

The Naruto Whirlpools As Seen Through the Eyes of Westerners

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Introduction

Numerous renowned historical and cultural sites along the “golden route”¹ of Japan have attracted and been described by foreign visitors in published materials for hundreds of years. Such attractions include the Nikko Toshogu Shrine in Nikko, the Asakusa Kannon Temple in Tokyo, the large Buddhist statue in Kamakura, Mt. Fuji, temples in Kyoto and Nara, castles in Osaka and Himeji, the Atomic bomb dome in Hiroshima, and possibly even Dejima Island or other places in Nagasaki. These places have been and continue to remain on the “must-see” list of foreign visitors to Japan. However, what is less frequently cited and often overlooked is the island of Shikoku and its significant places of interest.

Shikoku has repeatedly been considered to be far off the beaten track and not worth visiting. Nevertheless, an article about tourism in Japan dating from 1969 offers a sharply different opinion. “A striking example of neglected tourist opportunities is the island of Shikoku, the ‘least developed of the islands’” and “in traveling about Shikoku one is traveling through areas where the ancients passed to reach that Kyoto and Nara ‘cradle of civilization.’”² A few years later, in 1971, American born prolific writer and scholar on Japan, Donald Richie (1924-2013) found deep satisfaction to see that Shikoku had not been overrun by modernity. He voiced concerns about the possible construction of bridges that would someday connect the main island and Shikoku and thus “surrender [Shikoku] at last to the touring hordes with their buses, loud-speakers, children, and car-sick old ladies. Shikoku is still somewhat protected from the Japanese tourist because it is such trouble to get there.”³ However, with the completion of the ONaruto Bridge in 1985, the Seto Ohashi Bridge in 1988, the Akashi Kaikyo Bridge in 1998, and the Shimanami Kaido in 1999, Shikoku could now be easily accessed by motorbike, car, bus, or train from the main island of Honshu.

In the days before bridges and highways, and despite the difficulty to get to the island, efforts were made to promote tourism in Shikoku and various sites

on the island during the early 20th century. In the mid-1930s and 1940s, the Japan Travel Bureau produced a small travel booklet series entitled, “How to See ...” that described different tourist locations around Japan. The series contained booklets on more popular and accessible places like Tokyo, Kyoto, and Osaka, but there were also less known locations like “How to See Takamatsu” , which describes sites around Takamatsu city in Kagawa prefecture. In 1936 and 1947, editions of “How to See Shikoku” were published and as a result, people from around the world could learn in detail about famous sites in the four prefectures of Shikoku. For example, Yashimaji Temple and Ritsurin Park in Kagawa prefecture, Dogo Hot Spring in Ehime prefecture, Cape Muroto in Kochi prefecture, as well as the huge kite flying events and the remarkable whirlpools in Naruto city in Tokushima prefecture.

Popularity of the Naruto Whirlpools and the World Heritage Site Movement

Until 2000, foreign visitors could only view the Naruto Strait and its whirlpools from land on either the Tokushima or Awaji island sides, or by chartered boat. In April of that same year, the “Uzu no Michi” - an enclosed pathway under the Naruto bridge - was completed allowing people to walk 500 meters out into the strait and observe the whirlpools from a height of forty-five meters. In fact, parts of the floor are glass so visitors can look straight down on to this amazing site. During the first year of operation approximately 900,000 people visited, however the numbers have dropped annually since then to about 500,000 in 2014.⁴ Even with this decrease, a recent search on the Internet of “Naruto Whirlpools” produces up 372,000 results with over 11,200 videos, demonstrating the ongoing popularity of this natural phenomenon. One website states,

The currents of the Naruto Strait are amongst the world's three greatest currents, standing alongside the Straits of Messina between Sicily and the Italian Peninsula, and the Seymour Narrows between the west coast of North America and east coast of Vancouver Island. They are in the midst of working towards having the Naruto Whirlpools registered as a World Heritage Site and the movement is currently gaining momentum.⁵

This movement to obtain a World Heritage Site designation began in December 2014 with the creation of a “Promotion Council” supported by the Tokushima and Hyogo prefectural government.⁶ Since then a few cities as well as many business and groups on both sides of the Naruto Strait have been conducting activities to investigate and promote these whirlpools in Japan and around the world.

There are presently sixteen cultural and four natural World Heritage sites in Japan, but there is not one on the island of Shikoku. It is the plan to have the Naruto whirlpools placed into the “natural” category, however one important criteria that must be fulfilled to obtain such a designation is to prove that the property has “Universal Outstanding Value.” UNESCO defines this as being “a concept that shall embrace all cultures, regions and peoples, and does not ignore differing cultural interpretations of outstanding universal value because they originate from minorities, indigenous groups and/or local peoples.”⁷ By examining the Nomination Files submitted to UNESCO for other sites in Japan that have successfully become World Heritage sites, we can delineate how this was done. For example, in the section entitled “Public awareness” for “Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara” it states, “There are descriptions of Nara in the encyclopedias listed below, and information is also available in tourist guides published in many countries.” Twenty-one books are listed, but no quotations are included.⁸ In the Nomination File for the “Tomioka Silk Mill and Related Sites” designated in 2014, there is a “Draft Statement of Outstanding Universal Value” on page six which states,

Tomioka Silk Mill and Related Sites comprise a technological ensemble depicting the significant technological interchange and development that enabled realization of the mass production of high-quality raw silk from the latter half of 19th century into the 20th century, during the period when the world market was unified through international trade. This ensemble brought about developments in global silk industry as well as popularization of silk consumption and contributed greatly to modernization of the

Japanese economy.⁹

Unfortunately, there are no specific references in these examples to the plethora of comments made by foreigners nor how these properties were deemed to have “outstanding universal value.” In contrast, to support that Mt. Fuji has “embraced all cultures” and has been universally valued throughout history, there are eight pages (Table 2-4) entitled “Fujisan Seen by Foreign People.” Specifically, there are twenty-five descriptions of Mt. Fuji by foreigners between 1690 by Engelbert Kaempfer (1651-1716) and 1933 by Bruno Taut (1880-1938). Most of these descriptions are in English, but some are also in French, German, Italian, Swedish, and Korean languages.¹⁰

The objective of this paper is to demonstrate the “outstanding universal value” of the Naruto whirlpools and to examine how Westerners have described the Naruto Strait and its whirlpools over the past three hundred years. The paper consists of two sections: Observations from the Land, and Observations from the Sea. In the first part, I highlight references made in tourist guidebooks and military newspapers, explain the “strategic zone” in the area during the 1930s, and provide various maps of the area. In the second part, I describe the navigation history of the straits, references made to the whirlpools in navigational books, and illustrate how people felt about the “terror under the sea.” Finally, I describe people's experiences in boats – either chartered or sightseeing tour boats. In doing so, it will become apparent that while people have feared the strait of Naruto and thought that it was difficult to navigate, repetitively they have described the whirlpools as a wondrous site – a place that should not be missed when visiting Japan.

