

Miniaturization and Proliferation: A Study of Small-scale Pilgrimages in Japan

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Introduction

Although various studies have been made on the topic of Japanese pilgrimage in recent years,¹ they have generally focused on the major and best-known of pilgrimages in Japan, the 33-stage Saikoku pilgrimage (dedicated to the bodhisattva Kannon), and the 88-stage pilgrimage around the island of Shikoku, which focuses on the popular Japanese Buddhist figure Kōbō Daishi.^a In contrast, there has been very little discussion of small-scale pilgrimage routes that follow the model provided by Saikoku or Shikoku and have either 33 or 88 sites of worship. A large number of such routes has developed in Japan over the last three centuries and several of them in particular continue to flourish to this day, attracting appreciable numbers of pilgrims. In this they appear to represent a continuing tradition of pilgrimage, although they have rarely been made the focus of any serious analysis in their own right. Rather, when they have been mentioned at all, they have been treated almost entirely in terms of the overall scope and influence of the Saikoku and Shikoku pilgrimages.²

However, such small-scale routes represent an important phenomenon, one that ought not to be overlooked if one is to come to any understanding either of the Japanese religious world of pilgrimage or, indeed, the world of

¹ The contemporary popularity of pilgrimage in Japan is mirrored in the recent attention paid to it by writers and academics. In Japanese, see Hoshino Eiki, *Junrei: Sei to Zoku no Genshōgaku* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1981), Maeda Takashi, *Junrei no Shakaigaku* (Kyōto: Minerva Books, 1971) and Shinno Toshikazu, *Tabi no naka no Shūkyō* (Tokyo: NHK, 1980), as general works that focus largely on the Saikoku and Shikoku pilgrimages. In English probably the best-known work is the fictionalized account by Oliver Statler, *Japanese Pilgrimage* (London: Picador, 1984), which, although obviously non-academic and romanticized in its treatment of the subject, does at least provide some interesting stories connected with the Shikoku pilgrimage. More academically, Joseph Kitagawa, “Three Types of Pilgrimage in Japan”, in his *On Understanding Japanese Religion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987, pp. 127–36), gives a basic outline of Japanese pilgrimage structures.

² Kitagawa, *op. cit.*, p. 135, gives this type of pilgrimage one short paragraph only and describes such pilgrimages as, “of course not so meritorious as the pilgrimage to the real holy sites in Shikoku, but they have provided opportunities to many people who otherwise would not have been able to ‘walk with Saint Kūkai’.” None of the other works cited in note 1 above gives more than passing reference to the topic.

pilgrimage in general. In this article I will focus, for reasons of space and coherence,³ on those small-scale pilgrimages with 88 sites, in other words those whose basic role model is the Shikoku pilgrimage. Many of these routes have developed on islands in the Inland Sea in the vicinity of Shikoku itself, so the investigation will be able to focus on the ways a pilgrimage appears to have been replicated within its own geographical region. By describing some of these pilgrimages and the ways in which they have proliferated and developed, I intend to show that they should be seen not so much as simple copies of an important route, but as independent pilgrimages in their own right, as significant for the understanding of the themes and values inherent in pilgrimage as are major routes such as Saikoku and Shikoku. In order to lay the foundations for this I shall commence with a brief descriptive outline of the Shikoku pilgrimage itself.

The Shikoku Pilgrimage: A Brief Outline

In religious terms Shikoku, the fourth largest island in the Japanese archipelago, is perhaps best known as the setting for a long pilgrimage route that circles the entire island, taking in 88 different temples, and as the birthplace of the Buddhist monk Kūkai (774–835), founder of the Shingon Buddhist sect in Japan. Kūkai is especially venerated in Japan under his posthumous title Kōbō Daishi, in which guise he is regarded as a living miracle-working figure. Popular Japanese folk and religious lore attributes countless deeds to Kōbō Daishi, such as the carving of thousands of holy statues, the performance of miracles of healing and the creation of the Shikoku pilgrimage using 88 sites at which he as a youth had practised austerities on the island of his birth.

Although popular legend goes as far as ascribing an exact date to this founding (placing it in the year 815, when Kūkai was 42 years old⁴), there is neither evidence for his having been in Shikoku in this year,⁵ nor any evidence to show that the pilgrimage was extant until several centuries

³ It has also been frequently argued that Saikoku and Shikoku represent different types of pilgrimage in terms of focus, with Saikoku representing what Kitagawa (*op. cit.*) terms a pilgrimage based on faith in a particular figure (in this case Kannon), to whom each pilgrimage site is dedicated, whereas Shikoku is based on faith in a charismatic figure and has as an underlying motif the concept of travelling with the focus of devotion, in this case Kōbō Daishi. Japanese scholars tend to follow these lines of distinction too and so, in order to keep the present discussion within reasonable limits, I have decided to limit my enquiries to one type only, that of Shikoku, although I would contend that many of the themes that arise here could well be extended to other types as well.

⁴ This is, of course, the traditional “dangerous age” (*yakudoshi*^b) for Japanese men: the implication of this story is that Kūkai undertook the pilgrimage in order to ward off the bad luck believed to threaten men in this year of their lives. It has become a custom for people in their *yakudoshi* (which for women is 33) to undertake a pilgrimage.

