



Keynote 3

## The "Golden Age" of Contents Tourism: Already Over or Still to Come?

(コンテンツツーリズムの黄金期—もう終わったのか、まだこれからなのか)

Contents tourism is travel behaviour induced by works of popular culture such as manga, anime, dramas, films, and computer games. It has gained considerable attention (along with its siblings film-induced tourism, media tourism etc.) both at the levels of scholarly research and tourism policy particularly since around 2005. However, the increasing awareness among policymakers and contents producers regarding the potential of entertainment works to induce tourism causes a conundrum. Is it possible to generate genuine fandoms around works of popular culture if they smell of tourism PR, and do fans enjoy visiting sites that smell of contents tourism commercialism? In this sense, the explosion in contents tourism promotion and research might have precipitated the demise of the very phenomenon it promotes/researches. In other words, the golden age of contents tourism - in a purist sense as travel by fans wanting to connect more with the works they love - could be over as contents tourism gets increasingly planned and commercialized from the contents production stage. But, in the past two years the Covid-19 pandemic and deepening climate crisis have reset our thinking on travel. With people likely to be more restricted in their geographical mobility from now on, does contents tourism have a bright new future as a means of us enjoying more our immediate localities by connecting with local stories and local places? In this sense, is contents tourism on the cusp of a new golden age as a way of enhancing our enjoyment of socially-distanced and carbon-light travel to nearby destinations in the coming years?



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Philip Seaton is a professor in the Institute of Japan Studies, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. He researches war memories in Japan and contents tourism with a particular focus on historical dramas and film. His books on the topic of tourism include *Contents Tourism in Japan* (Cambria Press, 2017, co-authored with Takayoshi Yamamura, Akiko Sugawa-Shimada and Kyungjae Jang), *Contents Tourism and Pop Culture Fandom* (Channel View Publications, co-edited with Takayoshi Yamamura), and *War as Entertainment and Contents Tourism in Japan* (forthcoming, co-edited with Takayoshi Yamamura). He has also guest edited special editions of *Japan Forum* (2015, 27.1) and *Journal of War & Culture Studies* (2019, 12.1). His website is [www.philipseaton.net](http://www.philipseaton.net)