Part 1 – Observations from the land

Guidebooks

In this section, I examine how the Naruto Strait and whirlpools have been described in guidebooks, tourist literature, and other publications including military newspapers written in English and other foreign languages. Engelbert Kaempfer (1651-1716), a German naturalist, physician, and explorer, likely made

the earliest published references to the Naruto whirlpools. During his two-year stay in Japan between 1690 and 1692, he wrote extensively about Japan and although it is unclear whether he actually visited the Naruto area during his travels, he wrote the following in a section entitled, “The Japanese Sea and Its Two Whirlpools” :

There are two dangerous, strange whirlpools, one of which is called Hayasaki near Shimabara [Nagasaki prefecture] ... the other whirlpool, called Naruto, is not far Kii no Kuni [Wakayama prefecture], near the province of Awa [Tokushima]. Therefore it is called Awa no Naruto, meaning ‘the noise of Awa’ ... The whirlpool looks frightening but it is not considered dangerous because with its terrifying sound audible from afar it is easy to avoid.¹¹

While there are references to the whirlpools found in the 1870s and 1880s in navigational books and diaries, the next reference by a Westerner in a guidebook about Japan does not appear until 1887. Yoshitaro Takenobu (1863?-1930) writes in “The Japan Year Book” that, “At Naruto, one of the narrow straits by which the Inland Sea communicates with the Pacific, the tidal streams from eddies and whirlpools present a unique sight.”¹² Later, Basil Hall Chamberlain (1850-1935), a Japanologist from England and author on many books on Japan, wrote about the whirlpools in a work entitled, “A Handbook for Travellers in Japan” in 1901. He states,

The wonder of the place is the violent rush of water through the Naruto Channel, which separates the islands of Awaji and Shikoku, and connects the Inland Sea with the Pacific Ocean. It is a truly grand sight, and one which should certainly not be missed....¹³

In the early 1900s, the first tourist organization for foreigners called “Kihinkai” (Welcome Society) was created in Japan and the staff produced various publications in Japan. In “A Guidebook for Tourists in Japan,” published in

1906, the society describes the Naruto whirlpools noting, “The wondrous sight may be viewed at the beginning of every month....” Tokushima is about ten m[iles] from the celebrated whirlpool of Naruto.”¹⁴ Later in 1912, this tourist organization evolved into the Japan Tourist Bureau, the predecessor of today's Japan Travel Bureau, and expansive work was carried out to encourage foreign visitors to visit Japan, as well as to ensure that they had an enjoyable stay while in Japan. Materials produced by this organization will be examined later.

The whirlpools were not only described in guidebooks and other tourist materials written by foreign authors or by domestic tourist associations, but they were also included in literature produced for and distributed at overseas tourism fairs. For example, Hakurankwai Kyokwai the organizing group for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE), a world's fair held in San Francisco between February 20 and December 4 of 1915, describe the whirlpools in their publication, “Japan and her exhibits at the Panama-Pacific International Exhibition.”

Whirlpool of Naruto - A narrow channel between the island of Awaji and the province of Awa in Shikoku is a meeting place of two tidal currents ... This channel is called Naruto. It is, as it were, a fighting ground of the sea-dragon of the Genkai Sea and that of the Pacific... To view this grand sight excursion ships are provided at Kobe.¹⁵

Later, in a magazine called “Tourist”, published in 1922 in English and Japanese, there is the following description. “A trip to the island at any season of the year is to be recommended, but early spring may be considered the best if one wishes to view the grand sight of the Naruto whirlpool.”¹⁶ Finally, in 1930, the government became involved with foreign tourism by formally creating the “Board of Tourist Industry” and in 1933 published “The Official Guide to Japan”, which states,

Awa no Naruto (“Roaring Gateway of Awa”) is the name given to the narrow channel which separates the island of Awaji from Shikoku and

thus connects the Inland Sea with the Pacific Ocean ... The best place from which to witness the whirlpools are formed in the channel is from the island of Oke-jima, off the town of Muya.¹⁷

In the earlier mentioned “How to See Shikoku” tourist booklets, produced by the Japan Tourist Bureau (JTB) in 1936 and 1947, there are specific references to the Naruto whirlpools. The 1947 edition has a pilgrim sitting beside the whirlpools on the cover (Figure 1) and there are forty-one lines that describe the city of Naruto and its sites, but only seventeen lines that describe the larger city of Tokushima and its attractions. As well, there are published two black and white photographs of the whirlpools with the following description:

Between Shikoku Island and Awaji Island lies a narrow channel, about a mile wide, through which the current rushes with a terrific force, especially at the time of the spring tides, forming angry, white-gleaming whirlpools. Thus this channel is fittingly called Awa-no-Naruto, the Roaring Gateway of Awa. It is a sight of sights to see, the like of which is nowhere to be found in Japan.¹⁸



Figure 1. “How to See Shikoku” (1947)

Another booklet published by the JTB entitled, “How to See Osaka, Kobe and Awaji Island” , also from 1947, states that in order to see the famous whirlpool at Naruto one needs to travel about an hour from Sumoto town to Fukura town on Awaji Island. From the Naruto Recreation ground they state, “the tide sweeps in and out every six hours, when the visitor can see a number of gigantic whirlpools in boisterous motion.” ¹⁹ Eight years later, in 1955, a guidebook called “New Japan” contains a couple of significant photographs of the whirlpools under the title of “Naruto City” and “Naruto National Park.” (Figure 2). The captions states, “Naruto city is proud of the so-called ‘Naruto Whirlpool’ forming a dynamic park rarely found in the world … The whirlpools appear here and there and the ever-changing spectacle draws over 500,000 people a year from all over the nation.” It further notes, “Naruto National Park - The whirling current of Naruto Strait is a phenomenon practically unheard of in other parts of the world.

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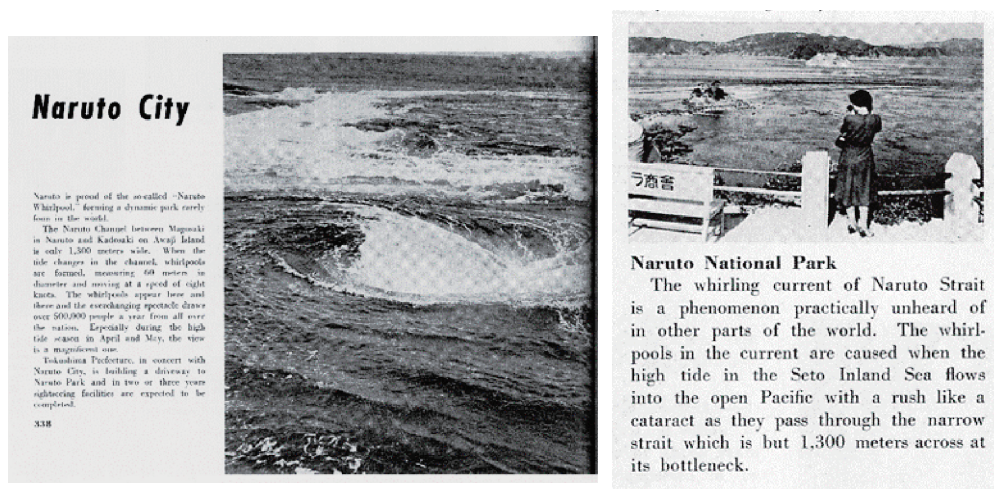


Figure 2. “New Japan” – Naruto City and Naruto National Park (1955)

Military newspapers

Newspapers and other published literature that catered to the Occupation Forces after World War II also contain various references to the Naruto Strait and its whirlpools. For example, the October 31, 1948 edition of the “Pacific Stars and Stripes” newspaper has an article with the title, “Shikoku – remote and unspoiled – island of legend and beauty.” The journalist claims that:

There are a number of scenic attractions in Tokushima prefecture, but perhaps the leading one is Naruto Channel or Roaring Gates, which are accessible from Tokushima city by train and bus or car. The Roaring Gates are a narrow strait between the northeastern tip of Tokushima Prefecture and Awaji Island.²¹

A few articles about Shikoku appear in the same newspaper in 1956 and 1957. The first one from March 6, entitled “Getting Away From It All” states, “Fukura is just across the famed Naruto Strait which separates Awaji from Shikoku, the smallest of Japan’s four major islands. The narrow Naruto Strait is noted for its violent whirlpools which be viewed either from boats or a platform on the shore.”²² Then, on April 14, a photograph of the strait was published with the following title and caption. “Ancient Mysteries of Perilous Japanese Strait to Be Studied - The furious torrents and whirlpools making things rough for the skipper of the ship above in Japan’s Naruto Strait are about to be studied in a daring expedition by 200 Japanese experts … The Naruto Strait in recent years has become a ‘must’ for tourists both from Japan and abroad.”²³ One year later, on July 29, 1957, there was an article about a ship capsizing in the straits, while indicating that the “dangerous whirlpools are a major tourist attraction.”²⁴

There is another reference in “Japan Today” , which was published in 1947 primarily for the Occupation Forces in Japan. The book was “intended as a picture album of colorful memories to those who have spent their days in Japan and as a carefully and conscientiously edition guidebook for those who are planning to visit out land in the near future.”²⁵ The book is 360 pages long and more than 90% of the book contains photographs on Japan including sightseeing spots throughout the country. There is a two-page section on Shikoku and three pages on the Inland sea with six half-page photos, including the one reprinted below (figure 3) along with the statement, “Naruto, famous for whirlpools, is the bottleneck connecting the Inland Sea with the Pacific.”