⁵ There is, for example, no mention of his having done so in reliable biographies of Kūkai such as: Y.S. Hakeda, *Kūkai: Major Works* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972); Watanabe Shōkō and Miyasaka Yūshō: *Shamon Kūkai*, Tokyo: Chikuma Shōbō, 1967. Tanaka Hiroshi, *Junrei no Sekai* (Tokyo: Furuima Shoten, 1972), p. 25, states that there are no records to show that Kūkai was in Shikoku during this year.

later. Kōbō Daishi is, however, the focal figure in the pilgrimage, for the route began to coalesce with visits from individual ascetics to sites connected with the life of Kūkai, and gradually developed, incorporating various other religious centres on Shikoku. From the early seventeenth century onwards one finds references to an 88-stage pilgrimage around Shikoku and, with the publication of the first guidebooks to the route in the last two decades of that century, the structure of the pilgrimage takes on a fairly fixed and coherent shape.⁶ The route is approximately 1500 kilometres in length and, if walked, takes 6–8 weeks,⁷ although, as I have noted elsewhere, pilgrims nowadays invariably make use of modern means of transportation.⁸ Despite various speculations, there is no concrete evidence to show why there are 88 sites: even the author of the first detailed historical guidebook of the pilgrimage, in the late seventeenth century, stated that he could find no reason for this number.⁹ The temples have names but are frequently referred to by numbers from 1 to 88 and are ranged roughly speaking in numerical order around the island in a clockwise fashion. Pilgrims, in visiting them all, basically circle the island, going around in whatever order and by whatever means they see fit and starting wherever is most convenient for them. It is usual, though by no means obligatory, to return to the site from which one started, thus completing a full circuit of the island. There is no prohibition against going anti-clockwise, though this is far less frequently done.

Even to this day many pilgrims mark themselves out as such, separate from everyday life, by wearing and carrying a number of special pilgrimage items. Chief among these are the *hakui*^c (white pilgrim's shirt), the *kasa*^d (bamboo hat) and the *tsue*^e (wooden staff). All of these manifest the symbolism of death, the *hakui* being a funeral shroud, the *kasa* a casket and the *tsue* representing both a gravestone and the body of Kōbō Daishi. All these items bear in Japanese ideograms the phrase *dōgyō-ni'nin*^f (two people doing the same practice), which expresses the concept that the pilgrim

⁶ On the historical development of the Shikoku pilgrimage the following provide useful introductions: Tanaka (see note 5, above), Miyazaki Ninshō, *Shikoku Henro-Rekishi to Kokoro* (Osaka: Toki Shoten, 1985) and Shinno (see note 1, above), esp. pp. 41–93.

⁷ My wife and I walked the route in 40 days during February and March 1984, spurred somewhat by a harsh late winter that did not encourage a slow pace. Others have taken it far more slowly and, no doubt, more carefully: the monk Chōzen, for example, took 91 days according to the journal he left. His account, with a commentary, can be found in: Miyazaki Ninshō, *Chōzen: Shikoku Henro Nikki* (Tokyo: Daitō Shuppan, 1977).

⁸ Ian Reader, “From Asceticism to the Package Tour: The Pilgrim’s Progress in Japan”, *Religion* 17, No. 2 (1987), pp. 133–48.

⁹ This work, written by the monk Jakuhon, was first published in 1689. The text is available in: Iyoshi Dankai (ed.), *Shikoku Henroshishū* (Matsuyama: Iyoshi Dankai, 1981), pp. 117–207. Miyazaki (1985, see note 6, above), pp. 38–42, and Tanaka (note 5 above), pp. 67–70, outline various theories generally given for the number, but with no positive evidence to validate any one of them.

is never alone but is always accompanied by another. The second person is the holy figure and miracle worker Kōbō Daishi, who, it is believed, travels with each and every pilgrim.

It is this aspect—the identification of the pilgrim with a holy figure who accompanies the pilgrim’s every step—that is the hallmark of the Shikoku pilgrimage: the pilgrim exists in relationship with the object of worship so that the process undergone is not so much a visiting of holy places as a journeying together with a holy object of veneration.¹⁰ This focus on a special relationship of union, especially when connected to the ubiquity of Kōbō Daishi in the Japanese folk tradition, gradually became an important theme in the development of other routes using this structure.

The Development of Other Pilgrimages With 88 Sites

Tokugawa Japan, especially from the late seventeenth century onwards, saw a tremendous upsurge in pilgrimage activity, with the great pilgrimage routes of Saikoku and Shikoku becoming major religious and tourist thoroughfares. Also large numbers of small-scale and regional pilgrimages sprung up throughout the country. A number of factors were at the root of this overall movement, including the development of a moneyed economy and a communications network that placed the wherewithal of travel within the reach of an ever wider range of people.¹¹ Further, it has been suggested, pilgrimage was encouraged on the national level as a means of helping to develop a sense of identity that transcended local and regional bounds, bringing people from different regions into contact with temples and places with deep connections to Japanese history.¹²

In Shikoku this growth in the numbers of pilgrims was certainly a factor in consolidating the structure, form and beliefs underpinning the Shikoku pilgrimage and in contributing to even greater emphasis on the figure and image of Kōbō Daishi. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, for instance, religious structures for the specific worship of Kōbō Daishi (known as *daishidō*^{es}) were erected at many of the pilgrimage sites,¹³ and innumerable legends and miracles were attributed to his power. In addition

¹⁰ See note 3, above.

¹¹ On factors in the development of Tokugawa pilgrimage, see Shinjō Tsunetzō Shaji, *Sankei no Shakai Keizai Shiteki Kenkyū* (Tokyo: Hanawa Shobō, 1964), esp. pp. 663–723, and Hoshino (note 1 above), pp. 40–3.

¹² On this point, see J. Foard, “The Boundaries of Compassion: Buddhism and National Tradition in Japanese Pilgrimage”, *Journal of Asian Studies* 41, No. 2 (1981–2), pp. 231–51.

