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Japanese Secular Pilgrimage Tourists in Finland

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The tour patterns of Japanese tourists coming to Finland are changing from traditionally collective ones towards more individualistic direction, because the tourists can obtain information themselves and decide the destinations themselves relating to their own interests thanks to digitalization and network. Some of them are enthusiastic to visit several places related to the specific cultural contents they are interested in, such as film, music, design, architecture and nature, in the form of “secular pilgrimage tour”.

In the primary research, the task is to find an answer to the following question: “what kind of secular pilgrimages are made by Japanese tourists in Finland?” The research starts with quantitative analyzing of the travel stories available on websites to find out some tour patterns. It shows the major places/attractions relating to the interests of the tourists. At the same time, it also shows minor destinations of niche demand.

In the second part of the research, one-on-one interviews are conducted with four of the tourists who have made a secular pilgrimage tour and one tour coordinator in Finland. The data from these interviews add richer description to the result of the primary research, drawing clearer picture of the tourists’ true feelings and more characteristics to the primary analysis of the destinations.

The goal of this research is to find what themes and stories exist behind Japanese tourists’ secular pilgrimages, which lead to the motives of Japanese tourists to travel to Finland. The ultimate research question is to find out what arouses the strong interest of Japanese tourists and what tempts Japanese tourists to secular pilgrimage in Finland. Their “secular pilgrimage tour” gives more clues about their expectation further than typical image of Japanese tourists.

Keywords: Japanese tourist, secular pilgrimage, cultural interests, Finland

Table of contents

1	Introduction	5
2	Secular Pilgrimage Tourism	7
3	Tour Offerings by Tour Operating Companies.....	9
4	Themes and Stories	10
5	Approach and Methods	11
5.1	Research Question and Hypotheses	12
5.2	Quantitative Research Approach and Data Analysis of Existing Secular Pilgrimages.....	12
5.3	Qualitative Research Approach and Data Analysis of Themes and Stories of the Pilgrimages.....	14
5.4	Reliability and Validity	17
5.5	Ethical Considerations.....	17
6	Results	17
6.1	Quantitative Research on Existing Pilgrimages: Blog Analysis.....	18
6.1.1	Film Pilgrimage	18
6.1.2	Music Pilgrimage.....	20
6.1.3	Design Pilgrimage	22
6.1.4	Architecture Pilgrimage	24
6.1.5	Nature Pilgrimage	26
6.1.6	Other Secular Pilgrimages	29
6.1.7	Discussions on the Existing Secular Pilgrimages.....	31
6.2	Qualitative Research Theme Interviews.....	32
6.2.1	Case 1: Japanese Tourist on Design Tour	32
6.2.2	Case 2: Tour Coordinator on Architecture Tour	33
6.2.3	Case 3: Japanese Tourist on Ice Hockey Tour.....	36
6.2.4	Case 4: Japanese Tourist on Finnish Culture and Moomin Tour	38
6.2.5	Case 5: Japanese Tourist on Film Tour	39
7	Analysis	42
8	Conclusion.....	44
	Figures	50
	Tables	51

1 Introduction

It is often said that the Japanese tourists have collective characteristics and they are very busy and pressured by a tight schedule on a package tour. On a tour, which includes multitude of things to see and do, they are forced to work very hard to take in everything, to see everything and to photograph everything. The average Japanese tours are also shopping-oriented, because the Japanese have “gift-giving and gift-receiving culture.” They are particularly interested in purchasing branded items and shopping such items is the highlight of the package tour in some cases. (Berger 2010, 42-43.)

In addition, according to the research conducted by the Finnish Tourist Board in the early 90s, Finland as a tourist’s destination was lacking distinguishable tourist attractions and the available tourism products were narrowed by seasonality, which made the destination weak in motivating Japanese tourists to visit. (Finnish Tourist Board 1991, 172-173). Moreover, the all Nordic countries as a group tended to be identified as one destination than each individual country. The image of the area held by the Japanese public was a beauty of nature, and this image alone was not strong enough to attract significant number of tourists. Fjord in Norway was actually the only destination that was emphasized on a tour in the Nordic countries. (Finnish Tourist Board 1991, 170.)

In the last 25 years the situation has changed and today an increasing number of Japanese tourists customize their own trips, focusing on the experiences to be gained in a trip related to their personal interests. The research of Finnish Tourist Board in 1991 already pointed that middle-aged females seek to gain knowledge and experience during their journeys abroad and elderly tourists show a strong interest in historical sites and cultural heritage (Finnish Tourist Board 1991, 30).

Young people, who have a lower barrier of communication in English and are skilled in collecting travel information using internet and network, are more inclined toward active pursuits. Basically most Japanese travelers have clear and practical objects in mind for their trips and visualize beforehand how they will spend their time at the destination (Finnish Tourist Board 1991, 42). Therefore, widespread use of digital equipment such as a mobile phone and active networking through the internet enables effective diffusion of travel information about the destination, and it creates personalization and exploration in travelling.

According to statistical data on Japanese consumers by Japan Travel Bureau report, approximately half of overseas travelers are individual travelers. The number is naturally increasing due to the expansion of hotel booking engines and increase of travel related websites. Finnish

Tourist Board promoted winter products on Rakuten Travel, which is one of the most popular sites among individual travelers from September to December 2012. (Noto 2013b, 3.)

Moreover, “Northern Europe boom” started in Japan around 2006 (Ishimura 2014, 46). In the beginning of the boom each Nordic country was not individually identified, however, Finland seems successful to be separately recognized from the other countries in recent years with distinguishable Finnish brands such as Marimekko. Also its social welfare system and education attracted Japanese attention. There are about 30 Marimekko shops in Japan (Marimekko 2015), a Finnish film festival (Finland Film Festival 2014) and a Finnish music festival (Music Finland 2015) are held every year and Finnish education style is actively introduced by the media. All these factors together are strongly appealing Finland and familiarizing Finland to the public as well as media such as TV, magazines and newspaper. These Finnish brand names and festivals about Finnish culture became a strong motivational factor of Japanese tourists to explore Finland to experience their interests and deepen their knowledge about Finland. It is well-known that the Japanese film “Ruokala Lokki” that was filmed in Helsinki sparked new interests of young women in Finland and increased name recognition of Finnish brand names such as Marimekko and Iittala by product placement in the film (School Cinema Association 2014).

The Finnish tourism in Japanese market continues healthy growth even after the winter 2012-2013. The number of overnight stays in summer from May to August of 2013 was 73,314, which is 25% more than the last year. The most notable thing is that the number of overnight stays in Finland got plus 25%, while the other Scandinavian countries got less number of overnight stays (Noto 2013a, 4.) For long time, Japanese guidebooks covered all the Nordic countries in one issue. But nowadays there are several only Finland guidebooks available in the market (Kuulumisia Japanista 2015).

In the case where the tourist makes a round tour to visit places related to his/her interest in contents of film, music and design, Masubuchi (2008, 33-34) calls them “contents tourism” or “pilgrimage tourism”, which originated from film tourism in Western countries and it has broadened to other contents. In Helsinki region there are some tour operating companies which specialize in a customized tour based on the customer’s interest such as Aalto’s modern architecture and above-mentioned film “Ruokala Lokki” (My Suomi 2015).

This research aims to grasp secular pilgrimage tour patterns by collecting data from Japanese tourists’ online travel stories, and then recognizing themes, contents and stories behind the pilgrimages by conducting theme interviews to the tourists and tour coordinators. Then ultimately the research aims to find the factors behind the interests of Japanese tourists and what tempts Japanese tourists to a secular pilgrimage in Finland. Their secular pilgrimage

tour would reveal the existing factors for grasping Japanese tourists' interests. Those factors would give more clues for creating personalized tourism products in the future than would the maintaining of the image of typical Japanese tourists.

As the author has experience of music pilgrimages in Finland and also of working for a tour company in Helsinki, the popular destinations and motivations of the Japanese pilgrims in this research is the matter of deep interest. According to the author's experience, most of the Japanese pilgrims in Finland are "Finland fans," who are enthusiastic about their interests related to Finland, frequently visit Finland and actively make a connection with Finland when they are in Japan. Though the actual behavior of pilgrims is often indistinguishable from that of tourists (Cohen 1992, 53), the author considers that those who are "Finland fans" have found motivation coming more from an inner feeling than from physical tourist attractions.

2 Secular Pilgrimage Tourism

In order to research the secular pilgrimage tours made by Japanese tourists in Finland, the concept of secular pilgrimage tourism is discussed in the following.

The term "pilgrimage" means a journey to a sacred place and an act of worship in order to feel closer to God. A person who makes such a journey is called a "pilgrim." Pilgrimage encourages our search for a deeper meaning and purpose in our daily lives. Through pilgrimage, the spirit is transformed, a positive outlook is reinforced and the way we look at everyday life is changed. (Shahshahani 2009, 161.)

The term "tourist" means a person who makes a journey, usually for pleasure, and returns to the starting point (Collins-Kreiner 2010, 442). Therefore, "pilgrim" is identified as a religious traveler and the "tourist" as a vacationer, however, this contemporary use of terminology is a culturally constructed polarity that blurs travelers' motives (Smith 1992). It is difficult to distinguish between pilgrimages and tourism. Both phenomenon are motivated by an emotional desire of individuals to visit sites meaningful to them that will ultimately add more meaning to life. The motivations of visitors are highly diverse, ranging from curiosity to a search for meaning. (Collins-Kreiner 2010, 452.) If there was a distinct difference between them, it would be that pilgrims are travelling toward the place or centre they believe to be sacred and where they can share the place with people who believe as they do. Tourists on the other hand are travelling toward the other and towards something different (Hovi 2010, 213).

In this research, a term “secular pilgrimage” is used to describe Japanese tourists visiting places of special significance that play a part in the Finnish cultures of their interests on their vacation. Their aim is to experience personal growth and exploration outside their everyday world. The Japanese secular pilgrimage tourists in Finland are assumed to be digging deep into Finnish cultures of their interests and ultimately find meaning and attachment to what they can feel empathic with.

According to Masubuchi (2008, 33), the secular pilgrimage tours are made because “fans are interested in the content of the works, and visit their original production site in what is referred to as pilgrimages to sacred places.” A sacred site represents the origin of all things and the centre of the world of each society, which is often marked by a shrine (Hyde & Harman 2011, 1344). In this research on secular pilgrimages, the sacred places are, for example, filming locations, architectural works of the architecture and concerts of the musician.

The basis of secular pilgrimage tourism is to add stories and themes via content as part of the atmosphere and image distinctive to a region, and to use these stories and themes as tourist resources. Due to digitalization, it would be easier for a region to develop its own content industry without excess concentration of tourism to the capital. (Masubuchi 2008, 40.) Therefore, in the case of Finland, it can be said that the secular pilgrimage tourism has a possibility to expand Finnish tourism to the other regions than Helsinki, by creating the right themes and stories through atmosphere and image distinctive to each region.

