

Maps with Walking Routes to Historical Sites in Nagoya: Common Denominators and Their Purposes

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Introduction

As part of an ongoing study into publicly displayed maps in Japan and their relevance to culture and leisure, the present article investigates illustrated maps of the “walking course” genre in Nagoya, which is the fourth largest city in the country in terms of population (approximately 2.25 million as of October 2009) and the economic anchor of the Chūbu district in central Honshū.¹ In the next section are photographs of one such map from each ward in the city, while their common denominators and contents are discussed to provide an idea of how maps like these can be useful for recreational pursuits. After that are some comments to wrap up the article per se, and then follow the end notes and a list of related publications by the author.

Examples of the “Walking Course” Maps

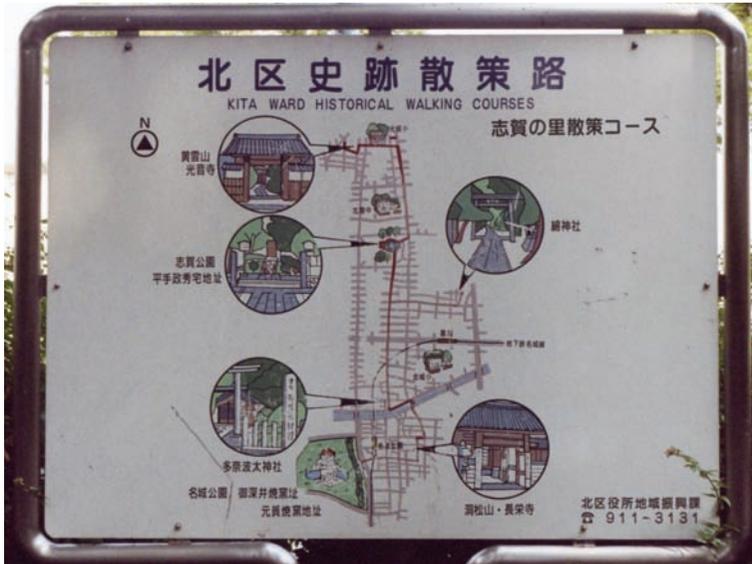
Throughout Nagoya are many publicly displayed, illustrated maps with the expression “史跡散策路” (*shiseki sansakuro*) in the title. This tends to be translated on the maps as “historical walking courses,” although in this article the expression “walking routes to historical sites” has been used because it is a better fit, being that the walking courses or routes are not historical (as in their having existed a long time ago) but have a variety of sites of historical value along them. Their main objective seems to be to provide routes for people to take for physical exercise and to present some insights into local history, while local government bureaus (the ward offices) appear to have been behind their having been commissioned and put up for public view. On the following pages are sixteen examples, one from each of the wards in the city, and a quick look over them will reveal a few common denominators.²



1: *Minato-ku Shiseki Sansakuro: Nagoyakô to Tsukiji Shûhen Shiseki Meguri* (Walking Routes to Historical Sites in Minato Ward: A Tour of Historical Sites in the Environs of Nagoya Port and Tsukiji).



2: *Nakagawa-ku Shiseki Sansakuro: Arako Kannon Kaiwai Kôsu* (Walking Routes to Historical Sites in Nakagawa Ward: The Course in the Vicinity of [the Temple Devoted to] Avalokiteshvara of Arako).



5: *Kita-ku Shiseki Sansakuro: Shiga no Sato Sansaku Kōsu* (Walking Routes to Historical Sites in Kita Ward: The Walking Course in the Village of Shiga).



6: *Moriyama-ku Shiseki Sansakuro: Ōmori-Kitayama Furusato Meguri* (Walking Routes to Historical Sites in Moriyama Ward: A Tour of the Old Villages of Ōmori and Kitayama).



7: *Meitō-ku Shiseki Sansakuro: Shibata Katsui Kōsu* (Walking Routes to Historical Sites in Meitō Ward: The Shibata Katsui Course).



