Seals, Script, and Sacred Sites: A Study of *Goshuin* 御朱印 in Modern Japan

by

Tanya L. Brittain

Bachelor of Arts and Science, University of Saskatchewan, 2021

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the Department of Pacific and Asian Studies

University of Victoria

Seals, Script, and Sacred Sites: A Study of *Goshuin* 御朱印 in Modern Japan

by

Tanya L. Brittain

Bachelor of Arts, University of Saskatchewan, 2021

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Cody Poulton, Supervisor

Department of Pacific and Asian Studies

Dr. Martin Adam, Departmental Member

Department of Pacific and Asian Studies

Abstract

I argue in this thesis that while *shinbutsu bunri* was highly successful institutionally in many ways it failed in practice. Goshuin, provided at both Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines in the contemporary period exemplify the enduring complexity of Japanese cultural and religious practices. From an academic perspective however, they have been hiding in plain sight. Although *goshuin* have long endured as a cherished tradition in Japan they have not yet been studied in English language scholarship and remain underexplored even among Japanese academics and researchers. This lack of comprehensive investigation has left a significant gap in our understanding of the social and historical significance of *goshuin* as forms of material culture.

Table of Contents

Figures

Maps

Tables

Acknowledgments

Merri-Ellen and Neil, without you much of this would not have been possible. Merri-Ellen, your support, encouragement, and wisdom have been guiding lights through some of the most difficult times in my life and my gratitude could never be adequately expressed. Your love and belief in me have been unwavering and I am eternally grateful to you. You are like a mother to me.

I am also immensely grateful to my children, Azarius and Alexis for their endless love, understanding, and motivation. Your belief in me has been a source of strength and I dedicate this work to you hoping to inspire you to pursue your dreams with the same passion and dedication. Thank you for your love and understanding during this time, your smiles and hugs always brightened my day and gave me the motivation to keep going.

I would like also to express my deepest gratitude to George for his support, and encouragement. Your patience and belief in me have been motivating. Thanks must also be shared for the tireless assistance answering all my questions, for helping with the Chinese and much of the reading of older *goshuin.*

To my friends and family who have supported me along the way, thank you. Your encouragement and advice have been invaluable, and I am grateful for your presence in my life.

And to those individuals who have contributed to this work in various ways from sharing their knowledge and insights to providing feedback and assistance I extend my appreciation and gratitude. Your contributions have enriched this work and made it possible.

Additionally, I am grateful for the financial assistance provided by the Tanaka Fund, the Student International Activities Fund (SIAF), and the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society

(CSRS) Graduate Fellowship for providing me with funding that allowed for opportunities that have enriched my academic experience.

Finally, I would like to thank all those who have supported me in ways both big and small. Your contributions have not gone unnoticed and are deeply appreciated.

Chapter One: Introduction

Goshuin 御朱印– revered (honorable) vermillion seals – unmistakably relevant and highly prevalent in Japanese religious (sacred) spaces (*i.e.* Buddhist Temples [*otera*] お寺 and Shintō Shrines [*jinja*] 神社) constitute an area of scholarly inquiry that remains largely unexplored. This project takes as its focus the study of *goshuin* in modern Japan (1600-1900) in the Kansai region (consisting mainly of Kyoto 京都, Osaka 大阪, Nara 奈良) to understand the ways in which they have functioned across time in a socio-religious context and to shed light on the ways in which the Meiji Restoration (*Meiji ishin*) 明治 維新 of 1868 was both successful and unsuccessful in eradicating Buddhist practices, as well as *shinbutsu shūgo* 神仏習合 (lit. "unity of spirits and buddhas", the amalgamation of Buddhist and Shintō deities).[1] As such, this research seeks to

[1] As it is now, most academics tend to focus on the changes brought on during this markedly important period in Japanese history. Allan G. Grapard, "Japan's Ignored Cultural Revolution: The Separation of Shinto and Buddhist Divinities in Meiji ("Shimbutsu Bunri") and a Case Study: Tōnomine," *History of Religions* 23, no. 3 (1984), https://doi.org/10.1086/462953, https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/462953. Helen Hardacre, "Creating State Shinto: The Great Promulgation Campaign and the New Religions," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 12, no. 1 (1986//24/ 1986), https://doi.org/10.2307/132446, https://www.jstor.org/stable/132446?origin=crossref. Helen Hardacre, "The Shintō Priesthood in Early Meiji Japan: Preliminary Inquiries," *History of Religions* 27, no. 3 (1988/02// 1988), https://doi.org/10.1086/463124, https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/463124; Marius B. Jansen, *The Emergence of Meiji Japan* (New York NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Orion Klautau, "(Re)inventing "Japanese Buddhism": Sectarian Reconfiguration and Historical Writing in Meiji Japan," *The Eastern Buddhist, New Series* 42, 1 (2011); Trent E. Maxey, *The "Greatest Problem": Religion and State Formation in Meiji Japan*, Harvard East Asian Monographs 365, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2014); John Breen, *Rituals and Power: The Emperor's Meiji Restoration Girei to kenryoku tennō no Meiji ishin* 「儀礼と権力 天皇の明治維新」 [Ritual and Power: the Emperor's Meiji Restoration] (Tokyo: Heibonsha 平凡社, 2011; repr., Hōzōkan, 2021); James E. Ketelaar, *Of heretics and martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and its persecution*, 1. Princeton paperback print ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1993, 1993).

achieve two main goals: the first of which is to initiate dialogue in the literature, particularly in the English language, bringing long overdue attention to an unobserved facet of Japanese religiosity, *goshuin*; second, to assess not only the successes – which have been the focus of most English-language scholarship – of the Meiji Restoration, but also its failures. Goshuin – and in brief, the goddess Benzaiten 弁財天 – also known as Benten – (Ben 弁 [alt. 辯] – discourse, discuss, argue; Zai 財 – talent, eloquence, skill; Ten 天 – celestial being) – provide an interesting lens through which to explore this momentous time in Japanese history.

The study of *goshuin* fits within the broader *milieu* of religious practices in Japan that have received ample attention and they can, in one way, be used to highlight the social and religious implications of *shinbutsu bunri* 神仏分離 (the forced separation of Buddhist and Shintō institutions by the Meiji government).[2] However, it remains that, although certain religious practices declined and there can be no doubt that institutional religiosity was deeply affected, the remarkable continuity of *goshuin* reflects, I suggest, not only what was necessarily important to the political powers of the time, but rather to the common people.[3]

These clearly delineated institutional changes vis-à-vis *shinbutsu bunri* are evident not only on the ground[4] but also in the primary sources (*i.e. goshuin* – a shrine *goshuin* no longer looks like a temple *goshuin*) the reasons for this are found in the historical narrative – one that う undoubtedly tells a story of matters of importance to the Meiji Government. In the aftermath of the Meiji Restoration one can clearly see that a shrine *goshuin* no longer fits within the same

[2] Allan G. Grapard, "Flying Mountains and the Walkers of Emptiness: Toward a Definition of Sacred Space in Japanese Religion," *History of Religions* 21, no. 3 (1982); Sagai Tatsuru 嵯峨井建, *Shinbutsu shūgō no rekishi to girei kūkan* 「神仏習合の歴史と儀礼空間」 [History of Shintō-Buddhist Syncretism and Ritual Space] (Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 2013).
[3] Hideo Kishimoto, *Japanese religion in the Meiji era* (Tokyo: Toyo Bunko, 1969).
[4] See Figs 2 and 3 on page 31.

religious framework as a temple *goshuin* (these differences are exponentially pronounced in contemporary Japan). However, the living tradition of giving and receiving *goshuin* paints a picture of tremendous continuity in the face of change that speaks to the living religious tradition of the people practicing it.

Approach

There are excellent arguments one can make for which of all the languages is the hardest to learn: Russian, Chinese, Arabic, to name only a few; even English has been touted as the most difficult of all. Japanese, however, with its four main scripts – *kanji* 漢字*, hiragana* ひらがな*, katakana* カタカナ, and *romaji* – varying degrees of politeness to accommodate a strict hierarchical social and familial order, and its advanced grammatical structure, is undeniably a complex and highly nuanced language. The beginner learner can spend a short time learning *hiragana* and *katakana* (arguably somewhat easily); however, one would never, even across the span of a lifetime, learn every *kanji* and all the nuanced ways in which each one can be read and interpreted let alone the ways in which Japanese engage with one another in their sphere of reference. Let me elaborate here for a moment with a simple example for illustrative purposes. The characters 大東 would seemingly be read appropriately (especially to the new learner) as *ō* (large or big) and *higashi* (east) but these characters can also be read as *daitō* (as in Daitō *shi* 大東市 [Daitō city]) or even *ōtō* (as in Ōtō *machi* 大東町 [a town]).[5] How is one to know which

[5] This is not a linguistic discussion nor is it a history of Chinese characters being adopted in Japan. There are reasons for the various readings, largely based on *on-yomi* and *kun-yomi*, however, these rules are not hard and fast, and the language is riddled with exceptions. I have

reading is the appropriate one in the context of its usage? Again, this is not a philological discussion, rather I share this to highlight the complexity and nuance that permeates into cultural, social, and religious practices in Japan. There are many ways one can interpret, read, contextualize, theorize, and approach every aspect of Japanese culture.[6] I raise this to preface my acknowledgment of the many imaginable ways one could approach the study of Japanese religion and culture, any number of which I could have followed. Furthermore, I recognise the co-existence of the various aspects of religion and culture that can exist within the same spaces. My approach to this research therefore does not deny or exclude these other aspects or approaches.

Allow me once more to make use of the Japanese language to further delineate my chosen approach. In Japanese most things – including temples and train lines – have a *hon* 本 or a main (I also like the imagery of trunk, like a tree trunk with branches) as in *honzon* 本尊 (main

chosen an easy example that can be explained by *on-yomi* and *kun-yomi* for the sake of simplicity as it does well enough to highlight my point.

[6] See, for example Porcu Elisabetta, "Pop Religion in Japan: Buddhist Temples, Icons, and Branding," *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture* 26, no. 2 (2014); Alistair Swale, *A Cultural History of Late Meiji Japan: Empire and Decadence* (Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), eBook.; Matsui Takeshi, review of Marketing Strategies of Japanese Pop Culture: The Secret of Japanese Dominance in Anime, Manga, and Cosplay That Conquered the World, Review, *Japan Marketing Academy* 43, no. 2 (2023); Takayoshi Yamamura, "Pop culture contents and historical heritage: The case of heritage revitalization through 'contents tourism' in Shiroishi city," *Contemporary Japan* 30, no. 2 (2019), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/18692729.2018.1460049; Eyal Ben-Ari, Brian Moeran, and James Valentine, *Unwrapping Japan : society and culture in anthropological perspective* (Honolulu, Manchester, Eng.: University of Hawaii Press;Manchester University Press, 1990); Timothy J. Craig, *Japan pop! : inside the world of Japanese popular culture* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2000); Fernando M. Basabe, Shin Anzai, and Alphonso M. Nebreda, *Japanese youth confronts religion; a sociological survey* (Tokyo,: Sophia University in co-operation with C. E. Tuttle Co. Tokyo & Rutland Vt., 1967); Akiko Shimada-Sugawa, "*Rekijo*, pilgrimage and 'pop-spiritualism': pop-culture-induced heritage tourism of/for young women," *Japan Forum* 27, no. 1 (2015), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/09555803.2014.962566.

image of worship at Buddhist temples) or main train line *hon sen* 本線 (e.g. JR Yamanote). Put another way, Japan's sophisticated train system has main lines that are central to navigating the city (prefecture, or country) of which myriad other lines branch off from all of them important in their own way; in the same way there are main halls at temples *hondō* 本堂 and main images of worship *(honzon)* that co-exist with side temples and multiple deities and hold importance. The ways in which these examples contextualize the branching out provides a useful framework for the focus of my research. That is to say, the *hon* – or the trunk – of Japanese Buddhism, Tendai 天台 (a form of esoteric [*mikkyō* 密教] Buddhism of which the lineages of Hossō 法相宗, Zen 禅, and Pure Land (*jōdo*)浄土 branch off from)[7] and its parallel Shingon 真言.

