6. Henry Noel's Journey through Shikoku

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Introduction

In 1937, the Japan Tourist Bureau celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary and since its inception Japan experienced a surge in inbound tourism. For example, in 1912, 15,964 foreign visitors came to Japan, but that number increased to 42,568 in 1936, so in order to provide information to people wanting to visit Japan, JTB opened offices around the country as well as in China, Taiwan, Korea, Manchuria and the United States. Staff provided advice in English and other languages, but JTB also published “maps and travel literature of all sorts, including a monthly magazine, The Tourist, a fortnightly journal, Travel News, pamphlets of the How to See series, This Week’s Attractions, Monthly Attractions etc.” However, other than two editions of How to See Shikoku (1936 and 1947) and one How to See Takamatsu (see fig. 1), JTB provided very little information about the island of Shikoku - a place off the beaten track, but according to them, “Shikoku, it may be said, fully qualifies itself as one of the most recommendable candidate tourist districts in the country.”

Who came to visit Shikoku from overseas during this popular time of tourism and what did they see and experience? One rare source of information is that of Henry Noel, an American journalist who lived in Japan between 1933 and 1939. Although mostly based in Tokyo, Noel came to Shikoku for a week in December 1935 and January 1936 and published articles about this visit. His detailed description of people, places, and events around Shikoku provided the reader with a unique opportunity to view Shikoku of the 1930s through the eyes of a Westerner.
Profile

Henry (Noel) Martyn NOEL was born on April 8, 1908 in Boston, Massachusetts to Zana SHAW (1915~1995) and Ephraim (Edmond) Percy NOEL (1882~1958).³ His father served as a war correspondent in France during World War One, and as a correspondent in the Far East for both American and European newspapers.⁴ After graduating from the University of Missouri, Henry went to the National School of Oriental Languages at the University of Paris. Then, in 1933, he went to Japan as a correspondent for the newspaper, *Petite Parisien*, where his father had worked. Over the next six years while Henry wrote numerous articles for various publications and published his first book, *Karakoro* in 1939. An article from 1935 stated that even though he had been in Japan for only a year he could read and speak Japanese.⁵ After returning to the United States, he enlisted in the army in 1941⁶ and spent until 1946 “serv[ing] in many capacities in the intelligence corps” in such places as “Governor’s Island, Panama, New Guinea, the Philippines and Japan.”⁷ A family friend stated that, “because of his language skills, Henry got to meet very senior Japanese and American personnel as the war was winding down.”⁸ After this he received a MA from the University of Pennsylvania and in 1951 received a doctorate from the Université de Montpellier in France. The title of his dissertation is “Les opinions de Stendhal sur Napoléon” (Stendhal’s opinions on Napoleon).⁹ He returned to the United States in September 1951 on the ship Anna Salen from Holland¹⁰ and around July 1953.
started working at the Library of Congress.\textsuperscript{11}

Around this time, Noel met Barbara Schuchard Tsu (1913-2006)\textsuperscript{12} who already had three children [Joan Stanley-Baker (1934–), Katherine Haas (1938–) and George Tsu (1943-2015)] and they married on May 24, 1956. Henry quit his job at the Library of Congress in July 1963 and started working at American University in the Language and Foreign Studies Department. He taught French language and literature for ten years and retired in 1973 at age sixty five\textsuperscript{13} and moved from Washington DC to North Dakota. He passed away at age ninety-three on December 16, 2001\textsuperscript{14} in the small town of Elgin, North Dakota and his gravestone is located there in Zion Cemetery.\textsuperscript{15}

\textbf{Writings}

While in Japan, Noel wrote articles for \textit{The Japan Times and Weekly}, \textit{Osaka Mainichi} newspaper, and for the magazine \textit{Tourist}.\textsuperscript{16} He later compiled some of these articles into a 225-page book entitled, \textit{Karakoro}, which is the noise of \textit{geta} (Japanese wooden clogs) hitting the roads and projects an image of someone hurrying about. In fact, the author of one book review states that Noel “slips his feet into geta and clatters down by-ways and highways into nooks and crannies of the country that the usual tourist never sees...”\textsuperscript{17} As well it is noted, “The well-known landmarks at famous tourist points are depicted from an intimate and personal point of view, so refreshingly different from the usual books on travel.”\textsuperscript{18} Another review stated that “The author vividly describes various aspects of life and travel in Japan, where it was his desire to live as far as possible in Japanese style. There are interesting descriptions of country life, and of the climbing of Mount Fuji in inclement weather.”\textsuperscript{19}

