiji state’s mind, Japan was a place for the modern Japanese, everything else was simply a curiosity or a legacy of Tokugawa backwardness. In this context, pre-World War II Japanese journeys to the countryside often took the form of

³¹ See Kären Wigen, *The Making of a Japanese Periphery, 1750-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

³² Charles Shiro Inouye, “Modern in Meiji Japan and Elsewhere in Time and Place,” in *Rethinking Japanese Modernism*, ed. Roy Starrs (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 62.

³³ Mason, *Dominant Narratives of Colonial Hokkaido*, 22; Gerald A. Figal, *Beachheads: War, Peace, and Tourism in Postwar Okinawa* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 18.

³⁴ Sharon Minichiello, ed., *Japan's Competing Modernities: Issues in Culture and Democracy, 1900-1930* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), 165.

scientific study, the purpose of which was the assimilation of the periphery into the Meiji state.

Meiji Japanese ethnographers flocked from the city to do fieldwork in *furusato*, which represented an early form of tourism that filtered the Japanese reading public's gaze upon the periphery through the lens of state-funded research.³⁵ Through this scientific form of tourism, Japanese modern national identity was reinforced as a contrast to the backwardness of the "ethnic" periphery.³⁶ By the 1930s, many scenic outposts in Japan had been classified as national parks according to the American model. Travel to the colonies of Okinawa and Hokkaido was also commonplace for researchers and the imperial military.³⁷ Before the end of World War II, Japanese nationalism and ethnocentrism often went hand-in-hand, the two concepts verified experimentally by the Meiji state.³⁸ After American occupation, however, *furusato* construction became positively associated with the construction of a democratic society, "cultural improvement," and modernization.³⁹ As Japan's relationship to the United States soured in the late 1960s, *furusato* construction remained, yet took on increasingly nationalist significance. Once peripheral figures suddenly appeared centrally as symbols of Japanese cultural virtue and distinctiveness from the United States.

Discover Japan's media made use of a wide variety of representations of people, landscape, ritual, and architecture to communicate the essence of the *furusato* to its urban audience. Specific

³⁵ Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*, 66-97. There was, of course, mass commercial tourism for pleasure as well, though, unlike Discover Japan, it was promoted directly by the state. See Tsuyoshi Tamura, *Scenery of Japan* (Tokyo: Board of Tourist Industry, Japanese Govt. Railways, 1937).

³⁶ Minichiello, *Japan's Competing Modernities*, 166.

³⁷ Mason, *Dominant Narratives of Colonial Hokkaido*, 57-58; Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*, 67.

³⁸ Minichiello, *Japan's Competing Modernities*, 176.

³⁹ Dusinberre, *Hard Times in the Hometown*, 126-7.

locations depicted in television and print ads included the country road, small town neighborhood, and Shinto shrine.⁴⁰ Large trees, open plains, or hazy mountains in the background emphasized the remoteness of the place. The *furusato* was far away and separate from the sprawl of Tokyo and its petty materialism. In television commercials and wall posters, tourists were often by themselves or in pairs, displaced city folk in the countryside. Surely, the tourist with her fur coat and designer handbag looked ridiculously out of place among the hay bales and wooden architecture. The few other humans that figured into Discover Japan imagery were fixtures of the “authentic” *furusato* environment. They included village elders, small children, monks—all dressed in traditional garb. These individuals, because of their occupation and location were peripheral to Japanese industrialization, Westernization, and modernity, yet they were central to Discover Japan’s message.