There can be no doubt that countless branches reaching deep into areas of society and culture including aspects of pop-culture, *anime*, and *manga* exist at large. It is my position herewith, however, that these areas are the offshoots, so to speak, of the main trunk, or main line, and therefore are tangential to my research. I have traced the history and evolution of *goshuin,* from the Edo 江戸(1600-1868) period through the Meiji 明治 (1868-1912), Taishō 大正 (1912-1926), and Shōwa 昭和 (1926-1989) focused on the main line – Tendai (and to a lesser extent in this research, its parallel Shingon). That is to say, my research is focused on Buddhist Temples, particularly those along the Saigoku Sanjūsan Kannon Junrei 西国巡礼 (The Saigoku Thirty-Three Kannon—commonly called the Saigoku Thirty-Three in English and The Saigoku

---

[7] Ian Reader and George Tanabe, *Practically Religious: Worldly Benefits and the Common Religion of Japan* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1998). Ian Reader, Esben Andreasen, and Finn Stefánsson, eds., *Japanese Religions: Past and Present* (Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1993); Toshimaro Ama, *Why are the Japanese non-religious? : Japanese spirituality : being non-religious in a religious culture* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2005).

[Saikoku] in Japanese, for short) and provides only a few examples of Shrine *goshuin* for context as it pertains to the Meiji Restoration. There are no Shintō shrines included in the pilgrimage route at the heart of my project.

There is a (somewhat) contemporary phenomenon unfolding in Japan that requires differentiation before continuing which is commonly referred to as a "stamp rally" (*sutanpurarī* スタンプラリー).[8] There is a thick line between the practice of giving and receiving *goshuin*, however, and that of a stamp rally. It is important here to separate the two and to underscore that I approached this research from the historical, cultural, and religious dimensions of *goshuin*. These stamp rallies are an activity that take place congruently to *goshuin* and in many instances the practice has been misconstrued (particularly by tourists) to the point of certain temples and shrines no longer participating in *goshuin*.[9] It is true that airlines, stationery stores, and even restaurant chains now have produced stamp rallies, in which they even may use the word *goshuin*, that are part of, and driven from, an economic and popular culture perspective. Religion in Japan functions in many ways and the so-called secular and religious overlap oftentimes

---

[8] Shiramizu Tadataka 白水 忠隆, "*Bangai-hen 'sutanpurari' no kenkyū* 番外編「スタンプラリー」の研協," [Extra edition "Stamp Rally Research".] *Seikatsukyōdōkumiai* kenkyū 生活協同組合研究 *[Consumer cooperative research]* 473 (2015). Shiramizu Tadataka 白水 忠隆, "*Bangai-hen 'sutanpurari' no kenkyū* 番外編「スタンプラリー」の研協," [Extra edition "Stamp Rally Research".] *Seikatsukyōdōkumiai kenkyū* 生活協同組合研究 *[Consumer cooperative research]* 473 (2015): 57-61. The term スタンプラリー, according to Tetsuki, Murakami comes from the 1970s when there was a famous car racing event in Japan that had stamps which started to become conflated with collecting goshuin the slogan "goshuin is not a stamp rally" was seemingly born in this period. Today one can find stamp rally stickers for sale in Narita airport tax-free shops.

[9] There are countless ways in which one can join a stamp rally as there are stamping stations all over the place including temples, shrines, train stations, museums, and so forth. These are not the same as goshuin and if one were to collect these stamps in a goshuinchō with or without goshuin alongside it would be exceptionally disheartening to any religious specialist inscribing or witnessing this. If one so desires to collect stamps there are plethora ways that are appropriate to do so.

becoming difficult to distinguish.[10] Often, religion, culture, and social norms all coincide within the same sphere of reference and examples abound. There are, for example, tiny *goshuinchō* in capsule stations located in some of the train stations in Kyoto, right next to mini statues of the guardian kings (Four Heavenly Kings [*shitennō*] 四天王).[11] I am (and remain) aware that I could have approached this research from the perspectives of pop-culture, tourism, and stamp rallies in contemporary Japan. I have chosen not to. I have approached *goshuin* as important aspects of material culture tied to Esoteric Buddhist lineages and have traced their history and evolution to analyze the impacts of *shinbutsu bunri* and the Meiji Restoration.

Figure 1 Stamp booth for stamp rally/stamp hunting.

[10] Reader and Tanabe, *Practically Religious*; James Mark Shields, "Beyond Belief: Japanese Approaches to the Meaning of Religion," *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 39, no. 2 (2010/06// 2010), https://doi.org/10.1177/0008429810364118, http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0008429810364118. Ama, *Why are the Japanese non-religious? : Japanese spirituality : being non-religious in a religious culture*.

[11] The Four Heavenly (Guardian) Kings are Buddhist *devas* (a class of beings) that watch over the cardinal directions.

Purpose of Research

Japanese studies in the west have largely focused on premodern and contemporary Japan and although many studies have covered the Meiji period the subject of *goshuin,* in any period, has been overlooked. What is more, scholars tend to focus solely on the changes born of the Meiji rather than continuous aspects, and the successes rather than the failures.[12]

What scholars have come to call Esoteric Buddhism has received a great deal of attention which will be discussed in Chapter One. In brief, however, esoteric Buddhism has often been understood as an "East Asian descendant of Tantric Buddhism," and in Japan is often defined by reference to the teachings of Kūkai.[13] Unfortunately, a great deal of literature on Japan available in English is entrenched in what Aaron Proffitt has described as "disciplinary tunnel vision, rooted in the colonial era" constituting a large body of scholarship that has inspired this "narrow

---

[12] Allan G. Grapard, "Institution, Ritual, and Ideology: The Twenty-Two Shrine-Temple Multiplexes of Heian Japan," *History of Religions* 27, no. 3 (1988/02// 1988), https://doi.org/10.1086/463122, https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/463122; Grapard, "Japan's Ignored Cultural Revolution."; Helen Hardacre, *Religion and society in nineteenth-century Japan : a study of the southern Kant*o region, using late Edo and eary Meiji gazetteers*, Michigan monograph series in Japanese studies ; no. 41, (Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Japanese Studies the University of Michigan, 2002); Klautau, "(Re)inventing "Japanese Buddhism": Sectarian Reconfiguration and Historical Writing in Meiji Japan."; Maxey, *The "Greatest Problem": Religion and State Formation in Meiji Japan*; Shimazono Susumu, "State Shinto in the Lives of the People: The Establishment of Emperor Worship, Modern Nationalism, and Shrine Shinto in Late Meiji," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 36, no. 1 (2009); A. Hirakawa and E.B. Ceadel, "Japanese Research on Buddhism Since the Meiji Period," *Monumenta Nipponica* 11, 3 (1955).

[13] Aaron Proffitt, *Esoteric Pure Land Buddhism* (Honolulu: Hawai'i Press, 2023), eBook., 3 Elizabeth Tinsley, "61. Kūkai and the Development of Shingon Buddhism," in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, ed. Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Richard K. Payne, Handbook of Oriental Studies (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Richard D. McBride II, "Is There Really 'Esoteric' Buddhism?," *Journal of the International Association for Buddhist Studies* 27 (2004); Matsunaga Yūkei 松長有慶, *Mikkyō no rekishi* 「密教の歴史」 *(The History of Esoteric Buddhism)*, 5th., 1997 ed., Sāra sōsho サーラ叢書, (Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1969).

view" of Esoteric Buddhism.[14] Although Proffitt is speaking directly of Esoteric Buddhism here, I maintain that many academics – and indeed their academic traditions – all too often perpetuate this approach, despite a large corpus of literature contributed over the past century that has called Eurocentric and colonial exoticism into question.[15]

This research follows the latter and critically examines *goshuin* as products of Esoteric Buddhist lineages in Japan and as signifiers of not only change but resilience, at the same time taking not only *goshuin*, but also the people who engage in these practices seriously. It is my position that as an outsider the approaches we employ ought to be done so with respect for the local context in which these practices are being engaged. I maintain that it is imperative to avoid the imposition of our own ideals and sensibilities where they perhaps do not belong.[16]

Goshuin are superlative material manifestations of a living religious tradition that withstood the watershed movements of Meiji reforms. The materiality of these objects manifests in spatial relations and have been either contorted in contemporary scholarship or neglected altogether. I cannot help but wonder why this category of Japanese religiosity has been

---

[14] Proffitt, *Esoteric Pure Land Buddhism*.4 Toshio Kuroda and James C. Dobbins, trans., "The Development of the Kenmitsu System as Japan's Medieval Orthodoxy," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23, no. 3-4 (1996).

[15] Proffitt, *Esoteric Pure Land Buddhism*; Shields, "Beyond Belief."; Roland Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982); Gregory Blue, Martin P. Bunton, and Ralph C. Croizier, *Colonialism and the modern world : selected studies*, Sources and studies in world history, (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2002); Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion: Post-Colonial Theory, India and 'The Mystic East'* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999); Donald S. Lopez, Jr., ed., *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 1978, 1978).

[16] Roland Barthes in *Empire of Signs* described these biases and approaches as a kind of Western narcisicm:"The measurement of language is what the Westerner is most unfit for: not that his utterance is too long or too short,but all his rhetoric obliges him to make signifier and signified disproportiante, either by "diluting" the latter beneath the garrulous waves of the former, or by "deepening" form toward the implicit regions of context." (75) Barthes, *Empire of Signs*.

oppressed or excluded and it is my great hope to reorient the conversation to include *goshuin* as a serious academic endeavour. Goshuin, rich in history, are evidence of – and confirmation – that orthopraxis rather than orthodoxy drives and sustains Japanese religiosity.[17]

My first encounter with *goshuin* had me immediately captivated.[18] Initially, this research was going to focus on Japanese Buddhist-Shintō talismans – the blanket term for such items in Japan, generally categorized as having talismanic attributes or functions, is *gofu* 御符. This term is translated by Japanese scholars as "talisman" or "amulet" in English.[19] Apotropaic and thaumaturgic objects, the most common in Japan being *ofuda* お札 and *omamori* お守り are readily available at nearly every temple and shrine across the country. So too are *ema* 絵馬 which are considered a kind talisman that Ian Reader has called letters to the *kami*.[20] This category (of talismanic items) however, extends to a panoply of items as considered in *Nihon no gofu bunka* 日本の護符文化 [Japanese Amulet Culture].[21] To write that thesis would have been fairly straightforward as there are plenty of studies in English, French, and Japanese that would

[17] Shields, "Beyond Belief."; Reader and Tanabe, *Practically Religious*.
[18] While taking language classes in the summer of 2022 one my teachers and I began discussing my research project. When I mentioned I was in Japan conducting reseaqrch on talismans she exlaimed with great excitement "ah *goshuin*?!" At this time I did not know what she was referring to and the next day she brough in a small part of her collection and allowed me to look through them. I was from this point onward hooked and initially only considered dedicating a chapter of my thesis to *goshuin*. However, as I continued to acquire *goshuin* and started to research I realized the significant gap that existed. I then decided to contribute to the field while at the same time satisfying my own curiosities which is the result of this thesis.
[19] Chijiwa Itaru 千々和到, ed., *Japanese Amulet Culture Nihon no gofu bunka* 日本の護符文化 (Tokyo: Kōbundō 弘文堂, 2010) 22.
[20] Reader and Tanabe, *Practically Religious*; Peter A. G. M. de Smet and Ian Reader, *Health-related votive tablets from Japan: "Ema" for healing and well-being* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2017, 2017); Ian Reader, "Letters to the gods: The form and meaning of *ema*," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 18, no. 1 (1991), https://doi.org/10.18874/jjrs.18.1.1991.23-50.
[21] Chijiwa Itaru 千々和到, *Nihon no gofu bunka* 「日本の護符文化.」22

have been ripe for dialogical exchange. [22] There was something about *goshuin,* however, that transfixed me. There is virtually nothing written in English (certainly no body of literature, nor

