

The Shuku River Tourism Geography Project

John L. Jackson

Abstract: This paper reports the methodology and results of a collaborative student ecotourism project undertaken through research and fieldwork using the Shuku River and the immediate environs surrounding the university campus as a case study in the preservation and appreciation of local resources and for potential ecotourism enterprises in the Nishinomiya area.

From the source of the Shuku River to its mouth, students observed a broad spectrum of geographical and topographical features, witnessed first-hand both the degradation and restoration of natural resources and discussed methods in which to address environmental damage and promote sustainable tourism. Through this project, students were encouraged to explore the means of stimulating local business and enterprise whilst fostering interest in historic heritage and cultural assets in the vicinity of Otemae University.

要旨

本論文では、夙川の実地調査を通じて実施された学生のエコツーリズム研究プロジェクトとの共同作業の方法とその研究成果を報告するものである。大手前大学キャンパスに隣接した夙川周辺は、地域の環境保全、更には西宮地区におけるエコツーリズム拠点としての可能性をはらんだ美観地域であり、共同研究のケーススタディに好適なサイトでもある夙川の源流からその河口まで、学生たちは法地政学的、地理的特徴を広範囲にわたって観察した。その結果、自然資源の破壊や劣化を自分自身の目で確かめ、環境破壊に対する解決策と持続可能な観光産業をいかに確立するか、ということについて議論を重ねることができたことは特記すべきであろう。本論では、更に、夙川近郊の歴史的遺産や文化遺産の保全を推進する一方、同時に地域のビジネスや産業を振興するということの意味や問題点についての課題についても論述している。

What is the relationship between tourism and geography?

The Oxford online dictionary defines **tourism** as “*the commercial organization and operation of holidays and visits of places of interest*” and **geography** as “*the study of physical features of the earth and its atmosphere, and of human activity as it affects and is affected by these, including the distributions of populations and resources and political and economic activities*”.

It is important to note the inclusion and relevance of human activity in the latter definition, as the geography of humankind has long had huge repercussions on social and cultural factors as well as an ever-increasing environmental impact in today’s world and society. Tourism is of course, geographic in its very nature – each is fundamentally bound and inherent in the function of the other.

To demonstrate and study these factors in a tourism geography class, Otemae University students are fortunate to have the Shuku River in close proximity to their campus and facilities. A river that can be used as a case study – a tangible example of the relationship between geography and tourism – particularly ecotourism, and the physical, human, and environmental geography that essentially binds and impacts. This class had the opportunity of observing the geography of a river from its source to mouth, witnessing not only negative aspects like water pollution and embankment degradation, but also the positive relationship the river provides with the local population through recreation, commerce and cultural heritage. This project, in short, aimed to utilize fieldwork as a student-centered and collaborative learning experience that enhanced and complimented classroom learning. These excursions to the river provided vital and memorable learning and social experiences for the students and enabled them to study and collect data in a natural and authentic setting. Research has shown the importance of fieldwork and the many ways it can impact on learning (DeWitt & Storksdiel, 2008) as well as numerous learning outcomes that may not have eventuated in a typical classroom setting. Some of these potential outcomes include:

Students exposed to new experiences gain increased interest and participation in science subjects regardless of their previous interest in a particular study topic (Kisiel, 2005; Bonderup Dohn, 2011). Additionally, experiences of this nature can be recalled and relevant long after the original visit (Salmi, 2003; Falk & Dierking, 1997, Wolins, Jensen, & Ulzheimer, 1992).

Further, to quote and adopt the popular phrase “Think globally, act locally”, this project provided an ideal opportunity for Global Japan Study students to acknowledge the relevance of acting locally and consolidate how the project was in fact, a global issue facing rivers not only in Japan but elsewhere around the world too. The study of tourism and geography both practically and theoretically, applied to a local project - this “glocalization” to use a popular buzzword, equipped students with an awareness of the skills required to adapt to the modern world. Douglass (2005) suggests “all globalization is in fact subject to local (or national and regional) influences” (p.1). He argues that in order for individuals to have a clearer and improved understanding of the complex nature of globalization, educational institutions should embrace the practice of acting locally to improve knowledge of global affairs.

Methodology

The 14 students undertaking this project were from a Global Japan Studies (GJS) Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) course, *Tourism World Geography*. The GJS curriculum consists of classes that examine Japan and its place in the world geographically and culturally. This was the first class to participate in this river study and was represented by students from Japan, Korea, Thailand and China.