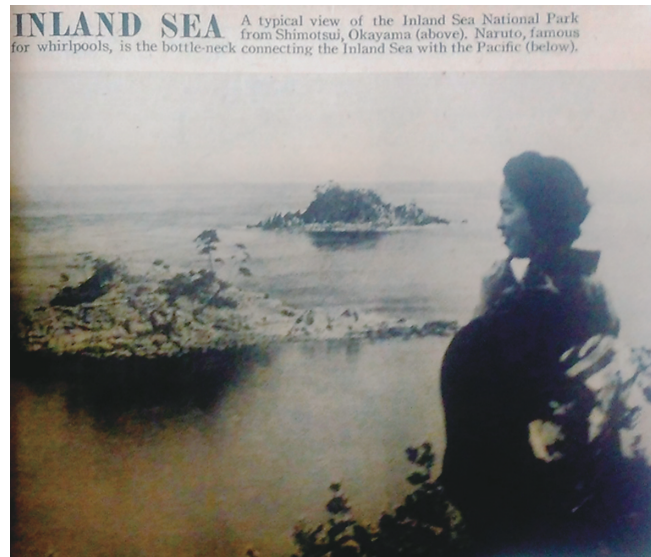


Figure 3. “Japan Today” - Inland Sea (1947)

Strategic Zone

Between 1906 and the end of World War II, the area around and including the whirlpools could not be photographed, sketched, or surveyed because it was considered to be a strategic military zone. On the southern-eastern side of Awaji Island there is a town called Yura and in 1889 construction for a military fortress began in order to protect the Kitan Strait that separates Awaji Island from Wakayama. In 1896, the command center at Yura began. Then in 1900, a fort was built in the town of Fukura as the command center, and in 1903, the Naruto base joined with the Yura base. One of the earliest references to the military build-up at Yura on Awaji Island is in a book published in English in 1906. It states, “The principal ports of Japan lie at the head of gulfs, the channels leading to which are nearly all fortified ... The port of Hyogo-Kobe is protected by fortifications at Yura on the Island of Awaji ...”²⁶ Thus to prevent any military information from being leaked, the fortifications were called “Fortified or Strategic” zones and warnings were included in guidebooks for foreigners to not take photographs or sketches in those areas without permission. Signs, as in Figure 4, were most likely posted around Naruto Park and the coastline.



Figure 4. Warning sign at Naruto

Another reference to this restriction appears in “Terry's Japanese Empire: A Guidebook for Travelers” published in 1914 by T. Philip Terry (1864-1945). It states, “Travelers may wish to remember that both the Naruto Channel and the straits of Tomogashima Island (Yura Strait, on the S.E. side of Awaji) lie within the fortified zone, and that photographing and sketching are prohibited by the War Department.”²⁷ Then in 1925, in a “Pocket Guide to Japan” published by the Japan Tourist Bureau, there is a section entitled “Photographing, Sketching, etc.” with the following, “Photographing, sketching, etc. may be freely indulged in except in the following fortified zones” which includes “... Yura (entrance to Osaka Bay, covering Wakayama, Muya, and vicinity, and Awaji Island”²⁸ This warning is included in a reissue of this guide published in 1935, however this time it specifically mentions the Naruto Straits. “Visitors may take photographs and sketch throughout Japan, except in the following zones ...Yura (entrance to Osaka Bay, covering the districts on the Kitan and Naruto Straits, in which are included Wakayama, Muya, and about a half of Awaji Island ...”²⁹ A map from that pamphlet with the fortified zones enclosed in red circles follows (figure 5).

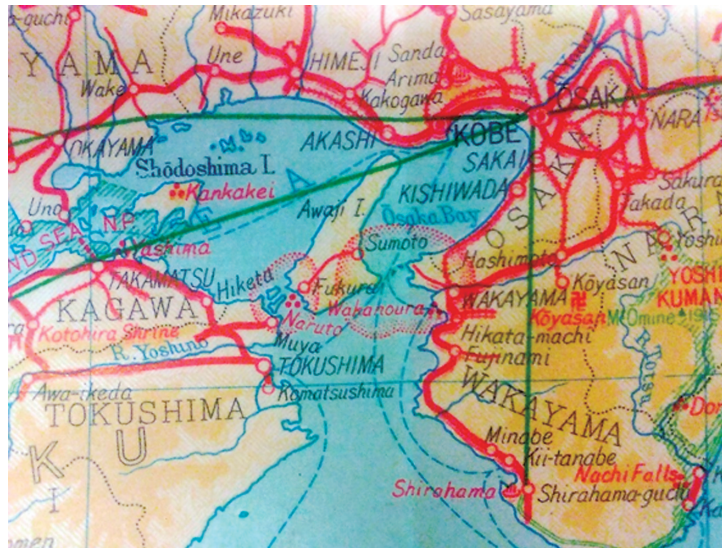


Figure 5. “Pocket Guide to Japan” (1935)

However, a pamphlet entitled “The Inland Sea – O.S.K Line” (Osaka Shosen Kaisha) published in April 1930 does not describe the Naruto straits nor mention anything about the area being a “fortified or strategic zone.” It does though include a map of the sea lanes and port stops in the Inland Sea and Tokushima prefecture. (Figure 6)

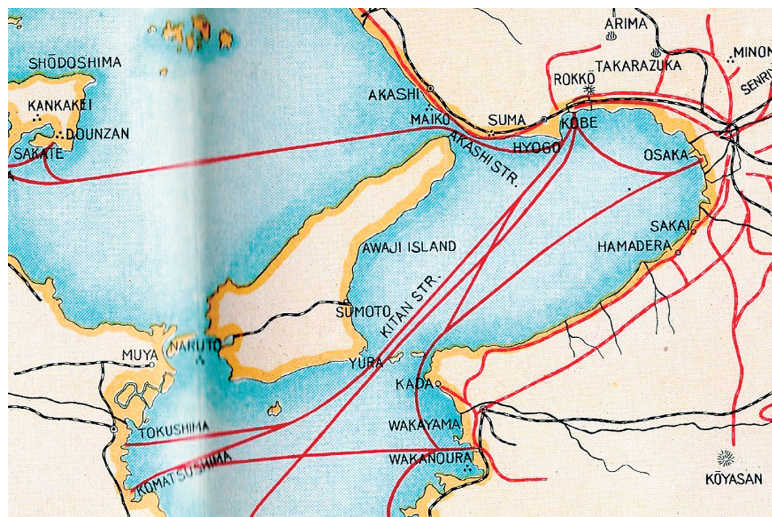


Figure 6. “The Inland Sea-OSK Line” (1930)

A comparable pamphlet published by the same company in June 1934 with the title, “The Inland Sea of Japan” , similar to the earlier publication of 1930, again

does not have a description of Naruto. (Figure 7) However, on the last page it warns visitors that, “photographing, sketching, taking photographical notes are strictly prohibited in the fortified zone... Offenders will be fined and their apparatus, notes etc., confiscated.”