¹³ All the temples have a main Buddhist image of worship as well as the *daishidō*. In Jakuhon’s time, according to his guidebook (note 9 above), only 30 of the temples had a *daishidō*. Now all do: Tanaka (note 5, above), p. 109f, feels that the development of *daishidō* since the seventeenth century is indicative of a growing focus on Kōbō Daishi. This is not to say that he was not the major focus beforehand; rather, that from this period onwards the concentration on him as image and focus of the pilgrimage tended to displace and assimilate all other images.

many other religious stories and miracles previously associated with other holy figures became assimilated to the growing cult.¹⁴

This overall interest in pilgrimage led to the growth of countless localized, small-scale versions of major pilgrimage; the Saikoku and Shikoku routes both began to appear in miniature throughout the country. Often this development was stimulated by an increased focus on Kōbō Daishi as a miracle figure: later I will show how, particularly in the region around Shikoku, this veneration contributed greatly to the formation of new 88-stage pilgrimage routes. It is worth noting at the moment, however, that a recent compilation of pilgrimages in Japan lists 129 Shikoku-type routes that developed from the late seventeenth century onwards, of which 65 are marked as extant in the present day: this gives at least some hint of the amount of energy inherent in the Tokugawa pilgrimage world.¹⁵

The first such route was probably established in 1691 in the Nagano region by two devout followers of Kōbō Daishi who had been to Shikoku and sought to re-create a replica of the pilgrimage in their home province for the benefit of others who had neither the time nor the opportunity to visit Shikoku.¹⁶ There is some evidence that the Shingon priests of Shodōshima¹⁷ got together in 1686 for the purpose of creating an island 88-stage pilgrimage like that on the neighbouring, larger island of Shikoku. However, this date, although generally cited by pilgrimage guide books, is contested by local historians, who point to a lack of documentary evidence of any pilgrims on the island before the mid-eighteenth century.¹⁸ Certainly, the Shodōshima route was active by this era and, throughout the later centuries of the Tokugawa period, there are countless records of 88-stage pilgrimages being formed in Japan.

A major element in this overall growth was that, despite the obvious enthusiasm for pilgrimages witnessed in the Tokugawa era, it still was not feasible for the vast majority of people to undertake such journeys. The extensive nature of the Saikoku and Shikoku pilgrimages posed enormous problems for the average person, their very length meaning that several weeks were required to do them. In the case of Shikoku, too, a great deal of

¹⁴ See Miyazaki (1985, note 6 above), pp. 182–5, for some examples of this.

¹⁵ Tsukuda Yoshio, *Nihon Zenkoku 33-kasho 88-kasho Shūran* (Tokyo: Tsukuda, 1981), pp. 35–51, catalogues such routes and gives founding dates. A less comprehensive collection of pilgrimage routes is to be found in Nakao Takashi (ed.), *Koji Junrei Jiten* (Tokyo: Tokyodo, 1973). Nakao includes a description of the Shodō route but does not give any dates, while he omits many others included by Tsukuda.

¹⁶ Tsukuda (note 15 above), p. 43.

¹⁷ Shodō island: the word *shima* in this context means “island” and is frequently an intrinsic part of geographical names in Japan. As such I feel it is better to use the Japanese geographical name. Hence I will talk of Shodōshima rather than Shodō island. Wherever *shima* occurs in this article it will be referring to an island.

¹⁸ Hirahata Ryōyū, *Shodōshima 88-kasho* (Chiba: Manganji Kyōkabu, 1983), p. 8f, gives this date, while Oda Masayasu, “Shodōshima ni okeru Utsushi Reijō no Naritachi”, *Jinbun Chiri* (Kyōto: Kyōto Daigaku) 36:4 (1984), pp. 59–73, discusses the evidence produced by local historians to place the formation in the next century.

time and effort was required just to get to the island and to return home afterwards. Shikoku, also, was divided into four feudal domains, each of which required that the pilgrims acquire documentation before entering, thus adding further obstacles to travel.

Thus the pilgrimage was really only accessible to those who could leave home for many months, who had sufficient funds to permit this or who were prepared to endure the hardships of begging for sustenance. For most people in most parts of the country, then, the Shikoku pilgrimage was not a very realistic prospect. In consequence, the energy inherent in the pilgrimage culture of the Tokugawa age found its expression diverted, to a great degree, to local and more accessible levels. In short, when the pilgrim could not go to the pilgrimage, the pilgrimage was brought to the pilgrim. We have already seen how two Daishi followers in 1691 established a Shikoku-style pilgrimage in their home region for the benefit of those unable to go to Shikoku. Such actions became more and more prevalent in subsequent centuries, enabling people to travel with Kōbō Daishi and share his grace in their own locality.

Other factors, too, came into play. Frequently local political and social factors were important: a recent study of local historical records in the Daisen area of Tottori prefecture has shown that the prime movers in creating such pilgrimages were generally the richer peasants and farmers. These people were leaders at the local level of society: their activities in developing local pilgrimage routes were a manifestation of this leadership.¹⁹ The richer farmers and peasants also, of course, had a vested interest in keeping local society stable and it is quite feasible that their establishing local routes was a subtle means both of control (by guarding against the wider instabilities caused should those they depended upon for labour be enticed to set out on long religious journeys) and of consolidating their own status in a society whose fabric was beginning to change through the growth of a moneyed economy.²⁰

A component element here was the effect that local rivalries had on the proliferation of pilgrimages. The Daisen study referred to above indicates that the development of one small-scale pilgrimage route in a region quickly gave rise to others: once one village area had set up a pilgrimage route, it was not long before neighbouring communities did the same.²¹ Hoshino, studying pilgrimage development in Kyūshū, notes similar themes concerning the effects of local rivalries.²² Quite clearly, the possession of one's own pilgrimage circuit was both a potent source of local identity and pride, and a stimulus to other communities to follow suit.

¹⁹ Mizoguchichō Chūōminkan Bunkakōza (ed.), *Hoki no Fudasho wo Tazunete* (Tottori: Mizoguchichō Chūōminkan, 1981), pp. 3–8.