Discover Japan media’s imagery indicates that the focal point of Japanese culture was not any of its modern creations, nor the sites associated with past war, but rather with places linked to traditional culture and pre-industrial history. A series of campaign posters juxtaposed the young urban traveler with the rural figure engaged in traditional folk activities.⁴¹ In one, a young woman in fashionable clothing stands behind an oarsman driving a wooden dinghy. Another depicted a well-dressed woman walking past a man in monk’s robes on a forest road, and a third showed a young woman in bright clothing playing guitar on the back of a farmer’s cart. The most powerful theme connecting these and other images is the moment of encounter between tourist and destination, urbanite and Japanese heritage. In Discover Japan advertising, this moment of encounter and self-discovery was played out over and over with different protagonists, but in essentially the same setting. While the ideal tourist was constantly changing in the ever-uncertain modern world, the *furusato* was eternal. With barely a paved road or power line in sight, the *furusato*, and therefore the “Japan,” in Discover Japan advertisements had almost

⁴⁰ Fujioka Wakao, *Disukabā Japan*, 9.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 15.

managed to avoid the past century of modernization, and thus the flow of history itself.

The Japanese authentic was set in stark contrast to the inauthenticity of consumerism, modernization, and Westernization. According to Fujioka, the essence of the campaign lay in this sublime moment of discovery and self-discovery: “Discovery is really one’s own self. ‘Discover myself,’ I said to myself. The self of travel, the discovery of myself, traveling through myself... “Discover myself” had become our campaign concept.”⁴² The message, according to Fujioka, that Discover Japan was attempting to communicate was that taking a tour of the *furusato* was a means to realizing an identity that had been hidden beneath Western materialism and city life. Fujioka’s direction is clearly seen in the short text captions that accompany both print and television advertising. One poster of a man gazing into the sea reads, “Let’s see ourselves in the ocean.”⁴³ Meanwhile, a series of television advertisements concludes with the caption, “If you come, what will you discover?”⁴⁴ In these advertisements, the tourists discover the oceans, forests, and folk of Japanese *furusato*, and in the process discover themselves. Self-discovery was not just a side effect of “discovering Japan” through leisure, it was the primary purpose.

Discover Japan and Japanese Modernity

Despite Discover Japan’s reliance on nostalgia for the *furusato*, the Japan of 1970 proudly occupied a spot at the forefront of twentieth-century technology and media development. A photo book published in 1970 commemorating Expo ’70 in Osaka opens with an introductory proclamation, “Osaka 70! A world within a world and for a hundred and eighty three days the focus of an entire universe...If Modernity is the keyword, then, Communication is the means, with all its implications and

⁴² Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*, 40.

⁴³ Fujioka, *Disukabā Japan*, 10.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 28.

connotations.”⁴⁵ The Japanese exhibits included both sixteenth-century Azuchi period dance masks and ten-by-twelve television screen collages.⁴⁶ Not since the height of empire in the 1930s had Japan been anything but a minor figure on the world stage. Now, the very nation that had suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the United States and its allies was sparing no expense to provide American and Western European visitors with a display of Japanese tradition and rapid modernization. In this space that would host over sixty million visitors, not only was Japan playing the generous host, it was also the guest of honor. For the first time, Japan had an opportunity to “reveal itself” in a grand coming-out party to showcase thirty years of economic and technological progress.

Discover Japan, like the transnational, transcultural mass media gala that was Expo '70, symbolized Japan's complicated position in the modern world. Every one of the seventy-six nations represented at the expo were given exhibition space for artwork installations that featured “the most traditional of its lore and the most ultra-modern of its achievements.”⁴⁷ In reality, this paradoxical convergence of Japanese tradition and modernity in the display halls can be seen as a microcosm of the transformative forces at work in Japan as a whole. The Japanese people and state negotiated between Japan and the West every day, struggling to reconcile Japanese heritage with the United States-led modernity. Although Discover Japan found success in part because of popular ambivalence towards modernization and Japan's complicity in United States' foreign affairs, the modern transportation and communications aspects of Discover Japan were points of pride. Reminiscent of Meiji Japan's emergence as a world power with the modernization of its military and railroad, Japanese technology astonished and pleased foreign observers in the West.