8: *Tempaku-ku Shiseki Sansakuro: Aioiyama Ryokuchi to Shizen Kansatsu Kōsu* (Walking Routes to Historical Sites in Tempaku Ward: The Aioiyama Green Tract and Nature-Observation Course).



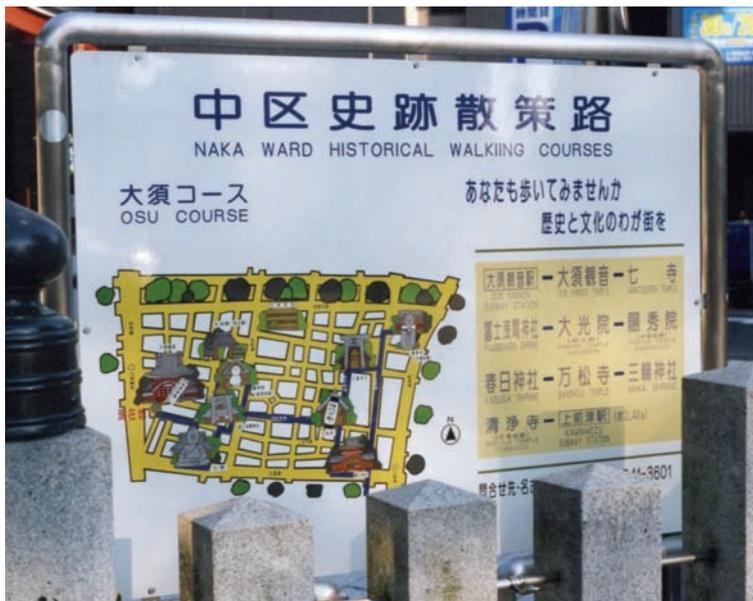
9: *Midori-ku Shiseki Sansakuro: Ryokuchi-Toride Kôsu* (Walking Routes to Historical Sites in Midori Ward: The Green Tract and Fortress Course).



10: *Minami-ku Shiseki Sansakuro: Tôkaidô Shûhen Meguri* (Walking Routes to Historical Sites in Minami Ward: A Tour of the Environs of the Tôkaidô [East Sea Road]).



11: *Atsuta-ku Shiseki Sansakuro: Miya no Watashi Kôsu* [and] *Atsuta Jingû Saidaibashi Kôsu* (Walking Routes to Historical Sites in Atsuta Ward: The [Atsuta] Shrine Crossing Course [and] The Atsuta Shrine [and] Saidaibashi Course).



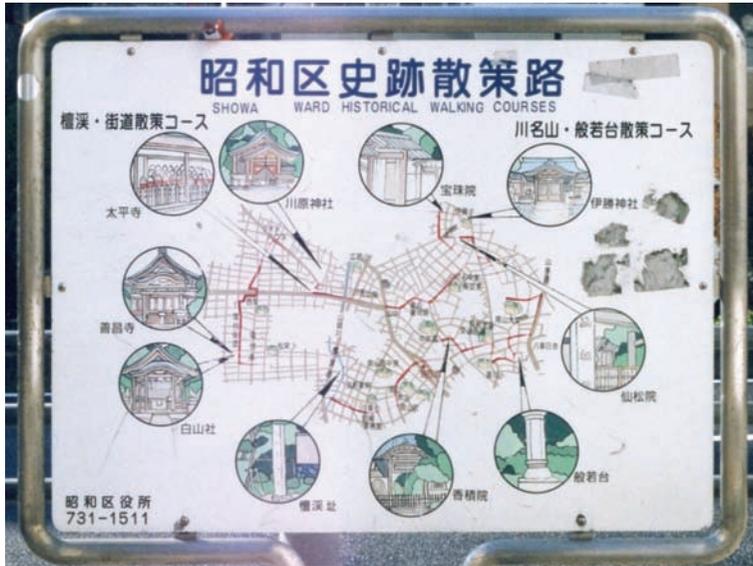
12: *Naka-ku Shiseki Sansakuro: Ôsu Kôsu* (Walking Routes to Historical Sites in Naka Ward: The Ôsu Course).