Moreover, secular pilgrimage tourism is tourist-driven in nature, in which the individual tourists collect information themselves and transmitting processed information through digitalization and network. Travel stories and word-of-mouth on the internet plays an important role in the case of secular pilgrimage tourism. It is the tourist who decides the purpose of travel, tourism resource and values of the destinations. The challenges of secular pilgrimage tourism is that firstly the content’s popularity is not always permanent and secondly management of tourism resource is difficult for locals, if it depends more on themes and stories than on the physical regional resources such as architecture. In any case, local residents and officials should well understand and get familiar with the contents and the interests of the tourists. (Okamoto 2012, 3.)

This research presents the contents of secular pilgrimages made by Japanese tourists in Finland and the motives of the Japanese pilgrims. These motives share some commonality with the motives for leisure tourism and other motives are unique to the secular pilgrimages. Through the sacred sites and the motives, the expectations of the Japanese tourists towards

Finland as a tourist destination can be explained and unique popular destinations are revealed as well.

3 Tour Offerings by Tour Operating Companies

This chapter is about the type of tour products provided by tour operating companies. The secular pilgrimage has similar problems as modern mass tourism does, such as the problem of finding accommodation, organizing the trip especially for a large number of people, the problem of food, eating and healthcare (Vukonić 1996, 137-8). Therefore, it is not rare that the tour products provided by tour operating companies are used as a part of pilgrimage in order to solve the problems. According to Varamäki's research (2004, 88), the stereotyped image of Finland for Japanese is 'a country of thousands of lakes, Santa Claus and the Moomins'. Serita, Pöntiskoski, Mallenius, Leikos, Villberg, Rinne, Yppärilä and Hurme (2009, 50) also found in their research that the mental image of many Japanese consumers have of Finland is very stereotypical and relates all to Finnish nature, winter and the Moomins. In the following, it is discussed whether the currently provided tour products matches the expectations of the Japanese pilgrims.

According to major travel companies specialized in trips to Finland, a trip to Lapland to experience northern lights and Santa Clause is primarily advertised on their webpage. Secondly the tours related to Finnish culture such as Finnish design, film and Moomin are provided as a regularly conducted tour. In addition, the arrangement of different type of accommodation such as homestay, apartment stay and farm stay is available, as well as study tours related to Finnish education and social welfare facilities are provided. (FinnTour 2015; Net Travel Service 2015; Alis Tour 2015.)

On the other hand, the most popular tour product of My Suomi Oy, which is a local tour operating company specializing tours focused on Finnish culture for Japanese individual tourists, is the tour on Finnish modern architect Alvar Aalto and design featuring Marimekko, Iittala and Arabia, followed by the tour to visit shooting locations of the film "Ruokola Lokki." Ihara (2010) analyzes that the source of success of My Suomi Oy is high level of services provided by highly skilled personnel and the unique products such as design-focused tourism products for Japanese tourists. (Ihara 2010, 37, 63-64.)

Consequently, based on the offerings of the major tour companies, the tours for the Japanese tourists mainly feature Lapland to experience northern lights and Santa Claus, Finnish design, Finnish films and Moomin, whereas My Suomi Oy conducts the tour on Finnish specific culture

referring Aalto, Marimekko and the film “Ruokala Lokki.” The tour products of My Suomi Oy are provided with thorough understanding of the Japanese culture to meet high expectations in the Japanese society where people put emphasizes on performance and professionalism when judging the quality of services (Ihara 2010, 64). Therefore, it can be said that the tour products of the major tour companies answer the need of the typical Japanese tourists who travel towards something different from their usual life, whereas the tour products of a local tour company like My Suomi Oy meets the needs of the pilgrims who travels toward the center to share with the people with the same enthusiasm.

4 Themes and Stories

This chapter is about the themes and stories behind the tours. Finland has been successful in establishing Finnish brands and image to attract a significant number of Japanese tourists in recent years. It depends more on themes and stories than on the physical regional resources such as sites of historical significance. The existing themes and stories used in Finnish tourism are discussed in the following.

The official travel information site of Finland, Visit Finland (Visit Finland 2015) sets attractive selection of themes “silence, please”, “wild and free” and “cultural beat”. “Silence” is represented by the topics about activities in the nature such as ‘summer cottage, sauna, and picking berries and mushrooms’. Then “wild and free” is represented by Nordic sports and outdoor activities such as ‘cycling, ice swimming and husky ride’ and “cultural beat” is represented by Finnish culture and food. The themes strongly appeal characteristic Finnish people’s common activities in everyday life and unique activities in the nature of Finland. Each topic is described in details, even with individual Finnish person’s story in some cases. These personal stories would make Japanese tourists more interested in experiencing Finnish customs and feel familiar with Finland.

Ihara’s research about My Suomi Oy (2010, 55), shows the respondents’ wishes for the next visit. The most popular destinations or activities are seeing the northern lights, the midnight sun and sauna. These activities and sceneries are not available in Japan and exactly unique attractions in Finland. It is evident that Japanese tourists’ typical expectations are similar to what the Finnish tourism organization offers. In addition, the tourists have minor interests such as visiting Rauma and enjoying live music.

Especially Lapland plays an important role in attracting Japanese tourists with an image of something unique such as northern light in polar nights and unique stories about extreme cold

arctic weather and original Santa Clause. “The Japanese come to Lapland believing that a baby conceived under northern lights will be a boy” (Helsinki Times 2014). The purpose of visiting Lapland is not only observing phenomenon of natures, “usually the tourists are satisfied with the experience because of something else, mainly attributed to the clean air and quiet wilderness” (Helsinki Times 2014).

In addition, Shoji (2015) analyzes Finland’s popularity for Japanese as there are certainly similarities and a feeling of closeness between Japan and Finland, such as “usage of materials like wood and concrete in architecture, appreciation of modern simplicity and ‘less is more’ functional approach in design, and both lives and thoughts are based on nature, as well as respecting traditions and attaching high values on advanced innovations at the same time”. In addition, Varamäki (2004, 20) points that Japanese people tend to use their own values, customs and norms as the yardstick for evaluating other cultures. For example, simple and long-lasting designs of Finnish products seem to be highly rated by the Japanese who are becoming increasingly environmentally conscious (Embassy of Finland 2009). Serita & al. (2009, 57) also discuss similarity of aesthetic ideals of Finnish and Japanese, which is mainly two things: simplicity and the use of wood and other natural materials.

Moreover, in the research about marketing Finnish design in Japan (Serita & al. 2009, 45), they mention about emphasis on stories and background information. For example, when Japanese buy an import product, he/she “expects to hear how the product is made and by who, what is the concept behind it and so on”. The product itself has a cultural meaning and in addition to it, adding background information attaches further meaning to Japanese consumers. (Serita & al. 2009, 45.)

Therefore, it can be said that Finland remains an exotic country for Japanese tourists for geographic and historic reasons, but Finnish people’s appreciation of the nature and old traditions, and valuing an innovative approach stimulate Japanese tourists’ curiosity to explore Finland more in order to find and feel similarities and closeness in a different world. A secular pilgrimage tour is one of the ways to experience a new culture and, at the same time, reaffirm and rediscover the value of Japanese nature of life, through Finnish values which they can feel empathically.

5 Approach and Methods

In this research a mixed method of quantitative and qualitative researches is used. This mixed method is useful when a researcher wants to generalize the findings to a population and

develop a detailed view of the meaning of a phenomenon or concept for individuals. In this research, first a large number of the travel stories of individuals are surveyed and then follow up with a few participants to obtain their specific views and their voices about the topic. In these situations, collecting both closed-ended quantitative data and open-ended qualitative data proves advantageous. (Cresswell 2003, 20.)

5.1 Research Question and Hypotheses

The main research question addressed by this research is that “what tempt Japanese tourists to a secular pilgrimage in Finland?” As described in introduction part, Finland does not have strong enough appealing tourist’s attractions other than nature. However, Finland has been successful establishing Finnish own brands and image to attract significant number of Japanese tourists in recent years. Therefore, hypotheses can be that “Finnish cultural contents consist of themes and stories which actually attract Japanese tourists.” Through a secular pilgrimage tour, Japanese tourists are able to see and touch authentic Finnish culture, by which they can experience the same feeling as the authors of contents they are interested in and enjoy the atmosphere distinctive to original production sites and then link the experience to their actual life and way of thinking.

In the primary research, the research question is “what kind of secular pilgrimages are made by Japanese tourists in Finland?” In the beginning of this research, firstly what factors the phenomenon consists of and what dependencies there are between the factors should be established (Kananen 2011, 41). The objective of this primary research is to get the picture of the secular pilgrimages made by Japanese tourists. It is expected that this result would show the typical destinations and also of minor destinations of niche demands as well.

Secondly, the question is more about the background of those participating on secular pilgrimage tours, “what themes and stories exist behind secular pilgrimage tours of Japanese tourists?” The objective is to deeply understand the motivation, expectation, impression and influence of interviewees on their secular pilgrimage trips. The result is expected to show themes and stories behind the secular pilgrimage tours, by analyzing what the tourists expected, what they saw and felt and what they gained from the tour.

5.2 Quantitative Research Approach and Data Analysis of Existing Secular Pilgrimages

In this stage of identifying existing secular pilgrimage tours, quantitative method is used. Quantitative method is suitable when theories can be used to describe the phenomenon (Kananen 2011, 39). In this research, this method is applicable since previous knowledge

about the Japanese tourists, which is about popular destinations of Japanese tourists' interests related to Finland, are well enough described in the previous researches in the past.

The targeted number of materials of a blog, a travel story and a travel information site, is over 50 in total. The aim here is to collect data on secular pilgrimage sites and secular pilgrimage's characteristic in each interest, therefore collecting data is stopped when no new information is gained anymore in each interest's category.

Regarding the data collecting process, travel blogs and travel stories openly available online are used in this research. Most of the travel blogs and stories are written by the individuals and posted on the travel advisory services. This research focused on the popular web services for Japanese tourists in Japanese language such as '4travel.jp' where travel stories are categorized into different theme and interests. Approximately 12-13 travel stories in each interest group were selected to read and analyze.

The advantage to using online source for the research is that target groups can be reachable regardless of their residential location (Kananen 2015, 162). Especially because the target groups are Japanese tourists living in Japan, collecting data from online sources offers savings of travel expenses. Also in the Japanese culture it is not customary to give direct feedback in a face-to-face communication, and it is possible that the true opinions and experiences are more openly revealed online. Japan has a high context culture, where internal meaning is usually embedded deep in the information and the listener is expected to be able to read between the lines to understand the unsaid part, with background knowledge. (Tella, Nevgi, & Nishimura 2008, 785-786.) Therefore, there is advantage to collecting data from travel blogs and stories of individuals tourist is that it may include their true feeling and the author can interpret what the writers mean, using the advantage of the author's being native Japanese speaker.

