

The Complexity of Dark Tourism: Packaging 'Edutainment' of War Tourism in Japan

Abstract:

Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and Park and the Nagasaki Peace Park are internationally recognized war-related tourist destinations. While these 'A-bomb' sites have been often criticized for relying on "victim consciousness", the discussion of interpretation and presentation of these sites has become extremely complex.

Comparing two war-related destinations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, this talk discusses contrasting relationships of memorial and touristic sites presented at the destinations. It explores how the memory of A-bomb tragedy has been constructed, interpreted, publicized, and embedded in war tourism, by examining various tourist materials including brochures and school trip promotional materials.

Certainly both cities remain focal destination for historical education for the young generations of contemporary Japan. Yet, while Hiroshima seems to take an approach to highlight the destination as the symbol of national of tragedy, Nagasaki well blends educational component of war memorials in an aesthetic cultural landscape of a historic city. The findings from the study further our understanding the complexity of war and tourism at the two destinations.

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Her publications include: "(In)visible Women: Gendering of Popular War Memories through the Narrative of the Battleship Yamato for Six Decades in Postwar Japan" (M. Kim ed., Routledge Handbook of Memory and Reconciliation in East Asia, Chapter 7, NY: Routledge, 2016); "The 'Edutainment' of War Tourism in Hiroshima and Nagasaki" (Working-paper in Heritage Tourism & Hospitality, 2015, co-authored with H. Bui); "Acquisition of Cultural Competence through Visual Media: Perceptions of Masculinities in Japanese Society" (Journal of Canadian Association for Japanese Language Education, Vol. 13 (Summer): 135-152, 2012).

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