The project consisted of several parts. First, students researched data from the library and the Internet before embarking on fieldwork and finally, they created a sustainable ecotourism project for the river based on what they had observed. These ecotourism projects were required to be original ideas that would eventually become promotional posters. Several of the completed posters were later presented at the “Japan in the World - The World in Japan” symposium at the Sakurashukugawa campus by five of the students from this project (photo 3). In a sequence of fieldwork trips, the students would first visit the middle course of the Shuku River closest to the campus. This

would be followed by excursions to the source in the nearby mountains mouth and finally, the mouth and estuary system (Photo 1).



Photo 1: Students at the mouth and estuary of the Shuku River

During all of these trips, students were asked to sketch particular sections of the river (Photo 2) identifying key features and geographical terms such as *bank*, *meander*, *channel*, *stream*, *deposition* etc and label the drawing accordingly (Fig 1). They were also encouraged to include any wildlife in their drawings and identify the species if possible. These sketching activities of the lower, middle and upper courses of the Shuku River reinforced not only vocabulary acquisition, but succeeded in providing an enjoyable and effective way of personalizing the river and creating an empathy with it, as many students reported later.

To consolidate this study, students were also required to write throughout the semester, two comprehensive reports with the following titles, “*The relationship between tourism and geography*” and “*A geographical study of the Shuku River*”. For their end of term assessment, using all the geographical and tourism related terminology that they had learned, students were asked to create a three hundred word power point presentation consisting of ten slides, on an allocated world river.

Prior to the commencement of the inaugural fieldwork trips, students were given relevant vocabulary and terminology worksheets and checklists related to the physical aspects of a river system, both natural and artificial (Figures 2, 3). Pre-assignments were given for students to research the Shuku River and collect data on its length and other geographical information – in addition to the flora and fauna that could be found along its course. Students also reported on pollution, silting or other forms of environmental damage.



Photo 2: A student sketching the middle course of the Shuku River

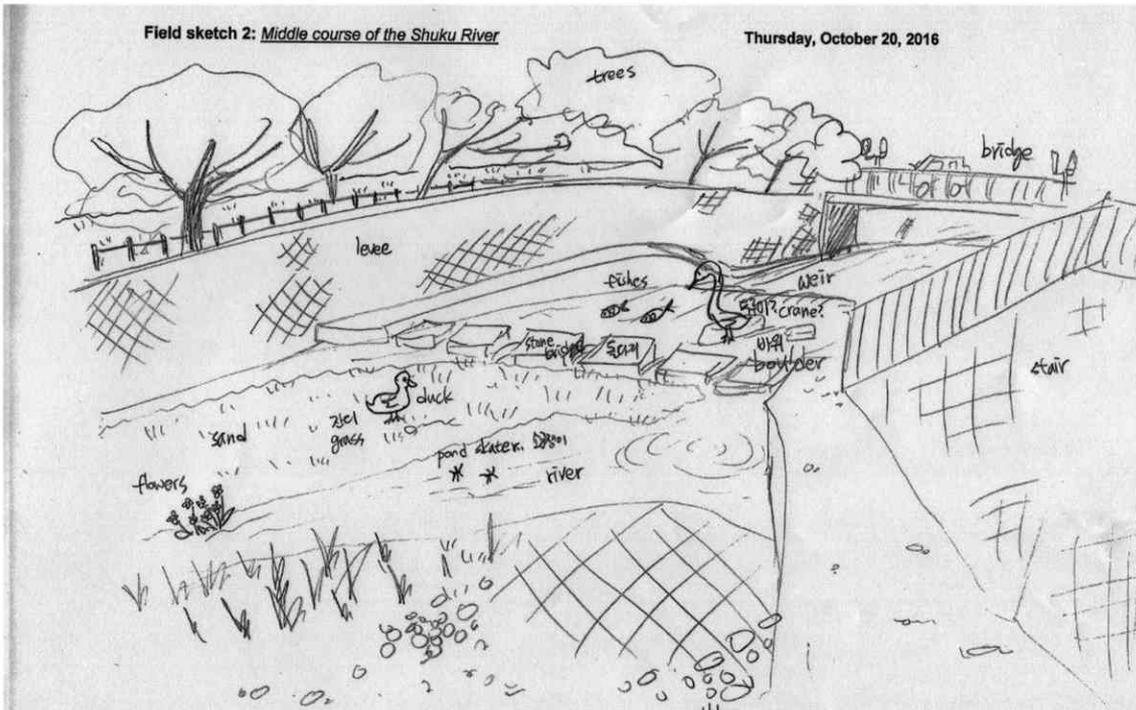


Fig 1: An example of a student's field sketch



Photo 3: Presenting posters at the “Japan in The World – The World in Japan” Symposium at Sakurashukugawa campus

In terms of collecting data on commercial or recreational use, emphasis was placed on identifying activities and pastimes that could be categorized as examples of tourism, or more specifically, ecotourism.