[22] Chijiwa Itaru 千々和到, *Nihon no gofu bunka* 日本の護符文化; Inge Daniels, "Beneficial Bonds: Luck and the Lived Experience of Relatedness in Contemporary Japan," *Social Analysis* 56, no. 1 (2012), https://doi.org/10.3167/sa.2012.560110, http://berghahnjournals.com/view/journals/social-analysis/56/1/sa560110.xml; Inge Maria Daniels, "Scooping, raking, beckoning luck: luck, agency and the interdependence of people and things in Japan," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 9, no. 4 (2003), https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9655.2003.00166.x, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9655.2003.00166.x; Lomi Benedetta, "Dharanis, Talismans, and Straw-Dolls: Ritual Choreographies and Healing Strategies of the *Rokujikyōhō* in Medieval Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 41, 2 (2014); Fabio R. Gygi, "Things that Believe: Talismans, Amulets, Dolls, and How to Get Rid of Them," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 45, no. 2 (2018), https://doi.org/10.18874/jjrs.45.2.2018.423-452, https://nirc.nanzan-u.ac.jp/nfile/4683; Sujung Kim, "A Star God Is Born: Chintaku Reifujin Talismans in Japanese Religions," *Religions* 13, no. 5 (2022), https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13050431, https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/13/5/431; Bendetta Lomi, "Dharanis, Talismans, and Straw-Dolls: Ritual Choreographies and Healing Strategies of the *Rokujikyōhō* in Medieval Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 41, 2 (2014); Richard D. McBride II, "Wish-Fulfilling Spells and Talismans, Efficacoius Resonance, and Trilingual Spell Books: The *Mahāpratisarā-dhāraṇī* in Chosŏn Buddhism," *Pacific World, 3rd ser.* 20 (2018); Josef A. Kyburz, *Ofuda: on Japanese charms Ofuda: amulettes et talismans du Japon*, Bibliothèque de l'Institut des hautes études japonaises, (Paris: Collège de France, Institut des hautes études japonaises, 2014); Fabio Rambelli, "Texts, talismans, and jewels: the *Reikiki* and the perfomativity of sacred texts in medieval Japan," in *Discourse and Ideology in Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, ed. Richard K. Payne and Taigen Daniel Leighton (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2006); *Curse tablets and binding spells from the ancient world*, ed. John G. Gager (New York: Oxford University Press,1992); Matthias Hayek and Josef Kyburz, "Base Ofuda," (2019), http://ofuda.crcao.fr/; James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, 3 ed. (London: Macmillan & Co,. Limited, 1919, 1919); Kyburz, *Ofuda*; Frank Bernard, *Ofuda: images gravées des temples du Japon: la collection Bernard Frank*, ed. Josef A. Kyburz, Junko Frank, and Didier Davin, Bibliothèque de l'Institut des hautes études japonaises, (Paris: Collège de France, Institut des Hautes Études Japonaises, 2011); Mauss Marcel, *General Theory of Magic* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1950); John L. McCreery, "negotiating with demons: the uses of magical language," *American Ethnologist* 22, no. 1 (1995), https://doi.org/10.1525/ae.1995.22.1.02a00070, http://doi.wiley.com/10.1525/ae.1995.22.1.02a00070; "Ema-gined Community: Votive Tablets (ema) and Strategic Ambivalence in Wartime Japan," *Asain Ethnology* 67, no. 1 (2008), https://www.jstor.org/stable/25135286; James Robson, "Signs of Power: Talismanic Writing in Chinese Buddhism," *History of Religions* 48, no. 2 (2008); James Robson, "Brushes with Some "Dirty Truths": Handwritten Manuscripts and Religion in China," *History of Religions* 51, no. 4 (2012).

any in-depth study exists) and very little has been written in Japanese; there is no discussion in the literature or academic sphere, which has proven to be quite challenging, but it has also proven to be a critical area to the field of Japanese Studies. The more aware I became and the more I started exploring *goshuin* I realized just how large the gap in English language scholarship is, and my research pivoted away from a generic study of Japanese talismans to a comprehensive study of *goshuin*. I spent two summers in Japan collecting *goshuin* from temples, shrines, and flea markets, and searching used bookstores and online auctions all the while compiling a digital archive, mapping the Saigoku pilgrimage route, and analyzing the ways in which *goshuin* have been consumed and used historically, taking into consideration the various components that comprise a *goshuin*. I also assessed how they were – or were not – affected by the Meiji Restoration.

This study of *goshuin,* through a critical examination of the category of Esoteric Buddhism in Japan, an historical synopsis of the Meiji Restoration, and the use of digital technology to map the Saigoku and Buddhist temples in the Kansai region aims to provide a nuanced exploration of the intricate interplay between tradition and historical transformation, and

---

Michel Strickmann, "The Seal of the Law: A Ritual Implement and the Origins of Printing," *Asia Major* 3rd series, 6, no. 2 (1993); Michel Strickmann and Bernard Faure, *Chinese Magical Medicine* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002) http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0710/2001020376-b.html; Michel Strickmann and Bernard Faure, *Chinese Poetry and Prophecy: The Written Oracle in East Asia*, ARC: Asian Religions & Cultures, (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005); Eugene R. Swanger and K. Peter Takayama, "A Preliminary Examination of the "Omamori" Phenomenon," *Asian Folklore Studies* 40, no. 2 (1981 1981), https://doi.org/10.2307/1177866; Stanley Tambiah, *Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1984); S. J. Tambiah, "The Magical Power of Words," *Man* 3, no. 2 (1968); Tambiah, "Power of Words."; Randall Styers, *Making magic: religion, magic, and science in the modern world*, Reflection and theory in the study of religion, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

argues that despite the profound impact of the Meiji Restoration and the subsequent forced separation of Buddhism and Shintō, *goshuin* have endured as tangible links to Japan's rich cultural and religious heritage.

When I speak of *goshuin* in this thesis I am referring to the historically significant category of *goshuin* that remain, to this day, a deeply connected and important part of Buddhist practice particularly in Tendai and Shingon lineages. I will give an historical overview of Shinto and the Meiji Reforms effect on the two religions, and in this way, I use *goshuin* to tell a story of *shinbutsu bunri*. My main focus, however, is on Buddhist *goshuin.*

The historical origins of *goshuin* have been traced to the Rokujūroku-bu *kaikoku hijiri* 六十六部廻国聖 (The [pilgrimage to] Sixty-Six Sites [of old Japan] wandering mendicants) and their dedicated pilgrimages where the practice of receiving *nōkyō* 納経 after having dedicated *sūtra*s began.[23] Goshuin later grew to become an integral part of various pilgrimage routes, like the Saigoku.[24] Terms like seal stamp and pilgrim stamp have been employed in English in

---

[23] Hiromi Kojima 小嶋博巳, *A Study of the Sixty-Six Rokujūrokubu Nihon kaikoku no kenkyū* 「六十六部日本廻国の研究」 (Kyoto: Hozokan 法蔵館, 2022); 手つき 村上 Murakami Tetsuki, Receiving and studying the goshuin stamps that are given as proof of visiting shrines and temples, and introducing goshuin stamps from ancient times to the present day, from the Edo period to the present day., "*Kokon goshuin kenkyūjo* 「古今御朱印研究所」 *Kokon Goshuin Oboegaki*「古今御朱印覚書」 *[Kokon Goshuin Memorandum]*, 2014, https://blog.goshuin.net. Goshuin also exist in nonaligned contexts and do necessitate pilgrimage however, it is worth noting that "pilgrimages are not…just transitory performances carried out at specific locations and directed at particular spatial and temporal goals, but may be points of departure for their participants, impacting on and influencing their lives thereafter and even….becom[e] recurrent features…" I. Reader, *Making Pilgrimages: Meaning and Practice in Shikoku* (University of Hawaii Press, 2004). https://books.google.ca/books?id=a5oBEAAAQBAJ, 7.

[24] The Shikoku *henro* as well as the Kumano have received tremendous attention in English language. I mention the Shikoku in this research but I do not focus on it. One can refer to any number of wonderful studies on the topic, including: George Joji Tanabe, ed., *Religions of Japan in Practice*, Princeton Readings in Religions (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999); D. Max Moerman, *Localizing Paradise: Kumano Pilgrimage and the Religious landscape of*

reference to *goshuin* and although they are closely connected to pilgrimage, it is interesting to note that the practice of receiving *goshuin* extends well beyond self-proclaimed devoted pilgrims and raises questions about their broader functions and significance, particularly in a modern context.[25] Furthermore, the term pilgrim stamp is conspicuously absent from Japanese terminology when discussing *goshuin* (the equivalent would be something like *junreisha no in* 巡礼者の印 or *ohenro* [*san*] *no in* お遍路さんの印).

Goshuin are important relics of the experience of pilgrimage, with origins traced to the *nōkyō* of the Rokujūroku-bu *kaikoku hijiri,* yet their history, evolution, and prominence across time and space comprise a world much larger and far more complex that is lost when we rely solely on inadequate English language terminology. Because English-language scholarship on *goshuin* remains limited it is easy to see how oversimplified narratives have come to be used, but I maintain that we should be wary of such oversimplifications. The research presented here seeks to address these gaps and offer clarification by examining the evolution of *goshuin* across time and by utilizing the Japanese terminology associated with *goshuin* (e.g. *nōkyō*). I have, therefore, avoided the use of terms like pilgrim stamp or seal stamp in my discussion. It is my hope that this research will contribute to a more robust and comprehensive understanding of *goshuin* and invite a deeper academic discussion of *goshuin* as products of religious materiality that have endured as a significant aspect of Japanese religious and cultural practices.

Premodern Japan (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005); Ian Reader, "An unwelcome minority: banning Buddhist practices, marginalising itinerants, and constructing heritage in a Japanese pilgrimage," *Religion, State & Society* 51, no. 3 (2023), https://doi.org/10.1080/09637494.2023.2200368; Reader, *Making Pilgrimages: Meaning and Practice in Shikoku*. Sarah Thal, *Rearranging the Landscape of the Gods: The Politics of a Pilgrimage Site in Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

[25] Ian Reader, *Pilgrimage: A Very Short Introduction* (London ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

Methodology

This research was approached using largely historical methods that required extensive field work in Japan and employs the use of primary sources. In the spring/summer of 2022 I spent two months (June and July) conducting fieldwork in Japan and during the summer of 2023 I spent May, June, and July, which was fully funded by the Tanaka Fund Grant.[26] During these trips, I accessed a variety of sources from major institutions like Ryūkoku University in Kyoto, and the National Archives in Tokyo, as well as attended numerous museum exhibits. I also visited over fifty-five sites comprised of thirty-eight temples and seventeen shrines where I collected over ninety Reiwa 令和 (2019-) *goshuin* filling the pages of four *goshuinchō* 御朱印帳.[27] These numbers do not include the temples and shrines I visited where I did not collect *goshuin* or from my trip in 2019. I found *goshuinchō* from the Taishō, Shōwa and Heisei 平成 (1989-2019) eras at temple and shrine flea markets[28] as well as online auctions.[29] Earlier Meiji and Edo period *goshuin* are accessible through several online auctions like Yahoo Auctions Japan,[30] however, the bidding is aggressive, and I was unsuccessful in purchasing any. For these older *goshuin*, I

[26] "Tanaka Fund Program," 2024, https://tr.jpf.go.jp/tanaka-fund-program-call-for-applicants/.
[27] Tanya Brittain, "Reiwa."
[28] Notably Kitano Tengmangu and Tōji.
[29] Unkown, Heisei 平成; Unkown, Heisei 平成; Unkown, Shōwa 昭和; Unkown, Taishō 大正.
[30] "Yahoo Japan Auction　オークション," 2024, https://auctions.yahoo.co.jp/. There is a lot of debate about the practice of purchasing from online auctions, particulary contemporary *goshuin*. There is a sentiment that obtaining the goshuin from a vendor as opposed to worshipping oneself to obtain the goshuin does not create the meaningful bond intended and is in some way disrepectful to the Buddha and to the faithful. In conducting my research I particpated whole-heartedly in the process of collecting goshuin, adhereing to all the austerities and consideration as is appropriate and expected of those engaging with the practice. I only purchased old *goshuinchō* and a *nōkyōjiku* scroll from historical periods from auctions and fleamarkets.

relied on an online Japanese database.[31] I also purchased many guidebooks which have been invaluable to this research.[32]

