

Pilgrimage and Peregrination

Contextualizing the Saikoku *Junrei* and the Shikoku *Henro*

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This article provides a general theoretical overview of Japanese pilgrimage while concentrating on the Saikoku and Shikoku multi-site pilgrimages. Japanese pilgrimage practice is placed in a broader perspective by comparison with practices in other countries. Pilgrimages in the Buddhist cultural sphere of Asia are generally of the multi-sited circuit-type, while those in Europe and the Middle East are single-line pilgrimages headed towards one major site. Victor Turner's observations regarding the differing attitudes of pilgrims when embarking on their journey and those on the way home would seem to be less appropriate in the case of these circuit-type pilgrimages.

THE PREVALENCE OF PILGRIMAGE within Japanese history and culture indicates the immense fascination Japanese have for pilgrimages (in Japanese, either *henro* 遍路 or *junrei* 巡礼). However, the image of pilgrimage in Japan is not unitary, as one can see from various poems that refer to the Shikoku pilgrimage. For example, a poet named Takahama Kyoshi 高浜虚子 (1874-1959) writes:

Is that a pilgrim
beneath the cherry tree,
unloading his baggage?¹
荷を解きし桜のもとの遍路かな

The word "pilgrim" has seasonal connotations of spring, when the cherry trees bloom. It is commonly said in Shikoku that spring arrives

* This article was translated from the Japanese (HOSHINO 1986) by Ian Reader. The contents were slightly modified and abbreviated with the cooperation of the author.

¹ [Translator's note: Kyoshi was a novelist and poet, a disciple of the famous Meiji poet Masaoka Shiki. He is known for his contributions in the development of modern haiku.]

along with the ringing of pilgrims' bells.² A glimmer of warmth is conveyed in this poem. However, in the following poem from the same author, a completely different image is conveyed:

By the side of the path
the sad grave
of a pilgrim from Awa.

道のべに阿波の遍路の墓あはれ

In Shikoku there are places where one finds the graves of pilgrims who died enroute while on the pilgrimage. Indeed, being prepared for death is part of the practice of pilgrimage. There are poems that express this melancholic atmosphere, such as this one by another, otherwise unknown, poet named Hanajo 華女:

Even the sick child
is prepared for travel
as a pilgrim.

病身の子にも遍路の旅支度

The Shikoku pilgrimage also has strong connections to this-worldly benefits (*genze riyaku* 現世利益), and for such reasons many people suffering from illnesses have come to Shikoku as pilgrims. The Shikoku pilgrimage in earlier times was considered to have a particularly strong spiritual affinity (*en* 縁) for people suffering from leprosy. In earlier times when medical knowledge was sparse, sufferers of leprosy were often driven out of their villages and afterwards spent the rest of their lives traveling around Shikoku as pilgrims. Of course, we do not know whether or not the child mentioned in this poem is suffering from this disease. However, the poem itself does conjure up the painful and dark image that enveloped the Shikoku pilgrimage.

There are many more images and nuances, but they all operate in complex ways and are bound up with the special feelings that Japanese people have for pilgrimages (including both *henro* and *junrei*). In this article I intend to discuss pilgrimage in Japan with special reference to the Shikoku *henro* and the Saikoku *junrei*, beginning with a consideration of the term *meguru* / *mawaru* 巡る (to travel round, go on pilgrimage).

² [Translator's note: Spring was traditionally the peak period for pilgrimage in Shikoku (see MAEDA 1971, pp. 48-54) and even in the 1980s it remained so, with 45% of all pilgrims visiting the island during the period from March to May (SATO 1990, pp. 41-46).

The History of Japanese Pilgrimage

First I will present a general overview of the history of pilgrimage in Japan.³ I should first like to note that I am using the term “pilgrimage” (*junrei* 巡礼) to refer to all long-distance travel to sacred places (*sankei* 参詣). I am aware, of course, that the term *junrei* is often used with a much more limited meaning, but I shall discuss these distinctions in greater detail later in this article.

The first use of the word *junrei* is in the title of the diary of Ennin 円仁 (794–864), the early-Heian Tendai priest, about which I shall comment more below. However, there is no doubt that the religious practice of pilgrimage itself existed in Japan before this, and that long-distance journeys to sacred places were taking place at least by the Nara era. This practice blossomed in the Heian period, and among the most active pilgrims of this era were the aristocrats and the imperial family. The custom of making religious visits and staying at shrines and temples outside Kyoto became popular in the capital from the time of the retired emperors Seiwa 清和 (r. 858–876, retired 876–880) and Uda 宇田 (r. 887–897, retired 897–931). This custom spread to the aristocratic classes from the late tenth to early eleventh centuries, during the prosperous Fujiwara period. It is thought that a major reason for this development was the enrichment of the aristocracy, due to their accumulation of land, and to the changing economic circumstances of the shrines and temples due to the decline in state patronage. The temples that were the main focuses of pilgrimage were the seven great temples of Nara (Tōdai-ji 東大寺, Daian-ji 大安寺, Saidai-ji 西大寺, Kōfuku-ji 興福寺, Gangō-ji 元興寺, Yakushi-ji 薬師寺, and Hōryū-ji 法隆寺) as well as locations such as Mt. Kōya 高野山, Mt. Kinpu 金峰山, Kumano 熊野, Hase-dera 長谷寺, Kokawa-dera 粉河寺, Shitennō-ji 四天王寺, and Ishiyama-dera 石山寺. From this period on we also know that temples in the Kinki region attracted pilgrims, while beyond these regions, one could also count places such as Hakusan 白山 in Kaga, Mt. Fuji 富士山, and Itsukushishima 巖島 in Aki as pilgrimage sites. We are aware of the nature of such pilgrimages from accounts that are given from time to time in aristocratic diaries and in stories from this era.

Of these places Kumano is the most famous for attracting large numbers of pilgrimage groups, and it was visited frequently by retired emperors.⁴ The practice of making pilgrimages to Kumano (Kumano

³ [Translator's note: See especially Shinjō 1982; see also the Editors' Introduction in this issue, pp. 225–70 and the accompanying list of references.]

⁴ [Editors' note: see the article in this issue by David Moerman, pp. 347–74.]

mōdé 熊野詣) originated in the era of the retired Emperor Uda, but during the Insei 院政 period from the later part of the eleventh century onwards this pilgrimage became virtually a yearly custom (*nenjū gyōji* 年中行事) that retired emperors performed over and over again.

The most fervent among the retired emperors were Shirakawa 白河院, who went to Kumano nine times, Toba 鳥羽院 (eighteen times), Go-Shirakawa 後白河院 (thirty-four times), and Go-Toba 後鳥羽院 (twenty-nine times). Such pilgrimages were performed with great parties of pilgrims, sometimes numbering several hundred or even thousands of people accompanying the retired emperor, which would set out from Kyoto to the Kawachi region and then down the Kii Peninsula following the coastal route, and then head towards Kumano. The widely-used phrase *ari no Kumano mōdé* 蟻の熊野詣 (the ants' pilgrimage to Kumano) depicts the mass extent of the pilgrimage. At the core of the Kumano pilgrimage was faith in Kannon (Kannon *shinkō* 観音信仰) but there were also elements of Pure Land faith (Jōdo 浄土 *shinkō*). The close association between Kumano and the veneration of Kannon is further expressed in the fact that the first site of the Saikoku thirty-three-stage Kannon pilgrimage nowadays is Seiganto-ji 青岸渡寺, which is located by Nachi Falls in the southern part of the Kii Peninsula.

One should note that Kumano has been known since mythical times as a place where spirits reside (*reichi* 靈地). According to the *Nihon shoki* 日本書記, Kumano was the place where Izanami was interred after she died giving birth to the fire god. Moreover, this was the same place where, according to legend, the first emperor, Jinmu 神武, landed during his expedition from the east to establish the imperial line and the Japanese state. In other words, Kumano had already acquired the character of a powerful sacred place long before it became a center of faith as a Kannon pilgrimage site for the aristocrats of the capital.

