

A comparison of the Shikoku 88-temple-pilgrimage with other pilgrimage sites and routes in Japan and around the world

Ryofu PUSSEL

四国八十八箇所巡礼をより広い文脈で位置づけ、日本および世界中の仏教および非仏教の他の巡礼と比較対照し、それらの共通点と相違点を示した。「巡礼」を一様に分類するようなものは存在しないことを示している。巡礼者は共通の絆の感覚を共有しているが、グループで行われたとしても、それは非常に個人的な問題である。従って四国巡礼は、関係者によって様々な理由で高く評価されている。

キーワード：Pilgrimage, Shikoku, 88 temples, Buddhism.

1. Introduction

The Shikoku 88-temple-pilgrimage covers the Island of Shikoku, which is the smallest of the four Japanese main islands, with a population of around 3.6 million people as of 2022, living mainly around the coastline. Shikoku consists of four prefectures: 徳島県 Tokushima (also known as 阿波の国 *Awa-no-kuni*: temples #1-23), 高知県 Kōchi (土佐の国 *Tosa-no-kuni*: temples #24-39), 愛媛県 Ehime (伊予の国 *Iyo-no-kuni*: temples #40-65), and 香川県 Kagawa (讃岐の国 *Sanuki-no-kuni*: temples #66-88). In around 45 days walking, around ten days by car or taxi, or two weeks by packed bus tour, covering approximately 1,400 km, the pilgrim visits 88 temples where he or she engages in some form of religious activities, as for example experienced and described in detail by Sibley (2012). Having its origins in ascetic practices, most people now do it wholly or partly for worldly reasons – if one can make a division between ‘worldly’ and ‘religious’, or can it be that ‘worldly’ is often integral to the ‘religious’?, – including the health and psychological benefits of a period of meaningful travel, to get out of one’s normal routine, or at least to enjoy the beauties of nature and the warm climate of this island.

This paper will locate the Shikoku pilgrimage in a broader context, by comparing and contrasting it with other pilgrimages, so that fundamental issues that are related to the meaning it has for the participants become clear, for example that, evident in all world religions, a pilgrimage often represents a break-away from familiar places and every-day behaviour and strains; some do it to find spiritual fulfilment, and also for sightseeing and pleasure purposes, in the past as well as – and even more so – in the present. Still, pilgrimage is often seen as a time of hardship, as a time apart, but also of *communitas*, as found in Edith and Victor Turner (1978): a world of anti-structure, which Coleman and Elsner (1995) define as ‘temporary social deaths’; however, Eade and Sallnow (2000) argue that

things are not as easily definable and advise that there is no such thing as a uniform categorization of 'pilgrimage'. This paper sees some truth on the one hand in the Eade and Sallnow approach, as pilgrims experience the Shikoku pilgrimage in various forms: on the one hand, pilgrims share a feeling of community, and on the other hand, at the same time, it a very personal, individualistic matter, which is experienced in a very different way by different pilgrims, especially when it comes to the motives for doing the pilgrimage, such as pilgrimage for healing, and for worldly benefits.

2. Pilgrimage in world religions

The origin of the term *pilgrimage* derives from the Latin *peregrinum*, consisting of *per*, *supposed origin*, and *ager*, *with idea of wandering over a distance*. The word *pilgrim* derives from the Latin word *peregrini*, *stranger* or *foreigner* (Webb, 2002: 3).

Ruggles writes that pilgrimages often represent a break away from familiar places and have been practiced in the past, even in prehistory; the participant usually perceived the need to visit a particular place and undertake one or more specific acts of worship there, and he summarizes that pilgrimages are travels in search of spiritual fulfilment (2005: 333, 344). This is a fair characterization, because for any place to become the focus of a pilgrimage, it must be seen as being exceptional in some way and must also include – besides its touristic value – some form of religious practices conducted there, because not any place that attracts many visitors would qualify as a pilgrimage site, such as, for example, marketplaces.