In May 2022 I participated in a Frogbear Fieldwork Cluster in Bangkok, Thailand where I was introduced to Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and the value of using digital methods in humanities research. Upon my return to Japan, I enrolled in some online courses where I learned how to use QGIS and ArcGIS, which are two different software programs used for mapping and spatial analysis. The process of mapping is cumbersome and time consuming and as such I was unable at the M.A. level for this thesis to make the most of these programs, yet they have been an excellent launch pad for future research. My contribution to the scholarship is enhanced through the use of these technologies and contributes to the field in new and innovative ways. Moreover, Digital Humanities methods allow for broader dialogical opportunities with fields beyond Japanese Studies and allows us, as researchers, to ask questions of our material that can only come to the fore through visual and spatial methodologies.[33] Geo/spatial

---

[31] Murakami Tetsuki *Kokon goshuin kenkyūjo* 「古今御朱印研究所.」

[32] Yagi Toru 八木透, *National goshuin encyclopedia Zenkoku goshuin zukan* 「全国御朱印図鑑」 (Tōkyō: SB Creative SB クリエイティブ, 2015); Yagi Toru 八木透, *A goshuin handbook: Visit temples and shrines and fall in love with goshuin Shiawase ga maikomu goshuin handobukku: Jisha sanpai kara korekushon made goshuin o suki ni nareru itsusatsu!!*「幸せが舞いこむ御朱印ハンドブック: 寺社参拝からコレクションまで御朱印を好きになれる一冊*!!*」(Tōkyō: Tatsumi Publishing 辰巳出版, 2012). Azusa 梓結実 Yumi, *Yoku wakaru Kyoto no goshuin* 「大きくてよくわかる京都の御朱印」 [Large and easy-to-understand Goshuin of Kyoto] (Kyōto: 淡交社 Tankosha, 2018); 八木透, *A goshuin handbook: Visit temples and shrines and fall in love with goshuin Shiawase ga maikomu goshuin handobukku: Jisha sanpai kara korekushon made goshuin o suki ni nareru itsusatsu!!*「幸せが舞いこむ御朱印ハンドブック: 寺社参拝からコレクションまで御朱印を好きになれる一冊*!!*」

[33] N. Ian and Ell Gregory, S. Paul, *Historical GIS: Technologies, Methodologies and Scholarship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Stephen Clark, "Placing History: how Maps, Spatial Data and GIS are changing Historical Scholarship by Knowles A.K and Hillier," *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 171, no. 4 (2008), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-985X.2008.00561_9.x; S. Piovan, "Historical Maps in GIS," ed. Wilson John P., *The Geographic Information Science & Technology Body of*

materiality of Japanese religion across time and space can be used to thicken our understanding of the material relationships and the experiences between people and their agency in relation to worship and the acquiring of materials, like *goshuin*, as markers of contact with transcendental beings through physical manifestations.

In sum, historical analysis has allowed me to trace the origins of *goshuin* and their evolution over time within the cultural and religious contexts that have shaped them. Digital Humanities methodologies have allowed me to curate a digital collection of *goshuin* in the Kansai region and by utilizing software like ArcGIS I have mapped the geographical distribution of *goshuin* along the Saigoku Sanjūsan Kannon Junrei.

Background

The Meiji Restoration, marked by the influx of Western ideas and the push for so-called modernization, witnessed significant political and social changes across Japan. The government's attempt to marginalize Buddhism, with policies like *shinbutsu bunri* resulted in the dismantling of syncretic practices and the decline of powerful Buddhist institutions. However, *goshuin* survived as material evidence of the continuity that transcended governmental decrees as well as signifiers of change.

Knowledge (2019), https://gistbok.ucgis.org/bok-topics/historical-maps-gis. Patricia and Martins Murrieta- Flores, Bruno, "The geospatial humanities: past, present, and future," *International Journal of Geographic Information Science* 33, no. 12 (2019), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/13658816.2019.1645336.

The study of *goshuin* reveals a complex and multifaceted cultural practice deeply rooted in Japanese religious traditions. Despite challenges such as the Meiji Restoration and the decline of traditional pilgrimage practices, *goshuin* have endured and continue to be a cherished aspect of Japanese cultural heritage. The evolution of *goshuin*, from the red seals to the folded book-style *goshuinchō*, reflects not only the changes in Japanese society but also the enduring popularity of these sacred seals. Overall, the study of *goshuin* reveals a rich tapestry of religious, cultural, and historical significance.

Historically speaking Japanese Buddhism had the greatest influence on Japanese society and enjoyed long-standing status as the predominant faith in Japan. As a religion that evolved in India as a response to the traditional practices (Brāhmaṇism) of the time, Buddhist traditions traveled across the Asian continent and reached Japan sometime in the sixth century CE via Korea.[34] Prince Shōtoku Taishi[35] was a strong proponent of this new religion and incorporated it into court politics, which led to the gradual adoption of Buddhism as a quintessentially Japanese

[34] Donald Lopez, *The Story of Buddhism: A Concise Guide to Its History & Teachings* (Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001, 2001); Byron Earhart, "Mechanisms and Process in the Study of Japanese Religion," in *Nihon shūkyō e no shikaku* 「日本宗教　絵の資格」(Ōsaka-shi: Tōhō Shuppan, 1994). Eugène Burnouf, *Introduction to the history of Indian Buddhism*, Buddhism and modernity, (Chicago ; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010, 2010); Jinhua Chen and McMaster University. Dept. of Religious Studies., "The formation of early esoteric Buddhism in Japan : a study of the three Japanese esoteric apocrypha" (1997), http://libaccess.mcmaster.ca/login?url=http://wwwlib.umi.com/dissertations/fullcit/NQ30080 ; Daigan Matsunaga and Alicia Matsunaga, *Foundation of Japanese Buddhism* (Los Angeles, Calif.: Buddhist Books International, 1974); Donald S. Lopez, *The Story of Buddhism: a Concise Guide to its History and Teachings*, lst ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001). http://www.loc.gov/catdir/description/hc042/00054263.html ; Baij Nath Puri, *Buddhism in Central Asia*, 1st ed., Buddhist Traditions, vol. 4, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987); Erik Zürcher, *Buddhism: Its Origin and Spread in Words, Maps, and Pictures* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1962).

[35] The historicity of Shōtoku is debated yet it remains that he is an influential figure.

religion.[36] During the Nara and Heian periods, Buddhism played an important role in the pacification and preservation of the country (*chingo kokka* 鎮護国家) and was inextricably connected to political systems like the Kokubunji 国分寺.[37] Throughout the Heian period, the role of state Buddhism remained intact with independent sects forming—particularly esoteric Buddhism (*mikkyō*, associated with Tendai and Shingon).[38] Esoteric rituals became widespread,

---

[36] Earhart, "Nihon shūkyō e no shikaku." Michio Araki, "Japanese Buddhism," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade and Charles J. Adams (New York: Macmillian Press, 1987); Jinhua Chen, "The Construction of Early Tendai Esoteric Buddhism: The Japanese Provenance of Saichō's Transmission Documents and Three Esoteric Apocrypha Attributed to Śubhākarasiṃha," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 21, no. 1 (1998); Ethan Bushelle, "Mountain Buddhism and the Emergence of a Buddhist Cosmic Imaginary in Ancient Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 45, 1 (2018); Chen and McMaster University. Dept. of Religious Studies., "The formation of early esoteric Buddhism in Japan : a study of the three Japanese esoteric apocrypha."; William E. Deal and Brian D. Ruppert, eds., *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism*, Wiley-Blackwell guides to Buddhism 1 (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015); Matsunaga and Matsunaga, *Foundation of Japanese Buddhism*.

[37] The Kokubunji system was a provincial temple system of Buddhist temples established by Emperor Shōmu in the Nara period. Each province had a monastery and nunnery built that connected the country. The provincial temples were under the central authority of Tōdaiji in Nara.

[38] Earhart, "Nihon shūkyō e no shikaku."; *Esoteric Buddhism and the tantras in East Asia*, ed. Charles D. Orzech, Henrik Hjort Sorensen, and Richard Karl Payne, Handbook of oriental studies. Section four, China, (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2011, 2011); Jinhua Chen, "The Formation of Early Esoteric Buddhism in Japan: A Study of Three Japanese Esoteric Apocrypha" (Ph.D. diss., McMaster University, 1997); Chen, "The Construction of Early Tendai Esoteric Buddhism: The Japanese Provenance of Saichō's Transmission Documents and Three Esoteric Apocrypha Attributed to Śubhākarasiṃha."; David L. Gardiner, "Tantric Buddhism in Japan: Shingon, Tendai, and the Esotericization of Japanese Buddhisms," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion* (Oxford University Press, 2018); Lucia Dolce, "64. Taimitsu: The Esoteric Buddhism of the Tendai School," in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, ed. Charles D. Orzech, Handbook of Oriental Studies (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Rambelli Fabio, "Secrecy in Japanese esoteric Buddhism," in *The Culture of Secrecy in Japan*, ed. Bernhard Scheid and Mark Teeuwen (London, New York: Routledge, 2006); Proffitt, *Esoteric Pure Land Buddhism*; Tinsley, "61. Kūkai and the Development of Shingon Buddhism."; Toganoo Shōun 栂尾祥雲, *Himitsu Bukkyōshi* 「秘密佛教史」 *(History of Esoteric Buddhism)* (Kyoto: Hatsubaijo Nagai Shuppan Insatsu Kabushiki-gaisha, 1933; repr., Reprint, Tokyo: Ryūbunkan, 1981); Lucia Dolce, "Taimitsu Rituals in Medieval Japan: Sectarian Competition and the Dynamics of Tantric Performance," in *Transformations and Transfer of Tantra in Asia and Beyond*, ed. István Keul (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter Publishers, 2012); Toshio Kuroda, "The Development

and the Buddhism brought back from China by Saichō 最澄 (767–822) and Kūkai 空海 (774–835) became fundamental teachings that transformed religious and political life. Tendai and Shingon lineages, respectively, grew to become immensely powerful institutions financially, politically, and socially.

Saichō (posthumously known as Dengyō Daishi 伝教大師) was a Japanese Buddhist monk born in Shiga 滋賀 prefecture (Ōmi 近江国) who is ostensibly known as the father of Tendai Buddhism in Japan. During his lifetime, Buddhist temples had been established in each of the provinces as part of the Kokubunji system, with Tōdaiji 東大寺 in Nara serving as the head temple. At the age of 13 he became a disciple of Gyōhyō 行表 (722–797), a priest esteemed for his learning and appointed a provincial teacher by the imperial court; in 788, by the age of twenty, Saichō was fully ordained by Gyōhō. In 803, Saichō took part in a diplomatic mission to China during the highly influential Tang period. Shortly after his arrival in China in 804, Saichō was granted permission to travel to Mt. Tiantai 天台山, where he studied and trained with the seventh patriarch, Daosui 道邃 (Jp. Dōsui; d.u.), of the Tiantai tradition—a school of Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhism that developed in China in the sixth century and emphasized the "One Vehicle" (Sk. *Ekayāna*, Ch. *Yisheng* 一乘, Jp. *Ichijō*) doctrine derived from the *Lotus Sūtra* (Sk. *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*, which means "The Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma"; Ch. *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法蓮華経, Jp. *Myōhō renge kyō* or *Hokkekyō*)—as it was

---

of the Kenmitsu System As Japan's Medieval Orthodoxy," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23, no. 3-4 (1996).

taught by the fourth Patriarch, Zhiyi 智顗 (Jp. Chigi; 538–597).[39] In 805, Saichō and his party returned to Japan and established the Tendai Lotus School (*Tendai Hokkeshū* 天台法華宗) on Mt. Hiei 比叡山. The writings of the Tiantai school were initially brought to Japan from China in 753 by the priest Ganjin 鑑真 (Ch. Jianzhen, 688–763), however, it was not until Saichō that the school was formally established with the founding of Enryakuji 延暦寺 (a.k.a. Hokurei 北嶺).[40] Up to this point, all monastic ordinations had occurred at Tōdaiji and, as such, Saichō had petitioned the emperor requesting permission to build an ordination platform on Mt. Hiei. His request was denied due to opposition coming from Nara.[41] Seven days after his death, however, permission was granted, and the ordination platform and hall were completed in 827.

Kūkai (posthumously known as Kōbō Daishi 弘法大師) is the putative father of Shingon Buddhism. He was born on the island of Shikoku 四国 and, unlike Saichō, Kūkai was not ordained as a Buddhist monk at an early age. He did, however, also travel to China on a diplomatic mission. Kūkai studied esoteric Buddhism, called *Zhenyan* 真言 ("True words" or

---

[39] This doctrine teaches that all Buddhist paths lead to Buddhahood through *upāya* ("skillful means").
Richard Karl Payne and Taigen Daniel Leighton, *Discourse and ideology in medieval Japanese Buddhism* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2005).