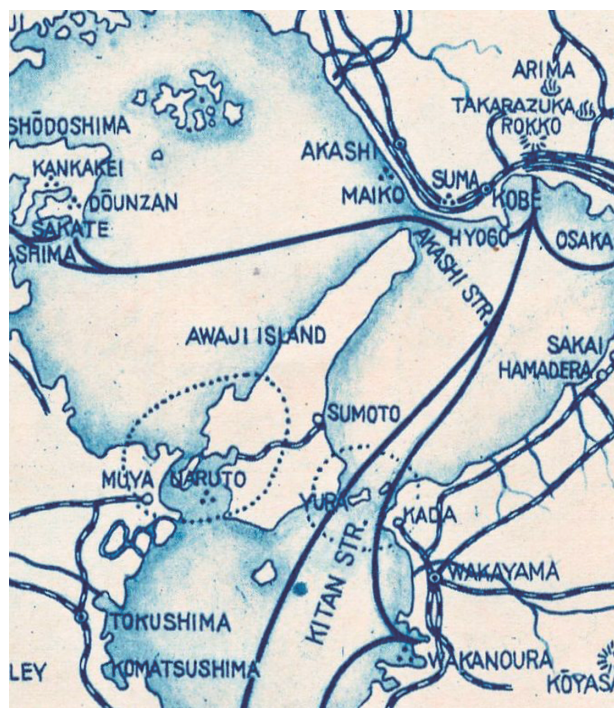


Figure 7. “The Inland Sea of Japan” OSK Line (1934)

Unlike the previous two pamphlets, one published by the Japanese Government Railways in 1932, entitled “The Inland Sea” gives the following explanation about the Naruto Strait. “The famous whirlpool at the Naruto Strait may be seen best from the Naruto-zaki promontory, 4m. W. of Fukura on the S.W. part of the Awaji Island. The waves roar as they rush through the very narrow passage, especially at spring tides, and present a truly impressive sight, which attracts many visitors yearly.”³⁰ This demonstrates that while there were restrictions, there was no shortage of people continuing to come to view these locations. On the last page of the pamphlet, there is a foldout “Sketch Map of the Inland Sea” and Naruto Strait is marked as “Strategic zone” with the same warning seen in other pamphlets. (Figure 8)



Figure 8. “The Inland Sea” (1932)

In 1936 Japan Tourist Bureau published another pamphlet entitled, “How to See Shikoku” as part of the “How to See ...” travel guide series. They published small booklets (12.5cm x 18cm, 25 pages) on such places as Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto. Some, like the one on Shikoku, were republished after the war, but this 1936 edition on Shikoku shows the fortified zone in Naruto and states, “Muya and all environs, both land and sea, are within the fortified zone, where photographing, sketching etc. are strictly forbidden.”³¹

Although restrictions regarding photographing and sketching etc. were in effect around the Naruto Strait until the end of World War II, this did not mean that photographs were not available. In fact, postcard sets with captions in English and Japanese were sold for the benefit of the foreign visitor, but earlier postcards included a “stamp of approval” by the Yura military headquarters as seen in Figure 9. (Note - left of the title)

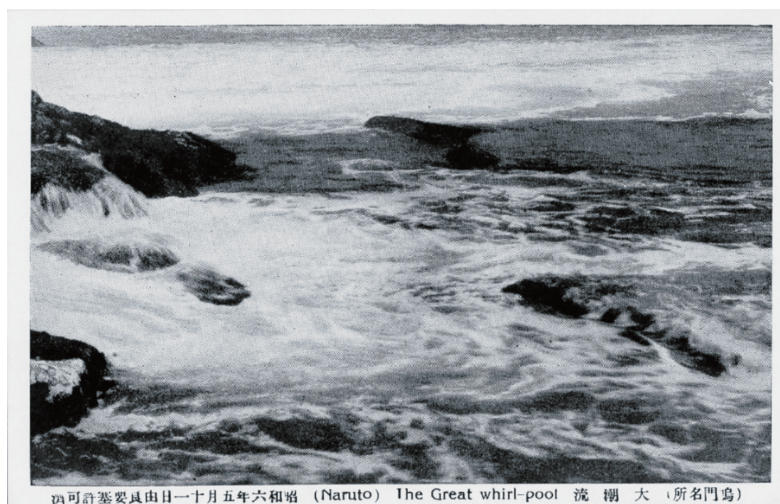


Figure 9. “Naruto – The Great Whirlpool”

Here are two examples of packages that contained a set of postcards (Figure 10). The package cover “Views of Naruto” on the left with the green cover contains eight black and white postcards – seven have the date August 1923 and one has the date June 1931. All of them have English captions and been approved by the Yura military headquarters. The package cover “Views of Naruto” on the right contains eight colour postcards with English captions. A previous owner has scribbled a date, March 23, 1954, on the back of the package that gives some indication as to the age of the postcards. These postcards do not have the “stamp of approval” from the military base.



Figure 10. Postcard collection envelopes

Future published sets, as seen in Figure 11, had slightly different captions and were quite different in quality. The example on the left is from the set published around the mid-1950s or earlier. The example on the right has a glossy coating and more prominent green and blue coloring. As well, to the left of the English caption, it states “National Park – Naruto” (国立公園鳴門). The area received this designation in May 1950.

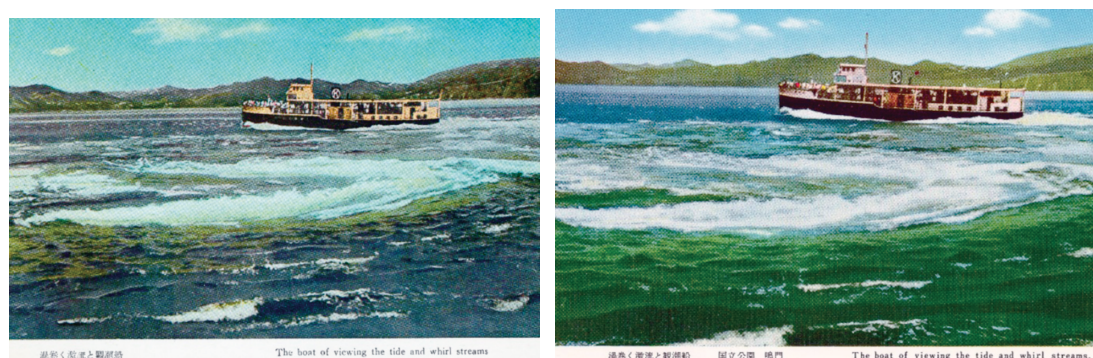


Figure 11. “The boats of viewing the time and whirl streams” postcards

Conclusion

In this section I have presented references to the Naruto whirlpools between 1690 and 1955 contained in tourist guidebooks, materials, and as well as documents that catered to the Western military forces after World War II. As well, I have demonstrated the outcome on the number of references between the 1930s until 1945 due to the surrounding area being deemed a fortified or off-limits zone. By examining the examples, we can identify the use of such adjectives and phrases as terrifying sound, strange movement, truly grand sight, should not be missed, wondrous sight, grand sight, terrific force, angry, sight of sights to see, boisterous action, ever-changing spectacle, thrilling spectacle, phenomenon practically unheard of in other parts of the world. Such terminology has been used to describe the Naruto strait or whirlpools, and clearly demonstrate that Westerners have thought this site to have “outstanding value.”