Following is a copy of the pre-assignment questions and a glossary of terms required in addition to the checklist for all visits to the Shuku river.

1. *What is the length of the Shuku River? Where does it start and finish?*
2. *What types of birds, fish and other animals can be found in and around the Shuku River?*
3. *What kinds of seasonal activities can people participate in and around the river?*
4. *Research the names of five shops, businesses or services that are close to the river.*
5. *Name 6 natural geographical features and 6 man-made structures that are in or near to the river.*
6. *Which organizations manage or protect the river?*
7. *Using the internet or newspapers, please research some recent environmental problems concerning the Shuku River.*
8. *Research some past or recent news showing improvement in the water quality of the Shuku River.*

9. Visit the Community Centre located close to our campus. Go inside and find relevant brochures containing information on festivals, events, concerts or tourist-related activities.

10. Visit the following websites and research any types of ecotourism currently available in the Nishinomiya area.

The Japan Ecotourism Society <http://www.ecotourism.gr.jp>

Nishinomiya Tourism Association <http://nishinomiya-kanko.jp/english/>

Ecotourism	Geography
biodiversity	catchment
forestry	channel
reforestation	confluence
conservation	erosion
ecological	delta
wildlife	estuary
sustainable	gradient
rainforest	meander
fauna	sediment
flora	stream
environmental	tributary
naturalist	wetland
birdlife	waterfall
bioregion	source
biodiversity	mouth
sanctuary	waterway
enterprise	downstream
development	upstream
management	upper course
habitat	middle course
impact	lower course
Japan Ecotourism Society	floodplain

Fig 2: Terminology worksheet

CHECKLIST - DID YOU SEE THE FOLLOWING ALONG THE SHUKUGAWA?

	What?	Notes - (More detail)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tree	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tree	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tree	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bird	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bird	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bird	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fish	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fish	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fish	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Catchment	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Channel	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Confluence	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Delta	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Erosion	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Garbage	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Garbage	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Garbage	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gradient	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Habitat	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Meander	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sediment	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stream	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tributary	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wetland	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bridge	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Waterfall	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Playground	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shop	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tourism	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tourism	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tourism	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	

Fig 3: Checklist used for fieldwork along the river course

The posters produced by the students reflected critical thinking, originality and enthusiasm as shown in examples of the ecotourism ideas and subsequent posters below.

- Fish and firefly viewing – planting the trees that fireflies require.
- Re-stocking fish programs for children accompanied by adults.
- Recycling booths along the river – especially during crowded periods at cherry blossom viewing times.
- People are encouraged to provide their own tumblers for reduced cost drinks that are available at special “EcoBooths”.
- From recycling, people are able to collect redeemable stamps for seed pencils that can be planted in pots to produce fresh herbs.
- A picnic fashion tour for girls. Money gained from clothes rental will go towards litter prevention. The aim is to present nature as being “fashionable and cool”.
- A seasonal food contest on the banks of the river. To participate in this, volunteers are first allocated a cleaning group. The person who collects the most garbage receives the most food vouchers.
- Making handicrafts through tours using acorns, leaves, twigs etc. This is seasonal, so the leaves can be Japanese Maple or Cherry blossom petals. Cones and acorns are easily found along the whole course.
- Events for children, including sketching contests and painting contests. The art will be displayed in the nearby community center.
- Learning about the environment through easy English lessons. Printed worksheets for children to locate specific trees, birds, fish or insects.
- All day bird watching hikes beginning at the bird sanctuary at the mouth of the river to Kitayama dam. Revenue from binocular hire will benefit the birds through tree planting and bank restoration.
- Improving the condition of weirs and fish ladders to assist the migration of fish upstream and prevent the accumulation of plastics. Volunteers remove plastic bags and recruit local residents to participate.
- Pressing flowers and making bookmarks that can be sold at the Otemae campus or through the Nishinomiya Tourist Association.