[40] At the time there was already a temple at the base of Mt. Hiei, Onjōji 園城寺 (est. 686) that Emperor Tenmu 天武天皇 (631–686) had built to deal with issues of succession. When the Tendai monk Enchin 円珍 (814–891) assumed leadership in 859, it was renamed Miidera 三井寺 and became a sister temple to Enryakuji, which Enchin led to become one of the most powerful institutions in Japan.
"Nichiren Buddhism Library," *Soka Gakkai Nichiren Buddhist Library*, https://www.nichirenlibrary.org/en/; "Digital Dictionary of Buddhism," *Digtial Dictionary of Buddhism* 電子佛教辭典 (995), www.buddhism-dict.net.

[41] "Nichiren Buddhism Library."

"mantra;" Chinese Esoteric Buddhism; Jp. *Shingon*) in the Tang capital of Chang'an 長安 under the monk Huiguo 恵果 (Jp. Keika; 746–805), who comferred esoteric initiations on Kūkai. This school of Chinese Esoteric Buddhism employed *dhāraṇī*s (Ch. *tuoluoni* 陀羅尼, Jp. *darani*),[42] *maṇḍala*s (Ch. *mantuluo* 曼荼羅, Jp. *mandara*),[43] *mantra*s (Ch. *zhenyan* 真言, Jp. *shingon*),[44]

[42] *Dhāraṇī*s are Buddhist chants, incantations, and recitations— usually mantras of Sanskrit phrases—believed to provide protection and perceived as powerful tools for generating merit. When they are written they are generally written in *Siddhāṃ* (*Shittanji* 悉曇字) which is a type of 'perfected' Sanskrit script. Mahāyāna *sūtra*s like the *Lotus Sūtra* and *Heart Sūtra* contain *dhāraṇī*s, which are often considered talismanic; *dhāraṇī* recitation is performed for healing and protection. "Nichiren Buddhism Library." Jacob Dalton, "How Dhāraṇīs WERE Proto-Tantric: Liturgies, Ritual Manuals, and the Origins of the Tantras," in *Tantric Traditions in Transmission and Translation*, ed. David Gordon White and Ryan Richard Overbey (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Ronald M. Davidson, "Studies in *dhāraṇī* literature II: Pragmatics of *dhāraṇīs*," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 77, no. 1 (2014); Richard D. McBride II, "Practical Buddhist Thaumaturgy: The "Great Dhāraṇī on Immaculately Pure Light" in Medieval Sinitic Buddhism," *Journal of Korean Religions* 1 (2011); Richard D. McBride II, "Dhāraṇī and Spells in Medieval Sinitic Buddhism"," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 28, no. 1 (2005); Max Deeg and Tibor Porció, "Reading a Dhāraṇī: Problems Concerning the Indian Sitātapatrā in the Light of Amoghavajra's Transcription and the Tibetan Translations from Dunhuang" (paper presented at the 14th World Sanskrit Conference, Kyoto, Japan, 2009); Li Ying Kuo, "Dhāraṇī Pillars in China: Functions and Symbols," in *China and Beyond in the Mediaeval Period: Cultural Crossings and Inter-Regional Connections*, ed. Dorothy C. Wong and Gustav Heldt (Amherst, NY and New Delhi: Cambria Press and Manohar, 2014); Sakauchi Tatsuo 坂内龍 雄, *Shingon darani 真言陀羅尼 (Mantra-Dhāraṇī)* (Tokyo: Hirakawa shuppansha, 1981; repr., 2001); Koichi Shinohara, "Removal of Sins in Esoteric Buddhist Rituals: A Study of the *Dafangdeng Dhāraṇī* Scripture," in *Sins and Sinners: Perspectives from Asian Religions*, ed. Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012).

[43] *Maṇḍala*s (Jp. *mandar*a) are ritual objects of devotion that depict Buddhas and bodhisattvas. They are considered symbolic representations of cosmic forces in two or three-dimensional form. They are used for ritual and meditation and serve to reveal the direct retribution of each of the ten worlds of beings (hells, *preta*s, animals, *asura*s, men, *deva*s, the heavens of form, formless heavens, bodhisattvas, and buddhas). "Nichiren Buddhism Library."

[44] Formulas that consist of sacred words and/or syllables that are believed to embody profound powers. They are used in rituals as a means of invocation.

*mudrā*s (Ch. *Yinxiang* 印相, Jp. *inzō*),[45] and *abhiṣeka*s (Ch. *guanding* 灌頂, Jp. *kanjō*),[46] and spells (Ch. *zhou* 呪, Jp. *shu*) to invoke esoteric deities like Mahāvairocana (Jp. Dainichi nyorai 大日如来, Ch. Dari rulai), Thousand-armed Guanyin (Sk. Sahasrabhuja-Avalokiteśvara, Jp.Senjū-Kannon 千手観音, Ch. Qianshou Guanyin) and Mārīcī (Jp. Marishiten 摩利支天, Ch. Molizhitian). When Kūkai returned to Japan in 806 he established the Shingon lineage on Mt. Kōya 高野山, where he envisioned Mt. Kōya as a representation of the Womb (Jp. *taizōkai* 胎蔵界曼荼羅) and Diamond (*kongōkai* 金剛界曼荼羅) [realm] *maṇḍala*s.[47] In 822 he erected the great hall at Tōdaiji for tantric meditation, and in 823, he was given control over Tōji temple in Kyoto, which was the capital and political center of Japan until the 1870s.[48]

These two traditions have dominated much of the religious sphere, maintained associations with feudal lords, and are inextricably connected to pilgrimage routes. Tendai and Shingon have remained historically significant because of their political power and state protection rituals which, from the 740s, formed an established network of Buddhist temples in nearly all the provinces that were charged with the chanting of specific scriptures to avert natural disasters.[49] Monasteries were established and edicts decreed by emperor Shōmu 聖武 (701–756)

---

[45] Hand gestures used in Esoteric and Tantric Buddhist ritual practices that serve to connect one to a deity.
[46] An esoteric rite in Buddhism. In Shingon, it is used to confirm that the student of Esoteric Buddhism has successfully absorbed the teachings of his master.
[47] For an excellent study of *maṇḍala*s see: Tanaka Kimiaki, *Mandara ikonorojī* (Tōkyō: Hirakawa Shuppansha, 1987); Tanaka Kimiaki 田中公明, *Indo Chibetto mandara no kenkyū* イ「ンド・チベット曼荼羅の研究」 *(Study of Indian and Tibetan Maṇḍalas)* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1996).
[48] These structures still stand today and remain significant historical and religious sites.
[49] George A. Keyworth, "On Bonshakuji as the Penultimate Buddhist Temple to Protect the State in Early Japanese History," *Religions* 13, no. 641 (2022), https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13070641, 641.

declared that the state would pay for the construction and maintenance of this system of temples (Kokubunji).[50] Shrine-temple complexes were then charged with performing these elaborate rituals which were dedicated to the *Golden Light Sūtra* (Sk. *Suvarnabhāsottama-sūtra*, Jp. *Konkōmyōkyō* 金光明経, *Jin guanngming jing*), the *Great Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra* (Sk. *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*, Jp. *Hannya-haramitta* 般若波羅蜜多経, Ch. *Bore boluomiduo jing)* and the *Lotus Sūtra*.[51] These institutions were subsequently granted large tax-free domains for their economic support and grew into cultic centers of significant importance and remarkable power.[52] Tendai and Shingon, brought back from China by the luminaries Saichō and Kūkai, became formidable institutions that wielded immense financial, political, and social influence of which the founding of Enryakuji and Kōya marked significant milestones in the history of Buddhism in Japan that continued to dominate religious and political spheres.

Shinbutsu Shūgo

The interoperability between Buddhism and Shintō cannot be overstated. For centuries, *shinbutsu shūgō* had been commonplace and widely practiced and accepted at all levels of

[50] Keyworth, "On Bonshakuji as the Penultimate Buddhist Temple to Protect the State in Early Japanese History." 641

[51] See Natalie D. Gummer, "Suvarṇabhāsottama*sūtra*," in *Brill's Encylopedia of Buddhism, Volume One: Literature and Languages*, ed. Jonathan Silk, Oskar von Hinüber, and Vincent Eltschinger (Leiden: Brill, 2015); R.E. Emmerick, *Sūtra of Golden Light: Being a Translation of the Suvarṇabhāsottamasūtra*, 3rd rev. ed. London: Pali Text Society, 2001 ed., vol. 27, Sacred Books of the Buddhists, (London: Luzac, 1970); Hiroshi Kumamoto, "Paul Pelliot and the Deśanā-parivarta of the Suvarṇabhāsa-*sūtra*," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute, New Series, Iranian and Zoroastrian Studies in Honor of Prods Oktor Skjærvø* 19 (2005).

[52] Grapard, "Japan's Ignored Cultural Revolution."

society.[53] The practice of associating local gods with buddhas and bodhisattvas is documented as early as the late seventh century, and by the eighth century, Shintō shrines (*jinja* 神社) and Buddhist temples (*o-tera* お寺, *jiin* 寺院) were being jointly constructed next to each other.[54] Throughout the Heian period, Buddhism gradually became deeply ingrained in local belief systems and large, powerful Tendai and Shingon Buddhist compounds came to house Shintō shrines where the indigenous Japanese deities, *kami*, were worshipped with Buddhist ritual practices. As Buddhism became central to Japanese religious practices, the *kami* were sometimes categorized as inferior beings subject to suffering who required the guidance of Buddhist teachings.[55] Alternatively, the *kami* were revered for the safeguarding of Buddhism and the state and were simultaneously protected by Indic Buddhist deities. Ultimately, the kami were redefined through *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹, which emphasized an interdependent relationship between Buddhism and Shintō: *kami* were seen as local manifestations of the universal deities of Buddhism.[56] In other words, Buddhist deities appeared in Japan as *kami*, rendering many *kami* localized manifestations (*suijaku*) of Buddhist deities (*honji)*.[57] Buddhist deities were conceptualized as the original substance of reality and the *kami* were regarded as their reflections

---

[53] Grapard, "Institution, Ritual, and Ideology."; Alicia Matsunaga, *The Buddhist Philosophy of Assimilation: The Historical Development of the Honji-Suijaku Theory* (Tokyo and Rutland, Vermont: Sophia University and C. E. Tuttle Co., 1969); Sagai Tatsuru 嵯峨井建, *Shinbutsu shūgō no rekishi to girei kūkan*.

[54] Robert E. and Lopez Buswell, Donald S. Jr, "S," ePub vols., *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014).1211

[55] Buswell, "S."1212

[56] Buswell, "S." 1212

[57] Fabio Rambelli and Mark Teeuwen, eds., *Buddhas and Kami in Japan: Honji Suijaku as a Combinatory Paradigm* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002); Mark Teeuwen and Fabio Rambelli, "Introduction: combinatory religion and the *honji suijaku* paradigm in pre-modern Japan," in *Buddhas and Kami in Japan: Honji Suijaku as a Combinatory Paradigm*, ed. Fabio Rambelli and Mark Teeuwen (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003); Matsunaga, *The Buddhist Philosophy of Assimilation: The Historical Development of the Honji-Suijaku Theory*.

or correlatives. This was a theory widely accepted until the Meiji period and it situates the relationship between Buddhism and Shintō as one of interdependence. This theory has been the centre of much scholarly discussion.[58] Mihashi Tadashi has argued, however, that no formal fusion of Buddhist and Shintō deities existed.[59] This is a curious debate. If no such relationship existed, what prompted the Meiji government to order the dissociation?

The development of shrine-temple complexes (*jingūji* 神宮寺) which did not differentiate between the two traditions followed, although shrine priests were generally subservient to their better-educated and politically connected Buddhist counterparts.[60] During the Tokugawa 徳川 period (1603-1868) tensions appeared as "Nativist" (Kokugaku 國学) scholars began identifying "Shintō" as Japan's pure indigenous religion and advocated that it should be de-contaminated of the so-called "foreign" elements of Buddhism.[61] Under the Meiji government, in 1868, the policy known as *shinbutsu bunri* was implemented which forcibly dissociated the putative native Shintō from Buddhism.