²⁰ See Mizoguchichō Chūōminkan Bunkakōza, *op. cit.*, *loc. cit.*

²¹ Mizoguchichō Chūōminkan Bunkakōza, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

²² Hoshino Eiki, “Shinshikoku Reijō no Tenkai Katei”, in: Takenaka Nobutsune Hakushi Juju Kinen Ronbun Shūkangyōkai (ed.), *Shūkyō Bunka no Shosō* (Tokyo, 1984), pp. 619–35.

A further element that promoted proliferation, or at least sanctified it, was the miraculous, almost omnipresent nature of Kōbō Daishi in Japanese religious lore. As has been noted already, this was an underlying theme in the expanding popularity of pilgrimage in the Tokugawa age: Kōbō Daishi was seen as forever travelling around, accompanying and guarding pilgrims, dispensing miracles and granting wishes. Such miracle stories and influence have never been limited to Shikoku alone: although the island of his birth, it has never had a monopoly on him. Rather, stories concerning Daishi (as he is popularly known) occur throughout the country;²³ frequently, too, they appear in connection with new pilgrimage routes, providing an apparent legitimation and reason for their establishment. This seems to be particularly true for those small islands in the Inland Sea quite close to Shikoku itself which have developed 88-stage pilgrimages. Stories, dreams and rumours of the apparition of Kōbō Daishi occur commonly in the founding stories of many of these routes. On Innoshima, for instance, a story states that a monk in pilgrim's clothing was ferried to the island by a boatman: on disembarking the monk was seen by locals, metamorphosed into 88 separate shapes. This in turn led to a general local tradition that Kōbō Daishi had visited the island, sanctifying it as holy territory just like Shikoku, and helped provide the basis for the formation of the island's 88-stage pilgrimage.²⁴ The Koshima island pilgrimage was established in the 1830s through the efforts of a devout island priest, Enmyō, who was spurred both by his faith in Kōbō Daishi and by the popularity of other island pilgrimages, such as that on Shodōshima, to establish a similar route where he lived.²⁵ Helping to provide a connection to the central figure of worship was an extant island legend that Kōbō Daishi had appeared once to a nun from the island when she was walking around Shikoku and had then reappeared to her in dream form on Koshima, investing the hermitage where she lived (which later became a site on the pilgrimage route) with his miraculous powers of curing.²⁶

The dream motif is also a point of departure for the Kōnoshima pilgrimage: in 1747 Kōbō Daishi appeared in a dream to a local man, telling him to construct an 88-stage pilgrimage around the island.²⁷ At times the connection is even more speculative: there is an oft-repeated view on Shodōshima that, because Kūkai was from Shikoku and because he travelled from there across the Inland Sea to the main island of Honshū, he must have stopped off on Shodōshima on his way. This theme has become, at least in island oral legends, even more concrete, with stories of his having visited various sites on

²³ An interesting, if rather dated account of Kōbō Daishi as a folk religious figure may be found in: U.A. Casal, "The Saintly Kōbō Daishi in Popular Lore", *Asian Folklore Studies* 18 (1959), pp. 95–144.

²⁴ Shudō Hajime, *Shima Shikoku Reijō Meguri* (Osaka: Sogensha, 1984), p. 207f.

²⁵ Itō Tadashi, *Koshima Hachijūhakkasho Reijō* (Tamano, Okayama: Kannon'in, 1981), p. 10f.

²⁶ Shudō (note 24 above), p. 141f.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

the island and even of him having established the pilgrimage route there in the year 814—a year before the legendary founding of Shikoku, thus making the Shodōshima route the parent, rather than the child, of Shikoku!²⁸

The starting point for these island pilgrimages is certainly the universality implicit in Kōbō Daishi's ability to perform miracles and dispense spiritual grace, and this helps link them to the wider framework and nationally known level of Shikoku. It also serves as an example of how a universal religious phenomenon may be localized and transplanted into a particular context, indicating the degree to which universal themes of pilgrimage, such as the widespread occurrence and availability of miraculous happenings,²⁹ may be transferred and assimilated into more specific settings. Later I shall have more to say about this. One should at the same time remain aware that other factors are also at work in causing such proliferation to occur: such catalysts as the desire to assert more clearly a sense of local identity³⁰ certainly contributed as well.

Certainly, each island, by asserting its own claim to be linked to Kōbō Daishi and the themes he encompasses, is not just absorbing a universal theme within its own local context: it is also implicitly stating its independence of the larger, culturally dominant land masses in the vicinity. The islands in the Inland Sea invariably came under the political jurisdiction and authority of feudal domains on either Honshū or Shikoku, the two major islands bordering the Inland Sea, and there were certainly instances when island pilgrimages were overtly seen as a threat or manifestation of local rebellion against the dominant political culture. When the route was established in 1807 around Iyo Ōshima, through the exertions of a group of island activists, the feudal authorities of Imabari in Shikoku, in whose domain Ōshima was, suspected that it represented some form of subversive activity against its control. Consequently, the pilgrimage was suppressed and those involved in its establishment were imprisoned for some years. They were released, and the pilgrimage restored, only on the intervention of a leading Buddhist temple in Kyōto, Ninnaji.³¹

Such themes were by no means restricted to earlier ages: concepts of local identity and pride are often found to this day in connection with these pil-

²⁸ Hirahata (note 18 above), p. 8f., repeats this story. In my travels around Shodōshima, during which I have twice walked the pilgrimage and have, at other times, visited many of the sites, I have heard this story many times. On April 25th 1987 the priest at the second site asserted that Kūkai, as a boy, disembarked at Sakate in Shodōshima and came up to this site, where he encountered and studied with an ascetic. He also affirmed the story that Kūkai founded this pilgrimage in the year 814.

²⁹ See, for example, V. W. Turner, "Pilgrimages as Social Processes", *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp. 166–230, and V. W. and E. Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (Oxford: Blackwells, 1978), esp. Ch. 1.