Shuku river activity

B15073 Sayumi Shichi

Let's go to watch a firefly

You can watch flying wild firefly!!
This place became the stage of the "Hotarunohaka".

Purpose

We are active for becoming the natural rich beautiful river where fireflies can inhabit in Shukugawa streaming down Nishinomiya.

When mid-May ~ in early June

Time pm 19:00 ~ 21:00

Playing in the water and view fish

- Water is pure and is shallow.
- It is the most suitable spot for the playing in the water of a small child.
- There are many fish.



Ecotourism & Environmental Geography of the Shuku River

(Maja Nishida)

Enjoy Bird-watching tours in Shukugawa

In Shukugawa, there are a lot of birds, and some of them are very rare like the grey heron. So, Shukugawa is a great place for bird-watching. The tour begins from the beach to Myoryuji (妙龍寺) in the mountain. The tourists can take photos of the birds, or make a sketch and draw a picture.

The participation cost is 3,000 yen. Tourists can borrow a binocular if they don't have one. The money will only use for Shukugawa. It will use for keeping the river's good environment, for protecting animals, for cleaning the river up.



nature hiking and nature craft tour -autumn-

815091
Rika Takigawa

First, we will start at Onmaehama.

There are various kinds of birds, and some fish.

Next, we will start to walk for "katahoko pond".

There are "ginkgo tree", "pine tree" etc around shuku river.

We can find and pick up a lot of fallen leaves and seed in the street.

When we arrive the katahoko pond, we will start to make nature craft.

1. Make a top with acorn.
 - to prick with a toothpick on top of the acone.
2. Make a preseed plant with autumn leaves.
 - to put fallen leaves between the Japanese paper "wasi".
3. Make a original character with twig, cone, acorn etc.
 - to stick with small article that we picked up before.



mallard



Start: Onmae-hama
Arrive: Katahoko-pond
Hiking time: about 20min
Cost: free



HANAMI RECYCLING

3/27 (Mon) ~ 4/9 (Sun) PROJECT in Shukugawa
SQ 1601 HYUNJUNG RO

- ★ Recycling booths along the shukugawa!
Staff will be help you!



- ★ Take out free drink with your own tumbler!



If you bring your own tumbler,
you can enjoy a variety of drinks
whenever you want!

The drink booth is near
the recycling booth

- ★ Collect recycle stamps and get some souvenirs!



After you use the pencil, just put it in the soil!
Your lovely plants will grow up!

- ★ Find out animals and plants at Shukugawa
with special handouts!



Carp



Ayu



Japanese Eel



Japanese Cormorant



Japanese Sparrowhawk

FIND THEM!!

Finding Nature
~ The same scenery after 50 years ~



Have you been involved with nature recently? Have you met any valuable animals?

There are many kinds of animals, plants and trees in Shuku River.

For people who want to meet animals that have never been seen.

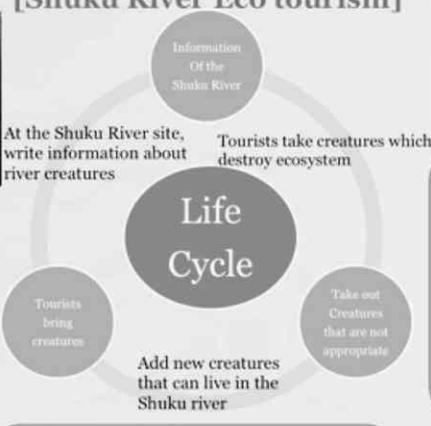
For people who are being chased by time, and having busy days...

Let's be healed with lovely airspace and nature!



Time: 10-12 / 15-17 ✓ You can choose!
*Cost : Child*600 yen, Adult*1100 yen*
 ✓ If child join with adult, child's cost change to 450 yen.
 ✓ If you want box lunch, please pay more 300 yen.
 Plan : Midstream course / Downstream course
 ✓ You can choose! ✓ Both are O.K.
 Pick up garbage : Depending on the number of grams, you can get luxury prizes such as restaurant's coupon tickets!

The Shuku River Ecosystem & Environmental Geography



[Shuku River Eco tourism]

Information Of the Shuku River

At the Shuku River site, write information about river creatures

Tourists take creatures which destroy ecosystem

Life Cycle

Tourists bring creatures

Add new creatures that can live in the Shuku river

Take out Creatures that are not appropriate




River Bank
On Shuku River stream side, there are levee banks. These are built to prevent floods. Of course there are river banks using soil but Shuku River's river bank is made of concrete which is stronger than soil. So in a prevention way, concrete is more reliable.