Part 2 – Observations from the sea

In this second section, I examine in three parts how the Naruto whirlpools

have been described from the sea. Part A consists of three subdivisions: 1. the earliest navigational maps made of the strait; 2. the difficulty of traveling through the strait; and, 3. a boat named after the strait including the belief among Japanese people of a sea monster laying under the waters. In the two subdivisions of Part B, I describe 1. Chartered boat tours and personal sailing trips; and, 2. the whirlpools as seen by missionaries. Finally, in Part C, I examine how the whirlpools have been viewed from sightseeing tours of the strait and the Inland Sea.

A(1) : Navigational maps -

The first Westerners to survey and produce a navigational map on the Naruto Strait were Commander Charles Bullock and Lieutenant W.F. Maxwell in the mid-nineteenth century. Bullock approached the whirlpools in the HMS Dove in 1861³² and Maxwell in 1869.³³ In fact, in 1869, the British Admiralty Publications published the first navigational map of this region entitled “Naruto Passage No. 119.” It was not possible to track down a copy of the original map, but in 1904, the Hydrographic Office of the US Navy published a map entitled, “The Inland Sea Eastern Entrance – Naruto and approaches” (Figure 12) that includes the following statement: “From a Japanese survey in 1900 (with additions from a British survey in 1869).” This survey most likely refers to Maxwell’s work. This detailed map that includes the names of cities and waterways along the coast, lighthouses, buoy positions, and depths in fathoms was used even after some corrections were made in 1925, 1932 and 1940.



Figure 12. The Inland Sea Eastern Entrance – Naruto and approaches map (1904)

In 1912, the United States Hydrographic Office published another map showing the Naruto Strait. It is entitled, “Japan – Naikai or Inland Sea: Izumi Nada and Harima Nada” and corrections were added as late as 1942.³⁴ (Figure 13)



Figure 13. Japan – Naikai or Inland Sea: Izumi Nada and Harima Nada map (1912)

Shortly after the production of Maxwell’s map, a Frenchman, Elisee Reclus (1830-1905), produced a very basic navigational map of Naruto strait in 1876. This map lacks details, such as depth of the Strait as seen in the maps made by the U.S Hydrographic Office. (Figure 14)

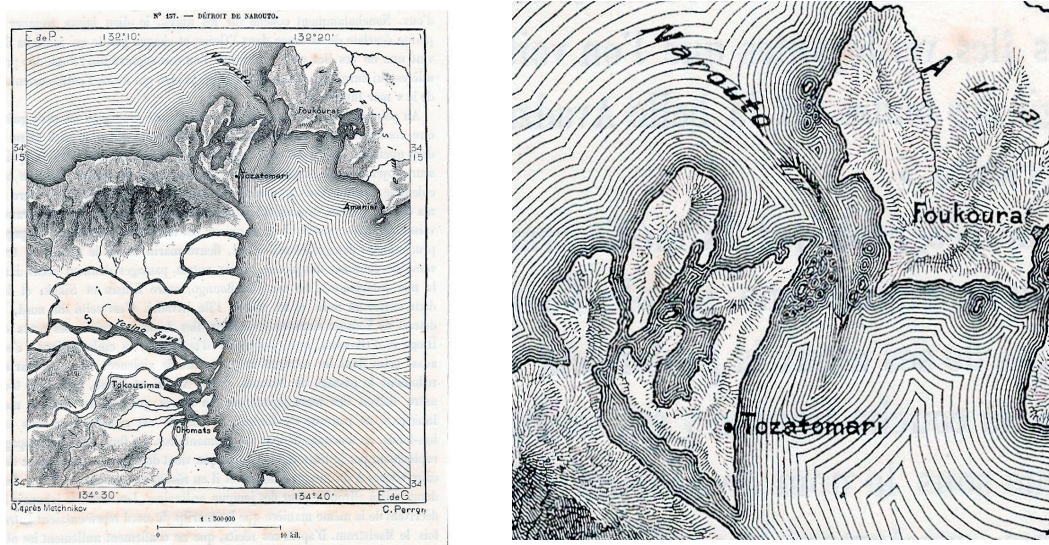


Figure 14. Detroit de Naruto (Naruto Strait) map (1876)

A(2) Difficult to navigate –

With the creation of the various maps, numerous people began to write about the difficulty of navigating the strait in books and other publications. For example, in 1870 Alexander G. Findlay wrote, “... it has previously been considered to be a whirlpool and it is not without cause that this dangerous character has been attributed to it, for junks have foundered in its turbulent waves, or been dashed to pieces on its rocks by the impetuosity of the current...”

³⁵ Three years later, in 1873, there is a long passage about the Naruto passage in “The China Sea Directory” that refers to the navigation by Bullock and Maxwell in 1861 and 1869. Part of the reference is the same as in Findlay's book. In 1878, Findlay had published “A Directory for the Navigation of the Indian Archipelago, China” and instructs readers as to the best time during the day to traverse the strait, but warns that it should not be attempted in bad weather.³⁶ Then in 1874, Aimé Humbert (1819-1900) in “Japan and the Japanese – Illustrated” wrote,

That passage of Naruto which leads directly from the basin of Arima into the great ocean is shorter than the former; it is, however, much less frequented, because it is considered a dangerous channel for high-decked vessels ...the tossing of the waves in the passage being solely the result of the violence of the current.³⁷

Élisée Reclus (1830-1905) in 1876 wrote in French, “Nouvelle géographie universelle: la terre et les hommes Vol 7 (p722) Impression à l'identique de l'édition d'origine” which was translated into English as “The Earth and Its Inhabitants: Asia” in 1891. Here he states that the “Naruto channel is more dreaded than any other in the Japanese waters.” ³⁸ In 1889 another Frenchman, Étienne de Villaret (1854-1931), wrote in “Dai Nippon (Le Japon)” that “the narrow Naruto Strait is almost impassable because of the currents and eddies are extraordinary.” ³⁹ Then in 1910, Joseph Henry Longford (1849-1925) wrote in “The Story of Old Japan” that “Passing by the Naruto passage between Awaji and Shikoku, the violent currents of which are a dread to mariners at the present day ...” ⁴⁰

A3: Boat names and a beast under the sea -

One boat was even given the name “Naruto” . In “The Travel Bulletin” from 1935 there is an article entitled, “Zoku Senmeiko – Nomenclature of the N.Y.K. Fleet Supplemented.” N.Y.K is the acronym for Nippon Yusen Kabushiki Kaisha and it is one of the oldest and largest shipping companies in the world. In the article, the author describes the ships in the N.Y.K fleet whose names begin with “N.” One of them is the Naruto Maru 鳴門 and the author claimed that this ship,

takes its name from the narrow straits which separate the island of Awaji and that of Shikoku, and forms one of the gates from the Inland Sea to the Pacific Ocean … 鳴 Naru means literally to ring and 門 a gate, but ‘naru’ is used of any great noise such as thunder, and the thundering, or roaring gate is a suitable name for this narrow passage, as the tides race in angry eddies through it causing no small uproar … The seething waters can be visited in perfect safety from the town of Fukura … Quite apart from the whirlpool the scenery is exceptionally beautiful … I have been unable to find any interesting mythological story to account for the existence of the whirlpool ….⁴¹

While there might not be an explicit mythological origin of the whirlpool, it is clear that many people believed that the whirlpools were like a mythological monster laying-in-wait to destroy ships and to pull people into the vortex of the waves. Johann Justus Rein (1835-1918) in 1884 wrote, “Here is Awa-no-Naruto or whirlpool of Awa, a sort of Chary[b]dis, where, according to a Japanese description, the ‘the waters of the sea eddy rounds, and the dashing on the rocks causes a roar as of a thousand thunders.’”⁴² Almost ten years later in 1914, T. Philip Terry (1864-1945) wrote in “A Guidebook for Travelers” that, “Between the outermost rocks on the S.W. coast of the island and adjacent Shikoku is the celebrated Naruto Whirlpool (Naruto Suido), a sort of Japanese Charybdis invested with all manner of terrors ….”⁴³ In Greek mythology, it is believed that there was

a sea monster on either side of the Strait of Messina in Italy. One of the two, Charybdis, would swallow huge amounts of water and belch it out causing whirlpools treacherous to ships. A reference from 1939 takes a slightly differently comparison.