There are many pilgrimage sites and routes in the world. In Buddhism, Lumbinī, Kapilavastu, Bodhi Gayā, Sārnāth, Kuśinagara, Śrāvastī, Sāmkāśya, and Rājagṛha are all well visited places in India (Tarthang Tulku, 1994). But pilgrimages are not only common to Buddhism and are found in the past as well as present: Jewish pilgrimages, the Meccan pilgrimage for Muslims, the pilgrimage to Benares and the Ganges River for Hindus, the Sekket's shrine at Bubastis or Ammon's oracle at Thebes for ancient Egyptians, Apollo at Delphi for the ancient Greeks, the temple of Quetzal for the pre-Columbus Mexicans, and Cusco for the Incas. There are many Christian pilgrimages, for example to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, Canterbury in England, Rome in Italy, and so forth. There are at least 105 major catholic pilgrimage places, as far afield as France (34 places), Italy (14 places), England (13 places), Spain (9 places), Germany (5 places), Belgium (5 places), Ireland (4) places, Wales (3 places), Scotland (3 places), Palestine (2 places), Poland (2 places), Switzerland (2 places), Brazil, Canada, Chile, Greece, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Turkey, and USA (1 place each). However, a circumambulating pilgrimage including such a large number of clearly defined and organized holy sites (eighty-eight), covering such a huge distance is exclusive to Japan (Hoshino, 1997: 286).

3. Comparing the Shikoku 88-temple pilgrimage with Buddhist pilgrimage sites and routes

Regarding other Buddhist pilgrimages, Tanaka states that they emerged in India in the 6th century BC (1981: 240), but the death of the Buddha is now generally dated ~400 BC, and pilgrimage to sites associated with him would have taken a little time to develop, so 4th century is more likely. Places associated with the four main events of the Buddha's life have become the goal of pilgrimages, and are called the *Caturmahāpratihārya*, the *Four Great Wonders*:

1. Lumbinī, where Buddha was born.
2. Bodh Gayā, where Buddha attained enlightenment.
3. Sārnāth, where Buddha delivered his first sermon.
4. Kuśinagara, where Buddha entered *parinirvāṇa*.

The importance of making a pilgrimage to these places is stressed in the *Mahāparinibbāṇa Sutta* (On the Last Days of the Buddha), which is found as *Sutta* 16 in the *Dīgha Nikāya* (Collection of Long Discourses). In this text, the spiritual value of pilgrimage to these sites, which have a significant connection to Buddha's life, is stated, even claiming that if one died on such as pilgrimage, he would be reborn in 'heavenly happiness'.

There are many other sites that became a focus of pilgrimages, such as:

1. Sāṃkāśya, where Buddha descended from heaven.
2. Rājagṛha, where Buddha overcame attempts to be killed.
3. Vaiśālī, where monkeys dug out a pool for Buddha and offered him refreshments.
4. Śrāvastī, where Buddha performed miracles.

Together, these four sites and the above *Four Great Wonders* are called *Aṣṭamahāpratihārya*, the *Eight Wonders*, and are located all around the Ganges Basin.

King Aśoka, ca. 268-239 (Harvey, 1990: 75), was very much responsible for popularizing Buddhist pilgrimages; he was the third king of the Mauryan dynasty, the grandson of Candragupta, and the son of Bindusāra. The remorse for his bloody conquest of the Kāliṅga region in the ninth year of his reign changed him dramatically, and he became a devoted Buddhist, spreading Buddhism throughout India, to Sri Lanka, to a part of Southeast Asia and even some parts of Western Asia. He also conducted several pilgrimages to these holy sites. Thanks to the fact that he erected memorial stone pillars and *stūpas* during on these pilgrimages all over, many sites could later be rediscovered. For example, King Aśoka made a pilgrimage to Lumbinī and erected *stūpas* and a stone pillar with the statue of a horse on top of it, inscribing on it that 'this is the birthplace of the Buddha'. Over time, the location of his birthplace became forgotten, and it was not until 1896, that a German archaeologist found a broken part of this pillar, thus being able to locate this place, based on its inscriptions by King Aśoka (things are not as straight-forward though, as with anything that stretches so far back into history: there is now a dispute over which of two modern places is the site of Lumbinī). After this discovery, excavations have revealed foundations of shrines, *stūpas*, and *vihāras* (dwellings of

monks). The pillar of King Aśoka as well as the tank and temple of Queen Māyā have been restored, and a modern statue of the Buddha as a child can also be found; the King of Nepal, the United Nations, Theravādin and Tibetan Buddhists as well as others have donated funds for restoring this site since the second half of the twentieth century. Hand in hand with these undertakings, the stream of pilgrims has steadily risen over the years.