The acquiring of various layers of religious traditions is a common characteristic of sacred places and can be seen at pilgrimage centers throughout the world. The famous Catholic pilgrimage sites of Guadalupe and Chalma in Mexico developed when the political and religious leaders of the time, in order to pacify the local populace, transformed native Indian pilgrimage sites into Catholic sites (see KURODA 1979 and 1981). The great medieval European pilgrimage site of Santiago de Compostela was originally a sacred place in the pre-Catholic indigenous religious tradition of the region, while the French pilgrimage center at Le Puy was, prior to being transformed into a Catholic site, a Celtic place of worship (see WATANABE 1980, p. 55). The culture of Mecca, also, prior to the time of the prophet

Muhammad, was polytheistic, and the sacred shrine of the Ka'aba was the focus of worship of various local cults (see PETERS 1994, pp. 1–29 and 105–12). The famed Chinese Buddhist pilgrimage site of Wu-t'ai-shan 五台山 was originally a sacred site in the Taoist (*shinsendō* 神仙道) tradition (see ONO and HIBINO 1942, p. 12).

In such respects the sacred sites of universal and organized religions are frequently places that were sacred prior to the incursion of that religious tradition, with such places being systematized as such by the appearance of a gifted religious founder or prophet, and changes in the people's consciousness.

To return to our discussion of Japanese pilgrimage history, the enthusiasm for pilgrimage in the Heian era was indeed extremely high, but it was also in reality limited by social status to such people as retired emperors, aristocrats, and priests.⁵ For priests such pilgrimages were simply ascetic exercises. This tendency, in which pilgrimage was largely restricted only to people of certain social classes, did not basically alter until the Kamakura and Muromachi eras.

In the Tokugawa period drastic changes in the history of Japanese pilgrimage took place, with most of the pilgrims coming from the ranks of ordinary people. We can distinguish a number of factors that gave birth to the emergence of this mass-populace type of pilgrimage, such as the economic advances made by the peasants and farmers, the development of a class of urban merchants, the safety afforded by political stability, and the development of a communications network and infrastructure. The nature of pilgrimage itself changed quite extensively as a result of the emergence of vast numbers of the general populace visiting pilgrimage sites.

One of these changes was in the increased levels of entertainment that occurred within pilgrimage. Since general travel was severely restricted, people who set out on pilgrimages enjoyed a temporary sense of liberation. In marked contrast to the more predominantly ascetic nature of travel until this period, the areas around pilgrimage sites began to take on the shape of *monzenmachi* 門前町 with the development of various shops, especially those connected with eating and drinking. Furthermore, a distinctive feature of this era was the growing numbers of alms-seeking beggar-pilgrims (*kojiki junrei* 乞食巡礼) and other such people who, escaping the constraints of the feudal system and the communal structure of village life, took to the road and became pilgrims.

⁵ [Editors' note: The lack of records concerning the activities of commoners means that we cannot know for sure how exclusive the participation in pilgrimage was during this period. For a further angle on this point see the article by Ambros in this issue, pp. 301–46.]

As well as the flourishing of older pilgrimages with long histories, this era saw the development of new pilgrimage routes all across the country. In such respects the Tokugawa period was a seminal era in the history of Japanese pilgrimage, and it can, indeed, be considered the period in which the basic patterns of contemporary Japanese travel were formed.

This very brief summary of the history of Japanese pilgrimage serves as a backdrop for the main focus of this article, which is a consideration of the Shikoku eighty-eight-stage pilgrimage and the Saikoku thirty-three-stage pilgrimage, both of which manifest aspects of the historical development of pilgrimage mentioned above. It is generally accepted that the Saikoku pilgrimage developed in the latter part of the Heian era, in the twelfth century, while the Shikoku pilgrimage came into existence somewhat later, during the Muromachi period (fifteenth to sixteenth centuries). These two pilgrimages are today seen as prime examples of Japanese pilgrimages, yet they are also, as I shall discuss below, pilgrimages with their own individual features and characteristics. Below I shall focus on these issues and attempt to provide a comparative study of them.

The Word "Junrei"

It is first necessary to consider the meaning of the word *junrei*, which is usually translated into English as "pilgrimage." This is not an incorrect translation, but when one makes a specific comparison between the meanings of *junrei* and those of the term "pilgrimage" as it occurs in other cultures, we can see that there are some subtle differences between the two terms. I would like to pay some attention to the ways in which the term "*junrei*" has been used, since this brings out some of the most distinguishing features of Japanese pilgrimage.

The first person in Japan to use the word *junrei* was, as I have mentioned earlier, the Tendai priest Ennin. One of the great priests of the Heian era, Ennin was a follower of Saichō 最澄 who became the third head priest of Enryaku-ji and who followed his teacher's final request to establish the foundations of the Tendai sect. Like his predecessor Saichō, Ennin traveled to China (in 838) in search of the Buddhist law, spending in all ten years there. He recorded the conditions of that period in minute detail in his journal, which was titled *Nittō guhō junrei kōki* 入唐求法巡礼行記 (Record of a pilgrimage to seek the law in China; see REISCHAUER 1955a and 1955b). From this period on, at least from the earlier half of the ninth century, the word *junrei* came into use in Japan.

Later the word *junrei* came to be used in texts such as the *Hokke genki* (or, to give it its full title, the *Dai Nihonkoku hokekyō kenki* 大日本国法華経験記) which was compiled in the middle of the eleventh century. This compilation of miracle tales (*setsuwa* 説話) preached by exponents of the virtues of the *Lotus Sutra* who sought liberation from all sins through the practice of austerities and devotion to the *Lotus Sutra* is, along with the *Nihon ryōiki* 日本靈異記 and the various collections of rebirth narratives (*ōjōden* 往生伝), one of the seminal works of early medieval Japanese Buddhism.

In the *Hokke genki* the term *junrei* is used in the following ways:

- 1 Story No. 59: The monk Hōkū 法空, a priest of Hōryū-ji, visited various mountains in the eastern provinces and settled in a cave in a remote mountain where he was served by magical Rasetzu women.
- 2 Story No. 60: The monk Renchō 蓮長 was devoted to the *Lotus Sutra* and visited famous sites including Mitake and Kumano, and could miraculously complete one thousand copies of the *Lotus Sutra* in a month's time.
- 3 Story No. 86: The ajari Dōmyō 道命 was an administrator of Tennō-ji who had practiced on Mt. Hiei and visited various sacred places. His powerful recitation of the *Lotus Sutra* led to many miraculous events.⁶

From these examples we can see that the term “*junrei*” at that time signified the act of walking and doing austerities while traveling to sacred places that were connected with miraculous events. Basing his argument on this point the scholar of early Buddhism, HAYAMI Tasuku (1970, p. 248), has stated that *junrei* signifies an ascetic itinerant journey to sacred places performed by ascetics who dwell in sacred places in the mountains and forests and who are known under the general term *hijiri* 聖 (wandering ascetics).

In this way from early times until at least the earlier part of the medieval period, the term “*junrei*” indicated two crucial elements: going around to a number of sacred places, and performing austerities. However, these special characteristics of *junrei* gradually changed as time went on. This was especially so as a result of the mass pilgrimages that developed in the Tokugawa period, when there was a general decline in the ascetic nature of pilgrimage.

