

ANNUAL UPDATE

*JAPANESE JOURNAL
OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES*



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The following is a summary of activities and circulation of the Japanese Journal of Religious Studies during the 2023 academic year. This update includes table of contents for published issues, an overview of online engagement with articles, and notes on present and future plans for the journal.

THIS YEAR marks the fiftieth anniversary of the *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies (JJRS)*. Since the journal was rebranded in 1974, the *JJRS* has published over one thousand academic articles on topics ranging from the architecture of ancient religious sites to contemporary religious movements in Japan. The breadth of scholarship and diversity of methodology included in its publications has made the *JJRS* the leading academic journal for the study of Japanese religion.

The issue published in 2023 is no exception. Although it only includes three research articles, they cover a wide range of topics, including female corporeality in koan praxis, Buddhist institutional support for Japan's war effort during World War II, and the role of modern technologies such as railroads in promoting travel to Buddhist temples. The issue also includes two reviews of recent publications. See the Table of Contents below for details.

There was a slight reduction in online engagement in 2023, no doubt due to the fact that only one issue was published that year. A total of 92,970 successful DOI searches between April 2023 and March 2024 is approximately 10,000 fewer than the previous year (see the *JJRS* update in *Bulletin 44* for an explanation of DOIs). The most popular DOI resolution for the 2023 academic year was for Kawakami Mitsuyo's "The View of Spirits as Seen in the *Bon* Observances of the Shima Region" (vol. 15, no. 2–3). Perhaps this popularity suggests new research on *bon* rites, or it may have been assigned in a course. (Editor's note: Please help us increase our online traffic by assigning *JJRS* articles in your courses.) Readers are invited to speculate on possible reasons for achieving the highest DOI activity in

2023. On JSTOR, there was an increase in the number of downloads. *JJRS* articles were accessed 101,882 times between April 2023 and March 2024, which is 1,100 times more than the previous year. The University of Edinburgh hosted the highest number of downloads of *JJRS* articles through JSTOR.

The above numbers do not include articles downloaded directly from the Nanzan Institute website (<https://nirc.nanzan-u.ac.jp/journal/6>). Although it is difficult to confirm how many articles have been downloaded, the *JJRS* page was viewed an average of about 9,000 times per month last year, making it by far the most visited page on the website.

Most readers engage with the *JJRS* in PDF format. The *JJRS* was ahead of its time in making all of its contents open access and freely accessible online. However, the *JJRS* is, in fact, a print journal. The digital version that most readers are familiar is a facsimile of a paperback version. Print copies of the *JJRS* can be ordered print-on-demand from any Amazon marketplace. Last year, we sold six copies worldwide. Although Nanzan does not receive profits from online sales of the *JJRS*, the editors spend a great deal of time and effort to create the cover and print volume. Please order it.

The 2024 academic year will be a banner year for the *JJRS*. We are currently preparing a full slate of articles for the spring issue, which covers topics such as mummies, reclusion, Kannon fandom, *wagaku* vs. *kokugaku*, and the music of the Pure Land. We also plan to complete a yet-unpublished special issue on not-so-new “new religions” that was originally scheduled for last fall. Finally, we will end the year with a very special special issue celebrating the Fiftieth Anniversary of the *JJRS*. This Golden Issue promises to be one of the greatest the journal has ever published. Check the NIRC website for announcements regarding new publications and related events.

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