Other countries have developed traditions of Buddhist pilgrimages, too, not only to serve some spiritual quest, but also to ask for worldly benefits, or to enjoy travel and touristic activities. In China, there are many such sites, for example grottoes which are famous for their ancient Buddhist sculptures. Also, the sacred mountains, divided into two groups (Taoism and Buddhism), have been important destinations for devoted pilgrimages. In Indonesia, Borobudur, in the city of Magelang, is a massive and famous ninth-century Buddhist monument. In Nepal, Boudhanathis, with its famous large *stūpa*, is the holiest Buddhist site in the city of Kathmandu. In South Korea, the 'Sambosa', the 'Three Jewel Temples', are their three principal Buddhist temples, with each representing one of the Three Jewels of Buddhism: the temple Tongdosa represents the Buddha, Haeinsa represents the *dharma*, Songgwangsa represents the *sangha*.

There are many Buddhist pilgrimages in Japan, but Shikoku is widely regarded as one of if not the most prominent pilgrimage in Japan centred on Buddhist temples. Of course, there are many more, especially several copies of the Shikoku pilgrimage (such as, for example, in Kantō, Fukuoka, Kyūshū). Next to the *Shikoku 88-Temple Pilgrimage (Shikoku hachijūhakkasho junrei)*, the *Saikoku 33 Kannon Pilgrimage (Saikoku-sanjūsan-kannon junrei)* is most known, including 33 temples in West Japan which have the statues of Kannon Bosatsu enshrined (11 in Kyoto, 6 in Shiga, 5 in Osaka, 4 in Nara, 3 in Wakayama, 3 in Hyōgo, and 1 in Gifu). This gave birth to 9 copy pilgrimages, all venerating Kannon Bosatsu (in Aomori, Chūgoku, Hokkaidō, Kamakura, Kanto, Saitama, Tohoku, Yamagata). Then there are two well-known pilgrimages, venerating Fudō Myōō in Kantō and Kyūshū. Two pilgrimages venerate Yakushi Nyorai (in Western Japan and Kyūshū). One pilgrimage venerates Jizō Bosatsu in Kyūshū. And the Tendai sect has its own *Rokugōmanzan Pilgrimage* in Oita. There is also a plethora of 13 Buddha-pilgrimages (*jūsanbutsumairi*) throughout Japan, but these are all of post-war-origin (for example, Nara and Kyoto), and the seven-gods-of-good-fortune-pilgrimage (*shichifukujin meguri*), but often only centred on Buddhist temples (for example, at Sennyūji-temple in Southeast Kyōto). Particular mountains are also regarded as pilgrimage places (for example, Mt. Fuji, Mt. Hakusan, and Mt. Tateyama).

Taking the famous Saikoku pilgrimage as an example to compare and contrast the Shikoku pilgrimage one to is very appropriate, as it, too, is very old, and, similar to Shikoku, also promises this-worldly benefits. It is done in a clockwise circumambulation – as usually, the Shikoku one –, and is also very long, approximately 1,000 km, and the numbering from 1-33 was done in order of convenience for the pilgrims who came from Eastern Japan to do the Saikoku (Western) pilgrimage

(Hoshino, *ibid.*: 285). Here, too, stamps and calligraphies can be collected by the pilgrim, in the *nōkyō-chō*-book upon completion. Small *miei*-paper-slips depicting the name and number of the particular temple and an illustration of its *honzon* (statue of the chief deity of each temple) are also handed out to the pilgrim; these are found in the Shikoku pilgrimage, too. Their design is identical to those used in the Shikoku pilgrimage, so I wonder who influenced whom. This paper shall not engage into a discussion of when, how and by whom the 33-Kannon pilgrimage originated, but it is generally assumed that it might have been founded in 718 by the monk Tokudo Shōnin, then forgotten, and rediscovered by Emperor Kazan in 988, to become popular between 1598 and 1868. MacWilliams dates the beginning of the Saikoku pilgrimage to the Heian-Period, with its copy-pilgrimages, because of its popularity, being established in the Tokugawa-Period, and he counts 136 copies throughout Japan, with the Bandō-route the oldest, first mentioned in inscriptions on a *honzon* in 1234 (1997: 375f.). Hoshino suggests that the textual legitimation for there being ‘33’ temples to visit on the pilgrimage is, because the *Kannon-gyō*, a chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*, explains that there are 33 bodily manifestations of Kannon (*ibid.*: 289). But MacWilliam’s and Hoshino’s statements needs to be handled with care: matters are far more complicated that they appear at first sight. Also, reasons for the number of temples included in a particular pilgrimage are, at least in the Shikoku case, far more multi-layered than in the Saikoku example. In both cases, the veneration of the deities exceeds sectarian boundaries: 80 Shikoku pilgrimage temples belong to the Shingon school, four to Tendai, three to Zen, and one to Tendai, and in the Saikoku pilgrimage, sixteen belong to Tendai, fifteen to Shingon, and two to the Hossō-school (Hoshino, 1997: 292).