However, right up to the present day in Japan, in *junrei*, as the literal meaning of the word signifies, the practice of going around (to a

⁶ [Translator's note: for fuller details see DYKSTRA 1983.]

number of sites) continues to be of crucial importance. The Shikoku eighty-eight-stage *henro* and the Saikoku thirty-three-stage Kannon *junrei* are types of pilgrimage that entail “going around” in this way. The pilgrimage to the shrines of Ise, which like these pilgrimages is a long-distance visit to a sacred place and which has many basic points in common with them, is known as the Ise *sangū* 伊勢参宮 or Ise *mairi* 参 (both meaning a visit to worship at the Ise shrines), but never as the Ise *junrei*.

However, the English word *pilgrimage* is used both for the Shikoku *henro* and for the Ise *sangū*. The term “pilgrimage” (and its equivalent terms in other European languages) derives from the Latin word *peregrinus*. Its meaning comes from *per-ager*, a person who passes through wild places. The basic root meaning of “pilgrimage,” then, is connected to a stranger, that is, someone who is “passing through.”

In contrast, in Japanese there are a number of words that correspond to the notion of pilgrimage. I have already mentioned the terms *sangū* and *mōdē*, but others include *sankei* 参詣, *junpai* 順拝, *junpai* 巡拝, and *junrei* 順礼. Of these some have very specific usages, such as *sangū*, which is normally only used to refer to journeys to Ise. Historically it appears that there was a custom of using the term *sangū* only to refer to cases of official visits to the Ise shrines. For travels to venerate at other shrines, one would not use the term *sangū* but would normally use either *mōdē* or *sankei* (see NISHIGAKI 1983, p. 36).

There appear to be no clear differences of usage between *junrei* 巡礼 and *junrei* 順礼. Rather, both of them share the same focus, of signifying visits to a number of sacred places that one must visit, therefore involving the need for going around (to a number of places) in some order. In circumstances where there is just one sacred place that is the special target of the journey, the term *mairu* is used rather than *junrei*, especially if there is no problem in terms of the order of visits. In such terms, then, one can see that there are differences of nuance in what is meant by the English term “pilgrimage” and the Japanese term “*junrei*”. In this sense one can see that there are some fairly large structural differences between pilgrimage in the West and *junrei* in Japan.

Circuits and Single-line Pilgrimages

One type of classification that can be used for pilgrimages is that between circuit-type (*kyokusenkei* 曲線型) and single-line (*chokusenkei* 直線型) pilgrimages. The differentiations between these two types are discussed further by AOKI Tamotsu (1983), who argues that the former

type is prevalent in Japan and South and Southeast Asia and is a particular feature of the Buddhist cultural sphere. The latter, single-line pilgrimages, are, he considers, the normal type of pilgrimages found in Europe and the Middle East. Of course one also finds examples of the single-line type of pilgrimage that have flourished in Japan, such as the Ise pilgrimage and the Ontake 御嶽 pilgrimage. Aoki argues, however, that in Japan this form of pilgrimage is not complete by itself, and it is considered important to combine a number of visits together. For example, when one has made a visit to Ise it is felt one should next visit the head temple of one's sect (*honzan mōde* 本山詣 or *honzan mairi* 本山参) and also go to various other sacred places to worship. In this sense, according to Aoki, in Japan even single-line pilgrimages are at root underpinned by the concept of circuits and of making multiple visits to sacred places.

It is, indeed, generally agreed that the circuit or multiple-site type of pilgrimage has flourished most widely in Asia. Certainly, one does not find in Christianity or in the world of Islamic pilgrimage the sort of structure that is seen in the Shikoku *henro*. However, on closer scrutiny, even this differentiation presents various problems.

Even single-line pilgrimages rarely have just one final and ultimate goal, to which one goes at full speed, without being diverted or looking at any other places along the way. One example here should suffice. In the flourishing pilgrimage culture of medieval Europe there were three great pilgrimage centers: Jerusalem, Rome, and Santiago de Compostela in Spain. These three sites were truly international pilgrimage centers, transcending specific regional or tribal boundaries. Besides these three there were numerous national pilgrimage sites specific to particular countries, such as the Cathedral of Chartres in France, or the tomb of Thomas à Becket at Canterbury in England. Besides these there were also numerous regional pilgrimage sites. Thus, one late-fifteenth-century document alone records 181 pilgrimage sites in Europe at that time (WATANABE 1980, p. 168).

If one were to define these sites according to the previously mentioned model, they would basically be considered single-line pilgrimages. Regional pilgrimage sites drawing pilgrims only from their local catchment areas were clearly linear routes in which pilgrims went in the most direct way possible between the place where they lived and the sacred site. However, in the case of the major international pilgrimages the situation was somewhat different, as can be seen from an examination of the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela.

Santiago is a remote location, situated in the far north west of Spain. It was here, according to legend, that the remains of the mar-

tyred St. James were discovered, and as a result a famous pilgrimage site grew around it. The roots of this site were thus in the veneration of sacred relics that was prevalent in Christianity in medieval Europe.

At its peak in the twelfth century more than half a million people a year made pilgrimages to Santiago from all over Europe. There were four main routes leading to Santiago from across Europe, and once they had crossed the Pyrenees, the four of them merged into one route that led across the northern part of the Iberian peninsula to Santiago. It took more than a month to walk the route from Paris, but along the way there were also many small and local pilgrimage places to visit, and the pilgrims used to call in at and worship at these places while making their way to their final destination of Santiago. Clearly the main focus of their pilgrimage was Santiago, but in view of the fact that their journeys included visits to numerous other sacred sites, one can see that this pilgrimage indeed had many points in common with circuit-type pilgrimages. In this respect it is evident that similar patterns were found in other single-line pilgrimages of Europe as well. However, such pilgrimages, unlike the Saikoku thirty-three-stage pilgrimage or the Shikoku eighty-eight-stage pilgrimage in Japan, or the Indian pilgrimages to the four or eight great sites linked to the life of the Buddha, did not expressly state that one had to visit a *number* of sites during the course of the pilgrimage. In this respect, certainly, a special feature of the circuit-type pilgrimages found in Japan is that they have a set number of sites (for instance, 33 or 88) that are all counted as equal, with no differentiation between them.

In the case of Santiago, however, even if en route pilgrims might have sought to visit and worship at many sacred places, they still very clearly had one place as their central and most important goal. To put it bluntly, missing some places along the way did not matter. The same is true in the Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca: nowadays, pilgrims do not join up with a caravan and travel from afar together in pilgrimage groups, but go directly by charter jets to Jeddah, the entry point in Saudi Arabia for Mecca. Their goal is, quite straightforwardly, Mecca. By contrast, in the Shikoku pilgrimage one can never say one has completed the pilgrimage just by visiting the first and last temples on the route.

The Development of Unyō (Clockwise) Pilgrimage Travel and Its Meaning

Another feature of Asian pilgrimages is that the shape of the pilgrimage may be a circle or circuit that is performed by proceeding in a clockwise (*unyō* 右繞) fashion. This is the case in both the Saikoku and

Shikoku pilgrimages, where the normal pattern is to travel clockwise.

Clockwise circumambulation is a style of veneration widely used in Japanese Buddhist rituals, but the origins of this practice can be traced to India. Clockwise circumambulation is also used in everyday activities to express respect for others, and it was especially common in India for circumambulating stupas and temples, which is an important form of worship in Hinduism. The means of circumambulation must always be to the right.

The Hindu practice of clockwise circumambulation is a ritual practice carried out when going around sacred burial pyres, altars, and stupas. As SUGIMOTO has noted, "this corresponds to the passage of the sun across the sky and is a ritual process that relates to such things as sanctity, purity, and happiness," while in contrast, counterclockwise circumambulation and going round to the left is inauspicious and indeed "is associated with such things as defilement, taboo, evil, sickness, death, and disaster" (1984, pp. 88, 309). This association of right and left with good and bad fortune and with happiness and unhappiness is found in numerous cultures throughout the world.