Whorls in the sea or beneath a waterfall are symbols of human life: agitation, turmoil, strife. But they are often also stylized merely for the beauty of their lines. Indirectly they may be connected with the Naruto whirlpools (near Awaji Island), the entrance gate to the realm of the Sea Dragon-King, or also with Sun-worship.⁴⁴

A reference to another sea monster appears around 1953 when an American, William Price, and his wife expressed a wish to visit the whirlpools by boat but were warned several times about the water goblins called *kappa* who delighted in pulling boats into the depths of the sea.⁴⁵ At first, they were told that they did not need to miss “one of the most dramatic phenomena of the Inland Sea” because they “could have a look at it from the steamer which daily takes Japanese tourists to view the spectacle.”⁴⁶ They boarded the steamer, but were told that the boat “could not go near the whirlpools that day, the sea being too rough”, but they decided to go anyway. As a result, the waves dashed over the prow and streamed down the decks”, but “when we reached the strait the waves miraculously disappeared, the captain changed both his mind and his course, and we steamed into the channel.” As they approached the author writes, “We could see these whirling monsters only at a distance.”⁴⁷ “The ship did not attempt to sail through the strait, but only skirted it, then returned to Naruto town.” They then discussed whether their chartered small craft could handle the trip into the strait. They found someone to guide them into the straits, but when they departed the next morning “the boat staggered like a drunken man as the whirling currents caught her”⁴⁸ and the boat stopped moving and was not able to move forward or backward.” The writer continues, “It took me a little time to realize that we were actually in a whirlpool and that the whirlpool was remorselessly carrying us nearer and nearer to its central pit.”⁴⁹ They were able to eventually

break free by releasing a large metal oil drum half-full of oil that “rapidly demoralized the perfect whirl of the vortex. The kappa made determined efforts to draw it down but always it bobbed up again.”⁵⁰ As the “whirl lost its power … the engine began to win over current … and we left the last of the rapids behind and drew into a sheltered cove.”⁵¹ It was not just a matter of whirlpools, they said - there were devils under that channel. One of the most persistent of Japanese superstitions is the belief in kappa, a species of evil mermen or water goblins who delight in drawing humans down to a watery grave. The caption according the article of the Naruto Strait states, “Seasoned sailors of the Inland Sea steer clear of the mile-wide passage. The superstitious believe that devils lurk below to pull them down.”⁵²

B: Chartered boat tours or personal sailing trips

Before the days of organized sightseeing boat tours operated by official companies, some foreign visitors like Mr. and Mrs. Price who came in the mid-1950s from the United States, hired a boat and crew to visit the Naruto strait and the whirlpools. In 1884, a Westerner described arriving in Fukura town on Awaji Island in a jinrikisha, staying the night and viewing the whirlpools the next day.

The lion of the place is the violent rush of water though the Naruto channel, which separates the islands of Awaji and Shikoku and connects the Inland Sea and the Pacific Ocean. It is a grand sight, especially at spring tides, when no junk can attempt the passage; and it should certainly not be missed. Boats are furnished at a reasonable charge by the proprietor of the inn at Fukura … the expedition, which takes from four to six hours ….⁵³

In 1892, Robert S. Gardiner wrote about a visit to the Naruto strait during his four-month trip to places “on and off the beaten track” in “Japan as We Saw It.”⁵⁴ In the chapters on “Islands of Awaji and Shikoku” and “The Inland Sea”, Gardiner wrote, “From the keeper of Idzuma inn in Fukura we engage[d] a boat

and boatman to take us along the coast of the mainland, from whence we can witness the violent rush of waters through the Naruto channel, separating Awaji from the island of Shikoku.”⁵⁵ Similarly, in 1894, Henry Davenport Norththrop (1835-1909) records his impressions as he sailed through the strait.

At length we saw the gates of the Strait: on the left, rocks surmounted by pines, from the front of the island of Awadsi; on the right, a solitary rock, or islet, also bearing a few pines, forming the front of the island of Sikoff.... the tossing of the waves in the passage being solely the result of the violence of the current.”⁵⁶

Two years later, in 1903, there is the following description in the “Up-to-date Guide for the Land of the Rising Sun.”

The whirlpool of Naruto is at the channel of the same name which is between the cape of Naruto west of Fukura and north-eastern extreme of the province of Awa. The distance of the channel is only a mile. The best way to visit the whirlpool is to take small boat which is obtained at Fukura. The splashing of the water against the large sunken rocks, the thunder-like sound of whirling of the water are sights worth seeing.⁵⁷

Twenty years later, in 1914, the author of “The Netherlands and Japan – Japan of Today” states,

Among the sight of the Nankai, that of NARUTO is most striking. A tourist who wishes to witness this grand sight should go to Naruto-zaki in Awaji, or to Mago-zaki in Okejima, an islet lying the in the Naruto Strait. He can also take a boat at Tokushima and thence sail north about ten miles. These [whirlpools] unite at one moment and then separate, presenting an endless variety of wonderful sights. The spectacle is at its best when the tide is high.⁵⁸

B2: Seen by missionaries

Not only were tourists sailing past or viewing the whirlpools by boat, but Christian missionaries also did so on their way to Shikoku or Awaji Island as part of their proselytizing activities or visits to their congregations on either one of those islands. In 1859, Dr. James Curtis Hepburn (1815-1911) was the first Presbyterian missionary to come to Japan, but it was not until the Meiji Restoration in 1871 that freedom of religion was introduced and all Christian groups could proselytize without fear of persecution or arrest. Though most of the religious groups and their missionaries focused their efforts on the main island, they eventually visited further away places such as Awaji Island and Shikoku. One example is Reverend Hugh James Foss (1848-1932), who as part of the “The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts” (SPG) that was a Church of England missionary organization, first visited various hamlets on Awaji island in 1878. Some years later, he revisited the island and after participating in sermons in Sumoto town went with two religious teachers to the town of Fukura. While there, he took a trip to the Naruto Strait:

In the afternoon we went in a Japanese boat to the end of the beautiful land-locked bay on which Fukura is situated. From the hill at the entrance one has lovely views over sea and land. Fukura is at the S.W. end of the triangular island, and close to Shikoku; the strait which divides the two is very narrow and dangerous, a whirlpool of considerable extent being often visible.⁵⁹

In 1899, Edward Bickersteth (1825-1906), the Bishop of South Tokyo, sailed pass the whirlpools on his way to Fukura after visiting the congregation in Tokushima.