The data from the materials would be mainly nominal scale and ordinal scale, however, the purpose of this primary research is to get the picture of the secular pilgrimages made by Japanese tourists, not measuring the secular pilgrimage's characteristics and the reviews of the tourists. The following questions are used to analyze the online data and to group data according to different themes.

Question	Attributes
1. Which category does motivation belong to?	1. Film 2. Music 3. Design 4. Architecture

	5. Nature 6. Others
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(The following answers are counted in each category separately.)

2.What places visited and what activities done?	
3.Gender?	
4.With whom?	
5.How long?	1. Less than a week 2.1-2 weeks 3.3-4 weeks 4.More than 4 weeks
6.What transportation used within Finland?	
7.What accommodation used?	

Table 1: The basic questions and attributes for the quantitative research

When the data analysis is made by primary researching, the different answer types are put into Excel spreadsheet. Then different types of secular pilgrimages with popular destinations are shown in the lists. The answers to the questions in ordinal scale are not always mentioned in travel blogs and travel stories, therefore description of answers in ordinal scale are given only in case the difference between categories is remarkable. In case a trip combines secular pilgrimage and some ordinary sightseeing, only the secular pilgrimage part was used in the analysis, though it was challenging to draw a clear line between them.

The result of analyzing is used for selecting sampling of the secondary qualitative research interview. Preferably the target respondents of the theme interview are the persons whose visits to Finland have had the similar characteristics as found in the primary quantitative research result and also persons whose tour was different in contrast. For this sample selection purpose, the answers in nominal scale and descriptions are carefully stored including exceptional cases. That is, a theory would be extended by gained results, and also the sufficient grounds for the interpretation would be given.

5.3 Qualitative Research Approach and Data Analysis of Themes and Stories of the Pilgrimages

Qualitative method is used when there are no knowledge/theories available on the phenomenon, when acquiring a deep understanding of the phenomenon or when creating new theories and hypotheses (Kananen 2011, 41). Therefore, this secondary research uses qualitative method in order to discuss the hypotheses "Finnish cultural contents consist of

theme and stories which actually attract Japanese tourists”. For this purpose, interviews and as well as the literary sources are used to draw a conclusion in this research.

In this research, a theme interview is used with a positivist’s approach, in which the subject matter is observed to collect data without interaction, using externally developed hypothesis derived from theory (Lapan & al. 2011, 76). Depth interview is a research method that enables the researcher to obtain rather deep, rich, and “thick” descriptions for the research problem (Varamäki 2004, 37). In the interviews, “one theme has to be discussed and considered thoroughly before a new interview is started” (Kananen 2011, 53). In order to gain richer description of the result from the primary research, one-on-one interviews are conducted with tour coordinators who have expertise about Japanese tourists’ tastes and behaviors as well as deep knowledge of Finnish cultural attractions. In addition some of the tourists who have done a secular pilgrimage tour in order to ask more details of their tours. Since deep understanding can also be interpreted as a verbal description which is comprehensive and easier to understand (Walliman 2004, 141), all the interviews were orally made face-to-face or on the telephone.

In order to collect data, the professional network of the author was used to find the interviewees, who are four tourists and one tour coordinator. All the interviewees are adult women. Two of the interviewees were accessible in Helsinki, where the author is available to meet the interviewees, and their interviews were conducted face-to-face at a café in Helsinki. The rest of the interviews were conducted on the telephone because those interviewees were not accessible in Helsinki. The interviews were conducted in a relaxing atmosphere in order to make the interview conversation flow naturally and to expand their stories.

Regarding sampling, non-probability sampling is used in this qualitative research, which is used to demonstrate that a particular characteristic, such as extreme or typical of other cases, exists in the population. Also completeness of qualitative data can be determined by using a variety of sources of data relating to the same event (Walliman 2004, 142). In addition, the sampling approach in this research is a mixture of convenience sampling and theoretical sampling. Therefore, the target respondents of theme interviews are preferably the persons whose tour has had the similar characteristics found in the primary quantitative research results and also persons who have had a secular pilgrimage tour in a different interest as well, in order to gain a variety of data. The coordinators are preferably specialized in arranging tours with specific purpose/characteristic, such as a study tour of architecture. As theoretical sampling approach is applied, the result of the analysis leads to a necessary information which is not yet covered by previous interviews.

The theme interview was conducted with the following basic questions. The questions are open-ended questions in order to create interaction and reflection to find unforeseen facts and to expand the stories of the respondents.

1. Tell me about your secular pilgrimage trip
2. What is your motivation for the secular pilgrimage trip
3. Tell me about your interests related to Finland
4. Compare Finland and Japan from the point of view of the interviewee's interest.

For this qualitative research, the research question is to define "what themes and stories exist behind secular pilgrimage tours of Japanese tourists?". Therefore, the aim of the interview is to find what drove the Japanese tourists to make a secular pilgrimage, what they expected for the tour and how it influenced their feeling and style of life. The qualitative research questions focus on explorations of behavior or social organization and of their meaning to the study population (Lapan & al. 2011, 79). When analyzing the data, the social and cultural behavior should be taken into consideration.

As the data collection and analysis in qualitative research are strongly connected to each other (Kananen 2011, 49), collecting data by interviews and analyzing them are conducted simultaneously. In the process of analyzing qualitative data of interviews, a grounded theory approach method is used. First, all the data is divided into segments and labeled where each piece of data is categorized, summarized and described by coding data. Then segments are compared to each other in order to find a new suitable code, finding more similarities and differences during those coding process. Then focused coding process is applied in order to capture the main theme in the data, using codes which appear frequently. As a number of category should 4-15 according to Attride-Stirling (2001, 392), the data is refined and synthesized by comparing data and codes, and then categories. Then the categories are put into a correlation diagram in order to find the hidden message or patterns in the data and create the extended theory, which would be the conclusion to the research question. As hypotheses is set that 'Finnish cultural contents consist of theme and stories which actually attract Japanese tourists', the hidden message or patterns would identify themes and stories behind Finnish products for Japanese tourists.

In addition, factor analysis technique is used in order to recognize the strongest association between the different interest categories. For example, a group of people with interests in architecture and the one with interest in design might be attracted by some common themes in their secular pilgrimages. This procedure will reveal the common themes of overall secular pilgrimages of Japanese tourists.

5.4 Reliability and Validity

“Reliability means consistency and repeatability of the measurement and research results” (Kananen 2011, 66). In this research, the primary quantitative research will produce the similar result if it is conducted again, as it is based on written material. However, the phenomenon may change over time and the survey could make the respondents’ behavior (Kananen 2011, 126). In the long term, interests and styles in traveling of Japanese tourists are changing, which might lead a different result with the latest written materials even with the same research method.

Validity is the degree to which a questionnaire reflects reality. The validity is related to the generalizability of the findings to the population. (Kananen 2011, 128.) As the information on the internet, especially tour company’s information is shared with everyone, the generalizability of the findings is valid to a certain degree. Some travel story and blog might include the writer’s own biased opinion. However, this research adopted a mixed method by using a triangulation of data collection, which consists of analyzing travel blogs and stories, interviews and observations based on the author’s experience of working in tourism industry. The aim of triangulation is to increase the understanding of complex phenomenon, in which agreement among different sources confirm validity (Malterud 2001, 487). In this research, a triangulation is used in order to better understanding on what attracts Japanese pilgrims to Finland.

5.5 Ethical Considerations

All the rights of everyone in any way concerned must be respected. The individuals’ right to withdraw from the research should be offered or their participation may be kept anonymous. The experiences used and the results must be protected not to be used for any other purpose than the research. (Cryer 2006, 84.)

Confidentiality is particularly an important issue. The researcher should “take all reasonable steps to ensure that they will not be subjected to any stress or anxiety beyond and above what they might reasonably experience in their everyday lives” (Smith 2008, 191).

6 Results

6.1 Quantitative Research on Existing Pilgrimages: Blog Analysis

Total 75 Japanese blogs, travel stories and travel information sites, which have secular pilgrimage characteristics in their travelling plan, were read through and categorized in different interest groups as “film, music, design, architecture, nature and others.” In the list, the possible destinations are listed in alphabetical order.

6.1.1 Film Pilgrimage

The film pilgrimage refers to “visits to sites where movies and dramas have been filmed.” The film pilgrims are those who are motivated by nostalgia and place identity as a result of a film (Jewell & McKinnon 2008, 155). Films serve as a source of information of a trip, suggesting “must do” tourist activities that tourists should see and do at a destination. (Rittichainuwat & Rattanaphinanchai 2015, 137-138.)

The Japanese film “Ruokala Lokki” pilgrimage is the most popular one. It was one of the factors leading to the popularity boom of Finland, introducing Finnish culture focused on its simplicity and natural materials, Finnish women’s life with freedom and independence, Finnish people’s simple life close to the nature, and their melancholic but positive and patient characteristics. The main shooting locations of the film are in Helsinki city center, therefore it is easy to find and visit all of the filming locations in a few days. The main purpose of the pilgrims is to experience the same atmosphere in the life of the main character of the film, who sets up a small café in Helsinki and enjoys her independent and simple life. As a matter of fact, more than half of the customer are Japanese tourists at the café in summer time (Rasimus 2012, 27).

“Ruokala Lokki” (film, 2006 Japan)	Academia bookshop/Cafe Aalto	Kiasma
	Arabia factory	Marimekko shop/Maritori
	Cafe Ekberg	Market square
	Cafe Ursula	Merikatu
	Design museum	Marimekko factory/canteen
	Etelä harbour	Stockmann
	Fazer cafe	Mattolaituri
	Hakaniemi market hall/Reinin Liha	Nuukio national park
	Helsinki church	Orion movie theater
	Kahvila Suomi	Tempeliaukio church
	Kaivo district/Kaivo park	Yrjönkadun uimahalli
	Kamppi chapel	

Table 2: Popular destinations list of “Ruokala Lokki” pilgrimage

The other popular film pilgrimage is based on Aki Kaurismäki's films. In Japan, Kaurismäki gained popularity and was recognized by the public with the film "Leningrad Cowboys Go America" in 1990. His films are far from mainstream but he has been famous among enthusiastic fans in Japan for a long time. (Kinenote 2015.) It is a little difficult to find all the filming locations, as some of them are downtown or have already been constructed into a building of a different purpose. However, the pilgrims enjoy empathizing with the melancholic and miserable feelings of the main characters at the sites, which are typical in his film. In some of the cases, the shop/bar staff does not know that the place has been a shooting place of the film and the tourist is not successful in communicating with the locals, maybe because those shops/bars are just a part of local people's ordinary life outside of city center, and not usual tourist sites / attractions. Kaurismäki's latest film "Mittsommernachtstango" featuring Finnish beautiful countryside sceneries with a sauna cottage and a dance hall, might bring more new delightful mission to find and visit the shooting places and to experience the same atmosphere and feeling as in the film.