This Hindu concept of the importance of clockwise circumambulation filtered also into Buddhism, and gradually the notion of circumambulating Buddhist stupas in a clockwise direction came to be mentioned in Buddhist sutras as a practice of immense merit and value (SUGIMOTO 1984, p. 309). The Buddhist stupas that are still found in India in the present day all have pathways for this practice. This pattern also spread to Tibetan and Chinese Buddhism. In Chinese Buddhist temples, a Buddhist statue would be enshrined in the inner sanctum of the temple, and a central element in rituals there involve clockwise circumambulation around that statue. A similar pattern can be observed also at the Great Buddha hall at Tōdai-ji in Japan.

This pattern of circumambulation also spread to Japanese Buddhism. The ritual practice of *sansōkōdō* 三匝行道, for example, is a Buddhist rite in which priests walk around the main image of worship while chanting Buddhist sutras. It is not limited just to rituals conducted by priests, however, for clockwise circumambulation is the standard pattern for lay people participating in Buddhist services and rituals. The ritual of relatives circling around the casket and bones in the family temple while reciting the nenbutsu and mantras during funeral services immediately before interment, is still observed today throughout Japan. However, in examining this custom, we should also note that, in mythical terms, there are suggestions of the existence of clockwise circumambulation in Japan prior to the introduction of Buddhism.

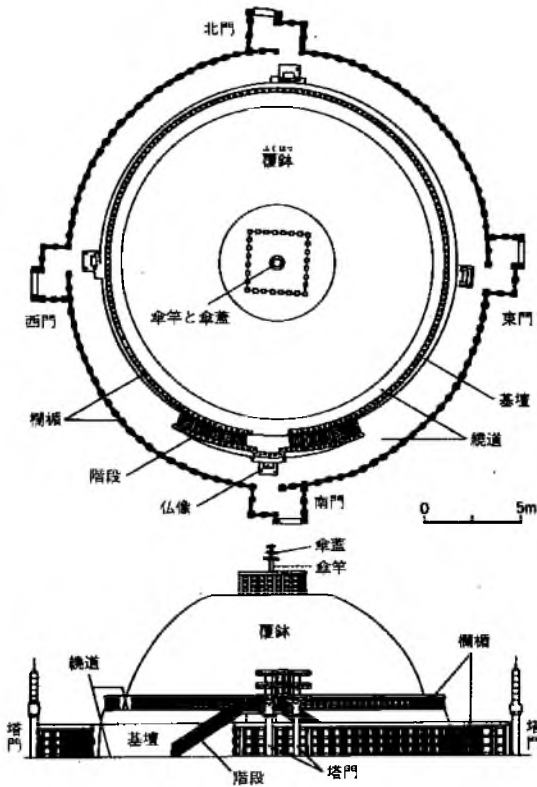


Figure 1. Buddhist stupa at Sanchi. Illustration taken from HOSHINO 1986, p. 252.

ing seven circuits around the Ka'aba. Although the Mecca case may be somewhat special in that it involves a counterclockwise circuit, it is nonetheless indicative of the widespread practice of circumambulation that is found in many cultures. Nevertheless there are various differences between the practices of circular pilgrimage in Japan and other parts of Asia, and it is to these issues that I shall turn next.

The Meaning of Pilgrimage (Mawari or Meguri) in Different Cultures

First I shall look at the case of Buddhist stupas in India. The Buddhist stupa at Sanchi in central India is a well-known example of the structure of early-era Buddhist stupas, and this can be seen in figure 1, which gives both its ground and side elevation plans. The height of the

Thus, the *Kojiki* in narrating the myths of the foundation of the nation talks of Izanami and Izanagi circling the pillar of heaven and thereafter giving birth to the gods of Japan (GORAI 1981, p. 2).

One can also find examples of the ritual of circumambulation embedded in linear pilgrimages. In the Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca, for example, there is the ritual of *tawāf*, which translates as “to go round” and refers to the practice of circumambulating the sacred shrine of the Ka'aba at Mecca. However, this practice is done counter-clockwise with the pilgrim making

stupa is approximately ten meters, and its diameter, if one includes its external railings, is approximately twenty-two meters. The passageway depicted in this figure is a clockwise ambulatory passageway that circles the outside of the stupa and is approximately sixty-nine meters long.

The practice of circumambulating Buddhist stupas to the right is not limited to a single circuit, and there are no set or preordained forms for this practice. In the case of Sanchi the circuit is less than seventy meters, which is (compared even to the two-hundred-meter circuit around the Ka'aba at Mecca) a very short distance. The clockwise circumambulations found in Chinese and Japanese Buddhist rituals also consist of rather short circuits.

While not a Buddhist sacred place, the Hindu holy site of Benares also provides us with some typical examples of circuit-type pilgrimage routes.⁷ Benares spreads out from the western banks of the Ganges River in a semi-circular shape. The eastern bank of the river, which is considered to be polluted (in the sacred sense), is unpopulated, while the region beyond the semicircular area of the town is also considered impure. At the very heart of Benares are the cremation grounds at Manikarnikā Ghat on the banks of the Ganges, and there are between seven and ten pilgrimage courses in concentric circles around Manikarnikā Ghat. The centermost of these, the Antargriha pilgrimage, can be done in two to three hours, while the outermost pilgrimage (shown in figure 2) follows the Panchakroshī road that circles the

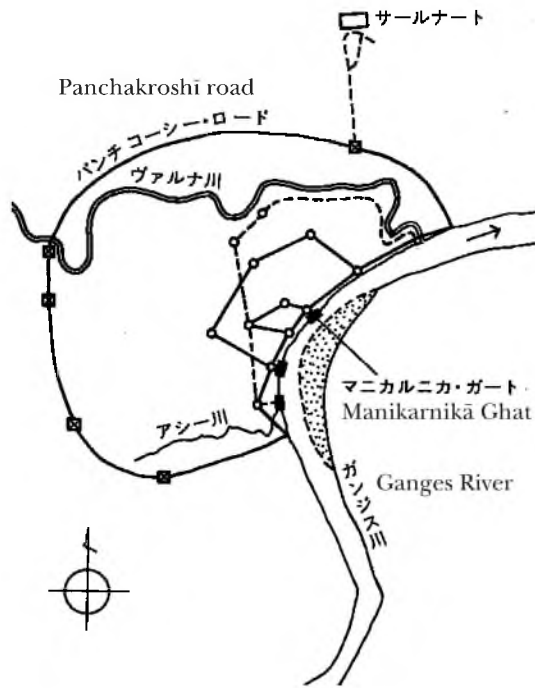


Figure 2. Benares, on the western bank of the Ganges River. Illustration taken from HOSHINO 1986, p. 253.

⁷ See, for example, YAMAORI 1982, VIDYARTHI et al. 1979, and ECK 1984.

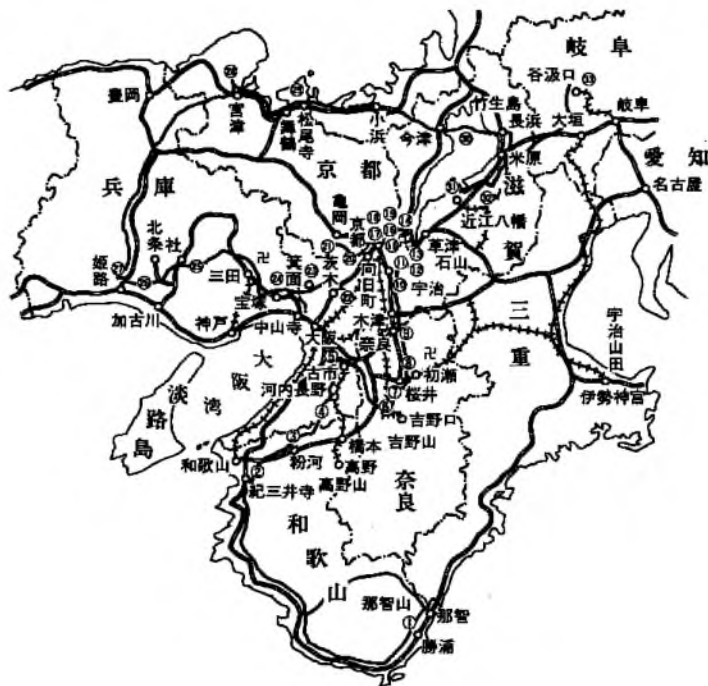


Figure 3. Map of the Saikoku *junrei*. Illustration taken from HOSHINO 1986, p. 254.

entire area of Kāshī (the name of the holy region not just of Benares but of its immediate surrounding area), with the pilgrims carrying their own cooking utensils and worshipping at all the shrines (including numerous Shiva shrines) that are found along the road. This pilgrimage normally takes five days and in all is approximately eighty-five kilometers in length.