³⁰ Frequently compounded by the stimulus of local rivalries, as shown by the way, for example, that the development of a route on Shodōshima was a causal factor in the formation of that on Koshima.

³¹ Shudō (note 24 above), p. 114f.

grimace routes. When I visited Iyo Ōshima in September 1986 I found that the islanders took great pride in the local pilgrimage and its traditions, especially talking about the three-day pilgrimage festival, known as the *henro ichi*^h, held each spring as a major part of the island's culture.³² Literature produced by the island's tourist authorities centres largely on the pilgrimage, reflecting another dimension in which it continues to a sense of local independence and identity in the current day. In the same way tourist authorities on Shodōshima focus on the island's pilgrimage as a key theme in their publicity, using it to suggest that the island is unique and worthy of a visit.³³ In such ways, then, one finds various themes prevalent in the origins of these pilgrimages re-iterated as valid in the present age.

88-Stage Routes: Types and Common Themes

The various terms used to describe such pilgrimages all point to some form of relationship with the Shikoku route. They are generally referred to as *shin Shikoku*ⁱ ("new Shikoku"), as "*mini Shikoku*"^j or as *utsushi Shikoku*^k ("copy/replica Shikoku") pilgrimages. Those that circuit islands are also known as *shima Shikoku*^l ("island Shikoku") pilgrimages. The Shikoku route is generally referred to, in the context of these routes, as *hon Shikoku*^m ("original Shikoku"). This terminology indicates a conscious recognition that the small-scale pilgrimages are direct descendants of a major and parent route, although, as has already been indicated, this is not to say that they are nothing more than mere copies.

The basic pattern is the same for all routes of this type, no matter how small they might be. All focus on the figure of Kōbō Daishi accompanying all pilgrims on a journey to 88 sites. The *dōgyō-ninin* relationship between each pilgrim and Kōbō Daishi is the same as in the Shikoku pilgrimage. Pilgrimage accoutrements and the symbolism, they entail are generally the same.³⁴

³² When I walked around Iyo Ōshima in September 1986, many people mentioned the *henro ichi* in terms of being an island event rather than simply one connected to the pilgrimage. It appears to have developed as part of the whole tradition of the island itself, part of its identity and an aspect which the local people appear both proud of and determined to preserve. Local history is unclear on the origins of this custom but there appears, so far as I have been able to discover at present, to be no evidence of this custom coming from Shikoku.

³³ Many of the pamphlets produced by the pilgrimage associations of these islands, for instance, highlight places of tourist attraction on the island as well as the pilgrimage: the relationship between pilgrimage and tourism has always, of course, been strong and it is often difficult, in Japan at least, to determine which may be the dominant of the two. In an interview Okamoto Gishō, the head priest of one of the Awajishima pilgrimage temples, indicated to me that a large portion of his activities as a member of the association that oversees the pilgrimage concerns dealings with tourist authorities, co-operation with them over the production of promotional literature and discussions with travel companies (Interview, Senkōji, Awaji, March 3rd 1986).

³⁴ On Shodōshima I have noticed that women tend to wear a white cotton bonnet rather than the *kasa*. Other than that, all the accoutrements are the same.

As on Shikoku, pilgrims usually go round in a clockwise direction, although there is no injunction against going anti-clockwise.³⁵ The only island pilgrimage where the norm is to go anti-clockwise is that around Sadoshima.

In terms of form and belief structure, then, there appear to be virtually no differences. The factor that marks out the most clear differentiation is that of length: all the new and island routes are far shorter than Shikoku. Whereas Shikoku is 1500 kilometres in length, the longest of the “mini” routes is the 300-kilometre long one on Sadoshima, while the most popular and frequently travelled of them all, Shodōshima, is about 160 kilometres long. This requires about one week to walk, a sharp contrast to the time, energy and, of course, expense required to walk Shikoku. In terms of bus travel, too, probably the most common means of pilgrimage in Japan at present,³⁶ Shodōshima takes far less time than Shikoku. Many routes are far shorter still: the Konoshima route, for instance, is 30 kilometres long and can comfortably be done in two days.

In terms of size, too, it should be noted that the sites themselves are usually quite basic, even sparse, in comparison to those on Shikoku. All the Shikoku sites are fully fledged temples, each with its own priest(s) and officiants to run and service it. In contrast, many of the island and smaller routes consist largely of small, unattended wayside huts in which a sacred image is enshrined. On the Shodōshima route there are 28 actual temples with officiants: the other sites are looked after by the temples themselves and some have attendants on a daily basis. On the Iyo Ōshima route, there are four temples (the only four on the island) and the rest of the sites are small huts which, apart from during the islands *henro ichi*, are unattended.

There are still shorter routes with smaller sites. Tanaka analysed one route barely 2.5 kilometres long at Kabutoyama in Hyōgo Prefecture,³⁷ while one I visited at the temple Kaiganji in Kagawa Prefecture on Shikoku was less than a kilometre and consisted of small stones and statues representing each of the Shikoku temples. This could be comfortably done, even when stopping at every one of the stages and reading the inscriptions on all the stones, in under an hour. Often one encounters still more miniscule models, usually in the courtyards of temples or ranged around hillsides behind temples. As a rule these consist of a small stone carving to represent the main image in the appropriate temple on Shikoku, with its number and name also engraved. The stones are generally linked up so that the whole “journey” may be little more than 50 or so metres. It is not uncommon for samples

³⁵ On our second pilgrimage around Shodōshima, in April and May 1987, my wife and I went anti-clockwise: no-one we met told us this was at all wrong, although everybody remarked that it was extremely rare.

³⁶ At least as far as the 88-stage routes are concerned, that is. Recent research has begun to suggest a shift towards extensive use of private automobiles (see the research report by Leavell and Reader elsewhere in this issue) in the Saikoku pilgrimage and it is possible that this trend will also be found in Shikoku and other routes.