13: *Higashi-ku Shiseki Sansakuro: Yadagawa Sansaku Kôsu* (Walking Routes to Historical Sites in Higashi Ward: The Yada River Walking Course).



14: *Chikusa-ku Shiseki Sansakuro: Chikusa Kôen to Mizu no Michi Meguri* (Walking Routes to Historical Sites in Chikusa Ward: A Tour of Chikusa Park and Water Road).



15: *Shōwa-ku Shiseki Sansakuro: Dankei-Kaidō Sansaku Kōsu* [and] *Kawanayama-Hannyadai Sansaku Kōsu* (Walking Routes to Historical Sites in Shōwa Ward: The Dankei Highway Walking Course [and] The Kawanayama and Pedestal of [the Female Demon] Hannya Walking Course).



16: *Mizuho-ku Shiseki Sansakuro: Furusato Rekishi no Michi Kōsu* (Walking Routes to Historical Sites in Mizuho Ward: The Course along the Roads of History in the Old Village).

One common denominator is that they can all be observed to be maps in the conventional sense of portraying space or an area in a graphical form that emphasizes direction, distance, and at least relative location, and despite their not providing a scale and not indicating the lay of the land (elevation differences and such like), they are rather easy to understand from the perspective of getting information related to the routes and selected sites. Their diagrammatic bases clearly delineate roads and, in most cases, bodies of water, while there is no overwhelming reliance on abstract symbols that require legends for them to be understood. In terms of orientation, fifteen of the maps have north to the top and one (#1) has it to the upper right; twelve of them indicate this through a circle with something like a triangle inside pointing to “N” (north), one (#8) does the same without the “N,” one (#11) has a circle with the darker of two inverted triangles inside pointing to “N,” while the orientation of the remaining two (#3 and #15) was determined by checking their layouts with printed maps of the areas shown.³ Another common denominator is that they are all in color, which not only is coded in a reasonably understandable fashion but also makes them more attractive, a factor that should not be overlooked since visual appeal is important for getting attention and presenting a good image of the area and the ward authorities, notwithstanding the fact that maps such as these do get damaged over time by the natural elements and/or vandals (#15 is a good example). Finally, they all include pictures of sites to be visited along the highlighted route(s); on #12 the pictures have been drawn directly into the road system, on #9 and #11 they are offset in rectangles, and on the remaining thirteen they are offset in circles.

With the exception of English translations of the titles in all but #11, the English translations for the sites in #12, and the “N” for north, these maps are in the Japanese language. That they and similar maps are exclusively or predominantly in Japanese suggests rather strongly that they are targeted at Japanese nationals, but whether they have been envisioned as belonging to any particular cohort by whoever commissioned such maps is impossible to say from the maps themselves. Related, and from an observational perspective, while conducting fieldwork in 2007 about the seventeen maps discussed in the monograph dated 2007b at the end of this article and – in greater depth for two of them in the articles dated 2008b and 2009a – in 2008, there was no clear evidence that anybody was specifically following a route on such a map, let alone that any particular social set dominated in taking up the invitation to explore local history.

Still, it would be within reason to assume that the “walking courses” such as these would be of potential interest to residents within or near a designated area, and perhaps to others who make urban hiking a hobby. The main purpose would seem to be physical exercise, with learning about local history secondary, so the types of people who are likely to engage in such an activity would be among the elderly and working-age people in their free time.