What, then, are the special characteristics of Japanese circuit-type pilgrimages compared to the circuit pilgrimages I have mentioned above? Here I shall turn my attention to the Saikoku *junrei* (figure 3) and the Shikoku *henro* (figure 4).

The first point to note is that both of these Japanese pilgrimages are much longer than such pilgrimages as the Sanchi or the Panchakroshī routes. The time it takes to cover the great distances of either the Saikoku or Shikoku pilgrimages depends to some degree on the pilgrims themselves and the manner in which they perform the pilgrimage, but in general terms it is as follows.

In the case of Saikoku, according to the guidebook *Saikoku junrei saikenki* 西国巡礼細見記 [Detailed records of the Saikoku pilgrimage]

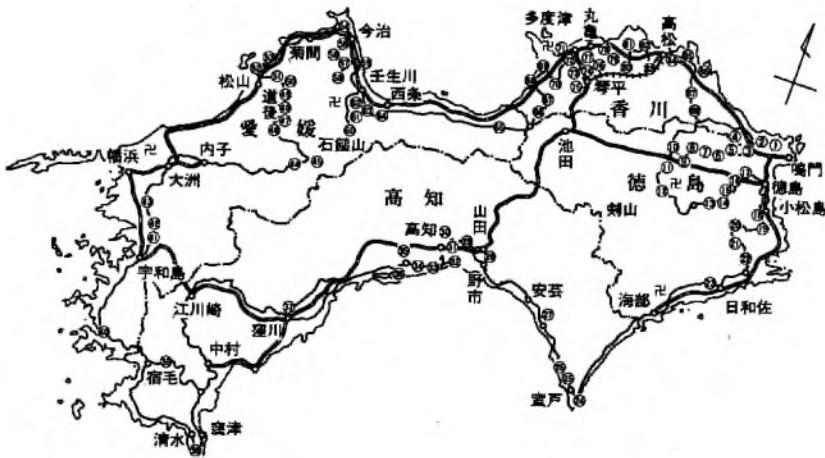


Figure 4. Map of Shikoku *henro*. Illustration taken from HOSHINO 1986, p. 255.

published in 1776, the whole route from the first temple to the thirty-third was given as 230 *ri*, or approximately 1,000 kilometers. In the case of Shikoku, the guidebook *Shikoku henro michi shirube* 四国遍路道指南 [Guide to the roads of the Shikoku pilgrimage] published in 1687 estimated that the distance from the first temple to the eighty-eighth was 304 *ri*, or approximately 1,200 kilometers. In fact, the present-day Shikoku route is, according to the calculations of the geographer TANAKA Hiroshi (who measured the route by walking the whole Shikoku pilgrimage while carrying a pedometer), 1,385.6 kilometers in length (1983, p. 82). In fact, since Saikoku and Shikoku are both extremely long pilgrimages, and there are numerous different routes one can take along the way, there are some variations in the distances that different pilgrims travel.

Whatever the exact distance, the point is that both Saikoku and Shikoku are long-distance pilgrimages of over 1,000 kilometers, and in such terms hardly bear comparison with the lengths of the Indian circuit-type pilgrimages we have discussed. This difference in size quite naturally gives rise to major differences in terms of the attitudes and experiences of the pilgrims who perform these pilgrimages.

In the case of clockwise circumambulations of Buddhist stupas, the pilgrims themselves are clearly able to recognize, while they are following the route, that the practice they are engaged in involves making a circle. Even in the case of the Panchakroshti pilgrimage around Benares, pilgrims no doubt are able to realize that the road they are

following, and that separates the inner central area of the fan-shaped city of Benares from its outer regions, traces a semicircular shape.

However, in the cases of Saikoku and Shikoku, as anyone will realize if they actually walk the route, one gets absolutely no sensation that the pilgrimage route one is following is of a circuit or circular pattern. As Tanaka noted:

I have used the phrase “the unending circle of the pilgrimage route.” Surely it can be said that the activities of the pilgrims involves closing the circle, in the sense that they set out from one point on the circle and make the pilgrimage around Shikoku, then return to their point of departure. However, from the cognitive point of view, it is not necessarily the case that one is tracing such a shape. After all, how many people are aware of proceeding in a circular pattern? My own feelings, as I was engaged in walking the whole pilgrimage route, were usually concerned with going forward, and in asking where the next pilgrimage site was. Thus, *in the process as a whole*, I certainly felt that, *rather than traveling around in a circle*, I had traveled along a meandering route, or, to put it more directly, *that I had walked in a straight line*. (TANAKA 1983, p. 83; italics in the original)

My own feelings are exactly the same as those experienced by Tanaka. From the perspective of the analytic observer, it is possible to consider the Saikoku and Shikoku pilgrimages as circular or circuit-like activities, in the same type of category as Buddhist ritual circumambulations of the type we have discussed earlier. However, viewed from the internal perspective of the pilgrim who actually experiences the practice, a clockwise circumambulation of a Buddhist stupa and a clockwise pilgrimage circuit of Saikoku or of Shikoku are totally different experiences.

Moreover, as Tanaka has noted, the major concern of the Saikoku or Shikoku pilgrim is, “Where is the next pilgrimage site?” The real question for them is the order of the sites and the number assigned to each of them. It is a common refrain of both Saikoku and Shikoku pilgrims, en route, to say “Up to what number have we visited so far?” “What is the number of the next site,” and “How many more sites remain to be visited?”

Pilgrimages in which one visits a number of sacred sites are found in other cultures as well, but it is only in Japan that the order and exact number of sites are designated to such an extent. For example, the cult of faith in Kannon was also extremely popular in China, and there were various Kannon pilgrimage routes, but the pilgrimage did

not assume the form of thirty-three sacred sites as it did in Japan.

On the other hand, one must admit that the order and the numbers that one should follow are not generally observed. Certainly many contemporary pilgrims, especially those who have come from afar, do tend to try to observe the correct numerical order. However, that they are able to do this with any ease is, ironically, made more feasible due to the development of the modern transportation system. In fact, the prescribed order of the sites for both routes was determined from the perspective of pilgrims coming from particular regions of Japan, and was not necessarily convenient for all pilgrims.

It is well-known, for example, that the name "Saikoku" (western country) was affixed to the pilgrimage by those making their journey from the eastern part of Japan. Many of the guidemaps of the Tokugawa period were drawn up on the basis of circumstances convenient for pilgrims from the Edo region, and depicted a journey in which one went first to the shrines of Ise, and then down the eastern side of the Kii peninsula and to the temple Seiganto-ji, which came to be regarded as the first pilgrimage site. From there the pilgrims generally went clockwise around the Kinki region, ending up at the thirty-third and last temple, Kegon-ji 華嚴寺, in the Ibi area of Gifu Prefecture close to the border with Saga Prefecture. From there their return to the Kantō region was the most convenient and easy. However, this pattern of traveling around the pilgrimage was rather inconvenient for pilgrims from the Kinki region or places to the west of it.