Aki Kaurismäki:	Alku baari	Moskva
	Andorra	Olimpia terminal
	Cafe Hima & Sali	Palastusarmeijan kirpputori
	Hotel Katajanokka	Pub Pete
	Kaapelitehdas	Restaurant Sea Horse
	Kaisaniemi park	Ruoholahti shopping center
	Kamppi	Tavastia klubi
	Marian hospital	

Table 3: Popular destinations list of Aki Kaurismäki pilgrimage

The novel pilgrimage about Haruki Murakami is based on the novel "Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage", in which a main character visit Helsinki and Hämeenlinna to find his old friend. In this case, the novel does not give any clear visual picture of the places appearing in the story, however, the pilgrims enjoy the gap between their imagination and the actual site.

"Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of pilgrimage" (novel, 2013 Haruki Murakami):	Cafe Ekberg
	Hämeenlinna Cafe Laurell
	Restaurant Gaijin

Table 4: Popular destinations list of "Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of pilgrimage" pilgrimage

The film pilgrimage shooting locations are mainly in Helsinki region. The pilgrims feel the atmosphere of the surroundings of the scenes and imitate the actions as the characters to empathize their feeling. Especially the pilgrims of “Ruokala Lokki” yearn for the film’s character’s life in Helsinki, and they try experiencing exactly the same scene as the film such as shopping at a market, wearing Finnish brand clothes, a café surrounded by Finnish brand tableware and everyday items and picking mushrooms in a forest, which can be usually seen in local people’s life. Some pilgrims were disappointed with a difference between the café “Ruokala Lokki” in the film and the actual café “Kahvila Suomi” in their interior designs and menus. However,

Compared with the secular pilgrimage of other interests, the pilgrims of the film tour seem to be less active in communicating with the local people but they usually travel with partners and friends to enjoy the film/novel’s world among themselves. There are more female pilgrims in this category, .

6.1.2 Music Pilgrimage

In general, the definition of music pilgrimage is that some music fans visit memorial sites related to their favorite musicians for worship in the same traits that religious followers worship their deities, because the fans want some link with and attribution to their idols. (Margry 2008, 147.) This definition can be applied to Sibelius pilgrims. However, the pilgrims of Finnish rock and pop music visit Finland more for the purpose of experiencing live play of the musicians. The Finnish rock and pop music has been popular in Japan since the Finnish rock band, Hanoi Rocks, got popular in Japan in early 80s. Finnish music festival, Finland Fest, is held in Tokyo every year and wide range of modern types of music are introduced to Japanese audience, regardless of the use of Finnish language in the songs (Music Finland 2015).

Sibelius enthusiast’s pilgrimage covers a wide area of Finland and majority of the pilgrims visit the places related to Jean Sibelius’ biography, such as his birthplace, Ainola and Koli national park where Sibelius traveled and found inspiration for his composition work. They enjoy imagining and feeling the way Sibelius was inspired to compose ‘Finlandia’ in the Finnish nature, considering in relation to Finnish history, culture and tradition. Then not only visiting other places related to Sibelius such as a park and a statue, several pilgrims also take advantage of the chance to listen to his works played by local symphony orchestra at concerts or music festivals.

Sibelius:	Ainola	Lahti symphony orchestra
	Cruise on lake Saimaa	Olavinlinna Castle
	Helsinki Sibelius park	Sibelius birthplace
	Järvenpää Sibelius statue	Sibelius festival
	Koli national park	Turku Sibelius museum
	Lahti Sibelius talo	

Table 5: Popular destinations list of Sibelius pilgrimage

Regarding Metal music pilgrimage, the pilgrims mainly visit music shops and festivals specialized in metal music. As Finnish musician's disks are usually not available in Japan, visiting shops is one of the important purpose to take advantage of the opportunity of buying the disks, though the situation is changing these days due to internet shopping. Festivals and concerts are also a great chance for the Japanese tourists to enjoy Finnish musician's live play at the site. Many of them have a great network with the local Finnish enthusiasts through their common interest and they use the best of it for transportation and accommodation. The travel stories tell that communication with the local Finnish enthusiasts is one of the best part of the secular pilgrimage. It is not common that the pilgrims of Metal music appreciate the Finnish nature in relation to the music. However the lake Bodom is a popular holy place for the pilgrims, as this is the shooting place of a Finnish band's music video and the unsolved murder of young couples happened at this lake in the 1960s is used as a model of the band's name and image. There is a strong tendency among the pilgrims of Metal music to get interested in Finnish language, Kalevala and folk culture as well. This is because Finnish metal music often use those Finnish cultures as an image and theme of the songs just as the Norwegian bands use old religion and gods, and some of Finnish metal bands sing in Finnish language. The similar phenomena can be seen in the cases in Europe such that more university students study Finnish language, history and society through metal music (IceNews 2013; University of Helsinki 2015). Among Nordic country's metal music bands, Finnish metal bands are especially popular for its melancholic melody and lyrics.

Metal music:	Bodom lake	Nummirock festival
	Hellsinki Rock Shop	On The Rocks, Circus
	Keltainen Jäänsärkijä	Ruisrock festival
	Levykauppa X	Semifinal
	Music hunter	Tavastia
	Nosturi	Tuska open air festival

Table 6: Popular destinations list of metal music pilgrimage

Finnish music pilgrimage mainly consists of jazz, folk music, hip hop, classics and church music. In the case of classical music, the Japanese tourists often have a connection to the relationship between Japanese and Finnish music schools and university. At festivals, the Japanese tourists enjoy not only music but also experience Finnish way to enjoy the festivals in relaxing atmosphere where the natural surroundings work nicely with the event, such as nights under the midnight sun. Finnish music festivals across the country offer the pilgrims an exciting experience to feel the authenticity of Finnish music and also a sense of unity with the organizers and local music fans. The pilgrims see this experience as a point of visiting the actual sites of playing music live, as opposed to listening to Finnish music in the recorded form.

Finnish music:	Brinkin Wanha Pappila	Oulu Elojazz festival
	Esplanadi Jazz Espa	Pelimanni talo
	Helsinki festival	Pori jazz
	Helsinki Flow festival	Ruisrock
	Helsinki Storyville	Suomenlinna Viapori Jazz
	Himos Pipefest	Tampere Blockfest
	Kaustinen folk music festival	Turku music festival
	Kemijarvi Iskelma festival	UMO Jazz Orchestra UMO Fest
	Kuhmo music festival	Violin concert at Tempeliaukio church
	Opera at Olavinlinna Castle	

Table 7: Popular destinations list of Finnish music pilgrimage

The main point of music pilgrimages is to visit concerts, festivals and places related to artists. In this category, there is not a remarkable difference between the numbers of male and female pilgrims. Remarkable characteristic of Music pilgrimage is that the pilgrims spend much less time visiting sightseeing places than the pilgrims of other interest groups. They are active in communicating with local people through their common interest, which is music in this case, and naturally enjoy the music events together with local Finnish people. Some of the music events are held in remote area from Helsinki, however, they use the fastest and most appropriate transportation such as train and taxi in order to move on to and from the destinations effectively.

6.1.3 Design Pilgrimage

Finnish design:	Aarikka	Marimekko factory
	Arabia factory	Maritori
	Artek	Market square
	Arts & crafts OKRA	Moomin shop

	Ateneum museum Cafe Aalto Chez Marius Common Design Forum Esplanadi Globe Hope Hakaniemi market Helsinki cathedral Iittala Ivana Helsinki Johanna Gullichsen Kahvila Suomi Kamppi Chapel Kauniste Lapuan Kankurit Lumi Marimekko	Nuoksio national park Old market hall Oma Maa Panama Pentik Private Case Post museum Sammakon kirjakauppa Sauna Arla Secco Seurasaaari Open-Air Museum Sibelius park Suomenlinna Taito shop Tempeliaukio church Tikau Villipuutarha
Post products:	Helsinki central post office Post museum	
Iittala:	Iittalan Lasimäki (Iittala craft studios, glassblowing experience)	Iittala museum Iittala outlet shop
Outlet shopping:	Aarikka outlet Halti outlet Iittala outlet Kalevala Koru outlet	Lumene outlet Marimekko outlet Pentik outlet
Vintage:	Anton & Anton Kruununhaka Johan & Nystrom Kruunukirppu & Olkkari	Lasikammari Toisto
Art:	Amos Anderson art museum Ateneum Didrichsen Art Museum	Espoo Museum of Modern Art The Aalto house The Studio Aalto
Cafe:	Armas Keittio & Viinitupa Cafe Ursula Caisa Chef & Sommelier Cafe Esplanad Cafe Regatta	Farouge Hietalahti Market Hall Juuri Kappeli Puro Deli Ravintola Sunn

Table 8: Popular destinations list of design pilgrimage

From reading travel stories, it is found that they tend to strongly connect Finnish design to Finnish nature. As a matter of fact, a favorite Finnish brand of Japanese tourists, Marimekko's patterns are often inspired by Finnish nature, such as 'Tyrsky (surf)' pattern "inspired by beautiful, windy summer days at sea and reflecting the forms of foamy wave crests and the feeling that the strength of a sea breeze can give you", and Lintukoto (bird home) pattern "inspired by carefree life in wild gardens and old courtyards, without a worry about tomorrow" (Marimekko 2015). Aarikka is characterized by its wooden jewelry. Then the pilgrims experience the scenes in the nature, which has been inspiring artists, by walking in the Kaivopuisto park and hiking in a forest in Nuuksio national park between shoppings. Their main motivation to come to Finland is to get in touch with real Finnish design collections, and in addition, to actually see and feel the same Finnish nature, which has inspired the Finnish design. According to the author's experience as a tour guide for Japanese tourists, they often wanted to know about the origin and background story of the patterns at Marimekko shop. Several cafes on the list, such as Villipuutarha, Cafe Ursula and Cafe Regatta, put value on the harmony with their surrounding nature.

Through Finnish design pilgrimage, the tourists see the strong connection of Finnish design to Finnish people's everyday life close to nature. As they see the Finnish design products going well in a good harmony with Finnish people's life close to the nature, the pilgrims are attracted by the nature and their simple life style. The growing demand of apartment hotels with Finnish interior design and homestay at Finnish local's house shows the growing interest of the Japanese tourists in Finnish simple life surrounded by Finnish designed products.

6.1.4 Architecture Pilgrimage

The fact that there are things in common between Scandinavian and Japanese architectural designs has been referred since 1930s and it is said that Finnish architect Alvar Aalto liked Japanese architectural design. Both architectural design incorporate the natural materials into the product and let in the wind and light in an effective manner. Many Japanese fans of Scandinavian architecture feel that aesthetic point of view in an everyday life is similar in Nordic countries. The Japanese tourists might see a fundamental perspective through Scandinavian architectural design away from their current life filled with economical industrial mass products. (Hokuo house 2015.) There are a large number of demands of architecture tour for professionals and students and there is a tour operating company, Archtours Japan Ltd, which is specialized in arranging architecture tours with an expert guide (Archtours Japan Ltd 2015).