That said, the dominating contents of the maps are the illustrations which are connected to the routes. A total of 154 sites are indicated on the sixteen maps, and among these are four sites that account for five extra labeled illustrations (on #6, #7, and #13) while seven sites have multiple pictures under one label only (on #2, #9, and #10); the latter have been calculated as being within the 154 sites, but the extra labeled illustrations have been added to create a total of 159 illustrated phenomena related to the mapped routes.⁴ Of these 159 illustrations, 115 (72.3%) pertain to religion – 68.5 (43.1%) are connected to Buddhism and 46.5 (29.2%) to Shintô – while the remainder may be classified as being ruins, monuments, or statues (19 combined, about 12%) or as “others” (25 combined, 15.7%).⁵

Because religious sites dominate, a question might be raised about whether such maps are properly categorized as “historical,” and the best which might be offered as an answer is that most of the religious sites could be considered monuments of or links to the past, more than as significant institutions flourishing in the present. To back this up, it is worth noting that of the 109 labeled illustrations having temples (63.5) and shrines (45.5) as their subjects on the sixteen maps,⁶ only three temples (Arako Kannon in #2, Kasadera in #10, and Ôsu Kannon in #12) and one shrine (Ueno Tenmangû in #14) seem to be reasonably well known locally as active institutions, many of the others are comparatively small institutions, and the only religious site of national significance past and present – Atsuta Jingû in #11 – does not have an offset illustration, although it is depicted by an idealized portrait of the main building and a *torii* (gateway that separates the sacred from the profane) in the graphics of the map itself. As if to tip the balance in favor of “history,” though, the 19 sites of ruins, historical monuments, and statues as well as at least a third of the 25 sites listed under “others” in note 5 do have historical significance, and among them are a burial mound, the graveyard of an influential family, an Edo-Period lighthouse, and a flood-level marker.

Whether “historical” in significance or as thriving institutions, temples and shrines can provide a pleasant place for a casual visit. Their grounds are well kept,

have trees and other plants, and (especially for the smaller, less visited ones) can be quiet and relaxing, all of which contributes to their appeal for leisure. Other areas on the sixteen maps have similarities in this regard, and among them are the port complex at the lower left of #1, most of the route and its surroundings on #8 (mainly the hilly Aioiyama upland, which has a lot of land devoted to agriculture, horticulture, trees, and bamboo), and the various parks which are along or not far from the designated routes. Parks are also among the illustrated sites listed as “others” in note 5, which also includes places that are aimed at contemporary curiosity such as an aquarium (of educational value as well) and the International Center. Although people engaged in leisurely activities can be found in only two of the illustrations pertaining to the routes – a baseball player in the park at the southern terminus of the route on #5, and a family of three walking in a park on #13 – all four are smiling cartoon characters who serve to cultivate a happy feel, something that is usual when people are illustrated on publicly displayed maps in Japan,⁷ and at least the family can be interpreted as a device to encourage spending some time along the riverside stretch of the route.

It not being the objective here to delve into details about the maps, in regard to content or otherwise because of the sheer volume of data they include, suffice it to say that maps such as these do draw attention to phenomena in the local landscape that can easily be missed or just simply ignored, as well as of course to higher-profile sites. Especially because of the sites that are small and not particularly impressive or significant, maps such as these can be seen not only as providing routes for recreation – walking and taking rests at some places – but also as serving as promotional material for the areas depicted as well as (since they are mentioned in the titles) the wards in general. In the sixteen examples reproduced in this article, all of them appear to have been sponsored by the ward offices, which are mentioned on the maps (#11 also mentions the Atsuta branch of the Lions Club – an international community-oriented, humanitarian organization – as a cosponsor), and the similarities in design and primary title among the maps suggest city-wide collusion, meaning that municipal authorities appear to be encouraging urban discovery and an acquisition of associated knowledge and insights.