The eighteenth chapter of \textit{Karakoro} entitled, “The Island of Eighty-Eight Temples” is an abbreviated version of two articles “A Shikoku Pilgrimage - Part 1 and 2” which were published in the magazine, \textit{Tourist} in April and May of 1936. These articles describe his journey through such towns and cities on Shikoku as Takamatsu, Zentsūji, Kotohira, Awa
Ikeda, Kōchi, Irino, Nakamura, Uwajima and Takahama, but unfortunately the description of his journey in *Karakoro* stops at Nakamura. (see figure 2)

![Map of Shikoku]

**Fig. 2 - Photograph from The Tourist (May 1936. p.25) showing Noel’s travel route through Shikoku.**

### The Journey to Shikoku

Noel began the journey to Shikoku on December 27\(^{\text{th}}\) (1935) from Tokyo. From here he travelled to Kyoto and stayed the night, and after enjoying a visit to a public bath early in the morning went to Kobe. For this journey Noel travelled with Dr. Noel Pippon (b. 1908) a German Japanologist who arrived to Japan on October 2\(^{\text{nd}}\), 1933 in order to study at the Tokyo Imperial University.\(^{20}\) Pippon stayed in Japan until 1945.\(^{21}\) Around 3pm they boarded the ship *Midori Maru* to “bid farewell to the main island of Honshu”\(^{22}\) and while at sea they passed Awaji Island “with its pine clad mountains and shores lined with fishing villages.”\(^{23}\) They arrived ahead of schedule at the port of Takamatsu – a town which Noel considers to be “a happy land for tourists.”\(^{24}\) To him the “broad, long streets of Takamatsu are different from those of any city on Honshu because they are covered in summer with awnings, like some Spanish or African city.”\(^{25}\) They spent the night in Takamatsu\(^{26}\).
Visiting famous temples and shrines.

The next day, Noel visited two famous religious sites in Kagawa prefecture. One is Zentsūji – a famous temple along the Shikoku pilgrimage route and the other is Kompira – a renowned shrine that people from around the country visit to pray for safety at sea. According to him, the next morning they “took a train which skirted extensive salt fields along the Inland Sea, and then went up country to Zentsūji”, but Noel adds that, “Zentsūji can scarcely be called a town, being mainly a collection of temple buildings and priests’ quarters...” Noel knew that Zentsūji is the birthplace of the Buddhist priest, Kūkai/ Kōbō Daishi (774-835) and it is one of the eighty-eight places of pilgrimage in Shikoku. He also knew that when Kōbō Daishi returned to Japan after training in China, “he founded Shingon, the Buddhist sect of the “True Word” and that “under his supervision were built some of Japan’s largest temples and monasteries.”

At Zentsūji, Noel and Pippon were able to explore inside the five-storey pagoda on the temple grounds. At the Kondō building (金堂) they met a priest who escorted them to the pagoda believed to have been built by Kōbō Daishi. They removed their overcoats and put on straw sandals before stepping in ready to explore the interior and climb to the top, but the priest refrained from joining them. He said, “My legs are so stiff these days, you must excuse
me!” Noel adds, “we find out why our old guide was so little enthusiastic [to guide us]. Narrow ladder-like steps feel their way up through the dark pagoda, suddenly ending in mid-air for no apparent reason, and massive beams run in every direction, ready to strike the head of the unwary.” Despite the difficulties of climbing up a pagoda they learned “what the inside of a pagoda was like, an intricate composition of beams fitted together without nails around five smooth pillars made of single trees.” From the top they could see two huge camphor trees said to have been planted by Kōbō Daishi in 815 and “from the northern window stretches the Inland Sea filled with islands, and behind some far-off mountains in Honshu.” The priest waited for them at the bottom of the stairs and then showed them the four wooden statues of the guardians of the pagoda – white horse, an elephant, a peacock, and mythical phoenix – situated around the base of the great beam.