The same could be said of the Shikoku pilgrimage. The first temple in numerical order is near to the town of Naruto in Tokushima Prefecture, while the eighty-eighth and last is in the Ōkawa district of Kagawa Prefecture, in the mountains close to the Tokushima prefectural border. The distance between these two temples is a little over twenty kilometers. To do the pilgrimage in this order is extremely convenient if one is coming from the Kansai area. However, even for people living in any part of Tokushima Prefecture (except for the northern part), or for pilgrims coming from the direction of Chūgoku or Kyūshū, this order would be extremely inconvenient. Nevertheless, at least up to the prewar era, the numbers of pilgrims from the four prefectures of Shikoku surpassed those of other prefectures, and great numbers also came from the San'yō (i.e., Chūgoku) and Kyūshū regions (HOSHINO 1975). This pattern remains unchanged since the middle of the Tokugawa period (see MAEDA 1971, p. 158).

However, in what order did people from these areas do the pilgrimage? The answer to this question is quite straightforward, for they

would do the pilgrimage starting at the pilgrimage site nearest to where they lived. Let us illustrate this point by looking at some examples. People from the Shikoku region who did the pilgrimage would, as noted, start at the nearest pilgrimage temple to their own home, so that, for example, someone living in the vicinity of Matsuyama in Ehime Prefecture might start at temple number forty-six and, by going around in a clockwise order, finish at temple forty-five. Pilgrims from outside Shikoku would travel from their homes to the nearest port and cross over to Shikoku by boat, and then start at the pilgrimage temple nearest their port of disembarkation. Pilgrimage guide maps from the Tokugawa era show numerous boat services to Shikoku, some of the main ones being: to Tokushima Prefecture, from Wakayama to Muya (in the present-day town of Naruto); to Ehime Prefecture, from Saganoseki in Oita Prefecture to Yawatahama, and from Miyajima in Hiroshima Prefecture to Mitsuhamma and Horie (both of which are located in the present-day area of Matsuyama); and to Kagawa Prefecture, from Tamajima, Shimotsui, Shimomura, and Tanoguchi (all in the present-day region of Kurashiki) in Okayama Prefecture, to Tadotsu, Marugame, and Utatsu (see IWAMURA 1973). The pilgrims would begin the pilgrimage starting with the site nearest the port where they disembarked.

Thus the feminist historian Takamura Itsue, who, in 1918, came from Kumamoto and spent six months on foot doing the Shikoku pilgrimage, crossed over to Shikoku from Oita by boat and landed at Hachimanhama, and began to visit the pilgrimage temples starting with temple number forty-five. However, she chose to do the pilgrimage in reverse order, going around counterclockwise, a practice known in Shikoku as *gyaku uchi* 逆打ち (literally: back to front).⁸

According to popular pilgrimage lore, the chances of encountering Kōbō Daishi while on the pilgrimage are enhanced by performing *gyaku uchi*, and the merit of performing the pilgrimage itself is greater. The explanation for the greater efficacy of doing it counterclockwise is that it involves a more difficult journey.⁹ Thus, rather than counterclockwise pilgrimage being taboo, as it is in Hinduism, it has a positive meaning in Shikoku. Certainly one can say that there is no standard criterion accorded to the direction in which one performs pilgrimages, as there is in the culture of southern Asia.

⁸ See TAKAMURA 1979. Concerning the importance of Takamura's pilgrimage experiences see HOSHINO 1981a.

⁹ [Translator's note: It is widely considered that going counterclockwise means doing more steep ascents of hills. Since all the guideposts and indicators of the route are designed for people going clockwise, it is also harder for counterclockwise pilgrims to keep track of the route they must follow.]

This point is not only concerned with direction but also with the order in which one visits the sites. The reality is that most pilgrims cross over to Shikoku by the most convenient route closest to their house, and start from the site nearest that port. The greatest emphasis in the pilgrimage is placed on visiting all the pilgrimage sites on the route, rather than on maintaining a numerical order. Indeed, in some of the “new Shikoku pilgrimages” (*shin Shikoku reijō* 新四国霊場), which are modelled on the Shikoku pilgrimage and receive large numbers of pilgrims every year, the route itself and the numbers given to each site along the way very often do not match up at all. For example, the Sasaguri eighty-eight-stage pilgrimage in Fukuoka Prefecture is of this type, with the sites not being numbered in the order in which one can most easily visit them (see HOSHINO 1984).

The next point regarding Japanese pilgrimages of the circuit-type is that of the fixed number of sites that have to be visited on the pilgrimage, such as the thirty-three sites of the Saikoku route or the eighty-eight sites of the Shikoku route. The origins of the number thirty-three in connection with Saikoku are found in the *Kannon-gyō* 観音経 (a chapter in the *Lotus Sutra*), which explains the number of bodily manifestations of Kannon. I think it is quite certain that the number thirty-three is related to the contents of this text.

In contrast, there is no clear authority and much ambiguity concerning why the number eighty-eight is associated with the Shikoku pilgrimage. There are various folk explanations, such as that the number eighty-eight represents a multiple of eight, which stands for the eight great Buddhist sacred sites of India; it signifies the eighty-eight evil passions or sufferings as explained in Buddhist teachings; the ideograms used to write the number eighty-eight 八十八 when combined make the ideogram for rice 米; and the number eighty-eight is the sum of the three major *yakudoshi* 厄年, or unlucky years, for men (42), women (33), and children (13). However, all of these are rather speculative interpretations that cannot be substantiated by any hard evidence and therefore hardly bear serious consideration.

KONDŌ Yoshihiro (1971 and 1982) has attempted to grapple with this question of numbers, and he suggests that this is related to the Kumano cult. In his textual studies of the *Kumano kyūjūkyū ōji* 九十九王子 found on the pilgrimage route to Kumano, Kondō claims that in fact there were eighty-eight such sites, and he suggests that this number was transferred from Kumano to Shikoku. Given the extensive influence of the Kumano cult and pilgrimage (see MIYAKE 1996), Kondō's interpretation appears quite possible, although the lack of historical documentation regarding the origins of the Shikoku pilgrimage makes it difficult to assess whether this explanation is in fact

correct. In any case, my interest is somewhat different from that of Kondō and others whose research focuses on basic historical origins, in that what I wish to do is to analyze the extent to which those actually performing pilgrimages invested the numbers thirty-three and eighty-eight with any particular significance.

First let us consider the case of Kannon pilgrimages. Here we have the example of the “hundred Kannon” pilgrimage, which involves combining the Saikoku, Bandō 坂東, and Chichibu 秩父 pilgrimages. These three together have one hundred sites because Chichibu has thirty-four rather than thirty-three sites. According to the earliest textual sources on Chichibu (which date from the latter part of the fifteenth century) this pilgrimage had thirty-three sites, but by the middle of the sixteenth century this had changed to thirty-four sites (see SHINJŌ 1982, pp. 469–73).

I have previously noted that the number thirty-three has a specific textual legitimation in Buddhism. However, in order to combine the three routes of Saikoku, Bandō, and Chichibu together and make the numbers of sites add up to exactly one hundred, it was found expedient to add one site to what might be considered the least important of the three, the Chichibu thirty-three-site pilgrimage, and make it have thirty-four sites. In this light, it is my contention that one must question the extent to which people really bothered about the notion of fixed numbers, in this case the number thirty-three.