Comments

It is worth noting that the statistics for the sixteen maps might raise doubts about whether these and other maps like them are truly “historical” – as in oriented toward an understanding of the past – as the word “史跡” (*shiseki*, historical) in their titles suggests. Their illustrations are heavily weighted toward religion (72.3% of the total), and only 19.5% of the illustrations – 19 ruins etc. and nine to twelve of the 25 “others” in note 5, for a total of up to 31 illustrations out of 159 – can be considered of both historical and non-religious merit. What this means is that many of the religious sites must have been considered to be of historical merit by the creators of the routes and the compilers of the maps, which would seem to be justified by the age of many such sites and their having been connected to administrative jurisdictions (notably villages) that no longer exist. Another explanation for associating the religious sites with history is that many contemporary Japanese seem to think that they are no longer a religious people, or not terribly so, meaning that a lot of sites (but not all) pertaining to Buddhism and Shintô could be viewed as belonging more to social history than to contemporary life, and therefore as artifacts that hint at the lifeways of generations past. Still, there is no need to be cynical about the “historical” claims of the maps because they can inspire at least some thoughts about, and even research into, local history, which can on some occasions be projected onto a larger scale (as, for instance, with the graves of the Senshû family, a woman from which gave birth to Minamoto Yoritomo in 1147). In some cases the link to history is direct (e.g. the ruins, a signpost along what was the Tôkaidô, and statues), while in others it might be simply because something has been around for decades or centuries (e.g. temples and shrines) or was made at some point in the past (e.g. a statue of a Buddhist character), and yet in other cases it might be oblique (e.g. the wooded area of Aioiyama, which can serve to provide insights into what it was like to live “in nature” before urbanization and industrialization dramatically changed lifeways).

As interesting as these links might be to people who are curious about the past, it does however seem that cultivating an awareness of (generally, local) history is of secondary intent when it comes to the spirit and purpose of such maps. More important – as suggested by the “散策路” (*sansakuro*, walking routes) in their titles – is their role in promoting exercise by mapping out routes to follow and illustrating places to find along the way. Although it is not necessarily

beyond the interest of some relatively younger people to pursue “walking courses” such as these in pursuit of history, it would be within reason to assume that they might prefer other, more energetic or exciting ways to get their exercise (loosely interpreted), meaning that these maps are primarily directed at older people with a couple of hours to spare. This is important because today’s Japan is in the throes of an “ageing” or “graying” society, one in which the population of retirees has been steadily increasing, in both numbers and percentage of the entire population, for several years and promises to remain an influential social factor in at least the coming two or three decades. These people require a diverse set of recreational activities to make life meaningful or not hopelessly boring, and it may be assumed from observation over the past couple of decades that such gentle outdoor activities as hiking, casual walking, and playing gateball (akin to croquet) are reasonably popular amongst the elderly. The aerobic exercise which comes from walking is a reasonably cheap and safe way to stay fit, especially for those whose main source of income is a pension, and maps such as the sixteen reproduced in this article provide useful routes and sites that could arouse curiosity. They can be photographed with cellphones and digital cameras for immediate use, often enough have “you are here” (usually 現在地, *genzaichi*, place at present) indicators so that bearings can be set, have routes that are generally not difficult to follow, and illustrate sites in ways that are clearly recognizable (photographs) or, more commonly, reasonably faithful artistic renditions (idealized portraits).⁸ One drawback, however, is that they do not always match their physical surroundings in the sense that the map has been set up so that its orientation matches the actual, direct view (e.g. north as both at the top of the map and in front of the viewer); from a charitable perspective, perhaps a significant minority of such maps have been inconveniently positioned to provide some mental exercise – checking the surroundings, determining actual directions, etc. – but that is a different issue for another article.