From Zentsūji they took a train to Kotohira in order to visit Kompira shrine. Noel states that “the Japanese must be inveterate travelers, judging from the prosperity of Kompira-san, which ranks second after the Grand shrine of Ise itself in the number of visitors.” Noel notes that “The first half of the climb is lined with souvenir shops, along the street which is already mostly steps; then paths wind through the woods, between square stone posts standing close together. On them are inscribed the offerings of countless pilgrims.” At the top, they find two buildings filled with various votive tablets and offerings, paintings of sea battles, model ships, rusty anchors and anchor chains from real boats, swords and for some reason locks of human hair.
Southward to Kochi

After visiting Kompira, they travelled south by train to the town of Awa-Ikeda, known for its production of tobacco. Noels mentions how cold it is at night in this town in the center of Shikoku surrounded by the mountains, and so in order to warm up they order sake after dinner and ask the inn keeper for two geisha “to help pour [the alcohol] faster and play a tune or so.” However, only one geisha appeared and the inn keeper said that she only asked one to come because she could play the samisen herself and wanted the men to save some money. The inn keeper also said that Noel and Pippon were the first foreigners to come to Awa Ikeda.

Around noon the next morning, the two of them took the new southbound train for the city of Kōchi, which until now “one could only reach Kochi by a long bus journey.” Along the way they “pass[ed] through many tunnels along the limpid green waters of the Yoshino that rush about the great boulders in its bed” and they realized, “what a difficult piece of engineering was the construction of this railway…” They saw Tosa Iwahara (土佐岩原) station, which had just open a few weeks previous, passed through a “clean little village with a brand new station of fresh unpainted wood” called Tosa Ananai (土佐穴内駅) and a place called
Amatsubo, where Noel says that “the divide is crossed, and after a long tunnel we coast down the Pacific slopes of Shikoku.” They also stopped at such stations as Tosa-Yamada (土佐山田) and Gomen (御免) before reaching their final destination, Kochi (高知) station.

At Kōchi

At Kōchi train station an official gave them “a map of the city, together with a list of hotels, so that we have no trouble whatsoever in finding our way around.” From there they made their way to Tomo-no-ya (友の家), “a comfortable Japanese inn down a side street near the river.” According to a tourist pamphlet from 1935 this inn is quiet and convenient, and the owners offer a morning bath and a shuttle service by car - most likely to the train station. It seems that this inn was destroyed by air raids during World War II and was never rebuilt. When Noel and Pippon arrived at the inn the local tourism association (土佐観光協会) provided them “with some interesting postcards, several booklets on Shikoku, and a map of the island.”

Since it was New Year’s Eve they noticed that people were busily preparing for the New Year. People were buying mochi (glutinous rice cakes) and new kitchen equipment such as brooms. Others were cleaning their homes or getting haircuts or their hair arranged in traditional styles. Noel and his travel companion went to sleep with the “sound of hurrying geta outside returning home” and the sound of the temple bell being struck 108 times to usher in the New Year. The next morning after having the first bath of the year, greeting the inn owner and drinking “at least three cups of o-toso for wealth, long life and happiness”, and then eating breakfast, Noel went outside to find that “many of the citizens of Kochi were already worshipping at the prefectural shrine. Women in their best kimono, officials in morning coats, stand before the sanctuary and clap their hands. Even some very old men come in simple dress, and students in shiny uniforms, but nearly all wearing new geta.”