⁴⁵ Bruno Suter and Peter Knapp, *Osaka: 500 Pictures of the Osaka Expo 70* (Paris, France: Hermann éditeurs des sciences et des arts, 1970), 2-3.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 233-247.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

The products of Japanese modernization legitimized Japan's postwar democratic reform, yet also complicated the relationship between city and countryside, leading many progressive Japanese to vilify modernization itself. By all accounts, the Japanese technological innovation that most impressed European and American observers was the standard gauge *shinkansen*, commonly known in America as the bullet train.⁴⁸ Expensive, sleek, and fast, the new passenger trains symbolized both Japanese ingenuity and the success of cooperation with the United States, since much of the train's technology was developed upon American imports.⁴⁹ However, it was the *shinkansen's* high service cost that drove the JNR into the debt, which necessitated Discover Japan as a revenue-generating advertising campaign. While the train facilitated tourists' escape from metropolitan areas, rapid railway expansion and speed increases from 1964-1975 represented for some the very destruction of Japan itself. Both rural residents and ecologists alike protested the deafening rumble of the vehicle's passing and the mini-sonic boom made when the *shinkansen* exited a tunnel.⁵⁰ The *shinkansen* entered the daily lives of Japanese commuters and tourists in a paradoxical manner, both empowering urbanites to return to 'the simple life' by the carload and inflicting the growing pains of modernization back upon that very countryside. A similar ambivalence towards technological modernization is visible within Discover Japan media that developed parallel to *shinkansen* line expansion.

The phenomenal success of Discover Japan and its appeal to nostalgia represented much of Japanese society's disillusionment with the

⁴⁸ Mitchell P. Strohl, *Europe's High Speed Trains: A Study in Geo-economics* (Westport: Praeger, 1993), 66.

⁴⁹ Roderick A. Smith, "The Japanese *Shinkansen*: Catalyst for the renaissance of rail," *The Journal of Transport History* 24, no. 2 (September 2003): 222-5; Dennis B. Smith, *Japan since 1945: The Rise of an Economic Superpower* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 110-111.

⁵⁰ Strohl, *Europe's High-Speed Trains*, 62.

high-speed growth of the 1960s.⁵¹ However, the campaign also suggests that a return to tradition was most appealing to Japanese urbanites at an emotional or intellectual level. In one television advertisement, two young well-dressed women begin their trip⁵² to the *machi* by boarding a train.⁵³ On the train, they take pictures with a Japanese-made digital camera, play cards, and eat lunch. Interspersed are shots of the women eating apples in an orchard, running through a field, and relaxing at a hot spring resort. The advertisement is edited in such a way that it seems as if the women are making several stops on a long journey, which emphasizes the convenience and comfort of JNR trains. The tourists depicted took no luggage but their purses to enjoy the scenic countryside in their everyday urban attire. Regardless of how effective tourism through *furusato* was at educating tourists about Japanese identity, this generation of young urban tourists expected creature comforts. Therefore, Discover Japan was not a campaign to truly make urbanites reconnect to their rural roots and reject consumerism altogether. Instead, Discover Japan reflects a broader intellectual and cultural rejection of Americanization and modernity, represented by city life.

In 1970, a wide range of politicians—and now the public—sought to reclaim the Japanese nation from following the path that American modernity was traveling. The Discover Japan campaign rode comfortably on this wave of nationalist sentiment to success. Regardless of LDP affiliation, opponents of both communism and American hegemony articulated the need to define Japanese democracy on its own national

⁵¹ Pitchford, *Identity Tourism*, 13. Pitchford emphasizes the difficulty of making claims about how tourists actually interpreted their journeys without access to more first-person accounts. While Pitchford was able to generalize a solution to this problem through extensive interviews, I was not able to do this.

⁵² Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*, 40. Ivy notes that “trip” in this case corresponds to the Japanese term Fujioka himself used, *tabi*, which is a romantic, free, and natural form of travel as opposed to *ryokō*, which has the connotation of commercial tourism.