The Saikoku pilgrimage has Kannon Bosatsu as the deity that is worshipped, and there are also, as listed above, other pilgrimages that venerate Fudō Myōō, Yakushi Nyorai and Jizō Bosatsu. In these cases, the focus of worship is *one* particular *honzon* or *one* classification of deities. In the Shikoku case, on the other hand, pilgrims venerate a whole array of 14 *honzens* in 3 classifications, as enshrined in the main halls of the pilgrimage temples:

1. 如来 **Nyorai (Tathāgata): 24**: 薬師如来 Yakushi Nyorai (Bhaiṣajyaguru): 24 (enshrined as *honzon* at temples #6, 11, 15, 17, 18, 22, 23, 26, 33, 34, 35, 37, 39, 40, 46, 50, 51, 59, 67, 74, 75, 76, 77, 88); 阿弥陀如来 Amida Nyorai (Amitābha): 9 (#2, 30, 37, 47, 53, 57, 64, 68, 78); 大日如来 Dainichi Nyorai (Mahāvairocana): 6 (#4, 28, 42, 60, 61, 73); 釈迦如来 Shaka Nyorai (Shakyamuni Butsu): 6 (#1, 3, 7, 9, 49, 73).
2. 菩薩 **Bosatsu (Bodhisattva): 32**: 十一面觀音菩薩 Jūichimen Kannon Bosatsu (Ekadaśamukha-Avalokiteśvara): 13 (#13, 37, 32, 41, 44, 48, 52, 62, 65, 79, 80, 84, 86); 千手觀音菩薩 Senju Kannon Bosatsu (Sahasrabhujā-Avalokiteśvara): 13 (#8, 10, 16, 29, 38, 43, 58, 66, 71, 80, 81, 82, 84); Jizō Bosatsu: 6 (#5, 19, 20, 25, 37, 56); 聖觀音菩薩 Shō Kannon Bosatsu (Arya-Avalokiteśvara): 5 (#37, 69, 83, 85, 87); 虛空藏菩薩 Kokūzō Bosatsu (Ākāśagarbha): 3 (#12, 21, 24); 大通智勝仏 Daitsūchishō-Butsu (Mahābhijñā-jnānābhībhū): 1 (#55); 弥勒菩薩 Miroku Bosatsu (Maitreya):

1 (#14); 文殊菩薩 Monju Bosatsu (Mañjuśrī): 1 (#31); 馬頭觀音菩薩 Batō Kannon Bosatsu (Hayagrīva): 1 (#70).

3. **Others:** 5: 不動明王 Fudō Myōō (Āryācalanātha Vidrarāja): 4 (#36, 37, 45, 54); 毘沙門天 Bishamonten (Vaiśravaṇa): 1 (#63).

Counting finds that there are 94 *honzens* altogether – not 88! –, as three temples have enshrined more than one *honzen*: Temples #80 Kokubun-ji and #84 Yashima-ji have each two *honzens*: Jūichimen Kannon + Senju Kannon Bosatsu, and temple #37 Iwamoto-ji has five *honzens*: Fudō Myōō + Amida Nyorai + Yakushi Nyorai + Shō Kannon Bosatsu + Jizō Bosatsu.

It becomes clear that one special characteristic of the Shikoku pilgrimage is that it is broad in its choice of variety of deities venerated in the sense that there is not only one particular sort of deity (such as only Jizō Bosatsu) or one kind of deity (such as some Nyorai) enshrined and venerated in this pilgrimage.

4. Comparing the Shikoku 88-temple pilgrimage with other pilgrimage sites and routes

Regarding Christian pilgrimages, some scholars argue that these started at about 200AD, with Palestine as a goal, and so-called Bordeaux Pilgrimage was the first to have left accounts. Christian pilgrimages to the Holy Land flourished as early as in the 4th century. Taking the above-mentioned Bordeaux Pilgrimage as an example, it took about one year for a return trip, with approximately three months actually spent in the Holy Land. This was an enormous undertaking, timewise as well as financially (Webb, *ibid.*: 1-4). But on the Shikoku Pilgrimage, nowadays, one would still need to spend as much as ¥10,000 (around US\$75; exchanged rate as of August 2022) per day for 45-60 days walking. This is a considerable financial burden. Besides accommodation and other business entities, each temple charges the pilgrim up to ¥1,000 (around US\$ 7.50) for their seal and calligraphy-services. There is also a connection between praying for worldly benefits at a temple, and patronizing it when these have come true, such in the case of temple #37 Kōnomine-ji, where a mother prayed for her son's success, and he later founded the Mitsubishi Corporation and became a millionaire; ever since, his family patronises this pilgrimage temple (Miyata, 2006: 73). Another example is the impressive Nyorai-statue of temple #35 Kiyotaki-ji, donated by a successful local company.