Notes

1. Tôkyô, Ôsaka, and Yokohama are larger in terms of population, and although Nagoya has a larger population and serves as the capital of Aichi prefecture, in terms of recognition it arguably exists in the shadow of the nearby, smaller city of Toyota which is home to the automobile company of the same name that drives the fortunes of the local economy. The present article comprises revisions of and additions to the sections “Generalities about the ‘Walking Course’ Maps” and “Final Comments” in a lengthier paper (“In Search of Local History: ‘Walking Course’ Maps in Nagoya, Japan,” 20 A4 p., currently available in PDF format) that was prepared for and orally presented at the Eleventh World Leisure Congress, a large international symposium held in late August and early September 2010 at Kangwon National University, Chuncheon, Korea; the case-study section on a map similar to #8 in this article has not been included here.
2. Although they take up substantial space within a journal, one of the purposes of articles such as this is to provide reproductions of the maps. The photographs in this article were taken in January (#1), February (#14), July (#8), and September (#5) 2007; in June (#13), July (#s 10-12), August (#9), and December (#s 2-4, 6, 15-16) 2008; and in April 2010 (#7).
3. Although fifteen of the maps reproduced have north where it is typically expected to be, and the other is close enough, such orientation is neither obligatory nor always found on publicly displayed maps. Of the seventeen maps reproduced in the monograph dated 2007b in the list of publications at the end of this article, for instance, eight are oriented to the north (i.e. north is at the top), three to the east, one to the southsoutheast, two to the south, and three to the west.
4. The distribution of the sites etc.: #1 = 16 total illustrated sites, #2 = 8 total illustrated sites (one site has three pictures under one label), #3 = 9 total illustrated sites, #4 = 11 total illustrated sites, #5 = 6 total illustrated sites (one not circled), #6 = 8 total illustrated sites (9 labeled illustrations), #7 = 7 total illustrated sites (10 labeled illustrations), #8 = 7 total illustrated sites, #9 = 6 total illustrated sites (four sites have two pictures under one label), #10 = 13 total illustrated sites (two sites have two pictures under one label), #11 = 16 total illustrated sites, #12 = 9 total illustrated sites (labeled and listed in the itinerary), #13 = 8 total illustrated sites (9 labeled illustrations), #14 = 8 total illustrated sites, #15 = 10 total illustrated sites, and #16 = 12 total illustrated sites. For the calculations in the text, the seven sites with multiple “pictures under one label” have been counted only once, but the five extra “labeled illustrations” have been added to the 154 “total illustrated sites,” yielding a total of 159.
5. The distribution of the content of the illustrations by category: Buddhist temples (寺 or 院), buildings (堂), or characters (観音 , Kannon; 地藏 , Jizô; 十王 , Jûô; 薬師 , Yakushi; 般若 , Hannyâ): #1 (3), #2 (4), #3 (4), #4 (9), #5 (2), #6 (4), #7 (4), #8 (2), #9 (1), #10 (5), #11 (9), #12 (6), #13 (1), #14 (3), #15 (6), #16 (5.5) = 68.5 total; Shintô shrines (神社 , 社 , or 宮)

or festivals (まつり): #1 (2), #2 (4), #3 (2), #4 (2), #5 (2), #6 (3), #7 (3), #8 (2), #9 (2), #10 (3), #11 (3), #12 (3), #13 (2), #14 (5), #15 (3), #16 (5.5) = 46.5 total; ruins (跡, 址), historical monuments (碑), or statues (像): #1 (5), #2 (0), #3 (0), #4 (0), #5 (2), #6 (0), #7 (2), #8 (1), #9 (2), #10 (3), #11 (2), #12 (0), #13 (0), #14 (0), #15 (1), #16 (1) = 19 total; and others: #1 (6: ship used for scientific expeditions, aquarium, port building, flood-level marker, two bridges), #2 (0), #3 (3: bridge, ceremonial cart, International Center building), #4 (0), #5 (0), #6 (2: burial mound, storage building), #7 (1: tree), #8 (2: family graveyard, pond; because it is connected to Buddhism, the postcard tower is counted above as such), #9 (1: park), #10 (2: one-*ri* hill, park), #11 (2: lighthouse, Tōkaidō signpost), #12 (0), #13 (6: meeting hall, two railway station buildings, Tokugawa Park, park, multistory apartment buildings), #14 (0), #15 (0), #16 (0) = 25 total, of which nine clearly have historical significance and another three or so might. The reason for the .5 enumerations under Buddhist temples and Shintō shrines is that one illustration on #16 has a label referring to both (寺 and 社).