³⁷ Tanaka (note 5 above), esp. pp. 101–9.

of soil from each pilgrimage site on Shikoku to be placed before such stones, so that one, in effect, is “walking” around the temples of Shikoku in the company of Kōbō Daishi. In recent years this type has been further refined, with soil from Shikoku being placed under transparent perspex so that one walks over it while circuiting a row of Shikoku temple images.

These miniscule routes require virtually no time, effort or financial outlay (there is a customary token offering at each image). I have very occasionally seen people dressed in *hakui* for this purpose but in my observations this is very much the exception rather than the rule. Nonetheless, such miniscule routes appear to be very much in the same mode as the larger, more extensive routes. At the temple Sanmyōji, at Toyokawa in Aichi Prefecture, for example, a circuit of 88 stones representing the Shikoku pilgrimage was erected in the year 1900 so that, according to a sign in the temple courtyard, those in the district too poor or infirm to go to Shikoku could still do the pilgrimage. At the temple Sumadera in Kōbe, where one walks across perspex under which is placed Shikoku soil, a notice informs one that doing this is equal in merit to Shikoku itself.

As these examples show, even the smallest, simplest and least demanding of pilgrimages are placed in the same category as Shikoku itself: a journey in Kōbō Daishi’s grace around a circuit of 88 sites. The journey may be undemanding, more symbolic than real, a minimalist representation of pilgrimage, yet within this minimalist scope one finds expressed the major, universal themes of the pilgrimage. One is with Kōbō Daishi on a sacred journey and, just as on Shikoku itself, it is through this special relationship that the inner meaning of the pilgrimage is expressed and experienced. Through the medium of Kōbō Daishi the essence of Shikoku is brought to the pilgrim, while through the symbols of Shikoku (the soil, the images of the temples and the symbolic construction of the route) the power of Kōbō Daishi is made accessible.

One finds these minimalist pilgrimages throughout Japan: it would be virtually an impossible task to assess how many there are. I frequently come across ones that have been constructed in very recent years (such as the one at Sumadera mentioned above) and it is my impression that this is a continuing process. Their ubiquity is testimony to the degree to which the universality of pilgrimage may be assimilated and transplanted: the sacred, miraculous powers that stimulate the pilgrimage are not the sole preserve of the physical place itself where the original route was located. In another sense, too, they represent the localization of macrocosmic themes. Besides the ultimately democratic function of making pilgrimage available to everyone, no matter how poor, weak, infirm or, indeed, busy, these models provide those who have already performed the Shikoku pilgrimage with the chance to re-awaken their experience, to bring it back into the present. At the small-scale route at Kaiganji in Shikoku cited above I was informed by the officiants that those who had been around the Shikoku pilgrimage were able,

by going round the model 88-stage circuit provided, to recall their experiences and thus to bring back into the present their own pilgrimage.³⁸ In this sense, too, these minimalist forms serve to function just like larger routes, presenting and providing a key to the transcendent and timeless encounter with the universal values embedded in pilgrimage.

From what has already been said, it should be clear that the representation of the Shikoku pilgrimage in smaller or, indeed, miniature forms focuses far more on the symbolic levels of meaning than on any direct physical replication (apart, of course, from the obvious point of having the same number of sites). The shortest such routes do little more than symbolically outline the 88 sites of Shikoku: there is no attempt at spatial representation. Even where the routes are longer, as with the island pilgrimages themselves, there has been very little real focus on the physical or spatial dimensions; any attention paid to direct representation and reproduction has been quite slight. This is perhaps a contentious point, certainly at least amongst Japanese social geographers. Tanaka Hiroshi's study of the spatial aspects of pilgrimage and the Kabutoyama route previously mentioned, suggests a process of direct replication. In this 2.5km route of stones ranged around a hillside there are close similarities between the spacing of the stones and the distances between the temples on Shikoku. Each stone has the main image of the temple carved on it and bears the name of the appropriate temple. Such similarities, Tanaka concludes, allow us to categorize these routes as replicas.³⁹ This point is challenged by Oda Masayasu, whose analysis of the Shodōshima route shows a spatial representation and distribution of sites entirely different from that of Shikoku. Moreover, he points out that the names and images of the Shodōshima sites differ from those of Shikoku: the 28 temples already extant on the island were the basis of the route as it formed and they kept their original names and images. Moreover, the small huts erected to make up the numbers themselves took on local, rather than Shikoku, names and images. Oda therefore contends that such pilgrimages should be seen as more than just replicas.⁴⁰

The problem here is that one cannot simply base one's case on one pilgrimage alone: there are so many small-scale pilgrimages that it is quite easy to select a route to fit a particular argument. The routes I am most familiar with could prove or disprove either argument. The Kaiganji model, for example, is as accurate a model as could be found. Less than a kilometre in length, it graphically represents the undulations and mountains of Shikoku, placing sites such as Unbenji (Temple 66) and Yokominedera (number

³⁸ Information received at Kaiganji, near Tadotsu, Kagawa Prefecture, in February 1986. Interestingly, as we went around this small model route my wife and I found ourselves recalling in detail memories of our walk around the Shikoku pilgrimage two years earlier.

³⁹ Tanaka (note 5 above), pp. 70–5.

⁴⁰ Oda (note 18 above), pp. 62–72, especially the maps provided on p. 66, shows the different spatial distributions of the sites on the two islands.