---

[58] See, for example: Teeuwen Mark and Rambelli Fabio, *Buddhas and Kami in Japan: Honji Suijaku As a Combinatory Paradigm* (Routledge, 2003, 2003).; Matsunaga, *The Buddhist Philosophy of Assimilation: The Historical Development of the Honji-Suijaku Theory*; Rambelli and Teeuwen, *Buddhas and Kami in Japan: Honji Suijaku as a Combinatory Paradigm*; Teeuwen and Rambelli, "Introduction: combinatory religion and the *honji suijaku* paradigm in pre-modern Japan." John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, eds., *Shinto in History: Ways of the Kami*, Curzon Studies in Asian Religion (Richmond and Surrey, England: Curzon Press, 2000; reprint, Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000).

[59] Reader and Tanabe, *Practically Religious*. 152

[60] Grapard, "Japan's Ignored Cultural Revolution."; Allan Grapard, "Institution, Ritual, and Ideology: The Twenty-Two Shrine-Temple Multiplexes of Heian Japan," *History of Religions* 27, no. 3 (1988). 253

[61] Shigeyoshi Murakami, *Japanese religion in the modern century*, trans. Harry Byron Earhart (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1980, 1980).23

Shinbutsu Bunri

Shinbutsu bunri 神仏分離 ("separation of spirits and buddhas") was an official policy established at the beginning of the Meiji to dissociate all aspects of indigenous Japanese religion from Buddhism. It was the forced division of Buddhism and Shintō: all syncretic practices that had once combined these two traditions were systematically dismantled. This had profound social, political, and religious ramifications. Before this, temples and shrines had been intimately connected complexes; as were practices, beliefs, customs, and traditions. The policy was based in part on an argument first broached by Nativist scholars during the Tokugawa: viz., that Shintō reflected Japan's true spirit whilst the "foreign" imports corrupted Japanese culture and tainted the indigenous religion.[62] These mandates forced monks to swiftly disrobe and return to lay life. They were forcefully ordered to eradicate all traces of Buddhist representations, structures, and objects, and a directive was passed down to rename all divinities bearing any syncretic nature.[63] The Meiji built its foundation on this rhetoric by making Shintō a state cult and asserting that the emperor was a descendant of the indigenous *kami* as described in the *Kojiki* 古事記 (Record of Ancient Matters, comp. 712), an early historical collection. *Shinbutsu bunri* was a successful government policy in that it helped strengthen Shintō giving the tradition its own identity independent from the Buddhist institutions that had been patronized by the earlier Tokugawa *bakufu* 幕府 (lit. "tent government") government.[64] Moreover, shrines around the county were

[62] Murakami, *Japanese religion in the modern century*.
[63] Ketelaar, *Of heretics and martyrs in Meiji Japan*; Grapard, "Japan's Ignored Cultural Revolution."; Murakami, *Japanese religion in the modern century*; Hideo Kishimoto, *Japanese religion in the Meiji era* (Tokyo: Toyo Bunko, 1969).
[64] Helen Hardacre, *Shintō and the State, 1868-1988*, Studies in Church and State, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989).Hardacre, "Creating State Shinto."; Jason Ānanda Josephson-Storm, *The invention of religion in Japan* (Chicago ; London: The University of

ranked in a national hierarchy and provided with state funding. This was not without negative consequences for both religions; however, this culminated in a loss of status that had once been granted to powerful Buddhist institutions.[65] Furthermore, by forcing apart and replacing many long-held traditions that had been shared for centuries, *shinbutsu bunri* ended up replacing these with newly imposed national practices and beliefs. Smaller shrines that were not state sponsored were forced to merge with larger shrines, which severely diminished their presence in local communities, and the government remained all but silent regarding the growing anti-Buddhist sentiments and left temples to face the violence and destruction.[66] These reforms bourgeoned into the *haibutsu kishaku* (abolish Buddhism and destroy [Buddha] Śākyamuni),which undeniably reverberated across the social, political, and religious landscapes.[67] Today, vestiges of this historical transformation persist and remain visible at sites like Iwashimizu Hachimangū 岩清水八幡堂 in Kyoto, where informative display boards indicate the precise junctures where Buddhist elements were cleaved off.

Chicago Press, 2012, 2012); Sakamoto Koremaru, "The structure of state Shinto: its creation, development, and demise," in *Shinto in History: Ways of the Kami*, ed. John Breen and Mark Teeuwen (Richmond and Surrey, England: Curzon Press, 2000).

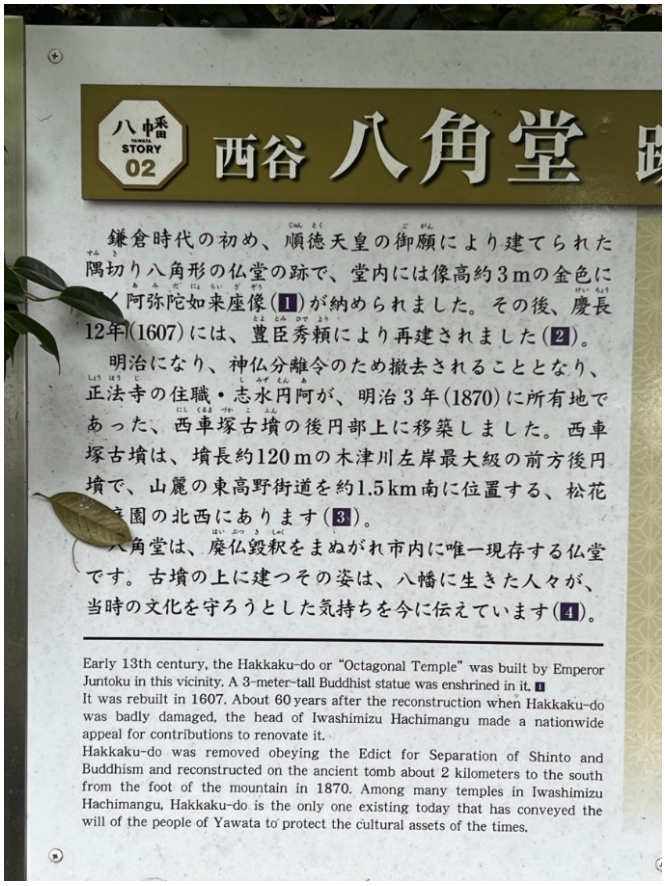
[65] Grapard, "Institution, Ritual, and Ideology."; Grapard, "Japan's Ignored Cultural Revolution."; Kishimoto, *Japanese religion in the Meiji era*. Ketelaar, *Of heretics and martyrs in Meiji Japan*.

[66] Ketelaar, *Of heretics and martyrs in Meiji Japan*.

[67] Ketelaar, *Of heretics and martyrs in Meiji Japan*; Kishimoto, *Japanese religion in the Meiji era*.

Figure 2 Signs showing separations. Author's photo.

Figure 3 Sign with text. Author's photo.



The sign pictured in figure three reads:

> Early 13th century, the Hakkaku-do or "Octagonal Temple" was built by Emperor Juntoku in this vicinity. A 3-meter-tall Buddhist statue was enshrined in it. It was rebuilt in 1607. About 60 years after the reconstruction

> when Hakkaku-do was badly damaged, the head of Iwashimizu Hachimangu made a nationwide appeal for contribution to renovate it. Hakkaku-do was removed obeying the Edict for Separation of Shinto and Buddhism and reconstructed on the anceint tomb about 2 kilometres to the south from the foot of the mountain in 1870. Among many temples in Iwashimizu Hachimangu, Hakkaku-do is the only one existing today that has conveyed the will of the people of Yawata to protect the cultural assets of the times.

The sign in figure four reads:

> Daito or “Big Pagoda” was built here in 1111 at the request of Shirakawa Ho-o, the priestly retired sovereign. The form of the pagoda was not of Chinese origin. It was originally designed by Kukai, the great Japanese Buddhist monk who founded the sacred place in Mt. Koya. The pagoda was the monument to enshrine the Buddhist sutras [*sic*]. It was demolished in about 1870 obeying the Edict for Separation of Shinto and Buddhism. The excavation in 2010 revealed that the stone seen on the ground today was foundation stone that supported the outer pillar.

Figure 4 Sign with explanation and images. Author's photo.

The Meiji Restoration

When U.S. Commodore Matthew C. Perry arrived at the shores of Uraga, southwest of Edo (present-day Tokyo), from the United States on his famous "black ships" in 1854 and demanded that Japan (re)open for trade to more than a few Dutch traders allowed up to this point, Japan was under the rule of the Tokugawa clan, a feudal military government operating as the central political body (1600–1886). Up to this point, Japan had spent over 250 years in *sakoku* 鎖国 ("locked country") under the Tokugawa shōgunate during which time the shōgunate enforced strict isolationist policies that controlled religion and trade throughout the Edo period (1603–1868). In the seventeenth century, the prohibition of Christianity was enforced through an established system whereby every citizen had to be affiliated and registered with a Buddhist sect.

By way of this system, the entire population was required to belong to a Buddhist temple which would serve the function of the smallest unit of feudal control.[68]

With the opening of the country came new ideas and terminologies. Throughout Japanese history, the notion of a "religion" as such did not exist in the way it would come to be designated.[69] The Sino-Japanese term popularized in the 1870s as a translation for the Euro-American word "religion" that was then exported throughout East Asia*, shūkyō* 宗教, is a compound of two characters *shū* 宗 and *kyō* 教 that had long meant "sect," "lineage," or "principle," and "teaching" or "teachings" respectively.[70] The language of religion, deployed as a systematic way of interpreting non-European cultures, however, is misleading. *Shūkyō* is the word that came to represent "religion" in Japan in the 1800s. This word, before the arrival of U.S. influence, was used to refer more generally to Buddhism as it appeared in Chinese Buddhist dictionaries.[71]

At the foundation of the system of State Shintō, which renounced its religious function to rule over all religions, State Shintō claimed that Buddhism, Christianity, and Sect Shintō were subordinate to it.[72] Restoration Shintō of Hirata Atsutane 平田篤胤 (1776–1843) arose from the school of Kokugaku (National Learning) and appeared at a time when Shintō was gaining

---

[68] Murakami, *Japanese religion in the modern century*.
[69] Josephson-Storm, *The invention of religion in Japan*; Mark Shields, "Immanent Frames: Meiji New Buddhism, Pantheism, and the "Religious Secular"," *Japan Review* 30 (2017 2017); Shields, "Beyond Belief."; Reader and Tanabe, *Practically Religious*.
[70] Josephson-Storm, *The invention of religion in Japan*.
[71] Dictionaries of this kind provide readers with translations of specifically Buddhist terms. The issue of translation is always tricky but how much more so for Sanskrit and Pali terms for ancient Chinese and Japanese. Often it was the case that terms would be transliterated merely to capture the sound not retaining any coherent meaning in the target language. Isomae Jun'ichi, "The Conceptual Formation of the Category "Religion" in Modern Japan: Religion, State, Shinto," *Journal of Religion in Japan* 1 (2012 2012).
[72] Murakami, *Japanese religion in the modern century*.

popular acceptance.[73] Kokugaku originally developed as the study of Japanese classics and criticized foreign thought such as Buddhism and Confucianism.[74] Hirata attacked established religions and syncretic Shintō and provided a new interpretation of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀 (Chronicles of Japan, comp. 720). The rites, prayers, and doctrine of contemporary Shintō depended heavily on Buddhism, and as such Restoration Shintō arose within the context of this.[75] In the 1840s, the *bakufu* censored Hirata's books and Hirata was exiled to Akita 秋田. Although his followers petitioned for a Shintō funeral ceremony, the request was denied, and he was buried with Buddhist rites.[76] The restoration movement of Restoration Shintō, which initially supported the feudal control system and the argument that supported reverence to the emperor, turned into a fanatical anti-foreign movement that called for the overthrow of the feudal government. From the Bunkyū 文久 era (1861–1864) the level of organization among adherents of the Hirata school of Kokugaku increased and consisted of upper- and middle-class merchants, artisans, lower-class warriors, and Shintō priests. In the summer of 1867, just before the collapse of the Tokugawa and the start of the Meiji, major disturbances occurred.