⁵³ “1970 Railways DISCOVER JAPAN,” MP4 video, 01:29, YouTube, posted by Gazoboxoldcm, October 27, 2007, accessed May 17, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LmVVocTbe_0.

terms.⁵⁴ Whatever the proper path for Japan's future was, it was obvious by this point that nationalism was the ideology that bridged almost all forms of Japanese political thought.⁵⁵ In a 1968 centennial celebration of the Meiji Restoration, the LDP lamented, "We have forfeited the inherent form of the Japanese people."⁵⁶ New calls came from liberal intellectuals to once again 'overcome modernity' by rescuing Japan from American hegemony. Fujioka's Discover Japan campaign, though unlikely intended to be explicitly political, managed to recover Japanese identity from modernity and place it firmly in the unchanging and pure *furusato*. Within all of Discover Japan's media, the *furusato* was represented as a set of iconographic images of an essentialized "Japan." Mountains, forests, rivers—all symbols associated with Shinto—set the background for nearly every advertisement. As the bastion of Japanese traditional culture, the *furusato* was represented in Discover Japan media as an idealized cultural space, untouchable by American influence.

In the words of Fujioka, each of the television advertisements broadcast told a story of self-discovery in which the modern Japanese consumer was allowed to discover himself through the experience of identity tourism.⁵⁷ Traveling alone or in a small group, the urban tourist was able to realize the Japanese modern identity on his own terms and understand that the past was timeless. Not only was each story a tale of sublime contact with the *furusato*, it was a tale of transformation and

⁵⁴ Yumiko Iida, *Rethinking Identity in Modern Japan: Nationalism as Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2002), 100-102.

⁵⁵ Dower, "Peace and Democracy in Two Systems," 25.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁵⁷ Fujioka, *Disukabā Japan*, 28-29. Videos can be found: "JNR Discover Japan: Hokkaido Notsuke Peninsula-hen, 1971," MP4 video, 00:31, YouTube, posted by Glory Showa CM channel, January 28, 2014, accessed May 17, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Tl_0YeD1-I&list=PLNFMW4Dn_seo10syPTiUR4o3e2hZTOw0A&index=3; "JNR Discover Japan: Kisoji-hen, 1971," MP4 video, 00:32, YouTube, posted by Glory Showa CM channel, January 28, 2014, accessed May 17, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5wLmnhtn7Es&list=PLNFMW4Dn_seo10syPTiUR4o3e2hZTOw0A&index=1.

purification. The salaryman visiting the Shinto temple experienced a reconnection to his spirituality. Meanwhile, a handsomely dressed young man wandering aimlessly through remote seaside fields on the Notsuke Island Peninsula encountered a horse and two sea lions and realized that there is more to life than expensive clothes.⁵⁸ According to Discover Japan, the moment when the modern tourist encounters that which is purely Japanese is of deeply educational significance for the tourist. However, Discover Japan did not see its didactic value as present simply in the moment of experience. Planning the trip, the process of travel, and remembering the journey were all elements of tourism given special attention by Discover Japan.

Mapping a Route and Defining Japanese Identity

From its conception, Discover Japan operated on the foundation that it was selling an idea—a common desire for a simpler past held by all urban Japanese. By selling this desire, Discover Japan also contributed to Japanese national identity discourse. According to Fujioka, “advertisements must be conceived of not from the perspective of business or commodities, but rather by asking what society or the masses are searching for—by asking what will appeal to society or the masses.”⁵⁹ In this quote, Fujioka imagines an advertising campaign like Discover Japan not as a product of a capitalist economy that may not serve Japanese interests, but rather as a tool for the traveler searching for their identity as a Japanese citizen. Whether the Japanese masses were searching simply for relaxation and entertainment or something more fundamental within their country and within themselves, Discover Japan was able to provide a path to follow.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 29.