60) atop small flights of steps to signify their altitude and location. The distances between each site are necessarily short but are still in scale with the distances between the Shikoku sites, and the images, names and numbers are exactly the same. In contrast, in the miniature structures at Sumadera and Sanmyōji all the distances are the same, indicating no concern with spatial representation, although the sites themselves are named after, and bear the same images as, those on Shikoku. On Iyo Ōshima physical features were barely taken into account: although the sites bear the same names and images as Shikoku, the distances between them and their topographical locations have not been in any way reproduced.⁴¹ On Awajishima, as on Shodōshima, all the sites have their own names and do not correspond to those the Shikoku temples, nor do the images in them.

In other words, the shapes and topographical structures of these pilgrimages are extremely diverse, certainly too much so to allow one to accept the view that they are simply replications of Shikoku in all aspects. I consider that cases of physical and spatial similarity are few enough to suggest that these dimensions have never been especially important when compared with the symbolic. Nonetheless, I would not dismiss the geographical element entirely for, as has been shown, it does at times play a part, albeit a minor one, in the whole process of proliferation.

Legends and Miracles: Transference and Independence

It is not just the conceptual structure and the idea of accessible miracles through the person of Kōbō Daishi that have been assimilated and adapted by small-scale and island pilgrimage routes. In examining the legends that abound in the world of pilgrimage one finds a similar process in evidence, which provides us with further insights into the general nature and development of pilgrimage. Like all pilgrimages the Shikoku one has produced a wealth of stories and legends and, just as the form and underlying meanings of Shikoku have been expressed elsewhere, so too has there been a similar transmission of legends, with similar effects.

There is a well-known legend in which Kōbō Daishi caused the load of dried mackerel carried by a tradesman to go rotten after the trader had insulted him. He then brought one of the fish back to life, thereby shocking the trader out of his previous uncharitable ways. This is found on Shikoku, where a *bangai*ⁿ (a temple affiliated to the pilgrimage route, though not counted as one of the 88 sites) is dedicated to the event. A very similar legend appears on Innoshima, which has a *Saba Daishi* pilgrimage site dedicated to the event and is counted as a *bangai*.⁴² Interestingly, this legend, as it

⁴¹ Yoshidachō/Miyakubochō Kankō Kyōkai (ed.), *Iyo Ōshima Shikoku Gaidobukku* (Ehime, Etchigun: Yoshidachō Kankō Kyōkai, 1977), p. 28. These observations are also based on my visits to and walks around both routes (Shikoku, February–March 1984, and Iyo Ōshima, September 1986).

⁴² Shudō (note 24 above), p. 218. *Saba*—mackerel—is the type of fish involved in the legend.

occurs on Shikoku, was not originally associated with Kōbō Daishi, but was assimilated as the Daishi cult grew in the Tokugawa period.⁴³

The freedom with which legends and miraculous stories are traded and borrowed in the world of pilgrimage is clearly shown here. Other general pilgrims' stories are found both in Shikoku and elsewhere, often so similar as to be indistinguishable. There is a story on Shikoku of a female sinner whose hair became entangled in the rope of a temple bell, thus effectively tonsuring her. This, according to the Shikoku version, occurred at the nineteenth temple in spring 1803 to a woman named Okyō who was fleeing after having committed a murder.⁴⁴ An almost identical story is found on Shodōshima at the fortieth site: the woman, unnamed, was from Okayama, the sin was less grievous (petty theft) and the date more precise (March 26th 1917).⁴⁵ In each case the story has entered the local pilgrimage lore as an accepted fact and is reported as such with no reference to the other: even guidebooks to the respective pilgrimages by the same author make no mention of the similarity.⁴⁶

There are two basic motifs and messages within this story, each of which underpins a crucial element in the belief structure originally of the Shikoku pilgrimage and, now, of Shodōshima as well. The Shikoku temple in question is known as a *sekisho*^o or barrier: according to popular belief, there are four such barriers on Shikoku beyond which one cannot pass if in a state of sin. Pilgrims should always travel with pure hearts and confess their sins: if not they will be exposed as was the murderess Okyō. Nonetheless, the second message provides some solace to sinners, for Okyō was able, like all miscreants, to gain absolution by confessing and performing acts of penance. In other words, one of the powers of the pilgrimage is that the pilgrim may atone for and eradicate previous bad deeds.

The concept of barriers found in Shikoku lore appears, through this story, to have become an aspect of the Shodōshima pilgrimage as well, while the validity of the pilgrimage as a means of absolution is also affirmed. The Shodō site in question has become regarded as a barrier because of this story: its extreme similarity to that found in Shikoku has, with time, faded into the background and the pilgrimage has incorporated the barrier concept into its own. It is not of great import that the site numbers where these stories occur are different, and that Shodō has just one barrier. The nineteenth site on Shodō is actually a very small wayside hut with neither bell, rope nor officiant, while the fortieth one has both and is a fully fledged temple. In

⁴³ See Miyazaki (1985, note 6 above), p. 182.

⁴⁴ This story is reported in Statler (note 1 above), p. 209f.

⁴⁵ Hirahata (note 18 above), p. 152, reports this story in its Shodōshima version.

⁴⁶ Besides reporting the Shodōshima story (note 44 above), Hirahata, in his guide to the Shikoku pilgrimage reports the Shikoku version: Hirahata Ryōyū, *Shikoku Hachijūhakkasho* (Chiba: Manganji, 1982), Vol. 1, p. 120. Hirahata's version here dates the event as occurring in 1802; there is no comment in either book about the similarities.

addition, the comparative size of Shodō means that, in contrast to Shikoku, one barrier will suffice. As Oda has suggested, the true relevance of this story is in its bringing to Shodōshima concepts and ideas, found originally on Shikoku, that have since contributed to the nature and stature of the smaller route.⁴⁷

At times, also, it is not just stories and legends that are common to both Shikoku and other pilgrimages. In cases where the miracle stories of pilgrimage have apparently become concrete, where tangible evidence seems to validate the themes of pilgrimage lore, a similar form of duplication occurs. At the temple Iyataniji, the 71st site on Shikoku, one finds a collection of rather ancient walking sticks, false legs, invalid braces, corsets and other objects designed to support the disabled. All have been discarded there, left, according to temple and pilgrimage lore, by pilgrims miraculously cured on the way. These discarded limbs and braces, arranged along the walls and staircase leading up to the main hall of worship, seem at the very least to bear testimony to a remarkable degree of faith, especially as Iyataniji is situated high up a mountain and the descent is quite steep.