In ancient Greece, starting in the 5th century BC, the assembling of Athenians in unity at the Acropolis for the festival of Attica, the Great Panathenaea, every four years, offering a new robe to the holy statue of Athena Polias, was of greatest religious importance (Coleman and Elsner, *ibid.*: 11). Although it might not have been a pilgrimage in the strictest sense, it nevertheless induced and supported a feeling of common identity between the participants. Conducive to this was that participants wore special robes, clearly identifying them as participants of this event: something that is experienced by the Shikoku pilgrims as well, as shown in this book.

In the play *Ion*, written between 414 and 412 BC by Euripides, pilgrims have to comply with

certain rules (such as taking off shoes when entering the temple), give offerings (barley-cakes and a sacrifice of a sheep), and then they may give prayers to the god (Coleman and Elsner, *ibid.*: 17). Similarly, in the Incan Empire, pilgrims to their main deity, the God of the Sun (from where they were believed to have ascended) at the holy place on a large crag on the Lake Titicaca, were only permitted to access it if they had followed various protocols and done donations (Ruggles, *ibid.*: 204f). Clearly, Shikoku pilgrims also have to adhere to certain prescribed rites, rituals and monetary offerings.

A Greek shrine dedicated for healing was, for example, the Asclepius in Epidaurus. Pilgrims came to ask for cure, made offerings, most often stayed the night at the shrine, and would leave message inscriptions when they were cured. Examples that were found are: easy childbirth, curing of blindness, regaining of voice. Similar things are found in pilgrimages of other world religions, too. In Mecca, pilgrims are said to be miraculously cured, drink water after completion of rites, and take it home in bottles. And in the Hindu religion, the deity of a certain sacred site, Baba Taraknat, is said to cure illnesses (Coleman and Elsner, *ibid.*: 20f., 61, 152). Striking similarities are found in the Shikoku pilgrimage, too, such as consecrated water, or mysterious paper slips for protection and healing. Although it cannot be verified that, throughout the world, inscriptions claiming cures originated from actually cured pilgrims, as they could have been carved for purposes of promoting a pilgrimage site, they still demonstrate the point that pilgrimages to certain holy places, in particular shrines and temples, were conducted, at least in part, in order to ask the deities for cure of illnesses and diseases. Other wishes are, for example, that of an easy childbirth (such as at temple #34 Tanema-ji, in Shikoku). As proper medicine and medical knowledge was not developed yet, it is understandable that people would pray to the gods for cure, and today people ask for cures of still medically incurable diseases.

The Shikoku pilgrimage can be engaged in at any time for any desired duration according to one's own individual circumstances. This is unlike other pilgrimages, for example, the *Haji* is conducted between the eighth and thirteenth days of the twelfth month of the Muslim year, the Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem is ideally done during Easter, and Hindu pilgrimages are done at particular astrological conjunctions, such as lunar eclipses. Part of my future research is to analyse how other Buddhist pilgrimages originated in, or are related to, astrological conjunctions, or other major calendric turns, such as those that can be found in Muslim, Hindu and Christian traditions. The Shikoku pilgrimage data that I have gathered shows that the peak time for the pilgrimage is spring, but the reason for spring is mainly that the weather is most comfortable, and flowers are blooming; autumn marks the second peak in pilgrimages.