Architect Alvar Aalto is by far the most famous Finnish architect among Japanese people. His design introduced oblique lines and curves in accordance with the surroundings and pursued

the space that can be used for harmonious life, which are called "organic modernism architecture". He achieved a good balance of the conflicting forces of nature and modern life and technology, which is Finnish specific culture (thisisFINLAND 2015). The pilgrims wish to see and feel Aalto's view or conception of nature that is rooted in the people of Finland, in order to understand Finnish architecture. The pilgrims also visit Aalto's house and studio to gain a glimpse into his philosophy of life and his lifestyle.

Aalto pilgrimage:	Academia bookshop	Otaniemi University of Technology
	Artek shop	Paimio Sanatorium
	Cafe Aalto	Ravintola Puro
	Finlandia hall	Säynätsalo Town Hall
	Helsinki House of Culture	Seinäjoki City and State Office Building
	Iittala shopSavoy	Seinäjoki City Theatre
	Jyväskylä Aalto museum	Seinäjoki Defence Corps Building
	Jyväskylä City Theatre	Seinäjoki Lakeuden Risti Church
	Jyväskylä Defence Corps Building	Seinäjoki Municipal-Provincial Library
	Jyväskylä Museum of Central Finland	Seinäjoki Parish Center
	Jyväskylä Muuratsalo experimental house Koetalo	Seinäjoki Town Hall
	Jyväskylä Vesiliikuntakeskus	Turun Sanomat Building
	AaltoAlvari	The Aalto house
	Jyväskylä Workers' Club building	The studio Aalto
	Muurame Church	University of Jyväskylä
	National Pension Institution office	Villa Mairea

Table 9: Popular destinations list of Aalto pilgrimage

Finnish architecture:	Cafe Urusla	Otaniemi chapel
	Helsinki cathedral	Petajavesi old church
	Helsinki central railway station	Pyhän Ristin chapel
	Hvitträsk	Pyhän Henrikin ekumeeninen taidekappeli
	Kamppi chapel	Rautatalo
	Kiasma	Sibelius park
	Kuokkala Pyhä church	Stockmann department store
	Kuopio Männistö Church	Tempeliaukio church
	Lahti Ristinkirkko	Viikki church
	Lahti Sibelius hall	Vuoksenniska Church
	Lohja library	Ylosnousemus chapel
	Myyrämäki church	

Table 10: Popular destinations list of Finnish architecture pilgrimage

In this category, there are relatively more male pilgrims than in the other categories. In addition, there are more company and school trips related to architecture. Therefore, the accommodation and transportation are set to higher class, compared with the other categories. The blogs and travel stories in this category give a lot of detailed description of architectural works in destinations, using technical vocabularies. They usually have an expert guide for technical information of the destination sites, even in some individual cases of the tourists.

The tourists also pay attention to the environment of the architecture, since Finnish architecture place a great value on the harmony with surrounding nature. There were some mention that it is impossible to understand the whole concept of architecture cannot be made without visiting the actual location and seeing its natural surroundings. That is, one of the main purposes of architecture secular pilgrimage tours is to comprehend the perfect harmony of Finnish architecture and natural surroundings, to feel how Finnish architects are inspired to develop a blueprint and to actually observe the techniques used in Finnish architecture such as letting in the sunlight to a maximum extent in order to fill the rooms with bright natural light and keeping the houses warm during dark cold winter.

6.1.5 Nature Pilgrimage

The Finnish natural assets in the top ten interests of the Japanese tourists in Finland are northern lights, the midnight sun, lakes, snow and forests (Finnish Tourist Board 2014). Especially abundant Finnish forests and wilderness areas are associated to relaxation and wellbeing, because Both in Finland and Japan, the positive effects of the forest on physical and mental health and the wellbeing of individuals have been recognized. For example, in Japan a forest bathing is a form of relaxation associated with forest recreation to reduce stress. (Konu 2015, 6). In addition, Japanese people tend to adore the beauty of supernatural phenomenon, such as eclipse of the sun and the moon. There might be some influence from traditional Japanese beliefs, such as the worship of spirits that represent natural phenomena like the sky and the earth (Ingram 2005, 20).

Regarding the northern lights, the detailed description of camera's technical specification is often seen in blogs and travel stories for photo shooting of northern lights, however, no description about scientific facts about northern lights were found. They seem to keep that natural phenomena as a mythical element of the experience in arctic region. Even the urban legend, such as that a woman conceives a baby boy if she could see northern light, is getting popular among the tourists from Asian countries, where boys are preferred to girls.

Regarding Santa Claus, the tourists are favorably impressed with the warm atmosphere of Finnish way of celebrating Christmas. Since celebration of Christmas has only commercial meaning in Japan, visiting Santa Claus village is an unique experience tour for the Japanese tourists. As a matter of fact, in blogs and travel stories, it is often written that the pilgrims are impressed by hand-made Christmas decorations and special Christmas foods. Scandinavian fairy tale of tonttu, which is a mythological creature from Scandinavian folklore typically associated with the Christmas season, adds more unique stories and exotic feeling. Regardless of the actual existence of Santa, the practices such as writing the editorials, criticizing the teacher who denies Santa's existence and writing a letter to Santa Claus, can construct the socially shared image of him. (Kahle 2006, 52-53) Then new locality reshapes the imported cultural materials by examining how objects are reinvented such that they become authentically Japanese in the minds of Japanese children. Such processes highlight the impact cross-cultural interaction has on social psychological processes (DeLamater 2003, 277).

The most important characteristic of Northern light/Santa Clause tour is that there are higher percentage of family tourists and they spend more money on transportation and accommodation than in the other interest groups. They are more dependent on a tour company and have not acquired vast information about the arctic region beforehand. The variety of destinations is rather limited and the popular destinations are related to northern light or Santa Clause. Though some tourists had interests in local culture and experience Finnish/Saami culture by taking Finnish sauna and visiting Kota houses, most of the destinations are the place giving them an exotic experience in arctic region.

Travelling by the Santa Claus Express train is quite popular as a part of the tour to go to/come from Lapland. It is not just because tourists are impressed by clean and well-equipped cabins of the train, they enjoy experience of a dining car and staying overnight on the train. Since overnight sleeper trains and a dining cars have disappeared due to development of the other transportation and high velocity trains in Japan, Santa Claus Express train gives an unique experience to children and a nostalgic feeling to adults.

Northern light and Santa Claus:	Arktikum	Reindeer sleigh ride
	Finnish sauna	Rovaniemi church
	Husky dog safari	Saami culture
	Ice bar	Santa Claus Express train
	Kakslauttanen igloo	Santa Claus village
	Lapland library	Snow hotel
	Luosto Amethyst mine	Snowmobile tour
	Northern light hunting	Sodankyla Aurola House
	Northernmost MacDonald	Visiting saami house
	Ranua zoo	

Table 11: Popular destinations list of northern light and Santa Claus pilgrimage

Outdoor activities such as reindeer sleigh rides, husky dog safaris and snowmobile tours are also popular daytime activities as a combination with northern light tour at night. These activities are strongly characterized as typical tourist's attractions. There is a bizarre phenomenon that the most of the tourists in this category have visited the northernmost MacDonald. However, the other destinations such as Arktikum and Aurola House are generally not very known to Japanese tourists. As discussed above, the tourists are not specially interested in the scientific facts about northern lights and they tend to keep the natural phenomena as a mythical element of the experience in arctic region. It seems that there would be still more potential activities in Lapland to attract Japanese tourists in daytime before the northern light hunting, related to experience tourism, such as visiting local house and handicrafts making. In addition, northern lights product will expand to Autumn from September to November to avoid severe cold weather in winter. Therefore, closer destination from Rovaniemi such as Luosto, Pyha, Salla, and Kuusamo are expected to get more Japanese tourists in autumn. (Noto 2013a, 7)

Cottage experience:	Cottage stay	Snowmobile
	Ice fishing	Snow shoe walking
	Ranua zoo	
Nature:	Berry and mushroom picking	Rental cycling
	Hiking	Savonlinna cruise Koli national park
	Observation of flowers	Suomenlinna
	Olavinlinna Castle	

Table 12: Popular destinations and activities list of cottage experience and nature pilgrimages

The destinations in Nature tours are seldom based on a specific person's biography, except the case of Koli national park where Sibelius got inspired to compose his famous

work 'Finlandia' and Eero Järnefelt got inspired for his painting works. Koli national park is quite popular destination in Nature pilgrimage as the most beautiful authentic Finnish view of lakes and forests can be seen. Nuuksio national park is also popular because it is easier to access and it is one of the shooting locations of the film "Ruokala Lokki."

The highlight of the Nature pilgrimage is to appreciate the Finnish rich nature and experience local people's way of enjoying the nature. Though there is not much description of active interacting with local people in blogs and travel stories, they seem to simply experience Finnish people's life as it is, without focusing on a specific Finnish culture contents.

6.1.6 Other Secular Pilgrimages

This section refers a minority type of pilgrimages of Japanese tourists in Finland. While more than ten travel stories were easily found for each interest group, few travel stories were found mentioning these minor kind of pilgrimages. However, in some cases the meanings and importance of places may not be so universal but carry spiritual significance peculiar to individuals' specific interests. For example, for those that have a deep interest in a particular sport, unlike the regular tourist, the sport tourist's reintegration and consequent ascension largely depends on where they went more than what they did during the pilgrimage. (Ritchie & Adair 2004, 34.)

The Japanese people love the Moomin characters and Moomin has a strong impact as one of the images of Finland. The first Moomin TV series was produced in Japan in 1972, and a million Moomin books have been sold there. The marketing of Moomin products which is Japanese original and available in Japanese market is intensified, for example a lunchbox with chopsticks, a gauze handkerchief decorated with Moomin figures and a stuffed toy sold at amusement parks. (Finland Promotion Board 2014; Moomin Characters Official Website 2015.) Therefore, quite a number of Japanese tourists name "experiencing Moomin's world" for motivation of a trip to Finland, according to their blogs and travel stories.

As a good example illustrating this 'experience tourism', Naantali Spa hotel launched their new Moomin Story Rooms targeting families and adult Moomin fans (Naantali Spa hotel 2012). Staying at Moomin Story Rooms of Naantali Spa hotel and visiting Moomin World is a package of a typical Moomin tour to immerse themselves in Moomin's world.

Tampere Moomin museum is one of the most popular destinations for Moomin museum. In the museum the tourists can explore the Moomin world with their memories and imagination stimulated by original works of the writer Tove Janson and three-dimensional displays

illustrating events in the Moomin story. Though Pyynikki Tower is popular site because it is introduced in several guidebooks, the Moomin pilgrims seem to like the place to enjoy the view of wide expanse of forest, which is a rare view in mountaineous Japan and by which they see the real environment of the Moomin's world.