6. Because only temples and shrines are counted here, the numbers vary slightly from those in the previous paragraph which include references to Buddhist characters and a Shintō festival.
7. See, in particular, publication 2010 for comments on and photographs of maps with cartoon characters; specific parts that explain cartoon characters and other categories of illustrations are “Comments on the Illustrative Component of the Maps” in chapter 2 and the “Glossary of Important Terms,” while chapters 2 (Contemporary *Ezu* on Public Display in Japan: Examples of a Cartographic Tradition That Continues to Flourish), 3 (Publicly Displayed Illustrated Maps in Japan as Insights into Domestic Tourism and Leisure), and 4 (Religious Sites in Publicly Displayed Illustrated Maps in Japan), as well as the “Glossary,” have photographs with easy-to-see cartoon characters.
8. An idealized portrait, as noted in the “Glossary” of publication 2010, is “an illustration which captures the essence of a subject with a sufficient degree of artistic license to argue that the impression is not supposed to be an exact replica or a reasonably detailed copy.” A photograph is considered to be a “realistic portrait,” as would be “a rather detailed, lifelike drawing or painting.”

Related Publications by the Author

2002. Contemporary “Ezu” on Public Display in Japan: Examples of a Cartographic Tradition That Continues to Flourish. *Tsudajuku Daigaku Kiyô* [Journal of Tsuda College] 34: 97-128.

2003a. Contemporary “Ezu” on Public Display in Japan, Continued. *Tsudajuku Daigaku Kiyô* [Journal of Tsuda College] 35: 77-114. This is a continuation of 2002.

2003b. Religious Sites in Japanese Illustrated Maps: Insights from the Literature about the Past, and Contemporary Examples from Maps on Public Display. *Saitama Daigaku Kiyô: Kyôyôgakubu* [Journal of Saitama University: Faculty of Liberal Arts] 39, 1: 51-95.

2003c. Illustrated Maps on Public Display in Japan: Geography and Artistic Tradition. *Geographical Review of Japan* 76, 12: 187-206 or 823-842.

2007a. Publicly Displayed Maps in Chikusa-ku, Nagoya: Samples of Japanese Cartographic Art. *Gengo Bunka Ronshû* [Collection of Essays on Language and Culture] / *Studies in Language and Culture* 29, 1: 161-174.

2007b. *Illustrated Maps on Public Display in Nagoya and Their Educational Merits*. Nagoya [via the College of International Languages and Cultures, Nagoya University]. 56 pp.

2007c. Artwork in Publicly Displayed Illustrated Maps in Japan as a Medium for Cultural Insights. *Studies in Media and Culture* 3: 57-72.

2008a. Publicly Displayed Maps in Japan as a Cultural Testimony to a Wealthy Lifestyle. *Studies in Media and Culture* 4: 109-127. This is a continuation of 2007c.

2008b. Evaluation of a “Historical Walking Course” Map in Chikusa Ward, Nagoya. *Gengo Bunka Ronshû* [Collection of Essays on Language and Culture] / *Studies in Language and Culture* 30, 1: 89-106.

2009a. Appraisal of the Damaged Map That Had Been Next to the Oosu Kannon Temple Complex in Nagoya. *Gengo Bunka Ronshû* [Collection of Essays on Language and Culture] / *Studies in Language and Culture* 30, 2: 115-134.

2009b. *Publicly Displayed Illustrated Maps in Japan as Insights into Domestic Tourism and Leisure: Being a Revision of a Paper Which Was Prepared for and Presented to the Third International Colloquium on Tourism and Leisure, Held in Bangkok, July 2009*. Nagoya [via the College of International Languages and Cultures, Nagoya University]. 29 pp. The original 30-page version can be found under “Proceedings 2009” at www.ictlconference.com.

2009c. Illustrated Maps on Public Display in Japan in Regard to Domestic Tourism. *International Journal of Culture and Tourism Research* 2, 1: 107-123.

2010. *Publicly Displayed Illustrated Maps in Japan: A Collection of Revised Essays*. Nagoya [via the College of International Languages and Cultures, Nagoya University]. 150 pp. Includes revisions of 2002 + 2003a combined, 2009b, 2003b, 2007a + 2008b combined, and 2009a.