In his writings Noel also mentions some well-known local traditions and sites. He
describes the castle in the center of town which “still has its three-storeyed [sic] keep, in the same state in which the daimyo Yamanouchi left it some sixty years ago.” As well he states that “the dogs of Tosa [Kochi] are famous also for their fighting natures, and contests are organized every year by many owners.” And he adds that “in this part of Shikoku, umbrella-making is a particularly prosperous occupation.” Interestingly, the umbrellas are not used for their regular use, but as Noel writes “they take the place of sails, a fact hard to believe before we saw some small boats skimming over the waters of the bay with kasa attached obliquely to their short masts. There could be no more convenient rig for lazy fishermen.” (fig. 4)

Fig. 4 – Left: Postcard set cover Right: Postcard of kasabune (umbrella boats) (date: around 1930s)

To Nakamura

The following morning Noel and Pippon continue their journey around Shikoku. This time they board the ship “Tosa Maru” bound for the town of Shimoda (now part of Shimanto city) down the coast towards Cape Ashizuri. Noel writes, “There is an excellent steward on board who is greatly astonished to see us at first, but soon lays out our blankets over the tatami covered space below decks, and brings us each a square pillow made of rush straw.” On the way they stop at Susaki where “lumber and its by-products were the chief industries.” After
sundown they stop at a place called Irino, but since they were not at the port they had expected to arrive at, they were not sure how to reach their expected destination of Nakamura, “the largest town in this part of Shikoku.” Fortunately, a young naval lieutenant told them in English that they could take a bus there, so they boarded a “family-like bus with baskets of hens under the seats.” Noel describes the town as follows: “The main street of Nakamura is lined with large houses with heavy roofs.... The town limits are marked by a high, thick wall that no doubt protected the inhabitants from floods in former days.” The lieutenant who traveled with them on the bus took them to an inn, but after settling in and getting changed Noel and Pippon, “dressed in the hotel’s cotton yukata that barely reached to [their] knees,” followed someone from the inn across the road to the public bathhouse. Needless to say, the owner of the bathhouse was shocked to see foreigners in town and said, “You are the first foreigners that ever came before my eyes.” They stayed the night and enjoyed breakfast, including an unexpected cup of coffee, the following morning before they departed.

**Onward to Uwajima and Takahama**

For the first time on their trip Noel and Pippon hire someone to drive them in a car. From Nakamura they went to Kawasaki, a distance of forty kilometers, and really enjoyed the explanations that the driver provided along the way, but the roads were narrow and quite dangerous. At a town called Kawasaki they transferred to a bus and after several hours reached a little mountain town called Yoshino in a blinding snowstorm. They had to wait about an hour until their train so they took a stroll in the small town. At four, they departed for Uwajima, but because foreigners were a rare sight in this part of Shikoku, other passengers stared at them and some asked Pippon such questions as “Where are you from? Are you German? Why are you going to Uwajima?” Some even offered their homes to stay the night.

Noel states that Uwajima is “a pleasant city of 50,000 souls, situated in the bottom of a bay, among mandarine [sic] groves. It is entirely surrounded by mountains, and reminds one of
Innsbruck, with its street vistas of snow-capped peaks... Noel knows that this town is famous for its bull-fights and states that “no humanitarians could find fault with the sport; it is not the carnage that takes place in the Spanish area. Here no horses are gored to death, neither are the bulls worried into a blind rage by the lance of the picador.” After having an enjoyable time at a local café they were questioned by the police as to where they came from and what they were doing in Shikoku.

Noel and Pippon stayed the night and in the morning “an excellent mountain bus with a sure driver [took them] up steadily up and up and 2.5 hours over several of the highest mountain ranges in this part of the island.” At the town of Ozu Noel and Pippon “board[ed] the train for Takahama, on what seems to be the last lap of [their] rather leisurely Shikoku pilgrimage.” At Takahama they boarded a ship and ended their journey around Shikoku. When asked, “What was most interesting about your trip around Shikoku?”, Noel replied that the scenery of the river and gorges of Oboke/Koboke in the Awa-Ikeda area was great. Pippon agreed. They also both said that the people of Shikoku are very kind to foreigners and that Shikoku is a good place with mountains, oceans and hot springs.

Noel’s observation of pilgrims

One interesting aspect of Noel’s journey around Shikoku is his description of pious people making a pilgrimage to sacred sites on Shikoku. In his writings Noel offers a description of temples and pilgrims during the 1930s, when tourism was becoming more popular. He also includes a few photos of pilgrims (see fig. 5 – left and center). Along his journey he saw pilgrims at Zentsūji and Uwajima with the latter group “plodding slowly up through the snow.” He states that pilgrims traveling to the eighty-eight temples are “a familiar sight all through Shikoku” and that they are “on pilgrimages to fulfill some vow, or in thanks for prayers granted.” He adds that for the three-month journey the pilgrims carry all of their belongings on their back, wear white clothes and a basket-like hat, carry a bell and a book of prayers.
well, they have a little box around their neck in which they keep slips of paper, but, “the indispensable essential is the accumulating collection of tablets that are issued at each temple. These tablets are stamped with the name and impressed with the seal of the respective temples.”

