

Making Pilgrimages: Meaning and Practice in Shikoku. By Ian Reader. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005. 350 pages including text, photos, maps, appendices, notes, character glossary, bibliography, and index. Hardcover, \$55; paperback, \$29.

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Ian Reader's *Making Pilgrimages: Meaning and Practice in Shikoku* is based on a decade and a half of extensive field research, including participant observations and over one thousand interviews, in addition to extensive primary textual research. Reader's principal research question has implications for the study of pilgrimage in particular, but also for ritual studies in general: How is pilgrimage produced? Pilgrimage, as a product of human action, is impacted by time, technological advancements, economic developments, and so on, and hence, is predisposed to countless changes and transformations, which Reader documents in his example of the Buddhist pilgrimage in Shikoku, dedicated to Kūkai/Kōbo Daishi. The book is divided into eight chapters and a short conclusion.

In chapter 1 Reader provides a brief overview of the history of Shikoku pilgrimage beginning with Kūkai/Kōbo Daishi, and ending with modern-day Japan. He points out the different ways pilgrims were viewed and received over time, from pious, religious pilgrims to unwanted criminal elements who transmitted diseases. He also positions his definition and methodological parameters in this investigation, which he brings full circle in his conclusion. Reader discusses the changes, evolutions, and adaptations in the pilgrimage, from changes in material culture (e.g., pilgrims' clothing) to adaptation in modes of transportation, which, in turn, produced new markets and industries affecting pilgrimage as it confronts tourism. Reader also discusses the tensions between "traditional" pilgrims versus "tourist-pilgrims," and takes an inclusive position that privileges neither "pilgrims" nor "tourists" because, together, they inform, structure, and make the pilgrimage of Shikoku what it is today.

Chapter 2 focuses on the components of the pilgrimage landscape, the geography, symbols, legends, traces, and emotions. It briefly presents the background of Kūkai/Kōbo Daishi and the legendary founding of the Shikoku pilgrimage. Reader points out that the emotional and physical landscapes of the pilgrimage, although based on "historically invalid" stories, are, nonetheless, important in the construction of the fundamental pilgrimage beliefs, even if the "historical evidence thus tells us that the pilgrimage could not have been founded by the historical Kūkai and that

he could not have selected the eighty-eight temples on it" (p. 45). Reader notes that together, the historical, mythic, legendary, and real experiences constructs the pilgrimage landscape, both geographically and emotionally, because pilgrimage is perceived and experienced on the interplay of the real and symbolic, the physical and the emotional. Beyond its foundation by Kūkai/Kōbo Daishi, the pilgrimage route is constantly being made and remade, in what Reader calls "moving text." Moving texts include the varied material culture encountered by pilgrims en route: stone inscriptions (big and small, grand and simple), as well as markers, prayers, posted stories, and guideposts.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the pilgrims, their profiles (e.g., background, age, and gender), motives, as well as the implicit and explicit meanings behind the pilgrimage. Reader concludes that there are multifarious forces at play, as some pilgrims are clearly motivated while others are ambiguous. Reader highlights a shift in gender participation, wherein studies of the 1930s–1940s reveal that 65 percent were male, while a current gender configuration is overwhelmingly female (p. 78). Of particular interest is Reader's discussion of "cultural inheritance," which is the conduit through which the history, ritual, culture, and meaning of the Shikoku pilgrimage is transmitted to the next generation via parents and grandparents (p. 99), as well as the increasing sense that it is not just religious, but rather, a symbol of Japanese national culture.

Chapter 4 provides a more comprehensive discussion of the making of the Shikoku, focusing on the "real" history. The history of the Shikoku pilgrimage is characterized by periodic oscillation of support, contempt, and ambivalence, all mirroring state attitudes and the mass media's portrayal. As a result, this history is one of ascetic beginnings, which earned mass support and practice, attracting a wide variety of participants from ascetics, the sick and dying in search of miraculous cures, to local youths in search of and in preparation for marriage, to modern-day pilgrims who travel the route in style and leisure. The result of this evolution resulted in the disappearance of sick and impoverished pilgrims, but also brought the development of an organized pilgrimage structure that, since the 1920s, made it a symbol of traditional Japanese culture in light of rapid modernization (p. 144).