Let us consider this question in connection with the Shikoku pilgrimage from another angle. Here I would like to consider the existence of those pilgrimage sites known as *bangai* 野外 (unofficial “extra” or “outside” sites) and *oku-no-in* 奥の院 (secluded sub-temples). These are not officially designated pilgrimage sites, but are temples and way-side halls of worship that are popularly visited in the course of the pilgrimage. Such *bangai* and *oku-no-in* are considered to have a deep connection with Kōbō Daishi and with the pilgrimage route itself, even if not on a par with the official pilgrimage sites themselves. Such *bangai* pilgrimage sites are, in the case of those with long histories, temples that have been built near official sites or along the ancient pilgrimage route. It is reasonable to suppose that, in the times when everyone walked the pilgrimage, many of the pilgrims also worshipped at these *bangai* sites. Of course one cannot assume that there was no difference between the official pilgrimage sites and the *bangai* in the minds of those who worshipped at them. Again, as with the question of research into the origins of the number eighty-eight, I consider it is just as important for us to take note of the means of performing the pilgrimage in the present day, and the practices and views of the pilgrims themselves.

There is also the question as to how many *bangai* there actually are. One well-known guidebook mentions twenty-three *bangai* in Shikoku,¹⁰ while there is also an organization of twenty *bangai* temples that is called the Shikoku *bekkaku nijūkasho* 別格二十ヶ所 *reijō* [Shikoku-affiliated twenty pilgrimage sites] (see SUDŌ 1978). The temples making up these two groups are not at all the same. One small newsletter that specializes in reporting about the Shikoku pilgrimage lists sixty-one *oku-no-in* and *bangai*, including places dating from the Tokugawa period as well as from the more modern age (see *Dōgyō shinbun* 同行新聞 106, 11 January 1980), while a recently published guide for walkers lists 248 sites along the route that pilgrims should worship at, including the 88 official pilgrimage sites, numerous wayside statues, several shrines, and 148 temples it classifies as *bangai* (HENRO MICHIO HOZON KYŌRYŌKUKAI 1991, pp. 34–77). However many such places there may be, it is clear that pilgrims in Shikoku as a rule worship at more than just eighty-eight places.

It is in the present age that pilgrims have become more particular about sticking to the number eighty-eight, because it has become easier to do this. Pilgrimages performed in the hurried manner of the high-pressure modern day—whether by bus tour, one’s own car, or by taxi—emphasize continually going forward to the next place. As a result many pilgrims miss the *oku-no-in* and the *bangai*.

The same is true for the Saikoku pilgrimage. While the numbers thirty-three and eighty-eight are clearly embedded in the consciousness of the pilgrims, there is no fixed or rigid principle that strictly excludes visiting any other places, and indeed, there is a tendency in Japanese pilgrimage towards a liberal and rather expansionist attitude. Here I would like to return again to the point I made earlier on when I stated that the notion of “pilgrimage” in the Heian era related to the process of walking and performing austerities while visiting a number of sacred sites associated with miraculous events. The attitude of performing pilgrimages while visiting numerous sites rather than a fixed and specific number of them, is one that has underpinned and permeated Japanese pilgrimage from the early medieval era through the middle ages and right up until the present day. This may be a digression from my main discussion, but the attitude that one should visit as many *arigatai basho* (efficacious or wondrous places) as possible is also manifested as the basic pattern of contemporary Japanese travel. Various overseas travel package tours with names such as the “Eleven-

¹⁰ See HIRAHATA 1975. However, this counts the *oku-no-in* at Mount Kōya as a *bangai*, so in all it lists twenty-four *bangai*.

day European highlight tours” that involve overnight journeys and stopping for one night at a time in various famous European cities, can also be seen in some ways as reflecting this form of traditional pilgrimage.

The Saikoku Junrei and the Shikoku Henro

So far I have discussed the Saikoku thirty-three-stage Kannon *junrei* and the Shikoku eighty-eight-stage *henro* as pilgrimages sharing some special characteristics, such as being circuit pilgrimages. However, we should not overlook the fact that both of these typical Japanese pilgrimages have their own special characteristics that differentiate them from each other.

First, the Saikoku Kannon pilgrimage is what is known as a *honzon* 本尊 (main image of worship) pilgrimage, while Shikoku is a pilgrimage focused on Kōbō Daishi and has no direct connection with the main images of worship (*honzon*) at the various pilgrimage sites. In the case of Saikoku, its thirty-three pilgrimage sites all have the same main image of worship, the bodhisattva Kannon. In contrast, the main images of worship at the Shikoku temples are diverse, consisting of the following: Kannon (29), Yakushi (23), Amida (10), Dainichi (6), Śākyamuni (5), Jizō (5), Fudō (4), Kokūzō (3), and one each for Monju, Bishamonten, and Daisūchishōbutsu 大通智勝仏.

Every one of the sites has, besides the main hall of worship (*hondō* 本堂), a Daishidō 大師堂 or hall of worship to Kōbō Daishi, which every pilgrim visits. The sectarian affiliation of the Shikoku temples is also varied, but this is a facet also of the thirty-three Saikoku Kannon temples. Faith in Kannon has a rich sect-transcending nature, with Kannon venerated not just in the esoteric Shingon and Tendai sects but also in the Zen and Pure Land sects as well. Kannon’s universality in Japan is also seen in her presence among the main images of worship mentioned above in the Shikoku pilgrimage temples.

The transectarian acceptance of Kōbō Daishi is well known, but from the broader perspective of Japanese Buddhism, Kannon is even more powerfully ubiquitous. This is reflected in the sectarian affiliations of the various Saikoku and Shikoku pilgrimage temples. In Saikoku there are sixteen Tendai temples, fifteen Shingon-lineage temples, plus two Hossō sect temples. In Shikoku eighty of the temples are of the Shingon lineage, while four are Tendai, two are Rinzai Zen, and one each are Sōtō Zen and Jishū. Although there is a pan-sectarian dimension to the Shikoku route, there is still an overwhelming Shingon dominance, with that sect comprising over 90% of all the

temples, while only 45% of the Saikoku temples are Shingon.

One should also consider some rather basic differences between faith in Kannon and faith in Kōbō Daishi. Both these practices of faith, along with, for example, faith in Yakushi, are representative examples of popular devotion found in Japanese Buddhism. At this level there may be no difference between them, but a closer look reveals some points in common, and some variations that we have not yet discussed. Here I intend to examine some of the important differences in the ways they have been absorbed in Japan.

It is unclear exactly when the cult of faith in Kannon was transmitted to Japan from China. The oldest statue of the bodhisattva Kannon in Japan is a bronze statue from Hōryū-ji, now kept in the National Museum in Tokyo, which bears an inscription stating it was made “in the year of the boar” for a Buddhist memorial service in the year 651, i.e., in the Hakuhō era. However, as HAYAMI Tasuku has argued (1970, p. 18), the cult of Kannon was probably transmitted to Japan earlier, in the Asuka era. Moreover, the history of the cult of Kannon is virtually as old as the history of Buddhism in Japan, and was rapidly absorbed into the upper echelons of ancient Japanese society. One can get a general idea of this issue by noting the prevalence of Kannon in the ancient temples of Nara and Kyoto, many of which are artistic masterpieces.

The cult of Kannon continued to flourish unabated in the Nara era, as an examination of the register of temple assets of the temple Saidai-ji, which was built in the late Nara period, shows. This lists the various Buddhist statues kept at Saidai-ji in this era, and shows that the temple had six statues of the heavenly kings (*shitennō* 四天王), four of Yakushi, four of Miroku, and one each of Śākyamuni and Amida, but as many as eleven of Kannon in various manifestations (HAYAMI 1970, p. 43). Furthermore, one can see the powerful influence of the cult of Kannon in such texts as the *Nihon ryōiki*, and see that by this period also the cult of Kannon had begun to spread among the ordinary people.