Lucian of Samosata (ca. 125-ca. 180), a pilgrim himself, describes the customs and practices at the Hierapolis temple in Phoenicia, such as shaving his head and eyebrows, sacrificing sheep, only using cold water for bathing and drinking, and always sleeping on the ground. Christian pilgrims wore

particular attire and carried special accessories to distinguish them on their travel. Forbes writes in a similar tone about the Buddhist pilgrimage in India to the eight places that have become associated with the Buddha's life: He faced hardships on his way, and found that the moments of exhilaration, and the glimpses that he had, or thought he had, of enlightenment far outweighed these (1999: 3). This is in line with 'hardship for religious practice' of the Shikoku Pilgrimage. The medieval Christian pilgrim would wear a Dominical-style monk's frock with a hat and a belt on which his wallet, bible, and other necessities were suspended. An important item was his garb. Other pilgrimage signs were badges sewn onto the hat or hung around the neck or pinned on the frock. Thus, the pilgrim clearly distinguished him or herself as such, and these items support him to 'stand out', that is, be able to break away from everyday life. In a similar custom, pilgrims doing the Muslim *Hajj* (major pilgrimage) or *Umrah* (minor pilgrimage) wear a special white gown, and have a bag hung around their necks, similar to the Shikoku pilgrim's traditional *zudabukuro*-sack. This supports the feeling of a group community, as everyone is the 'same'. This is a major theme in the Shikoku Pilgrimage, too, and the clothes and accessories all clearly signal that this is a pilgrim, and through this, he or she have it easier to be able to escape from every-day-life and enjoy this time outside society and social boundaries.

Besides wearing certain clothes and preparing the body in a certain way, certain rules assist the pilgrim to enter the 'holy world' from the 'outside world'. Certain kinds of foodstuff are forbidden (such as the consumption of meat), smoking is prohibited, and sex or acts that could arouse sexual feelings, are forbidden (but not in Shikoku!). For example, in India, pilgrims ideally fast, practice celibacy, reject soft beds and avoid vehicles for making the journey. This is different to Shikoku, for example alcohol is consumed: both *shukubōs* (temple lodgings), in temples #2 Gokuraku-ji, and #75 Zentsū-ji, where I was accommodated, had beer for sale: #2 had a vending machine at the sleeping quarters for pilgrims, and #75 had such a vending machine in the dining room. Pilgrims consumed beer freely, also smoked: So, Shikoku lacks some of the more common signs of a time apart - but it does not lack them all.

Indeed, many pilgrims do the pilgrimage repeatedly, even making it a way of life, and therefore it is not just something done outside of everyday life (Reader and Schultz, 2021). In fact, it can be so addictive that one pilgrim is reported to have completed the Shikoku one 385 times in sixty years (Koll, 2007: 3). Here one encounters similar-minded people in a world of anti-structure, sharing a time that is outside their everyday life. Nevertheless, the Shikoku pilgrimage is much controlled, structured and conceptualized, and pilgrims experience a feeling of consensus and group-belonging. Still, Shikoku pilgrims clearly distinguish ranks, hierarchy, and status (such as by a red *kongō-tsue*-walking-stick, signaling that the carrier is a *sendatsu* (official pilgrimage guide), or the colour of the *osame-fuda* paper-slips (as a traditional pilgrimage ritual, this paper slip, containing the pilgrim's name and sometimes wish, is handed out to the temple as well as anyone from whom one receives a

giving), for example, red is used by a pilgrim who has done the pilgrimage between 8-24 times) and so not all are equal and sharing the same experience. It is interesting to see how Shikoku pilgrims on the one hand share the same experience (bus-groups sleeping in the same rooms, wearing the same clothes, conducting the same rituals), but at the same time are distinguished by hierarchy (different garbs, different colours of *osame-fudas*, different hats, some leading the rituals and being closer to the priest of a temple, such as a *sendatsu*) while others are following, thus having different experiences at the same time.

Reader explains that the term *dōgyo* (*together*) shows that they share a bond (2005: 30). To take this argument even further, although many pilgrims engage in a packed bus tour, they all have their own individual reasons for doing the pilgrimage, and indeed their individual prayers and wishes, ranging, for example, from success in academic examinations to finding a partner for marriage. So, although pilgrims share a bond, and are conducting it most often in a group, it is at the same time a very personal, individualistic matter, an experience of which they not only take 'home', but which will be present in their everyday life (such as placing the hanging scroll into the *tokonoma*, niche for art, at home), but many repeat it, even up to 385 times, as Koll's example mentioned above.

In Shikoku as well as Saikoku, all sites need to be visited in order to complete the pilgrimage. If the pilgrim to Santiago missed visiting for example St. Patrick's Purgatory in Dublin, this would have been no problem at all, but with regard to the Shikoku pilgrimage, one must not leave any temple out (although they might be visited at different times and not necessarily in the common order). This was a problem when Koll found out that he had missed out visiting temple #7 Jūraku-ji (2008: min 18:50, and had to walk back to this temple, before he could call his pilgrimage 'completed'.