The shopping is one of the hightlights of the tour, according to Japanese blogs and travel stories. The shops such as Finlayson and Iittala and post office are the main places to buy unique Moomin products. Tove Janson's original design adds a big value to Moomin products, since the business of Moomin shop has already expanded to Japan. Also the way of life of Tove Janson, who loved Finnish nature and staying at a cottage on the island in summer, is attracting Japanese Moomin fans' attention. Her works and biography is being introduced at exhibitions and events celebrating her 100th anniversary of her birth, which is expected to give an additional boost to Japanese Moomin fans' experience tourism in Finland in the year 2014.

Moomin:	Finlayson	Moomin shop
	Helsinki central post office	Moomin museum
	Iittala factory	Naantali Spa hotel
	Iittala outlet	Pyynikki Tower
	Moomin world	Tove Janson park
	Moomin museum	

Table 13: Popular destinations list of Moomin pilgrimage

Olavinlinna Castle is famous from the story that the castle became a model of "the Castle of Dragon King", which appeared in the computer game "Dragon Quest" released in 1986 in Japan (Excite Japan News 2014). Olavinlinna Castle is a famous sightseeing site in Savonlinna for Japanese game fans and the tourists admire its magnificence and venerableness. In the case of the secular pilgrimage tour, in addition, the pilgrims enjoy actual being at the site where they are participating the battle in the virtual game world, and get excited finding the similarities between the real castle which served as a model for a castle appearing in the game and the virtual one. They spend much time strolling around in the castle. The pilgrims are impressed by the castle's surroundings, which shows that the castle located on the lake with one bridge is a natural in a country of thousands of lakes, and the virtual castle on the lake is based on the very fact.

PC Game:	Olavinlinna Castle
	Joensuu Lutheran Church

Table 14: Popular destinations list of PC Game pilgrimage

Motor sports tour and Ice hockey tour are both sports related secular pilgrimages. The main destinations are usually sports matches/games, but also they sometimes include sites related to one specific Finnish player/driver's life, such as practicing places of the player/driver's young days. In the blogs and travel stories, their biography are introduced, linked with photos which are taken during the secular pilgrimages. In addition, another main part of the secular pilgrimage in these categories is to communicate with local enthusiasts for the common interest at a specific sports-themed restaurant/cafe/pub. They see this communication as a whole point in visiting Finland.

Linux:	Linux museum University of Helsinki department of Computer Science	
Motor sports:	Allun Grilli Espoo Jyväskylä Neste Oil Rally Finland	Keimola circuit Mika Häkkinen square Porvoo cathedral
Ice hockey:	Espoo Barona Areena Hartwall Areena Helsinki Ice Hall	Ice halls Sports Academy Sports pubs

Table 15: Popular destinations list of Linux, motor sports and ice hockey pilgrimages

The tourists in the other secular pilgrimages are very focused on the only destinations related to their interest and they do not visit typical sightseeing sites. On this point, this category's secular pilgrimage seems to have a similar characteristic to that of Music pilgrimage. The popular sites of their interests are usual leisure sites in everyday life for local people or only one of the options of typical sightseeing sites. They usually do not have strong requirements about accommodation and transportation, and they take any available way to move to the destinations. According to the blogs and travel stories, they are active in communication with local people when they find the locals share the same interests. In most of the cases, they have a good deal of knowledge about their interests, therefore the contents of their blogs and travel stories are often difficult to understand for non-enthusiasts of their interests. Even if the popular destination is merely one of the typical sightseeing places, it has deeper meaning for the pilgrims through the enthusiast's view. This can be said equally about the film pilgrimage.

6.1.7 Discussions on the Existing Secular Pilgrimages

As a result of the primary quantitative research of reading travel stories, most of the pilgrimages of different interest groups more or less refer to the Finnish nature and local Finnish people. It is interesting that pilgrims are interested in interaction with the local

people. It is generally considered that Japanese tourists prefer the well organized itinerary in details to avoid unexpected need to interact with the local people with a different cultural background in a foreign language, which is challenging for the tourists from Japan, which is an ethnically homogeneous nation.

There are different forms of interaction with the local people described in the travel stories, such as direct communication at a festival site, homestay, or trying the same activity as the character in the film. The form of communication might depend on the language skills and how familiar the tourist is with the Finnish way of living. It can be said that the Japanese pilgrims in Finland want to have or result in having more opportunities to interact with the Finnish local people through their interests related to Finland.

In addition, the pilgrimages of film and music referred to melancholy and patience as the Finnish characteristics and also as one of the things they are enthusiastic about.

6.2 Qualitative Research Theme Interviews

The theme interview was conducted with the following basic questions.

1. Tell me about your secular pilgrimage trip
2. What is your motivation for the secular pilgrimage trip
3. Tell me about your interests related to Finland
4. Compare Finland and Japan from the point of view of the interviewee's interest.

6.2.1 Case 1: Japanese Tourist on Design Tour

The first interview was made with a Japanese woman, face-to-face on 11.03.2015.

1. She had homestay experience at Finnish family's home and their summer cottage in Oulu. She recognized that Finnish life is surrounded by the rich nature and to coexist with the nature in a harmony. Her experience of Finnish people's life was exactly as she had expected. She enjoyed a life close to the nature in the Finnish countryside. She was impressed by Finnish people's kind and affectionate hospitality and being treated as a member of the family. She experienced Finnish common activities such as grilling sausages and pancakes during outdoor activities, cross-country skiing on the frozen lake, snowmobile ride, Finnish style sauna, staying at a summer cottage where there was no electricity and running water. Among these things, what she got impressed the most were hand-made everyday items such as an oven mitten, a wooden cutting board, bread and a seat swing hanging inside the house for small children to play with.

2. What she expected from her homestay experience was an everyday life close to the nature in the Finnish authentic countryside, participating in classic life style with traditions, and a stay at a log house with rest and quiet.

3. She has a studying and working career in design field, specialized in industrial design. In her picture of Finnish life, she always sees a wooden log house in the forest. She is especially interested in usage of woods in the design of everyday items and buildings. She had an image that Finnish people frequently use hand-made everyday items such as kitchen tools made of a lot of natural materials. After the homestay experience, she was stimulated by the hand-made swing to design a wooden product of her own. At the same time, she tried to simplify her own life style. She thinks that she got rest and quiet from her experience in Finland.

She told that the appeal of Finnish design is 'beautility'. It means that Finnish design is simple, functional and comfortable, which can be seen in, for example, interior of Finnish Lutheran churches. Regarding Finnish wooden products, they have lighter color than those of Japanese wooden products, which gives bright, warm and comfortable feeling. They are not too sophisticated but natural. A life style surrounded by Finnish design products cuts off the unnecessary things from people's life and consists of the essential part of life. Therefore, this simplicity gives comfort through the products. While Finnish design presents wood-grain as beautifully as possible, Japanese design uses wood as an ordinary material without presenting it as a part of the beauty. Though Japanese life is full of wooden products, she has never paid special attention to them because it is taken for granted that the wooden materials exist in everyday life, not as a part of interior design.

4. She does not think that Finnish design has anything in common with Japanese design and it gives any nostalgic feeling to Japanese people. The Japanese people are rather longing for the simple, functional and comfortable feeling of Finnish design.

However, regarding common things between Finland and Japan, she admits that both have a sense of 'beautility'. On this point, the Japanese people might feel nostalgic and familiar when they visit Finland, though she still feels that longing is stronger than feeling familiar. She thinks that it is possible for Finnish design and Japanese design to coexist together without a sense of discomfort. She points that Finnish and Japanese people have a similar sense of value of comfort in everyday life, such as hygiene and safety, therefore it is easy for Japanese people to live in Finland comfortably.

6.2.2 Case 2: Tour Coordinator on Architecture Tour

The interview was made with a Japanese tour coordinator of a tour on Finnish culture and architecture, "Visit Lakeus" project (Visit Lakeus 2015), in Etelä-Pohjanmaa region, on the telephone on 11.03.2015.

1. Visit Lakeus tour consists of three main destinations visits to the church of Teuva, SELLA Interior Design Center in Jurva, Amfora tableware shop and Aalto center in Seinäjoki. These three points attract Aalto fans, Tove Janson/Moomin fans and Finnish furniture/interior design fans.

The church of Teuva is popular to be added in Tove Janson/Moomin pilgrimages. The church and its back yard are designed by four women, which shows enhancement of women's participation in Finnish society. Especially it is famous because the altarpiece was painted by Tove Janson in 1953. There are a lot of stories of her couple months' stay in Teuva handed down for local people. In a tour, those events and detailed background stories of painting process of the altarpiece are introduced by the person who is doing research on Tove Janson. His explanation is based on the literature and is about Tove Janson's biography and Moomin. He also shows the accommodation in Teuva where Tove Janson actually stayed. There is also a presentation about the church by a priest.

The next stop is Jurva, where the tour visits SELLA Interior Design Center, which is famous for the furniture production. SELLA Interior Design Centre was built to help local furniture industry with marketing, education, research and development.

In Seinäjoki the tour visits tableware shop Amfora. Amfora's design products are inspired by "Lakeus," the surrounding plain which is distinct characteristic of the region, and their design have simplicity and functionality with a playful touch. The designer him/herself makes elaborate calculations for the product design in order to make the design simple with variation in expression and lead to simplicity and functionality.

The other stop in Seinäjoki is the Aalto center. The appealing point of Aalto design is the way how to let in the sunlight and the feeling of back-to-nature. The tourists like unique stories known only to the local people. For example, they like the local story such as that the material used for the floor of Seinäjoki Theatre was imported from Sweden and it was found that the floor contains fossils which are nowadays one of the theater's must-see sites. Some tourists think it interesting to get a glimpse of Finnish people's usual life such as how the local Finnish people are dressed to watch an opera at the theater. As appreciation of a play at a theater is not familiar in Japan, the tourists are interested to see how the culture, such as a play at a local theater, is appreciated in everyday life in countryside in Finland. The tourists thought it interesting that design of a new Seinäjoki library building is inspired by Origami,

the Japanese art of paper folding. They are interested in the story that there is a slight slope from the altar to the exit in Seinäjoki church, which a newly married couple works together to walk up after making a commitment.

For the experience of Finnish traditional food, the tour visits the restaurants “Juurella” catering with the local ingredients and “Luonto-Parra” catering with “loimulohi”, grilled salmon in the traditional Saami way in a Kota house. The tourists are not exactly interested in Saami culture, however, the detailed explanation on local foods presented by specialized staff is attracting. Meal is one of the joys of the travel and choice of the food is important. Salmon, Karelian pie and home-made cheese, which tastes mild and familiar, are better choice than reindeer meat, which has “love it or hate it” strong taste and texture. In the evening of the tour, the tourists experience smoke sauna and they can spread some tar on their skin to make it smooth. This used to be a custom for a bride to do it on the eve of their wedding day in the old times. The tourists enjoyed the sauna like a spa tour. It can be thought to be similar to Japanese culture of bathing in the hot springs.