I went in a jinrikisha to the coast, about ten miles, and took a sailing boat to pass over to Awaji, an island N.E. of Shikoku. On the way I went to see the celebrated whirlpool, and got a magnificent view from a rocky island close to the narrow channel where the waters are much agitated. I saw two junks come through, one of them was completely twisted round twice

by the force of the waters, and then hurried on her way at a tremendous pace; there does not seem to be any particular danger, the force of the water carrying them clear of the rocks. The day was delightfully fine, and we sailed into Fukura with a fair wind.⁶⁰

Several years later, in 1891, Henry Baker Tristram (1822-1906) an English clergyman, Bible scholar, and traveler visited Tokushima and wrote about his trip to Naruto in “Rambles in Japan – The Land of the Rising Sun” (1895). He writes:

One day was spent in a delightful expedition along the coast to Muya, a large straggling town twelve miles off ... to the celebrated Straits of Naruto. A party of six, we started each in a kuruma drawn by two men, pulling tandem. It was a lovely ride ... It was a lively scene ... we found ourselves at Naruto, one of the lions of Japan. Here the tide coming up the Inland Sea meets the tides from the north.”⁶¹

C1: Sightseeing boat tours for tourists

Today visitors to Shikoku or Awaji Island can choose from one of several boat tours to get a close look of the whirlpools. Some trips depart from the Tokushima side and others from Fukura town on Awaji Island. An early reference from 1947 to a possible boat tour or tourist cruise states, “Naruto [is] noted for its swift currents and mammoth whirlpools... The promoters also plan to commence a cruise through the famed Naruto Straits for tourists, as the swift currents of the strait are said to be one of three strongest currents in the world.”⁶² However, the first tangible evidence of such a cruise – in this case from Fukura town – is noted in a tourist pamphlet from 1959.

From the city of Sumoto it is possible to take a bus or electric train to the small town of Fukura from where daily excursion boats leave for a sightseeing tour of the famous whirlpool rapids, the Naruto Straits. These rapids are caused by the trip-tides passing over a rough bottom in the narrow strait formed by the islands of Shikoku and Awaji.⁶³

In the “Official Guide of Japan” of 1961, it states, “Muya … city is noted for its salt and for the view of the whirlpools formed in the Naruto Channel when the tide turns,” and “Naruto Channel, popularly called Awa-no-Naruto (Roaring Gateway of Awa) … Throughout the year boats are available for the view of the whirlpools at a close range, while an observation platform at the tip of a promontory projecting into the channel offers a wide view of the channel and its environs.”⁶⁴ A reprint of this guidebook in 1966, gives a very similar description, “The Naruto area is noted for its view of the whirlpools formed in the Naruto Strait when the tide changes … Throughout the year boats are available for sightseeing trips to the whirlpools at close range.”⁶⁵ In 1970, in a book entitled, “New Japan” there is also a description that demonstrates just how popular this site was among tourists.

On the sightseeing side, one of the ‘musts’ are the Greater Naruto Whirlpools, a phenomenon occurring when the tide flows to and from the Inland Sea through the narrow Naruto Straits. The whirlpools are most fantastic in April and May.... Naruto - Naruto is internationally known as a sightseeing city and for its so-called "Uzushio" whirlpools of the Naruto Strait. More than 2,500,000 tourists visit the city every year to see the tide rushing in and out of the strait. Boats are available through the year for a view of the "Uzushio" at a close range.⁶⁶

Again in 1975 an additional description, “Another fine view of the straits can be obtained from atop Naruto Hill, to which a lift ascends in 3 min from Senjojiki, N of the park. Visitors can also go by ferryboat from the Okazaki Pier, 5 min by bus from the station, for the 30-min trip to the part or the 1-hr trip to Fukura.”⁶⁷ This route is shown on a Japanese map. (Note: the dotted line in figure 15)

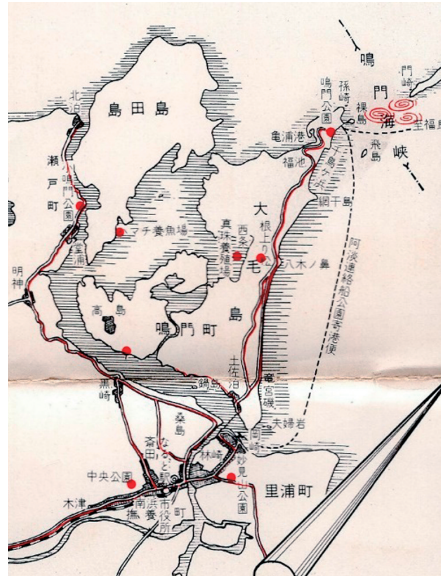


Figure 15. Ferryboat route from Okazaki to Naruto straits (dotted line)

C2: Inland Sea tours -

Unlike the scary, violent image of the whirlpools where sea creatures lay await to pull people down, the Inland Sea has been promoted as a tranquil place.

The eleven prefectures bordering the Inland Sea worked to create the Seto Naikai National Park in 1934 and since then tourist companies have endeavored to promote tours along its waterways from Osaka to Kyushu. There are specific description of the Naruto whirlpools in some brochures and pamphlets. In 1925, the attraction of the Inland Sea and a description of the Naruto Straits can be found in a news bulletin published by the Japan Society in New York. Founded in 1907, this society was to “bring the people of Japan and the United States closer together through understanding, appreciation and cooperation” but it closed between 1941 and 1952.⁶⁸ The bulletin states,

The Inland Sea of Japan - ... between Awaji Island and Shikoku, is located the dreaded Naruto Whirlpool where the angry sea boils and eddies with a loud noise and the tides race with extreme violence. This thrilling spectacle is about an eight hour journey from Kobe and can best be viewed from Naruto Park.⁶⁹

In 1953, “The Seto Inland Sea – Japan’ s World Famous National Park” was published containing numerous photographs of the Inland Sea and cities and town along the way. In the section, Tokushima Prefecture – That Spectacular Naruto Whirlpool” , the author describes how things have changed since the disappearance of the military bases, how the whirlpools have become a “favorite object” for all sorts of people, and claims that it is truly inspiring.

Foremost in the itinerary for tourists in Tokushima prefecture (the province of Awa) is the spectacular whirlpool at Naruto in the Seto Inland Sea National Park. It has been famous for the churning tide; with the garrison at Naruto forever gone and the site now converted into an objective scenic spot for sightseers, Naruto has assumed more importance in tourist industry. The whirlpool has been a standing challenge for interpretative ability of poets, songsters and painters, and of late, it has been a favorite object for photographs and the screen. The true aspects of the Naruto Whirlpool are admittedly difficult, if not almost impossible, to realize; more than its being merely picturesque or superb, at has, it may be said, its own inspiration ...⁷⁰

There are also a couple of photographs with captions of the Naruto strait, the whirlpools, and of Naruto Park. One caption states, “Naruto Strait is between Magosaki at the north-eastern end of Owgeshima Island and Tosaki at the south-western edge of Awaji Island ... Naruto Strait is famous for its rapid currents ... a most spectacular sight.” Another (Figure 16) states, “The world famous great whirlpool in Naruto Strait, between Fukura on Awaji Island, and Naruto in Shikoku ... Fukura is the nearest and best point of vantage to enjoy the famous Naruto Whirlpool.” And the caption for Naruto Park, “Also “Naruto Park” – “... commands the best view of Naruto Strait. In the park, on a little hill about 200 yards high, a level ground known as ‘Senjo-Jiki’ is the point where one may enjoy the imposing sight the of world famous tidal whirlpool.”



Figure 16. Naruto Straits looking from Fukura on Awaji Island (1953)

Six years later, in 1959, Kansai Steamship Co. Ltd. Published a pamphlet entitled, “The Inland Sea of Japan – Kansai Line” , which contains an overall description of what sightseeing opportunities a passenger can experience on their tours. They state, “What better contrast, after you have seen the man-made glories of Kyoto and Nara, than to relax aboard ship and slip along carefree amidst the wonders of natures, seeing three of Japan’ s main islands … From the serenity of Yashima to the raging whirlpools of Naruto ….” The pamphlet also provides a description and photograph of the whirlpools (figure 17):

In the narrow straits that separate Shikoku from the island of Awaji can be seen one of the most unusual sights in the world. Here, twice each day, the peace of the Inland Sea is shattered as the waters of the Pacific fight their way first into, then out of, its land-locked stretches. From the safety and comfort of your ship you can look out on raging whirlpools – caused by a difference in level between the sea on each side of the straits of as much as five feet – that are gay with dazzling white foam on sunny days, turbulent and menacing under the clouds.