Weir
Weir looks like stairs in the water. It's a kind of bank in the river made to turn the flow of water. And when we see weir, we can find interesting things. There is a weir for fish which have to go against the current. Near the high weir, humans made low weir like stairs to help fish to rest when they jump upstream.

River Mouth
There is a beautiful rivermouth in the Shuku River. We can see lots of birds, fish and plants. Also Physical Geography, for example, delta, sediment etc. But problem is 'LITTER'. Shuku river is clean. Creatures which only can live in clean water live in this river. When you go to the river mouth, you can easily find out lots of plastic and other garbage in water. When you go to river mouth, please don't throw trash in the water!

Shukugawa Park
Near the Shuku River is 'Shukugawa Park'. Even though the Shuku river is located in the city, it's also in Shukugawa park. It has great riverside views. When we walk through the park, there is a train station. In Korea, my town, there is also a place like Shukugawa park and river. When I think about both rivers (and parks), it's amazing that they are literally clean even if made by human's hand. It looks like nature that has never been touched by human beings.



SB1616 Jisook, Yang

The Shuku River ecosystem and environmental geography



Holding events for Children on the Shuku River

Purpose

- *Children can feel closer to nature!
- *increase amount of children who want to play outside!

Contents of Event

- *Hold sketching contest (Display paintings of Children in the Community Center)
- *Learn about the environment using English
- *observing creatures
- *collage using leaves or flowers for under elementary students!

Participation fee
Only material cost

The creatures which inhabits Shuku River



What can children do???

- * see a lot of animals.
- * come and connect with nature.
- * enjoy games without players.
- * learn about environment and English.

I think children can enjoy this event if they can try!

B15102 Chiemi Tokushita

Results

At the conclusion of this project, the entire group of students in the GJS Tourism World Geography 200 class expressed a much greater appreciation of a river they cross almost on a daily basis. They were able to view the Shuku River from a different perspective – not necessarily as a bridge over a body of water or cherry blossoms in spring, but as a precious resource and valuable waterway supporting many types of fish, mammals and birdlife. By studying the Shuku River, they also gained a new and enthusiastic engagement with it – a desire to maintain its beauty and protect it through creating and promoting individual ecotourism projects that would enhance and preserve its condition. This hands-on fieldwork also motivated the students to further study the impact of human, physical and environmental geography on many other rivers throughout Japan and the rest of the world.

In the classroom, using the data collected through research both from media sources and practical field trips, the students collaborated and discussed their existing ideas and findings, simultaneously improving their knowledge of both geographical terms as well as potential tourism and business enterprises that had not occurred to them. This sharing of ideas further assisted the students in recognizing the importance of sound and sustainable tourism practices - activities that would benefit the Shuku River and its immediate environment. Seeing first-hand the pollution, littering and degradation of the river and the effect it could, and is, having on native waterfowl and fish, ensured students were aware of the importance of this project.

With these images in mind, the students created Power Point posters that were centered on ecologically sound tourism practices causing little or no negative impact on the fragility of the environment. There was also a notable

ecotourism".
tourism because shukugawa has mother nature, many wild animals and beautiful views. Those are one of changes of the seasons by seeing view of Shukugawa. There are strong relationship between Shukugawa and eco "Shukugawa is very familiar river for Oiemae students. Oiemae students see shukugawa every day. We can feel the watershed areas".

"In last class, we went to the upper stream. The river is so small and meander. Also the upper stream are in forest so trees and river have relationship. Tree can put precipitation because soil of forest is soft so it has permeability. If it is run off, it won't be problem because the water is soaked by trees so it can prevent flood. Forest function to prevent is very fortunately that I taking the class".

lower course of Shuku river first time in our class. When I think that I would not go there if I didn't take this class, it project of Shuku river. Also, it was great experience that walking around Shuku river. I went both upper course and that helps to nature more directly while studying about examples of eco-tourism and thinking about eco-tourism realized I have gone eco-tour like rafting, exploring caves, and hiking. Nevertheless, I began to think about the way eco-tour because the word of eco-tourism seems difficult and serious. However after studying about eco-tourism, I tourism because I like traveling, but I have not go eco-tour recently. The beginning of class, I think I have not gone studying hard of geography when I was high school student makes me easier to study. Also, I am interested in relationship of tourism and geography, Shuku river, and eco-tourism, I got interest of them. Maybe the memory of "To be honest, I didn't know well about Shuku river, birds, fish, and eco-tourism. But while studying about geography, Shuku river and ecotourism".