⁵⁹ Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*, 45. According to Ivy, Fujioka terms this advertising strategy “deadvertising” –advertising through the lack of obvious advertising message. As Fujioka explains, the consumer would place themselves into the advertisement, using the negative space left by the advertisement to realize their own desires.

With branded guidebooks, maps, and station stamps, Discover Japan was able to guide travel and represent Japan throughout a tourist's entire journey. The concluding frame of many Discover Japan television advertisements displays the boxed text-and-arrow logo above a caption that reads, "Stamp your memories of Discover Japan!"⁶⁰ Through this statement, the television advertising campaign reminded viewers of unique station stamps that they could receive by traveling on a JNR train line. Tourists were encouraged to bring a commemorative stamp book with them to collect stamps of each destination they visited. Every station's stamp depicts an assortment of images associated with its municipal or prefectural location—notable architecture, natural scenery, hot springs, people in traditional folk attire, etc. In addition, each stamp contains the signature Discover Japan text-and-arrow as well as text indicating the name of the stamp and other notable travel destinations. By either design or perhaps necessity given limited space for detail, the stamps illustrated only the bare essentials in the way of sightseeing and entertainment that each location had to offer tourists. The way in which the stamps presented each destination in the Discover Japan network of routes helped tourists organize both their future travels and their memories of those travels.

Each stamp individually functioned as an itinerary for that specific location, distilling it into key points and itemizing it for the tourist consumer.⁶¹ They emphasized entertainment and creature comforts on the one hand, and cultural attractions on the other. A stamp from Oiwake station in Nagano prefecture, for instance, shows an ice skater and a skier in action positions above a train. Fukuchiyama station in Kyoto prefecture has a stamp that depicts two people wearing *kassa* hats and *yukata* in the foreground and an Edo period castle and the Oeyama ski resort mountain

⁶⁰ "1970 Railways DISCOVER JAPAN," MP4 video.

⁶¹ Fujioka, *Disukabā Japan*, 32-39. Photos of station stamps are often preserved on blogs kept by former tourists. Neko tetsu sōsai, "Disukabā Japan no koro 108," *Neko tetsu shashin-kan*(blog), entry posted July 18, 2009, accessed May 17, 2015, <http://blogs.yahoo.co.jp/nekonyoubo/folder/1171686.html?p=5>; Neko tetsu sōsai, "Disukabā Japan no koro 108," *Neko tetsu shashin-kan*(blog), entry posted July 18, 2009, accessed May 17, 2015, <http://blogs.yahoo.co.jp/nekonyoubo/folder/1171686.html?p=5>.

in the background. The Hamada station, located by the ocean, is in the shape of a fish and contains the image of a fishing boat and a shrine to the heroine Ohatsu, built in Osaka in 1972.⁶² According to Fujioka, over 1400 train stations offered stamps for travelers to add to their collections. A special poster was even produced, depicting a large hand pressing a stamp down upon an array of photographs of images of scenic Japan.⁶³ Combining real-life photography with the signature stamp transformed the entire country into a series of boxes to be checked off a list by the ambitious traveler. Furthermore, compiling destinations into a grid of dissociated images further removes the already idealized *furusato* further from spatial reality, making all of Japan visible and accessible. Each of these locations compiled into one composite image combine the uniquely local *furusato* into the uniformly Japanese.

With a limited color palate and size of just a few square inches, the Discover Japan station stamps conveyed the essential character of their locality. Instead of providing the broad overview of a tourist destination of a guidebook, the stamp distilled the essence of a place in a few select images. One glance at a station stamp communicates to the traveler which locations best captured the spirit of the place and what activities were worth pursuing there. This guiding strategy is reminiscent of the guidebooks and travel maps distributed by tourism departments in twentieth-century Latvia and Wales.⁶⁴ In both cases, tourism advertisers engaged the challenge of attracting tourists by highlighting signature sights representative of and unique to the locale. Repeated again and again in Discover Japan media was the idea that in each unique *furusato* existed the basis of Japanese identity. Stamps, guidebooks, and planning maps,

⁶² "What is Ohatsutenjin-dori Shoutengai?," *Sonezaki Ohatsutenjin-dori Shoutengai*, accessed June 6, 2015, <http://www.ohatendori.com/global/english/>.