As these events unfolded, tensions between those who wished to reinstate the emperor to political power and praised ideas of "modernity," and those of the Tokugawa shogunate grew immensely, culminating in the Boshin 戊辰 War (1867–1868). Nothing short of political revolution, the Meiji Restoration of 1868 removed the Tokugawa from power and restored the

[73] Murakami, *Japanese religion in the modern century*.
[74] Murakami, *Japanese religion in the modern century*.
[75] Murakami, *Japanese religion in the modern century*.
[76] Murakami, *Japanese religion in the modern century*.

country to imperial rule. Fueled by fervent ideas of modernization, the Meiji government established new constitutions, laws, educational systems, railway networks, and industrialization all the while encouraging its citizens to participate. Japanese intellectual elites during this time crafted a narrative aimed directly at the marginalization of Buddhism, the dominant religion of Japan for centuries, thereby casting it to the fringes of society.

After Tokugawa Yoshinobu 徳川慶喜 (1837–1913), the last shogun, officially relinquished power to the Emperor in 1867, the anti-*bakufu* alliance moved quickly to occupy strategic government positions.[77] The "restoration of Imperial rule" (*ōsei fukko* 王政復古), ostensibly presented as a revival of rule by divine authority, took part of its social identity from legislation issued in the Emperor's name by the ever-unstable political body called the Ministry of Rites (Jingikan 神祇官).[78] A conspicuous representative of the restoration government, Ōkuma Shigenobu 大隈重信 (1838–1922) recalled in an interview in 1912 that "political concerns during this period were extremely complex."[79] The anti-Buddhist program legislated in the early months of the Meiji restoration was given public form via a series of separation edicts (*bunri ryō* 分離令) of which Kamei Koremi 亀井茲矩 (1824–1885), lord of the Tsuwano 津和野国 domain and vice-minister of the Office of Rites, along with Fukuba Bisei 福羽美静 (1831–1907), under-secretary for the Office and instructor of the Meiji Emperor in Shintō ceremony, were most responsible for drafting.[80] Kamei was very specific in these orders and consistently referred to Buddhism as the "heretical law" (*jahō* 邪法) and claimed that, through

[77] Ketelaar, *Of heretics and martyrs in Meiji Japan*.18, 87-88
[78] Ketelaar, *Of heretics and martyrs in Meiji Japan*. 18, 87-88
[79] Ketelaar, *Of heretics and martyrs in Meiji Japan*. 18, 87-88
[80] Ketelaar, *Of heretics and martyrs in Meiji Japan*. 18, 87-88

the separation edicts' enforcement, Shintō shrines would be worshipped and revered by all Japanese people, thereby preserving the doctrine of the Imperial nation.[81] The first laws issued by Kamei's office appeared in 1868, on the eve of the founding of the Meiji era.[82] On the first day of the fourth month of 1868, three days after the official promulgation of the separation laws, Juge Shigekuni 樹下茂国 (1822–1884) arrived at Hiyoshi Taisha 日吉大社 at the base of Mt. Hiei to carry out the enforcement of these edicts.[83] An exchange of documents with the Office of Shrine Affairs (*jingikan* 神祇官) within Enryakuji 延暦寺, the Tendai temple that until the promulgation had administered the shrine, Juge and his group of "restorationists" (*fukkosha* 復古者) proceeded to remove every statue, bell, *sūtra*, tapestry, scroll, and article of clothing that could be even remotely linked to Buddhism from the shrine complex. Anything flammable was gathered and burned; metals were confiscated and refashioned into cannon or coins; stone statues were decapitated and buried or discarded and wooden statues were used for target practice.[84] During the attack on the shrine, however, members of the Murakami 村上 family (retainers of the shrine, loyal to Enryakuji) attempted to save what they could and managed to collect and secret away hundreds of *sūtras*, miscellaneous shrine records, and an impressive collection of syncretic statuary that they hid behind a fake wall in the family storehouse and guarded with a curse that whoever should open the vault would be rendered blind.[85] These articles remained

[81] Ketelaar, *Of heretics and martyrs in Meiji Japan*. 18, 87-88
[82] Ketelaar, *Of heretics and martyrs in Meiji Japan*.18, 87-88
[83] Ketelaar, *Of heretics and martyrs in Meiji Japan*. 18, 87-88 Chapter three provides three examples of *goshuin* from this shrine from the Shōwa, Heisei, and Reiwa periods.
[84] Ketelaar, *Of heretics and martyrs in Meiji Japan*. 18, 87-88
[85] Ketelaar, *Of heretics and martyrs in Meiji Japan*.18, 87-88

hidden and forgotten until 1983, and many articles have since been designated Important Cultural Property (*Bunkazai* 文化財) by the Japanese government.[86]

The Meiji Restoration marked a pivotal moment when ideas of what constituted modernity were flowing into Japan from the West and this further divided an already unstable political situation, directly affecting institutional religiosity.[87] Yet, amidst the sweeping reforms and ideological shifts, certain religious practices endured, providing a bridge between past and present that reveals a captivating narrative of evolution and continuity. And while the Meiji Restoration achieved remarkable success on many fronts, this elite-driven modernization movement did not wholly resonate with the everyday lives and concerns of the common people. With its ambition to modernize and redefine Japan, the government established by the Meiji Restoration undoubtedly delivered extensive reorganizations. Yet it could not entirely sever people's deep-rooted connections with their history and how they enacted it in their daily lives. Practices that had long been part of the cultural fabric clearly persisted and reflected the resilience of tradition in the face of change. *Goshuin* are but one such testament to continuity in the face of transformation.

[86] Ketelaar, *Of heretics and martyrs in Meiji Japan*.10, 18, 87-88
[87] Josephson-Storm, *The invention of religion in Japan*.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The topic of this research is, simply put, the historical evolution of *goshuin* vis-à-vis the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Given the complexity of the topic in question, however, I cannot possibly provide a comprehensive account of every aspect of Esoteric Buddhism, the Meiji period, the history of Shintō or Buddhism, nor even of *goshuin* – particularly in their contemporary context. These considerations aside, the sheer breadth of historical, social, religious, and political issues at play would put such a task beyond the competence of any one person – let alone the scope of this thesis. What I propose, rather, is to introduce a discussion of *goshuin* (one that is entirely absent in English language literature) within the context of the Buddhist traditions through which they have manifested (*i.e.* Esoteric Buddhism) directed at an historical account of the function and evolution of goshuin in the modern period (1600-1912). I further seek to problematize the ways in which current scholarship has neglected *goshuin* and that which has relied on ides of "superstition" (that was also brought to Japan in the early 1800s).[1] Presupposing that terms like "magic" and 'superstition" can be applied to the ways in which people practiced their religions runs the risk of imposing contemporary thought and language not only on an historical period but also of engaging with foreign cultures through a Eurocentric lens.[2]

---

[1]See for example Josephson-Storm, *The invention of religion in Japan*.

[2] Sam Van Schaik, *Buddhist magic: divination, healing, and enchantment through the ages*, First edition ed. (Boulder, Colorado: Shambhala Publications, 2020). When studying non-Western cultures with different metaphysical and epistemological assumptions such terms have no place due to their cultural and intellectual assumptions of colonial Europe; they maintain a kind of academic colonialism. Exoticizing terms and approaches lack respect for local contexts and sideline people and practices as Orientalism. Van Schaik does an excellent job of defining 'magic' as something divorced from the exoticizing European connotations projected on the 'other' by Victorian anthropologists. He argues that magic should be thought of in terms "truer to the world of Buddhist practice," and that such practices cannot be examined solely in a theoretical manner as we "tend to do with our modern Western impulse" (9) See Josephson-

Material Culture and Buddhist Studies

There have been several studies published that approach Japanese religion and culture, yet it remains that the academic study of material objects associated with religion has only recently - over the past few decades - emerged as a serious endeavor. The approach that shaped nineteenth and early twentieth-century scholarship resulted in material objects being relegated to the domain of "low religion, "superstition," and "idolatry," among similar concepts. [3] As such, calls to engage with forms of material culture, to recognize their value, and to move beyond the Protestant presuppositions as so carefully coined by Gregory Schopen, that have long driven the study of religion have emerged.[4] Schopen, a leading scholar in the field of Buddhist Studies whose work focusses mainly on Indian Buddhist monastic life and early Mahāyāna movements that, as Shayne Clark notes, have helped scholars re-envision the lives of Buddhist nuns and monks and what it meant to be Buddhist, is highly critical of previous scholarship that had, till then, focussed primarily on text- based studies as somehow indicative of pure or true religion and pointed out that scholars needed to reassess their approaches and ask different questions.[5]

Storm, *The invention of religion in Japan*. for study on these Western ideals brought to Japan in their "modernization" efforts.

[3] Kim, "A Star God Is Born."; Benjamin J. and Mann Fleming, Richard, "Introduction: Material Culture and Religious Studies," in *Material Culture and Asian Religions: Text, Image, Object*, ed. Richard D. Mann Benjamin J. Fleming (New York, London: Routledge, 2014); Gregory Schopen, "Archaeology and Protestant Presuppositions in the Study of Indian Buddhism," in *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997); Fabio Rambelli, *Buddhist materiality: a cultural history of objects in Japanese Buddhism*, Asian religions & cultures, (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2007).2024-08-23 11:07:00 AM

[4] Schopen, "Archaeology and Protestant Presuppositions in the Study of Indian Buddhism."

[5] Schopen, "Archaeology and Protestant Presuppositions in the Study of Indian Buddhism."; Gregory Schopen, *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India*, Studies in the Buddhist Traditions, (Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997); Gregory Schopen, "On the Absence of Urtexts and Otiose Ācāryas: Buildings, Books, and Lay Buddhist Ritual at Gilgit," in *Écrire et transmettre en Inde classique*, ed. Gérard Colas and Gerdi Gerschheimer (Paris: École Française

Schopen's work was largely informed by that of Mircea Eliade, E. Burnouf and J.W. de Jong whose positions maintained that "Undoubtedly, this literature [Buddhist texts] is the most important source of knowledge of Buddhism. Buddhist art, inscriptions and coins have supplied with useful data, but generally they cannot be fully understood without the support given by the texts. Consequently, the study of Buddhism needs first of all to be concentrated on the texts."[6] The methodological position often employed by modern Buddhist academics has been "decidedly nonneutral and narrowly limited [in] Protestant assumption[s] as to where 'religion' is actually located."[7] In other words these positions are "uncannily" like those adopted by early Protestant "reformers" in their attempt to define and establish the locus of "true religion" that has been generalized and "fully assimilated into Western intellectual and cultural values."[8]

---

d'Extrême-Orient, 2009); Gregory Schopen, *Figments and Fragments of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India: More Collected papers*, Studies in the Buddhist traditions, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005); Gregory Schopen, "The Phrase *sa pṛthivīpradeśaś caityabhūto bhavet* in the *Vajracchedikā*: Notes on the Cult of the Book in the Mahāyāna," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 17 (1975); Gregory Schopen, "The Mahāyāna and the Middle Period in Indian Buddhism: Through a Chinese Looking-Glass," *The Eastern Buddhist* 32, no. 2 (2000); Gregory Schopen, "The Text of the 'Dhāraṇī Stones from Abhayagiriya': A Minor Contribution to the Study of Mahāyāna Literature in Ceylon," *Journal of the International Association for Buddhist Studies* 5, no. 1 (1982); Shayne Clarke, "Miscellaneous Musings on Mūlasarvāstivāda Monks: The Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya Revival in Tokugawa Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 33, no. 1 (2006).

[6] J.W. de Jong, "The Study of Buddhism: Problems and Perspectives," in *Studies in Indo-Asian Art and Culture*, ed. P. Ratnam (New Delhi: 1975). 14 Eugène Burnouf, Jules Mohl, and Théodore Pavie, *Le Lotus de la Bonne Loi (Saddharmapuṇḍarīka), traduit du sanscrit, accompagné d'un commentaire et de vingt et un mémoires relatifs au Bouddhisme par M.E. Burnouf* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1852); Burnouf, *Introduction to the history of Indian Buddhism*; Mircea Eliade, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Complete and Unabridged ed., 16 vols. (New York: Macmillan Pub. Co., 1993).