I will more have fun to travel, and I will more care about the environment by knowing the tourism and

"The Shuku River Project was terrific!"

geography, nature, and relationship between human life".
"This report taught me water cycle. We live in convenient life, so it was great chance to know well about

differences part of river".

"It's little bit difficult to use whole words, but I think it was good project to remind what was on the river and find

"It was so amazing that source was so different that I imagined. I never imagine that source is that much eco".

comments below:

sense of renewed responsibility resulting in several students expressing a genuine desire to become involved in physically removing plastic refuse. Most remarked on feeling a far greater sense of ownership as can be seen in the

“We also about Ecotourism too. Ecotourism is tourism directed toward exotic natural environments, intended to support conservation efforts and observe wildlife. Therefore we students project about Ecotourism in Shuku river. For this project, we went to Shuku river. The river source is Mt Rokko and its mouth is through Osaka bay. We went to its mouth to source.

“We went to beach to see river mouth. The point that shukugawa and sea meet is estuary. We saw a lot of bird such as seagull and duck. However I also saw some garbage so I worry about if bird eat garbage, bird will die. We should protect that”.

“This class is very interesting. I did not know the existence of the ecotourism. However, I was able to be interested by this class. This is the first time that I studied so much about Shuku river. I wanted to experience an active ecotourism”.

“Some day, I wish increase the nature by eco tourism and become easy to get in touch with nature. We have to protect the nature and treat nature better even when environment changes”.

From the perspective of the teacher, these excursions became spontaneous, student-centered, problem-solving and extremely collaborative undertakings. There was a 95% attendance rate throughout the course of the autumn semester when this project ran. It was encouraging and rewarding to see the students using the target vocabulary consistently and appropriately as is evident in the feedback comments.

It is the view of the author that this project presented the topics of geography and tourism in a manner that enabled students to be cognitively challenged and engaged at all times in bidirectional communication with the teacher as well as peers. During and since the conclusion of this project, students contacted the teacher and each other on social media to post photos of birds they had observed or certain river conditions following heavy rain. As previously mentioned, this was a new project, never before offered and the instructor subsequently, learned many ways in which to improve and enhance it for further application. It was an experiment - a learning curve that provided the grassroots for future tourism geography classes.

It is hoped these fieldwork lessons could become more comprehensive as they progress - with more extensive excursions and perhaps study camps, to other rivers in the Kansai region. As Japan moves toward accepting visitors for the Tokyo Olympics in 2020, Otemae students are becoming more aware of the increased tourism to the country and the importance and responsibility that accompanies it. With the Shuku River Project, there is indeed a great potential to transform it and expand it further, involving local schools, members of the public and governing bodies like the Nishinomiya City Office and the Japan Ecotourism Society. The author strongly believes these relationships would undoubtedly benefit not only the environment but strengthen bonds between the local community and Otemae University and its students.

References

- Bonderup Dohn, N. (2011). Situational interest of high school students who visit an aquarium. *Science Education*, 95(2), 337-357.
- DeWitt, J., Storksdieck, (2008). A Short Review of School Field Trips: Key Findings from the Past and Implications for the Future. *Visitor Studies*, 11(2), 181–197.
- Douglass, J. A. (2005). All Globalization Is Local: Countervailing Forces and the Influence On Higher Education Markets. *Research & Occasional Paper Series: CSHE.1.05*.
- Falk, J. & Direking, L. (1997). School field Trips: Assessing their long-term impact. *Curator*, 40, 211-218.
- Kisiel, J.F. (2005). Understanding elementary teacher motivations for science fieldtrips. *Science Education*, 89 (6), 936–955.
- Salmi, H. (2003). Science centres as learning laboratories: experiences of Heureka, the Finnish Science Centre. *International Journal of Technology Management*, 25, 460-476.
- Wolins, I. S., Jensen, N., & Ulzheimer, R. (1992). Children's memories of museum field trips: A qualitative study. *Journal of Museum Education*, 17(2), 17–27.

John Jackson is an instructor at Otemae University. His interests include geography, tourism and English pedagogy.