Chapter 5 discusses changes and developments in the visual landscape, infrastructure, temple networks, commercialization, modes of transportation, changing gender dynamics, as well as the overall shifting conceptions of those experiencing the pilgrimage first hand and those experiencing it indirectly via TV documentaries and/or publications. The forces of modernization, with helicopter use and improved roads, displaced foot pilgrims. However, developments since the 1990s, stressing "tradition" and "physical fitness," has renewed the infrastructure for foot pilgrims

and, more recently, the possible innovation of cyberspace communities may foster the development of cyber pilgrimage. These changes, fueled by Japan's economic development from the mid-1950s onward, coupled with media coverage, has transformed a local regional cultic pilgrimage into a "national pilgrimage," with participants coming from every region of Japan (p. 155). Following this transformation is an ambivalent development concerning the two faces of pilgrimage: that connected to Shingon orthodoxy, and the other as symbol of Japanese folk culture (p. 178). The changes and transformations that Reader points out reflect a dimension of pilgrimage that is important to remember and consider—"pilgrimage can change" just as religion can and will change (p. 186).

In chapter 6, Reader provides a detailed phenomenological discussion of walking pilgrims: what they see, hear, feel, eat, do, think, and why. Moreover, he examines the same for people that the walking pilgrims encounter: temple priests; locals giving alms (*settai*); and shop, restaurant, and lodge owners. The pilgrimage experience is not all positive, and Reader makes this clear in his discussion of pilgrim complaints, regrets, hardships, and dilemmas. Reader also highlights the physical pain of walking a 1,400-kilometer pilgrimage, not to mention the toll of natural forces and exposure, the torment of getting lost, or encounters with death. However, this reviewer wishes Reader had further developed his discussion of the role of the body; Reader's view of the body is as a conduit through which the emotional landscape of the pilgrimage is experienced, culminating for many in uncontrollable sobbing when the final destination is reached.

Chapter 7 is a phenomenological discussion of pilgrims who purchase a package tour, a concept developed by the forces of modernity and the demands of contemporary life. For many the automobile is the preferred method of transportation to experience the Shikoku pilgrimage, bringing with it added layers of commercialization and criticism of these "non-genuine pilgrims" by some self-righteous walkers. Reader explores the motivations of those taking the package tour, and additionally debunks the notion that riding a bus is an easy copout to walking. The pilgrims, although in a tour/pilgrimage group, are respectful of each other's individual religious style and motivations, as well as their prerogative on whether or not, or to what extent, they observe the recommended regulations while en route. Of importance to the theoretical understanding of pilgrimage, Reader, due to his experiences on bus pilgrimages, finds Michael Sallnow's notion of pilgrimage as *contest*, or Victor Turner's notion of pilgrimage as *communitas*, insufficient because ambivalence, individuality, and group solidarity were all at play in shaping and making the pilgrimage experience (p. 237).

Lastly, in chapter 8 and in his conclusion, Reader re-examines the theoretical discourses on pilgrimage, highlights their shortcomings, and advances his position. Again, commenting that pilgrimage is neither *contest*

nor *communitas* alone, Reader holds that “pilgrimage cannot be viewed solely through the lenses of marginality and liminality or as one-off activity. Rather than being a practice existing as an appendage on the margins of mainstream Japanese religious life, the Shikoku pilgrimage is something far more central, a core motif in the social and religious lives of the pilgrims. As such, pilgrimage may be as much about continuities and providing a centralizing theme to its participants’ lives and religious orientations as it is about departures, disjunctions, and transience” (p. 266).

Reader discusses the time and factors involved in shaping and reshaping the Buddhist (for some “folk”) Shikoku pilgrimage of Kūkai/Kōbo Daishi. He presents tales, real and fictional, of pilgrims, past and present, who impacted the physical and emotional pilgrimage landscape, and hence, the lives of its participants, pilgrims and non-pilgrims alike. In addition, he documents the changing landscape brought on by modernization and advances in Japan’s infrastructure, coupled with the demands of contemporary life, all of which have introduced new commercial aspects to the Shikoku pilgrimage, that is, advertise it as both a religious experience and a symbol of national culture. Reader moves beyond traditional studies of pilgrimage; not only does he focus on the goal, the sacred site, and the pilgrim, but rather on all players, major and minor, who influence, implicitly or explicitly, the pilgrims’ experience. Thus, Reader says: “The process of making pilgrimage and of creating meanings is not static.... It is through the multiplicity of meanings thereby created that the pilgrimage is understood by participants, and it is through the seeming chaos and cacophony of sounds, practices, beliefs, legends, miraculous tales, tourism, and the like that the complexity of pilgrimage—a complexity that cannot be reduced to simple theoretical narratives—may be viewed and understood as a continuing process of meanings that are made and remade with every act of every one of its participants” (p. 271).

This book is recommended for scholars of religion interested in pilgrimage or ritual studies, Buddhologists, anthropologists, sociologists, and historians of modern Japan, and is a welcome addition to university libraries. It is smooth and, more importantly, fun to read and, hence, recommended for undergraduates in upper division courses.