On Shodōshima one finds a remarkably similar situation: the fourteenth site, Kiyotakisan, which is, like Iyataniji, a mountain site, is itself the focus of numerous stories of miracle cures. It also has a collection of artificial limbs and other such objects discarded by the cured. In terms of age and style they are extremely similar to those at Iyataniji: there are less of them, to be sure, but they are arranged in a similar way, along a wall by the staircase leading up to one of the inner sanctums of the site. To the observer there appears an almost mirror-like reflection in miniature of Iyataniji, yet local sources on Shodōshima do not see this as so. The officiants at Kiyotaniji made it clear to me that this apparent duplication did not imply copying: rather it was their contention that miracles, particularly in the realm of healing, occurred on pilgrimages. Consequently, it would be utterly unsurprising to find evidence of such happenings on various pilgrimage routes and at various sites.⁴⁸

In this way the Shodōshima pilgrimage is asserted as being on a similar level with Shikoku. The artificial limbs at Kiyotakisan are an affirmation of the inherent powers of the Shodōshima pilgrimage itself, evidence that the miraculous healing qualities of Kōbō Daishi are mediated through it. There is no point of reference to Shikoku at all, a clear indication that this island pilgrimage has become overtly independent of its parent model.

The Shodōshima pilgrimage represents one of the most clear cases of evolution away from an original basis. The assertion that it is older than Shikoku may be no more than an unsubstantiable oral tradition, and stories transferring Shikoku themes such as barriers and absolution may be little more than unadmitted assimilations of extant Shikoku themes. But, in the terms

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⁴⁷ Oda (note 18 above), p. 72f.

⁴⁸ Interview at Kiyotakisan, March 19th, 1986.

in which they are developed and used, they have become elements of the Shodōshima pilgrimage, framing it and adding to its identity and uniqueness. The Shodōshima route has thus built its own independent tradition, transcending the imitative roots from which it started. In transcending the localized, particularized foundation from which it started, the Shodōshima route has appealed not simply to people from its immediate area, but has developed a broader clientele, with large numbers and groups of pilgrims coming annually from many regions, especially the Japan Sea coast areas of Hyōgo, Tottori and Kyōto Prefectures.⁴⁹

Conclusions

As I have attempted to examine a particular phenomenon solely through the medium of a Japanese pilgrimage structure, I will offer my conclusion primarily in relation to that world. However, I would like to offer the suggestion that much of what has transpired in this examination is of relevance to studies of pilgrimage in a wider field, not least because pilgrimage replication, while especially frequent in Japan, is found elsewhere (the case of Walsingham in England readily comes to mind).

The extensive and overt proliferation of pilgrimages using the form of the 88-stage Shikoku pilgrimage developed because of the widening popularity of pilgrimage itself and of the cult figure on whom the pilgrimage focuses. In this the fluid nature of pilgrimage is openly demonstrated: religious themes that pertain to the transcendent, as with Kōbō Daishi's pervasive presence, were transposed into local settings, which thereby transcended their locality and became part of the universal. The universal is therefore localized and through this process the local is expressed in universal terms.

This process of localization, in which the pilgrimage is brought to the pilgrim, is an overt manifestation of the democratic and levelling nature of pilgrimage. When even the smallest, most minimal models proclaim equality with the older and longer routes on which they are based, they affirm that the microcosm does indeed contain the essence of the macrocosm. Further they state that no-one should be denied the possibilities of sharing in the miracles and grace of the macrocosm: the inability to go to Shikoku is no reason why someone should be denied the chance of receiving Kōbō Daishi's grace. Being ubiquitous, it can and should be made available to all, wherever they are.

Simultaneously, of course, there is an intrinsic assertion that such grace and the miracles that flow from it are not limited by physical considerations, but are the preserve of all. Shikoku has special historical connections

⁴⁹ Oda (note 18 above), esp. p. 61f, shows that a large number of pilgrims are from these regions. From my own interviews with those connected with Shodōshima route and from observations of the implementa (pilgrims' banners etc.) left at the sites, I tend to concur with this: it is part of my continuing research to seek reasons why there should be such a regional connection.

to Kōbō Daishi which have played a formative part in its pilgrimage, yet Shikoku cannot claim any special monopoly of its own themes. There is no sense of exclusivity within the world of pilgrimage: basic themes, structures, figures and miracles are not the property of one pilgrimage alone, but may be freely and abundantly borrowed, traded and assimilated by others while still remaining in the lore of the original. Thus a story may simultaneously be found in both Shikoku and Shodōshima lore, contributing to the general belief structure of each pilgrimage independently.

Once the whole process of assimilation commences, as the Shodōshima case illustrates, pilgrimages so formed take on a life of their own, borrowing materials from the storehouse of the original and transforming them in their own distinctive manner. They become independent pilgrimages in their own terms and should be treated as such. These routes are far more than mere copies or replications of a original, for the macrocosmic themes of the original are not simply distilled and symbolized in the microcosm of the new. Rather, the microcosm takes on a life of its own, becoming the macrocosm in its own right.

Characters Quoted in the Text

- a. 廣法大師
- b. 厄年
- c. 白衣
- d. 笠
- e. 杖
- f. 同行二人
- g. 大師堂
- h. 遍路市
- i. 新四國
- j. 江四國
- k. 映し四國
- l. 島四國
- m. 本四園 J
- n. 番外
- o. 關所