Although #1 Ryōzen-ji in Tokushima-Prefecture is generally regarded as the starting point (and therefore its number is given as such #1), this is not a binding rule, but just a convenient convention; pilgrims can theoretically start at any temple. For example, Ms. Takamure, in 1918, came from Ōita-Prefecture, then took a ship from Ōita to Yawatahama on Shikoku Island, and then began walking the pilgrimage at temple #43 Meiseki-ji, which was south of Yawatahama (still a port nowadays) in Ehime-Prefecture and completed the pilgrimage in an anti-clockwise full circuit (Takamure, 1979: 243f.). Statler explains that pilgrims can start at any point, but finally must return to their starting point to complete it (Statler and Ueda, 1983), which suggest that it is seen as a circuit by pilgrims. The concept of circumambulation is however not limited or peculiar to this pilgrimage. Muslims circumambulate in Mecca, and Buddhists have always circumambulated, in a clockwise fashion, sacred sites such as *stūpas*; however, one must keep in mind that there is a difference between walking around a sacred object, and a circular pilgrimage route, with nothing obvious as its 'centre'. The Shikoku pilgrimage can be done either *tōshi-uchi* (the entire pilgrimage in one time), or *kugiri-uchi* (in parts). Pilgrims may commence at the temple nearest to their starting place, for example nearest to their hometown, or nearest their port of entry, such as Ms Takamure. Pilgrims from the

mainland would now usually start at temple #1 Ryōzen-ji, which is nearest to the Muya-port of entry when coming from Osaka and Wakayama-Prefecture by boat, car or plane, or at #29 Kokubun-ji when arriving at Kōchi airport, or at #49 Jōdo-ji, when arriving at Matsuyama airport, or #83 Ichinomiya-ji, when arriving at Takamatsu airport. I have met many pilgrims who made #1 their start of the pilgrimage. Muya produced salt and Aizome for indigo-dyeing, and so there was frequent trading with the mainland, in particular the Kansai area (including Osaka with its huge port). This was a major source of income, particularly in the Edo-Period (Tokushima Aizome Research Publication, 2009: URL). Thus, there was frequent exchange of ships, which the pilgrims could use for their own transportation in those days. Nowadays, there are on Shikoku several main ferry ports, such as Naruto (Muya), Tadotsu, Imabari, Yawatahama, Matsuyama, Takamatsu, and three modern bridges now connect three of all four prefectures of Shikoku, except for Kōchi Prefecture, with the mainland: Naruto Ōhashi Bridge (Naruto city, Tokushima Prefecture, construction completed 1999; the pilgrim would then start at temple #1), Seto Ōhashi Bridge (Sakaide city, Kagawa Prefecture, completed 1988, the pilgrimage would preferably start at temple #75), and Shimanami Kaidō Bridges (Imabari city, Ehime Prefecture, completed 1999, allowing the pilgrim to start at #55 Nankō-bō). In other words, the Shikoku Pilgrimage may be commenced at any place and conducted in any order, as suits the needs of the pilgrim best. Furthermore, the pilgrim is free to choose his or her mode of transportation entirely based on individual preferences – there are no binding rules.

It could be argued that the pilgrim in Mecca also circumambulates the sacred site of the Ka'ba, or the Christian worshipper circumambulates the shrine at Fatima on her knees. However, these are relatively short distances, and, as stated above, there is a difference between circumambulating a sacred object and a pilgrimage circuit with noting 'sacred' at its centre (although Miyata explains that in the Shingon tradition, the mind of the pilgrim should symbolically be regarded as the centre of the island, around which the 88 temples are located in Tokushima-prefecture in the East, Kōchi in the South, Ehime in the West, and Kagawa in the North; *ibid.*: 149). The Shikoku pilgrimage route is, when done by car, around 1,400 km long. This is why many Shikoku pilgrims, whom I talked to, said to me that they feel that, as they circumambulate the entire island, Shikoku in its entity is a 'holy place'. This hardship seems to support the feeling that the entire island is one large holy place in which the pilgrim moves around. Of course, unlike Shikoku, when a pilgrim circumambulates the Ka'ba or a *stūpa*, they do not walk *on* it. Based on my own experiences, I would say that unlike the pilgrimages in Europe and India, the feeling one has when the Shikoku pilgrimage is completed, and one has arrived at the same temple where one originally started (which is required), is: 'the set is completed'.