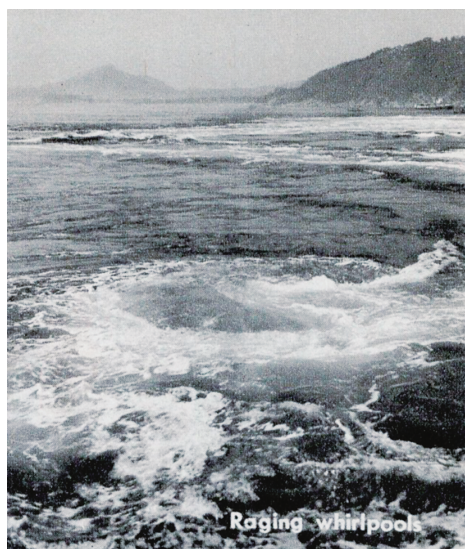


Figure 17. Inland Sea of Japan (1959)

One year later the same company published another pamphlet entitled, “Map: The Inland Sea of Japan (Seto nai kai) – Kansai Line” and in it they state that their tour will, “take you from isle to isle, harbor to harbor, in comfort as in a deluxe hotel and carefree as if you were cruising on your own yacht.” They add, “The tour lets you see three of Japan’s mainlands and the scenic attractions they offer picturesque Miyajima, awe-inspiring Mt. Aso (one of the world’s mightiest volcanoes, serene Yashima Plateau, the angry whirlpools of Naruto, the flowers of Shodoshima, the boiling geysers of Beppu.”

Conclusion –

In this second part of this paper, I have shown how Westerners have described the whirlpools from the sea – from boats containing missionaries, to chartered boats, and sightseeing cruises. Since the first maps were made in the mid-1860s until the latest references included here from the 1960s, it is apparent that Westerners knew of the difficulty to navigate the strait. There were also keenly aware of the belief that the whirlpools were a sort of Charybdis or felt that they contained other sea monsters, unique to Japan, that were eager to pull ships down into the vortex of the whirlpools. Although adjectives such as violent, dreaded, angry, raging were frequently used, other words such as grand, celebrated, famous, thrilling, imposing, spectacular, worth seeing were used to

describe the awe felt by the Westerners who witnessed the whirlpools.

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Conclusion

This paper has closely examined how Westerners have described the Naruto strait and its whirlpools over the past three hundred years. In the two parts of this paper – 1. Observations from the Land, and 2. Observations from the Sea – it is obvious how this site has been described. In Part 1 such words and phrases as terrifying sound (1690), unique sight (1887), grand sight (1901)(1915)(1922), should not be missed (1901), wondrous sight (1906), fighting ground of the sea-dragon (1915), truly impressive sight (1932), sight of sights to see (1947), leading scenic attraction (1948), [rare] phenomenon (1955), must for tourists (1956), major tourist attraction (1957) were used. Then, in Part 2 such words as dangerous character (1870), sort of Charybdis (1884)(1910), should not be attempted (1878), dangerous channel (1874), currents and eddies are extraordinary (1876), grand sight (1884) (1914), violent currents (1894) (1910), thunder-like sound (1903), worth seeing (1903), all manner of terrors (1914), angry sea (1925), thrilling spectacle (1925), angry eddies (1935), realm of the Sea Dragon-King (1939), famous whirlpools rapids (1947), dramatic phenomena (1953), spectacular sight (1953), famous (1953), whirling monsters (1953), inspirational (1953), most unusual sight (1959), angry (1960), a must to see (1970) were used. While the whirlpools of the Naruto Strait have been feared, treated as a place of mystery and awe, thought to be a monstrous-like place with the sound of thunder, they have been repetitively described for centuries as a wondrous, grand, scenic, inspirational and a must-see place.

This paper has shown for the first time in explicit detail that Westerners have treated the Naruto whirlpools as a place of value for more than three hundred years from the first references by Engelbert Kaempfer in 1690 until the present day. This examination of “The Naruto Whirlpools as viewed by Westerners ” offers clear and undisputable evidence to fulfill the criteria of “outstanding universal value” in the efforts to get the Naruto whirlpools designated as a World Heritage site.

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- ¹ http://www.japanspecialist.co.uk/semi_escorted_tour/japans-golden-route-7-days/ Here is an example of a 7-day tour by Japan Travel Bureau entitled “Japan’s Golden Route” that includes visits to Tokyo, Mt. Fuji, Kyoto and Nara. Other tour companies include visits to Nikko, Hakone, Hiroshima and Osaka. Accessed: Dec 27, 2016.
- ² Rowland G. Gould, “Imaginative Tourism to Match the Jumbo Jet Age.” *Asia Scene* 14(9), 1969, 143-145.
- ³ Donald Richie. *The Inland Sea*. (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1971) 54.
- ⁴ 徳島県の経済と産業 2016 (The Tokushima Prefectural Economy and Industry (Guide), 徳島：徳島経済研究所
- ⁵ http://www.kansai.gr.jp/mt51/plugins/KWInformation/newssearch.cgi?__mode=detail&lang_code=en&id=4162 Accessed December 27, 2016.
- ⁶ <http://naruto-uzushio.jp/activity/> Accessed December 27, 2016.
- ⁷ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/1192/> Accessed December 27, 2016.
- ⁸ <http://whc.unesco.org/uploads/nominations/870.pdf> Accessed December 27, 2016.
- ⁹ <http://whc.unesco.org/uploads/nominations/1449.pdf> Accessed December 27, 2016.
- ¹⁰ <http://whc.unesco.org/uploads/nominations/1418.pdf> Accessed December 27, 2016.
- ¹¹ Beatrice M. Bodart-Bailey ed. *Kaempfer’s Japan. Tokushima Culture Observed*. (Book 1, Chapter 7, The Japanese Sea and Its Two Whirlpools), (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1999) p55.
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- ¹⁷ Japanese Government Railways. *An Official Guide to Japan*. (Tokyo, 1933) 421.
- ¹⁸ Japan Tourist Bureau. *How to See Shikoku*. (Tokyo, 1947) 10.
- ¹⁹ Japan Tourist Bureau. *How to See Osaka, Kobe and Awaji Island*. (Tokyo, 1947) 25.
- ²⁰ *New Japan*. vol 8. (Tokyo: Mainichi Publishing Co., 1955) 338.
- ²¹ Pacific Stars and Stripes. “Shikoku- remote and unspoiled- island of legend and beauty.” Oct 31, 1948.
- ²² Pacific Stars and Stripes. “Getting Away From It All.” March, 6, 1956. 15.

- ²³ Pacific Stars and Stripes. "Ancient Mysteries of Perilous Japanese Strait to be Studied." Tokyo: April 14, 1956.
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- ²⁹ Board of Tourist Industry. Japanese Government Railways. *Pocket Guide to Japan*. (Tokyo, 1935) 94.
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- ³⁴ A digital copy can be viewed at the UC San Diego Special Collections site:
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- ⁴⁷ Journey by Junk, 55.
- ⁴⁸ Near Disaster, 635.
- ⁴⁹ Journey by Junk, 59.
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- ⁵⁵ Ibid. 89
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- ⁶⁵ Japan National Tourist Organization. The New Official Guide to Japan, (Tokyo: Japan Travel Bureau, 1966) 880.
- ⁶⁶ New Japan (Osaka: Mainichi Publishing, 1970) 217

⁶⁷ Japan National Tourist Organization. The New Official Guide to Japan, (Tokyo: Japan Travel Bureau, 1975) 814.

⁶⁸ <https://www.japansociety.org/resources/content/9/7/8/documents/CentBook.01-57.pdf>
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⁶⁹ Japan Society November 25, 1925 News Bulletin. 1

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(Tokushima University)