According to Noel pilgrims spend a few sen daily for travelling expenses and accept the hospitality of the temples at night.

In his writings Noel also mentions women who are “especially anxious to visit the Eighty-eight Temples [because] there is a belief among them that they may have difficulties in finding suitors unless they fill this part of their education.”

In the May 1936 edition of the Tourist’s “A Shikoku Pilgrimage” by Henry Noel, there is a photograph of two women in pilgrim attire (see fig. 5 center), but interestingly this same photograph taken by M. Suzuki is also used in the December 1935 edition of the magazine Tabi (旅)(p.49) as well as in the May 1936 edition of the How to See Shikoku pamphlet published by the Japan Tourist Bureau. A slightly different photograph of these same two women can be found in a Japanese pamphlet “Shikoku no Tabiro”(四国の旅路) from September 1936. (fig. 5 right)

![Fig. 5:](image)

Left: Tourist (March 1936) Caption: “A Pilgrim Waiting his boat at Takamatsu, Shikoku.

Center: Tourist (May 1936) p.29 Caption: “Unless she has been on a pilgrimage to the Eighty-Eight Temples, a young woman in Shikoku has hardly a chance of finding a suitor.”

Conclusion

During the 1930s increasingly more people visited Japan from overseas, yet it seems that few visited Shikoku. At that time Japan Tourist Bureau declared that “Shikoku has much to offer to visitor. Attractions in the island are many and varied. Yet, most of them have long failed to attract the attention of travelers from abroad.” Fortunately, Henry Noel was one person who discovered the interesting sites and customs of Shikoku and wrote about them. His journey around the island of Shikoku by train, ship, car and bus during this period is rare and his route, including some very remote areas, is certainly unique. However, thanks to his experience as a newspaper reporter, he offers very explicit descriptions of the places he visits, the local people, the customs as well as of the pilgrims making their way around the island. His account offers the reader a rare and detailed look at Shikoku during the mid-1930s.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the relatives of Henry Noel who have corresponded with me over the past couple of years and have provided useful information about Henry. I hope that with further searching more materials about him and his stay in Japan may emerge and it may lead to a more comprehensive work regarding his life and description of things related to Japan.

2 Japan Tourist Bureau. How to See Shikoku. (Tokyo, 1936) 2.


5 「昨年来朝したばかりなのに、日本語をしゃべることも書くことが出来るほどの日本通である」大島観光ホテルの一晩”, Tourist. (November 1935) 24.


8 email from Stevan Stevanovic to author: July 28, 2018.

9 Stored at the University Paul-Valéry Central Library, in Montpellier (call number: TL 51.75045-2).

10 List of In-Bound Passengers. United States Department of Justice Immigration and Naturalization Service

11 “According to information on the Library of Congress’ employee newsletter, the Information Bulletin, Henry M. Noel worked at Library of Congress in the late 1950s - early 1960s. He was promoted from a trainee cataloger in the Far Eastern Languages section, GS-5 to cataloger in the Descriptive Catalog Division, GS-7 in 1959. He had become a permanent staff member in 1954, so he was likely first hired around July 1953. He resigned from the Library in July 1963. You can find the Information Bulletin online at www.HathiTrust.org” From Cheryl Fox, LC Archives Specialist, Manuscript Division. Email to author: July 28, 2018.


13 Email to author from Archivist at American University: July 17, 2018.


16 See bibliography for list of articles.


18 Ibid. (p4)


20 朝日新聞. “お経、刺身、銭湯・日本研究の第一課卒・帝大入学希望のドイツ青年来朝 “1933 年 10 月 7 日.”