5. Conclusion

This paper has located the Shikoku pilgrimage in a broader context, by comparing and contrasting

it with other pilgrimages in Japan as well as around the world, Buddhist and non-Buddhist, showing what they have in common and where they differ, for example, other pilgrimages venerate one particular deity or one God whereas in the Shikoku pilgrimage, a whole array of different deities are venerated. In all cases, pilgrimages provide a stream of income, and there are certain rites and rituals, with varying extent to which pilgrims have to comply with these. Pilgrimages, be they Christian, Muslim, or Buddhist (such as venerating the *honzon* Yakushi Nyorai, the Medicine King), were also conducted, at least in part, in order to ask the deities for cure of illnesses and diseases. This leads to the *meaning* embedded in it for the participants. Pilgrimage often represents a break-away from familiar places and every-day behaviour and strains, only to find a new 'home' in the pilgrimage itself, which thus becomes familiar 'terrain' with repeated similar experience and routine behaviour (such as those who do the pilgrimage repeatedly); doing it to find spiritual fulfilment; and also for sightseeing and pleasure purposes. It is often seen as a time apart, and as a world of anti-structure: temporary social deaths. However, this paper shows that there is no such thing as a uniform categorisation of 'pilgrimage'; Shikoku pilgrims share a feeling of a common bond, but the pilgrimage is, even when done in a group, a very personal, individualistic matter, which is experienced in a very different way by different pilgrims: It becomes apparent that the Shikoku 88-temple-pilgrimage is a kind of contested cultural and sacred space, which is valued for many different kinds of reasons by those involved in it.

6. Bibliography

- Coleman, Simon and Elsner, John, 1995, *Pilgrimage. Past and Present in the World Religions*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Eade, John and Sallnow, Michael, 2000, *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage*, Champaign: University of Illinois Press.
- Forbes, Duncan, 1999, *The Buddhist Pilgrimage*, Delhi: Montilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited.
- Harvey, Peter, 1990, *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hoshino, Eiki, 1997, 'Pilgrimage and Peregrination. Contextualizing the Saikoku Junrei and the Shikoku Henro', *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 24/3-4: 271-298.
- Koll, Gerald, 'Wallfahrt auf Shikoku' (Pilgrimage on Shikoku), *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 16 August 2007, Nr. 189/ Seite R3.
- _____. 2008, *88. Pilgern auf Japanisch* (Pilgrimage in Japanese) [motion picture: documentary], limited circulation, available from Edition Salzgeber, Mehringdamm 33, 10961 Berlin, Germany, or through several on-line shops.
- MacWilliams, Mark, 1997, 'Temple Myths and the Popularization of Kannon Pilgrimage in Japan. A Case Study of Ōyaji on the Bandō-Route'. *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 1997, 24/3-4: 375-411.
- Miyata, Taisen, 1984, *A Study of the Ritual Mudras in the Shingon Tradition. A Phenomenological Study of the Eighteen Ways of Esoteric Recitation (Jūhachidō Nenju Kubi Shidai: Chūin) in the Koyasan Tradition*, Sacramento: Northern California Koyasan Temple.
- _____. 2006, *A Henro Pilgrimage Guide to the 88 Temples of Shikoku Island, Japan*, Los Angeles: Koyasan Buddhist Temple.
- Reader, Ian, 2005, *Making Pilgrimages. Meaning and Practice in Shikoku*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

- Reader, Ian and Schultz, John, 2021, *Pilgrims. Until We Die. Unending Pilgrimage in Shikoku*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ruggles, Clive, 2005, *Ancient Astronomy*, Santa Barbara: ABC CLIO.
- Sibley, Robert, 2013, *The Way of the 88 Temples. Journeys on the Shikoku pilgrimage*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.
- Tanaka, Hiroshi, 1981, 'The Evolution of a Pilgrimage as a Spatial-Symbolic System', University of Lethbridge, *Canadian Geographer*, XXV, 3, 1981:240-251.
- Tokushima Aizome Research Publication, 'Ai Indigo', quoted in Kajimoto, Tokiko, retrieved 5 August 2022: <http://www.awa-ai.com/isso/eng/ai.html>.
- Tarhang Tulku (ed.), 1994, *Holy Places of the Buddha*, Crystal Mirror Series, Volume IX, Berkeley: Dharma Publishing.
- Webb, Diana, 2002, *Medieval European Pilgrimage, c. 700 - c. 1500*, Houndmills: Palgrave.