2. In Teuva, The tourists are attracted by the stories presented by the person doing research on Tove Janson, following in the footsteps of Tove Janson’s life. The detailed explanation of Tove’s stories and local people’s stories in Teuva which is not widespread are very much appreciated by the tourists. The tourists are drawn to the attracting story and detailed explanation of the specialized local staff, even though they are about trivia which is usually not taken seriously. At SELLA Interior Design Center, the tourists are impressed by great use of wood in Finnish interior design.

At Amfora, the tourists listened to the explanation about concept, design, structure and background of the products and observed making process with great interest. Once there was even a request of a workshop to experience pottery. Many of the tourists say that it is worth travelling all the way to Etelä Pohjanmaa region in order to visit the church of Teuva. Before the visiting, the tourists’ expectation for the site might be low, but their satisfaction is at the highest level after the tour. They are drawn by the unique stories to the local place, professional explanation with rich technical information and lively communication and interaction. Whether the tourists get drawn to an explanation/story depends on a presentation skill of the guide or the specialist. For example, one of the tourists’ favorite stories about Tove Janson is that a girl, who served as a model for Tove Janson’s altarpiece, lived near Janson’s atelier. That fact came to light when the girl, who now lives in Helsinki, recognized herself in the altarpiece at Tove Janson’s exhibition held in Helsinki. The stories like this are much appreciated by Tove Janson fans. Especially interpretation of those small stories in Japanese language is much appreciated because it is often difficult to get information in Japanese language in countryside like Teuva.

The vacations are very short in Japan, therefore a strong motivation is needed to attract Japanese tourists to travel all the way to Etelä-Pohjanmaa region. At the moment, tango festival, for which Seinäjoki is famous for, and farm stay are possibilities appealing points of the tour in the future.

4. Some tourists are impressed by the fact that the church of Teuva and the yard surrounding it are all designed by women, which shows women's active participation to the society in Finland.

At Amfora, some of the tourists feel familiar and close to the natural materials used for the products, which is also frequently used for Japanese design products.

6.2.3 Case 3: Japanese Tourist on Ice Hockey Tour

The interview was made with a Japanese woman, on the telephone on 14.03.2015.

1. Ms. Kuroda pilgrimaged in Helsinki region to watch five ice hockey games during five nights' stay. She had gained all the travel information through web sites in English, including information about ice hockey matches in a suburb area. She occasionally had some difficulties in communicating when she went to a game site in a suburb by local bus and train, however, the local passengers kindly helped her reach the site, which was one of her best memories of her trip. About accommodation, she stayed at a hotel in front of Hakaniemi market hall which is often introduced in a guidebook as a place for local people, because she expected to see a part of local people's life. She tried some Finnish traditional food at a local restaurant outside of the center, which is not mainly targeting the tourists but popular for the local people.

She was satisfied with the fact that she saw some practice scenes of the professional players before the game started, which cannot be seen in Japan. Also she often saw a local amateur ice hockey teams practicing at an ice rink in a park in suburb, which is a part of typical Finnish sceneries she expected to see. She also enjoyed the unique custom in Finland that the audience get off their seats during the break to have a drink in the bar. Since there were not many Asian audience and she stood out in the crowd, she got acquainted with some team staff and enjoyed some communication with them. She tried some sports bars and cafes around the game sites, where ice hockey fans get together and ice hockey related goods are displayed.

She did not have enough time to do much sightseeing and hopes to see the popular

sightseeing places for Japanese tourists such as a lake and a forest next time she comes to Finland. In addition, she hopes to try communication between her amateur hockey team with a Finnish local amateur team in order to play together at a local ice rink in the future, making the fullest possible use of the communication on the internet social networking service such as Facebook, which enables the users to join common interest user groups and build networks.

2. According to Ms. Kuroda, though National Hockey League in North America is the center of ice hockey world, its playing style is based on Finland and the other Nordic countries. This is the reason why she came all the way to Finland to pilgrimage the ice hockey matches. The purpose of her secular pilgrimage tour is to experience the enthusiasm by local people to support ice hockey and communication with the local enthusiastic fans if she has an opportunity.

3. She thinks that appealing point of Finnish ice hockey is that the fans can enjoy the match together with players, feeling familiar and close to the players, even though they are well-known as professionals with their high level techniques. She points that tickets are sold at reasonable price for the professional league matches.

Before the trip, she had an image of Finland that people's life is full of typical Finnish design products with vivid colors and large patterns, however, she realized that outlook of Helsinki is actually diverse with the different races and cultures. The Finnish people's way of communicating with a comfortable sense of distance and natural attitude, a life style in a good harmony with the nature, and peaceful atmosphere where people love Moomin characters are exactly same as she had expected and imagined. She liked Finnish products such as a water-soluble aromatic oil used in sauna with a natural scent like eucalyptus, tar and white birch. She also has been using Marimekko products, not only because of its Finnish design patterns, but also because of its high quality and usability.

4. She was impressed by the close distance between Finnish ice hockey players and their fans, because in Japan there is a big gap between the professional players and the fans. Therefore she felt it very comfortable that Finnish fan's natural way of communicating and sense of distance with the players. She hopes the relationship between the fans and players should take this Finnish style as a model in Japanese ice hockey world too. She felt a strong collective sense of unity of the local fans and region supporting together their local team. Though she had some difficulties due to a language barrier this time, she hopes to have more communication with the local fans and join in their community when she gets a chance. It is often possible to see the players practicing and training outside the games and communication between the fans and the players is active. She was impressed that she can even feel close to those Finnish players during her trip this time. At the same time, she was

impressed that Finnish fans have a respectful attitude to the players and behave well not to react too much, without any intimate interactions.

6.2.4 Case 4: Japanese Tourist on Finnish Culture and Moomin Tour

The interview was made with a Japanese woman, face-to-face on 19.03.2015.

1. At that time she traveled in Finland for the first time in the early 2000s, Sweden and Denmark were more popular and well-known than Finland to Japanese people, however, she thinks she was looking for something different from the main stream. Finland had a strong image of interior design and summer cottage in the forest.

When she came to Finland for the first time, she experienced home stay in a small town near Kouvola. She experienced Finnish everyday life, which would have been impossible to see if she was a typical tourist visiting sightseeing attractions. In addition she got to know Finnish people's characteristics which she was also interested in. In the next trip, she spent the days just like local people such as having picnic in Seurasaari island. She was already familiar with Finnish people's way to enjoy leisure time, as she had learnt it when she did home stay in her last trip. The theme of her trip this time was to put into practice what she learnt from her home stay. As she got interested in Finnish design as well, she visited museums of Finnish design. She stayed at a holiday apartment in order to experience Finnish people's everyday life for herself.

On her third trip she visited Moomin museum in Tampere and Moomin world in Turku. The theme of this trip was to get to know about Finland through Moomin's world. She observed people at a library in order to see local people's ordinary everyday life. She also tried to get in close contact with nature, which is not exactly an outdoor activity but an activity involving contact with nature like Finnish people do in their usual life, such as walking in the forest and picking berries and mushrooms. These activities in the nature are featured in the tours conducted by the tour company "My Suomi Oy" in Helsinki, therefore she can be empathetic with the company's policy.

Her image of the Moomin world is easygoing, laid-back and warm, and her image of Finland is that the people are friendly, having a simple life style with the nature. The reality of Helsinki is exactly as same as the image she had in Japan.

2. It was a book of Moomin which got her interested in Finland for the first time when she was a child. Since then she has yearned for the Moomin's world and used to have a Finnish pen pal when she was a student.

In Japan she was learning Finnish language, actively attending to events related to Nordic countries, joining an organization of cultural communication between Kansai region and Finland and often visiting a Finnish style café run by a Finnish woman in Kyoto. Also she got more interested in Finnish interior design.

3. One of the appealing points of Moomin is different types of colorful and adorable characters, and the situation where Moomin stories always take place in the nature is another attracting point to Japanese people. The Moomin's warm and laid-back world is attracting. There is no sharp line between a good and a bad role in characters. Even a character of a bad fellow type is not disciplined and ruled out, but accepted and try to find a way to exist together with the others without too much self-assertiveness, which fit naturally into Japanese characteristic. Originally Japanese people like the character offering support to a person in a vulnerable position. As a matter of fact, the messages of Moomin story are quite philosophical about a life. Therefore, they are impressive for even adults and they often get to adult fan's heart. This might be the reason why Japanese adult tourists are still attracted to go to the places related to Moomin. She's also interested in Tove Janson's life, which is close to the nature.

4. Regarding common things between Finnish and Japanese, she thinks that both have aesthetic feeling in silence, especially in communication. The pause and some silence in a conversation would not make them feel uncomfortable and they do not think they have to fill the pause, while some people with a different nationality feel it uncomfortable and think the partner must be bored when they have a pause in a conversation. Finnish and Japanese people can commonly appreciate silence with an aesthetic sense. She points that Finnish tourists specially like Kyoto, where people have a culture to value spending time in silence and appreciate it the most in Japan. In addition, simplicity and functionality represented by Alttala products also have something in common with Japanese cultural characteristics. Therefore, those Finnish design products nicely match with Japanese interior design without any unpleasant feeling.

6.2.5 Case 5: Japanese Tourist on Film Tour

The interview was made with a Japanese woman, on the phone on 20.03.2015.

1. She thinks that Helsinki is visually attractive as a tourist destination with a lot of unique design. Helsinki does not have many internationally famous sightseeing places and the tourists do not need to follow a hectic schedule visiting historic and novel sightseeing attractions all day long like on a trip to London, Paris or New York. The tourists do not have to be in a hurry

travelling from one place to another and they can enjoy relaxed atmosphere in their adult world of travelling, being relaxed and being able to afford the expense of the activities during the trip. As a matter of fact, she could travel being herself as she is, without feeling pressure and nervous, because of well-maintained public peace, local people's kind attitude to the tourists and non-commercialized community in Helsinki.

She is attracted by Finnish design, which made her consider to actively take Finnish design into her house's interior. Her house is traditional Japanese style house using a lot of wooden material, and she found that the furniture and everyday items of Finnish design match well with the interior of her house without any uncomfortable feeling. In Japan the design of wooden furniture is such that usually makes the interior look country-style, however, Finnish design even makes that wooden interior look modern, which attracted her attention.

The trip itself did not influence her way of life except design's point of view. But the pleasant point of the trip to Finland was that a tourist does not need to be filled with a tense feeling but he/she can be his/her natural self there.

2. It was the film "Ruokala Lokki" which actually made her decide to visit Helsinki in order to experience Finnish people's life like the characters did in the film. The highlight of her trip was visiting local grocery stores, cafes/restaurants and her friend's house to enjoy local food with local people. In addition, she wanted to see Finnish design in local people's life, which strongly has simplicity and functionality.