According to the February 1929 issue of The Tourist (p. 42) the Midori Maru was an "excellently equipped diesel engine boat of 1,700 tons... put in service by the Osaka Shosen Kaisha for its Osaka-Beppu Line, which passes through the world-famous maritime scenery of the Inland Sea." The boat for Beppu leaves Osaka at 2pm, leaves Kobe at 3:40pm and leaves Takamatsu at 9:20pm.


Karakoro. 191.


How to See Takamatsu. Nov 1936 – “The picturesque city of Takamatsu (pop. 86,900), capital of the Kagawa prefecture, is situated on the south-east of the Inland Sea and constitutes a main entrance to the Shikoku Island.”


Ibid, 192.

Ibid, 192.

The forty-three-meter pagoda was first built during the 8th century, but collapsed due to a strong wind in 1070. It was rebuilt around 1338–1342, but set on fire in 1558. Reconstruction began in 1760 and was completed 1804. However, in 1840 it was destroyed by fire caused by lightning. The order to reconstruct the pagoda was given in 1845, but it was not completed until 1902. (Reference『屏風浦霊場・大本山善通寺』1939. p.13. and a document received from Zentsūji.

Karakoro, 195.

Karakoro, 194.

Karakoro, 194.


Karakoro, 196.


Karakoro, 196-197., Tourist (April 1936) 5.

Tourist. (April 1936) 5.


Tourist. (April 1936) 6.

Tourist. (April 1936)7.


Tourist. (April 1936) 7. Note: Noel incorrectly writes it as Tosa Annai.

Wikipedia. “Shigeto Station”. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shiget%C5%8D_Station (Feb 18,2019) The station opened on 21 June 1930 when the then Köchi Line was extended northwards from Tosa-Yamada to Kakumodani. At this time it was named Amatsubo Station (天坪駅) and was operated by Japanese Government Railways (JGR), later becoming Japanese National Railways (JNR). On 1 October 1963, it was renamed Shigetō.
85

45 Tourist. (April 1936) 7.


47 Japan Tourist Bureau. How to See Shikoku. May, 1936 “The city of Kochi with a population of 103,114 is the biggest city in the southern part of the island...The city’s products include paper, coral works, fishing hooks, and marine products.”

48 Tourist. (April 1936) 7.

49 Ibid, 7.

50 Pamphlet title: Kensho jisagashitsuki Kochi annai.『懸賞字探し附高知案内』高知案内社 1935.6

51 “吉井勇の高知を歩く” http://www.tokyo-kurenaidan.com/yoshii_kouchi_02.htm (Feb 18,2019)

52 Tourist. (April 1936) 8.

53 Tourist. (May 1936) 25

54 Tourist. (May 1936) 25.

Note: “Toso (屠蘇), or o-toso, is spiced medicinal sake traditionally drunk during New Year celebrations in Japan. Toso is drunk to flush away the previous year’s maladies and to aspire to lead a long life.”

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toso)

55 Ibid, 25.

56 Ibid, 25.


60 Tourist. (May 1936) 26.


62 Tourist. (May 1936) 27.

63 Karakoro, 206

64 Tourist. (May 1936) 27.

65 In "A Shikoku Pilgrimage (2)" Noel states that they stayed at a place called “Kashiwa Kan”, but officials at the local tourism office in Shimanto city as well as an archivist at the Kochi Prefectural Museum of History could not confirm the existence of such a place. However, in the article“紅毛二人四国遍路のこと”(Tourist. March 1936, 9–12) where Noel and Pippon are interviewed about their trip, Pippon says that they stayed at a place
called “Hanaya” (花屋) in Nakamura town. A staff member at the Museum of History found a listing for this inn in phone books from 1931 and 1950. (email from Keisuke Okamoto. Feb 21, 2019)

66 Karakoro, 206.
67 Karakoro, 207.
69 Tourist. (May 1936) 28.
70 Tourist. (May 1936) 28.
71 Ibid, 28.
72 Ibid, 28.
73 “紅毛二人四国遍路のこと”, Tourist. March 1936, 12.
74 Tourist. (May 1936) 28.
75 Karakoro, 192.
76 Tourist. (April 1936) 2.
77 Karakoro. 193.
78 Karakoro, 193.
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