Thereafter, from around the tenth century the cult of Kannon also became linked to the cult of faith in the next world, which spread amongst the aristocrats, and large numbers of people from this class made pilgrimages to Kannon temples such as Hase-dera, Kokawa-dera, and Ishiyama-dera. We know about the nature of such visits from the frequent mention of them in the diaries and tales of the Heian era.¹¹

From the Kamakura period onwards, as SHIMIZUTANI Kōshō has demonstrated (1971), there were close links between the leading

¹¹ [Editors' note: see the article by Ambros in this issue, pp. 301–46.]

figures in the Kamakura government and the cult of Kannon, which continued to be closely supported by and connected to the establishment.

Of course it is evident that a major reason why the cult of Kannon captured the faith of the ordinary people was through its use of the promise of this-worldly benefits, which are clearly expressed in the *Kannon-gyō*. The links between faith in Kannon and agricultural prosperity and child rearing were deep, while the connections between the bodhisattva Kannon and women were also a major factor in the popular development of the Kannon cult. The Saikoku pilgrimage also became increasingly popular among ordinary people during the Tokugawa period (see SHINJŌ 1982).

What, by comparison, are the special characteristics of the cult of Kōbō Daishi? One important point to note is that it is a cult of faith born in Japan. While it is rooted in homage and veneration of Kōbō Daishi, this cult manifests many differences from simple founder veneration. According to folklorists such as YANAGITA Kunio (1967), faith in Kōbō Daishi is rooted in cults of pre-Buddhist Japanese indigenous deities known as *miko* 御子, or visiting deities (*raihōjin* 来訪神).

As compared to the cult of faith in Kannon, the veneration of Kōbō Daishi is much newer, having developed at the earliest from the latter part of the tenth century. One of the mainstays of the popularity of the cult of Kōbō Daishi is belief in Kōbō Daishi's entry into samadhi at Mt. Kōya. This belief centers on the notion that Kūkai 空海, the founder of the Shingon school who is venerated more widely under his posthumous name Kōbō Daishi, did not die but entered into enlightenment in his own body at Mt. Kōya, and that he would remain in his mausoleum there awaiting the coming of the future Buddha Miroku (Maitreya) to earth in 5,670,000,000 years' time. This is quite clearly a folkloric belief. Certainly in Shingon esoteric Buddhism the concept of *sokushinjōbutsu* 即身成佛 (becoming Buddha in this very body) is a central principle, but the concept is rather different from the "living being" type of explanation surrounding Kūkai that states that, although in reality buried in his tomb, he remains alive there, seated in meditation with his hair and nails still growing. However, it is this simple belief in him as a "living being" that is at the heart of the folk cult of Kōbō Daishi in Japan.

Let us next turn our attention to the position of the Kōbō Daishi cult in the history of Japanese Buddhist art. It is certainly the case that the esoteric tradition has bequeathed us some of the most sublime artefacts in the history of Japanese Buddhism, and the aforementioned statues of Kannon are only one example. Indeed, it would be

fair to say that esotericism is at the very heart of Japanese Buddhist art. In comparison with other Buddhist figures of worship, however, sublime artistic objects connected with Kōbō Daishi are rather few. One reason might be that, compared with the Kannon cult, faith in Kōbō Daishi is very much a populist cult with comparatively little aristocratic patronage.

Moreover, in contrast to the Kannon cult, faith in Kōbō Daishi does not figure very much in the literary works that have been produced in Japan since ancient times. Viewed from the artistic and literary perspectives, the Daishi cult has hardly made an impact. Yet, when one turns to the world of the ordinary people, one encounters extraordinary varieties of belief within the Daishi cult that are less evident in that of Kannon. The veneration of Kōbō Daishi as a savior to whom people turn in times of distress is found in numerous settings, from the pilgrims who went to Shikoku in the Tokugawa era to seek salvation from illness, to the cult of Daishi amongst Japanese immigrants to Hawaii (see HOSHINO 1981b).

This view of Kōbō Daishi as folk savior has also been a major factor in the formation of the “new Shikoku” pilgrimage routes, the development of several of which were motivated by desires to attain, through the grace of Kōbō Daishi, salvation from threats to the community posed by such things as droughts or epidemics (see HOSHINO 1984).

However, in comparing the new Shikoku types of pilgrimage with the replications of the Saikoku pilgrimage, we immediately notice one very major difference. There are several “new Saikoku” routes that were founded prior to the Tokugawa era, but the new Shikoku routes began to emerge only towards the middle of the Tokugawa period. The oldest “new Shikoku” route is said to be the Shōdoshima 小豆島 route, which according to some sources was founded in 1686, although this date is probably inaccurate and there is no record of pilgrimage activity on the island before the mid-eighteenth century, and no specific references to a Shikoku-style pilgrimage on the island until the first half of the nineteenth century (ODA 1996, p. 171). The new Shikoku routes as a rule began to emerge in the latter half of the Tokugawa period, especially in the earlier part of the nineteenth century. It is certainly the case that these events occurred during the Bakumatsu era when the 1,000th anniversary of Kūkai’s entry into samadhi occurred, but I would like especially to point to the connections that were occurring at the same time between the social changes and turbulence of the Bakumatsu era and the figure of Kōbō Daishi as a savior. Indeed, it was especially in the Bakumatsu period that we find the founding of various new Shikoku pilgrimages as a result of people’s

desires to ward off such things as droughts or epidemics.

It is certainly true that the bodhisattva Kannon is, amongst the various figures in the Buddhist pantheon, one of those who is very close to human beings, but she nonetheless continues to exist in the realms of the Buddhas. By contrast, Kōbō Daishi, while being the child of a human being, was said to have become a Buddha in his very body and hence to exist on the boundaries of the human and Buddha worlds. This type of borderline position has an immense fascination for people. We cannot overlook the fact that the differences between the Saikoku and Shikoku pilgrimages, in short, have their origins in the very natures of the two figures of worship that are at their centers.

Conclusions

It is widely accepted that a special characteristic of pilgrimage is that it focuses on a sacred site that is generally located far from one's home. In Japan, the term "*sanpai*" 参拝 (lit., to visit and worship) rather than "*junrei*" (pilgrimage) is used to describe visits to sacred places located within the boundaries of one's own community. However, when a person has come from a distant place to make a visit of worship at that sacred place, then such a visit is a *junrei*. Thus, in my view, one factor that is an important element in a pilgrimage is the notion of a "long road" that lies between the person coming to worship and the sacred place itself.

The anthropologist Victor Turner has argued that the attitudes of pilgrims are completely different on the way out, going towards the sacred site, from the way they are on the way home. On the way to the sacred site pilgrims, while carrying in their hearts their expectations of visiting a desired sacred place, they travel in an attitude of prayerful repentance. As they get nearer the sacred place, their spiritual feelings become intensified and heightened. However, when they turn homewards, satisfied after fulfilling a desired goal, and feeling that they have been absolved of all their sins, their spirits relax and their thoughts turn to thinking about the reception they will get from their families when they reach home, and their homeward journey thus is hasty. The tense seriousness of the outward journey is completely absent (TURNER and TURNER 1978). Since the focus of Turner's research was the linear pilgrimages of Catholicism, it may be that this analysis would be problematic in the context of circuit-type pilgrimages. However, there is no doubt that Turner also emphasized the importance of the "way" that existed between the places where people lived and the sacred sites that were the foci of their pilgrimages.

In the religious world the metaphor of the “way” (*dō*, *michi* 道) is used to refer to situations such as seeking the way, or seeking the law. The term was used by Jesus when he said “I am the way,” and Buddhists speak of the “eightfold path.” However, such a way is never straight and easy. In the *Kegon Sutra* a man named Sudhana, following the advice of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, sets out on a journey to seek the Buddhist law. This quest eventually involves seeking out the wisdom of fifty-four teachers. In other words, seeking the truth is not a matter of efficiency or rationalism, but it involves visiting numerous places and people and is a difficult, long, and winding road. In following that difficult path there is always the chance of encountering awakening or truth. One could say that this is also an underlying point behind making a pilgrimage that involves a circuit of many sites.

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