⁶³ Fujioka, *Disukabā Japan*, 22.

⁶⁴ Aldis Purs, "'One Breath for Every Two Strides': The State's Attempt to Construct Tourism and Identity in Interwar Latvia," in *Turizm*, 113; Pitchford, *Identity Tourism*, 116-154.

therefore, all employed iconographic imagery in order to enshrine history and culture within a space.

Every attraction recommended by Discover Japan stamps and guidebooks directed urban tourists towards the *furusato* and towards iconic scenic and cultural landmarks, leading them on a journey of discovery of their nation and themselves. In the ideal situation, at each travel destination, the Japanese tourist would come face-to-face with the ‘true Japan’, consciously or unconsciously comparing it with their home city and assessing authenticity. This equated to realizing a fundamental divide between the “national self” and the “rationalized American other” emphasized by Japanese Romantic intellectuals.⁶⁵ The modern Japanese urbanite who every day chose between having a Japanese or an American breakfast in the morning, decided between using a Japanese or a Western toilet at work, and picked between reserving a Japanese or a Western hotel on vacation would now have experienced a purely Japanese lifestyle for the first time. Through Discover Japan’s process of guided tourism, the tourist would not only experience Japanese distinctiveness, they would also realize Japanese identity within themselves. Although Japan was still urbanizing and modernizing throughout the 1970s, *furusato* remained as vessels containing collective identity and shared Japanese history to be discovered one by one. By “discovering Japan” on JNR’s trains, Japanese tourists experienced a trip through Japanese popular memory that assured their inherent cultural virtue, and informally initiated them as members of the Japanese nation.

Towards a New Nationalism

Discover Japan reflected the political realities in Japan during the 1970s. The sustained success of the advertising campaign’s promotion of rediscovery of the nation and a return to simpler times indicates that Discover Japan certainly represented a firm and compelling stand against the consequences of American-led development. As Pitchford eloquently argues, all travel is political and a country’s image “influences a country’s

⁶⁵ Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*, 42.

political alliances.”⁶⁶ Discover Japan’s image was an unabashedly nativist representation of the authentic Japan. The rejection of modernity and Westernization reflected in Discover Japan media constituted a rejection of the United States political umbrella. By presenting to the tourist a Japan that was culturally unique and stubbornly free of American influence, Discover Japan, intentionally or not, demonstrated to tourists that their ideal country should also be free of foreign cultural influences. Those who bought into Japanese cultural nationalism and viewed Japan as occupying a unique place in the Cold War framework—not American, yet not communist either—recognized limits to the universality of American liberalism.

The nationalist discourse that Discover Japan contributed to reached a totally new height by the time the original campaign ended in 1978. Discover Japan crystallized many threads of Japanese postwar history into an iconic set of images, sounds, and experiences that sought to define Japanese identity. No matter how far away one went, one could never escape the thunderous sound of a passing bullet train, or the sight of Levi-wearing young people clicking Sony cameras. In the face of rapid change, Discover Japan offered reassurance during a crisis of modernity. It sold the hope that if one traveled far away from her apartment in the city, far away from the foreign, the industrial, and the materialistic, then she would truly return home. The *furusato* in Discover Japan promised an unchanging and untainted bastion of Japanese heritage and history and the ideal Discover Japan tourist recognized what it meant to be truly Japanese. Throughout the uncertainty of the Cold War’s thaw in the 1970s, Discover Japan offered the comforting belief that what was uniquely Japanese was also eternal.

⁶⁶ Pitchford, *Identity Tourism*, 5.

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