What she longed for her trip was 'a comfort' relaxing herself with culinary delights in easy-going atmosphere close to the nature, like a character in "Ruokala Lokki." At the same time, she wanted to actually see the good sense of color using vivid colors in monochromatic colors' scene as she saw in Kaurismäki's film.

The best memorable comfort in her trip was when she relaxed herself in the forest and enjoyed grilling sausages there. The Finnish nature, the Finnish forest and Finnish local food healed her stress from her usual life in Japan. It was not until she went to the Finnish forest that she understood a good healing effect of the nature. She could enjoy her trip in Helsinki feeling as if she had a domestic trip in Japan, without feeling nervous as a foreign tourist.

Recently in Japan, there are more stores and cafes which have a motif of "Finland", however, she feels that they strongly appeal Finnish design as a novel cutting-edge fashion, which does not give any comfort to her. In real Finland, the Finnish design makes people relax to be their natural self in everyday life and a tourist can feel the natural atmosphere. Finnish people behave naturally as they are without pushing themselves too much to their limits in their every-

day life. Therefore, even the tourist can get a glimpse of the real scenes of their usual life.

3. It was Aki Kaurismäki's film "Kauas pilvet karkaavat" which got her interested in Finland. She got drawn into its melancholic atmosphere in the film. In addition, she likes the unique sense of color of interior design in the film, where a vivid color inserted in a monochromatic scene works well giving a good contrast effect. It also led her to Finnish design. What she was attracted was Finnish people's characteristics; managing things simply in a straightforward manner without too much expressing feelings, being always on the side to help the weak, being in silence with monotonous expression, patience and warm affection. She felt familiar to these characteristics and they make it easy for her to empathize with the characters in the film.

4. Her image to Finland did not change even after she actually came to Finland. Finnish people's melancholic atmosphere and quiet expression are exactly the same as the image she got by watching Aki Kaurismäki's films.

Regarding the common characteristics in design, she points that both designs consist of simplicity and functionality. Finnish design of housewares matches well with Japanese style interior. She gave examples to describe this point; a Japanese industrial designer Sori Yanagi and general merchandise brand "Mujirushi." Sori Yanagi is famous for his design with simplicity and functionality and his quote "true beauty is not made; it is born naturally" (Design within reach 2015). Mujirushi is famous for its simple design products, at reasonable prices by making the best use of the materials while considering environmental issues. The products are sold under the MUJI brand spreading worldwide. (Ryohin Keikaku 2013.)



Figure 1: Sori Yanagi's products
(yahoo Japan 2015)



Figure 2: Mujirushi products
(yahoo Japan 2015)

In addition, she thinks that the melancholic atmosphere in Finnish film is similar to that of Japanese traditional ballad songs which penetrates into the inner heart. She also points that quiet monotonous expression is common characteristic for both Finnish and Japanese people

7 Analysis

The primary quantitative research shows popular destinations of different interest groups. Many of those destinations are commonly associated with Finnish nature and the local Finnish people and their everyday life. Also an expectation to communicate with the local Finnish people is one common characteristic of different interest groups, although there are differences in the form of interaction. As the target group of the secondary research interview, adult female travelers in their 30-40s were selected. They travel with sufficient travelling money, knowledge and language skills and they are interested in experiencing Finnish life style. Therefore, they successfully represented the Japanese pilgrimage tourist's true feeling and expectations about the trip. Since all four tourist interviewees arranged the itinerary for themselves without buying any tour products from tour companies, it can be said that their experiences of the trip were completely based on their expectations. One interviewee from the sports pilgrim group was chosen as a contrast to the other interviewees, however, she also emphasized the interaction with the Finnish athletes and the local Finnish audience as one of the highlights of her trip, which did not show any distinct difference from the other interviewees' stories.

During the interview, the most repeated theme words are nature, simplicity, functionality and comfortable feeling.

Simplicity and functionality mainly refer to Finnish design from everyday items to architectures. According to the interviewee, the simplicity and functionality of Finnish design is what Japanese people are longing for. As wooden items and buildings can be seen more at the countryside in Japan, respecting harmony with nature used to be common in Finland and Japan in old days. However, Japanese people sacrificed the sense of aesthetic in order to pursue convenience and functionality during the postwar economic growth.

On the other hand, Finland has maintained the sense of aesthetic successfully. Japanese people try to regain the concept of their old culture that has been lost and Finnish design answers the Japanese people's need. (Hokuo house 2015.) Handicraft is suggested by Finnish Tourism Board as a key word among female travelers (Noto 2013b, 8). Visiting a studio of the craftsman and experience workshops of handicrafts are could be one of the potential tour for the target female travelers. It is preferable that the concept and background story of the product are well presented to the tourists.

Comfortable feeling refers to relaxation and healing. This is what the interviewees had longed for before the trip and also what they have got from the trip. According to the interview, the relaxation and healing in Finnish nature such as a forest is highly expected by the tourists.

Comfortable feeling also means a sense of distance, patience and aesthetic, which the interviewees felt were similar to Finnish and Japanese people. As a matter of fact, Finland as a tourist's destination is highly appreciated by Japanese tourists for its beauty of the nature, towns and cities (Pulkkinen 2010, 11). These common characteristics of a sense of distance and patience might be one of the reasons to increase Japanese tourists' interests in communication with the local Finnish people regardless of a language barrier. Also it leads to the further interest in studying Finnish language and the other culture.

The fact that one of the interviewees had studied Finnish language before she visited Finland was the unexpected thing that came out in the interviews. Some of the travel blogs and stories in the primary research also referred to the interest in Finnish language. According to the report of Finnish Tourist Board, Finnish words and language have been spread out in Japanese society nowadays from the name of cafe, fashion boutiques to TV commercial film. Also the primary research shows that the music pilgrims have a strong interest in Finnish language. Therefore, one of the largest possible future travelling styles would be a Finnish language study. Moreover, there is some new demand of a children's summer camp in Finland to educate them in a global environment. (Noto 2013b, 8.) Generally it is quite difficult for Japanese people to have a long holiday of several weeks, the main target of young women prefer to take a long study course more than three months after quitting a job. In this case, however, the residential permit matter will be an obstacle, because a student's permit is not issued to a language school student at the moment (The Finnish Immigration Service 2015).

From the interview with the tour coordinator, what the pilgrims expected for the tour was described clearly. In the case of an arranged tour, the interaction with the local Finnish people are conducted by way of the professional staff. Therefore it is important for the local staff and organization accepting the tour to have sufficient knowledge about destination related to the contents of the tourist's interest.

The interviewees' expectation to have a comfortable feeling in relaxation and experience the everyday life of local Finnish people matches 'LIVE LIKE LOCALS' style of travelling, suggested by Finnish Tourist Board. LIVE LIKE LOCALS means "enjoying the destination like local stylish people do", such as visiting new design shops, boutiques, cafes, flea markets, supermarkets and factory outlets. This trend is getting popular among female travelers who are keen on the Finnish life style. (Noto 2013a, 5.)

In the author's opinion, the most repeated theme 'nature, simplicity, functionality and comfortable feeling' consists of a feeling of longing for Finnish modern culture and at the same time, a feeling of nostalgia for the part of Japanese culture which has been lost. The warmth of wooden houses, hand-made handicrafts, forests and lakes, music and films with a

melancholic taste and innocent characters such as Moomins and Santa Clause are being replaced by industrialized mass products sold with a clever commercial strategy in modern days in Japan. Therefore, the simplicity and comfort of Finnish attractions makes the Japanese pilgrims feel nostalgia and add special meaning to the destinations. Nostalgia works in tourism successfully. The main reason why nostalgia operates so successfully in tourism is that it manages the unfamiliarity of a strange environment by giving the tourists the impression that they have been there before. (Theobald 1998, 40) Consequently, regardless of Finnish high technology and advanced society ahead of those of Japan, the Japanese pilgrims still relax themselves with the appreciation of the common and similar characteristics of Finnish people, and the Japanese pilgrims are attracted to visit Finland repeatedly.

8 Conclusion

Finnish Tourist Board & Finnair Social Network promotion successfully stimulates “Finland fan” to travel again as a repeater (Noto 2013a, 3). Therefore, this research was conducted to reveal the themes and stories in the Finnish culture, which are intriguing and compelling for enthusiastic Japanese “Finland fan” and which attract them on repeated trips to Finland and visiting different places across Finland. From a general tourism point of view, the secular pilgrimage type of tours is not in the mainstream of commercially profitable group tours. However, the secular pilgrimage tours are based on those very things that the Japanese find interesting in Finland and their expectations about travelling in Finland. Also the pilgrimage tours enhance destination image by turning an unknown place into a tourist spot. This research has analyzed the themes and the stories that the Japanese tourists feel empathic with. The results of this research can be used in the future and to create more attractive tour products.

Future research about Japanese tourists coming to Finland should focus on the gap between the expectation of Japanese tourists and the marketing of Finnish tourism sections. For example, the actual café “Kahvila Suomi,” the main shooting location of the film “Ruokala Lokki”, looks quite different from the one in the film, and the contents of the webpage of Visit Finland in Japanese language is completely same as those in other language, regardless of the differences in the interests between Japanese tourists and Western tourists. Also Helsinki Tourist Information webpage provides walking route maps covering many shops in different categories related to design products (Helsinki Tourist Information 2015). These maps are very informative for design enthusiasts, however, those maps are not provided in Japanese language. Some supporting information spiced with some local stories would motivate Japanese pilgrimage tourists. It would be beneficial to engage in a deeper research and analysis

on the popular pilgrimage sites in Finland in order to motivate “Finland fans” travel again as repeaters.

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Figures

Figure 1: Sori Yanagi's products (yahoo Japan 2015).....	41
Figure 2: Mujirushi products (yahoo Japan 2015)	41

Tables

Table 1: The basic questions and attributes for the quantitative research	14
Table 2: Popular destinations list of “Ruokala Lokki” pilgrimage.....	18
Table 3: Popular destinations list of Aki Kaurismaki pilgrimage.....	19
Table 4: Popular destinations list of “Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of pilgrimage” pilgrimage	19
Table 5: Popular destinations list of Sibelius pilgrimage	21
Table 6: Popular destinations list of metal music pilgrimage.....	21
Table 7: Popular destinations list of Finnish music pilgrimage	22
Table 8: Popular destinations list of design pilgrimage	23
Table 9: Popular destinations list of Aalto pilgrimage	25
Table 10: Popular destinations list of Finnish architecture pilgrimage	25
Table 11: Popular destinations list of northern light and Santa Claus pilgrimage.....	28
Table 12: Popular destinations and activities list of cottage experience and nature pilgrimages	28
Table 13: Popular destinations list of Moomin pilgrimage.....	30
Table 14: Popular destinations list of PC Game pilgrimage	30
Table 15: Popular destinations list of Linux, motor sports and ice hockey pilgrimages.....	31