[7] Schopen, "Archaeology and Protestant Presuppositions in the Study of Indian Buddhism." 19

[8] Schopen, "Archaeology and Protestant Presuppositions in the Study of Indian Buddhism." 19

Schopen's efforts are relevant to this study because even though he was writing on the Indian Buddhist *Mūlasarvāstivāda,*[9] his ideas reshaped the entire field of Buddhist studies and there are major correlations to be drawn between the Protestant presuppositions that Gregory Schopen delineated in his work on India to the study of Japanese religions.[10] The notion that true religion is found only in scripture and that somehow what constitutes a true Buddhism is solely text-based entirely neglects the reality of lived religion in Japan which is driven by orthopraxis rather than orthodoxy.

Fabio Rambelli has written extensively on the materiality and semiotics of Japanese religions (e.g., Buddhism and Shintō).[11] Writing about the multivolume books on the cycle of *Reiki ki* 麗気記, for example, which concerns the Two *Maṇḍalas* (*Ryōbu* 両部) interpretation of Shintō texts from a Shingon perspective, he highlights the performativity of sacred texts in medieval Japan explaining that texts did not only have a "meaning" that was understood as the "signified" but that the text itself was also the "signifier" and had many uses that were defined in ritual ways.[12] Texts were therefore used for their performative nature, their materiality, and their

---

[9] Monastic codes. Gregory Schopen, "The Lay Ownership of Monasteries and the Role of the Monk in Muulasarvaastivaadin Monasticism," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 19, no. 1 (Summer 1996 1996); Gregory Schopen, *Buddhist Nuns, Monks, and Other Worldly Matters: Recent Papers on Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014); Gregory Schopen, "The Good Monk and his Money in a Buddhist Monasticism of "The Mahāyāna Period"," *The Eastern Buddhist* n.s. 32, no. 1 (2000).

[10] Schopen, "The Phrase *sa pṛthivīpradeśaś caityabhūto bhavet* in the *Vajracchedikā*: Notes on the Cult of the Book in the Mahāyāna."

[11] Fabio Rambelli, *A Buddhist theory of semiotics: signs, ontology, and salvation in Japanese esoteric Buddhism*, Bloomsbury advances in semiotics, (London ; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, An imprint of Bloomsbury Pub. Plc, 2013, 2013); Rambelli, *Buddhist materiality*.52

[12] Fabio Rambelli, "The Ritual World of Buddhist "Shintō": The *Reikiki* on Kami-Related Matters (*jingi kanjō*) in Late Medieval and Early-Modern Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 29, 3-4, no. 265-297 (2002). On ritual see Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Catherine Bell, *Ritual Perspectives and Dimensions* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).On performativity see Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Jacques

value. In other words, texts had to be "performed" (used, enacted, handled) and often their value was not only in their meaning, their "immaterial" part but "also and primarily for their *material* aspect."[13] Texts in medieval Japan were "written, copied, edited, commented upon, ritually transmitted" and oftentimes seemed to have functioned with certain performative values where, for examples, scriptures were "copied (sometimes in one's blood), chanted, illustrated, placed inside buddha images, buried – all uses that, however "meaningful" in a broader sense to transcend the words written on them and pertain to ritual uses and contexts…"[14] Rambelli, echoing Schopen discusses how elite and prescriptive approaches have "generally been the main subject of Buddhological study" whereby the underlying assumptions were those that religion is a "matter of the spirit, not of the body; that it involves mainly feelings and cognitive states and not interaction with objects" that the study of "prescriptive written texts" tell us what practitioners "believe"" and therefore, behave.[15] These presuppositions lead to the devaluation and denigration of what religious people actually did and denies its place in true religion. Not surprisingly this focus was "obsessively" on material objects.[16] Although Buddhist objects of every use (e.g. family altars, funeral paraphernalia, amulets, souvenirs, etc.) tend to escape Buddhological study and remain "solidly in the ambit of anthropology and folklore as an

---

Derrida, Alan Bass, and Jacques Derrida, *Writing and difference*, Reprinted ed., Routledge classics, (London: Routledge, 2005, 2005); John Searle, *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); J. L. Austin, *How To Do Things With Words* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962).

[13] Rambelli, "Texts, talismans, and jewels: the *Reikiki* and the perfomativity of sacred texts in medieval Japan." 52

[14] Rambelli, "Texts, talismans, and jewels: the *Reikiki* and the perfomativity of sacred texts in medieval Japan." 55

[15] Rambelli, *Buddhist materiality*. 4

[16] Rambelli, *Buddhist materiality*. 4 Gregory Schopen, *Bones, stones, and Buddhist monks : collected papers on the archaeology, epigraphy, and texts of monastic Buddhism in India*, Studies in the Buddhist traditions, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997). 1

inferior category of objects… pertaining … to popular mentalities often perceived as uniformed if not "superstitious," Buddhist studies has recently started to address the status images, relics and the role "experience;" however, as Rambelli notes, "objects tend to be studied as components of a standardised devotional context and ideology" which risks the continuation of a traditional distinction between elite (text and doctrines) and popular (ritual and object).[17] These are important concepts that translate to research on *goshuin*.

The Meiji

Focusing mainly on what he argues is the invention of religion in Japan during the Meiji period and the importation of Western ideas of superstition, religion, and science as universal aspects of human experience as put forth namely by Kant, Heidegger, Durkheim, Weber, Geertz, and Levi-Strauss over the past two centuries – all of whom have "largely taken religion for granted as a cultural universal" – Jason Josephson challenges these presuppositions that very much still permeate the modern academy.[18] Challenging the presuppositions of language, translation, and

---

[17] Rambelli, *Buddhist materiality*. 5 See also: Bernard Faure, "The Buddhist Icon and the Modern Gaze," *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 3 (1998); Robert H. Sharf and Elizabeth Horton Sharf, *Living Images: Japanese Buddhist Icons in Context*, ARC: Asian religions & cultures, (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001); Brian Douglas Ruppert, *Jewel in the Ashes: Buddha Relics and Power in Early Medieval Japan*, Harvard East Asian Monographs, no. 188, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Council on East Asian Studies, 2000); John Strong, *Relics of the Buddha*, Buddhisms., (Princeton, N.J.; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004).

[18] Josephson-Storm, *The invention of religion in Japan*. 2 Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, ed. Clifford Geertz (New York: Basic Books, 1973); Immanuel Kant, *Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der blofsen Vernunft. Die Metaphysik der Sitten, Kant's gesammelte Schriften* (Berlin: Reimer, 1969); Martin Heidegger, *The Phenomonology of Religious Life* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963); Claude Levi-Strauss, *The View from Afar*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel and Phoebe Hoss (New York: Basic Books, 1985).

research in Religious Studies as a discipline he argues that Meiji ideologues used a Western concept of religion as a "politically charged boundary-drawing exercise" that resulted in a reclassification of Shintō, Buddhism, and Confucianism.[19] He further argues that although it was not well-received, Timothy Fitzgerald's – highly critical of the concept of "religion" and those disciplines associated with the term – discussion of the construction of religion in Japan was a move in the right direction.[20] According to Fitzgerald, the idea that "religion" could be segregated from the "secular" was fraught, at best. These ideas, saturated in ethnocentric European Judaeo-Christian influence are problematic in any context, according to Fitzgerald and I certainly agree with this sentiment. And how much more so when we trace this conception to Japan?

Throughout Japanese history, the notion of a "religion" as such did not exist in the way it would come to be designated.[21] Providing further context, scholars have provided fruitful discussions on the problem of semantics and translation and explain how the contemporary Japanese word that came to represent "religion" in Japan in the 1800s, *shūkyō* 宗教 – which is a compound of two characters *shū* 宗 and *kyō* 教 that had long meant "sect," "lineage," or "principle" and "teaching" or "teachings" respectively[22] – was used to refer more generally to Buddhism as it appeared in Chinese Buddhist dictionaries before the arrival of U.S. influence.[23]

---

[19] Josephson-Storm, *The invention of religion in Japan*. 2
[20] Timothy Fitzgerald, *The Ideology of Religious Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
[21] Shields, "Beyond Belief."; Josephson-Storm, *The invention of religion in Japan*; Reader and Tanabe, *Practically Religious*.
[22] Josephson-Storm, *The invention of religion in Japan*.
[23] Reader and Tanabe, *Practically Religious*; Jun'ichi, ""Religion" in Modern Japan."; Josephson-Storm, *The invention of religion in Japan*; Shields, "Beyond Belief." Jun'ichi, ""Religion" in Modern Japan." Dictionaries of this kind provide readers with translations of specifically Buddhist terms. The issue of translation is always tricky but how much more so for Sanskrit and

The language of religion, deployed as a systematic way of interpreting non-European cultures, however, can be interpreted as highly misleading. After its use in treaties after opening to the West, the meaning shifted from originally signifying principles and teachings of Buddhism into a modern re-interpretation used by Meiji ideologues incorporated in the dissociation of Buddhism and Shintō.[24] Not only did the Meiji government struggle with ideas of translation but they used such terminology to aid in their political motivations to elevate Shintō; the government subsequently declared that Shrine Shintō did not fall under the category of religion.[25] By effectively cutting off some aspects of Shintō from the category of religion the Meiji leaders were able to raise the status of Shintō to something beyond religion – the very essence of the national body, *kokutai* 国体.[26] This allowed for the use of Shintō practices to be mandatory without infringing on religious freedoms which, in turn, made room for the Meiji government to politicize Shintō and re-establish the emperor's divine lineage to the sun goddess Amaterasu 天

Pali terms for ancient Chinese and Japanese. Often it was the case that terms would be transliterated merely in an attempt to capture the sound not retaining any coherent meaning in the target language.

[24] See: Josephson-Storm, *The invention of religion in Japan*; Shields, "Beyond Belief."

[25] On Shintō see: Helen Hardacre, *Shintō and the State, 1868-1988*, Studies in Church and State, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989); Helen Hardacre, *Kurozumikyō and The New Religions of Japan* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986); Hardacre, "Creating State Shinto."; Helen Hardacre, "Conflict between Shugendō and the New Religions of Bakumatsu Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 21, no. 2-3 (1994/05/01/ 1994), https://doi.org/10.18874/jjrs.21.2-3.1994.137-166, http://nirc.nanzan-u.ac.jp/nfile/2539; Hardacre, "The Shintō Priesthood in Early Meiji Japan."; Helen Hardacre, *Shinto: A History* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Helen Hardacre, "Religion and Civil Society in Contemporary Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 31, no. 2 (2004). Also seeKishimoto, *Japanese religion in the Meiji era*. for transformation of Shintō into a state cult. For interest in missionary accounts seeGeorge Schurhammer S.J., *Shin-tō The Way of the Gods in Japan: According to the Printed and Unprinted Reports of the Japanese Jesuit Missionaries in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Leipzig and Bonn: Kurt Schroeder, 1923).

[26] Shields, "Beyond Belief." 134

照 (alt. Tenshō daijin 天照大神) that sanctified the emperor's right to rule.[27] It is important to my research to understand how western ideas of modernization drove the Meiji Restoration that impacted Buddhism and Shintō and in turn affected religiosity and more specifically *goshuin*.[28]

Esoteric Buddhism in Japan

The topic of esoteric Buddhism is one greatly debated and discussed in the academy.[29] The difference between so called esoteric vs. exoteric is one that many have attempted to delineate

---

[27] For detailed study see, for example Kishimoto, *Japanese religion in the Meiji era*; Murakami, *Japanese religion in the modern century*.

[28] Allan Grapard has also brought attention to Meiji policies that drastically shifted institutional religiosity with a focus on Shintō-Buddhist interactions, sacred geography, and cultic practices. See:
William M. Bodiford, "The Protocol of the Gods: A Study of the Kasuga Cult in Japanese History," *Journal of Asian Studies* 52, no. 4 (Nov 1993), http://www.jstor.org/journals/00219118.html; Allan Grapard, "Geosophia, Geognosis, and Geopiety: Orders of Significance in Japanese Representations of Space," in *Now / Here: Space, Time, and Modernity*, ed. Roger Friedland and Deirdre Boden (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1994); Grapard, "Institution, Ritual, and Ideology."

[29] For example: *Esoteric Buddhism and the tantras in East Asia*; Ryuichi Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Ian Astley, "62. Esoteric Buddhism, Material Culture, and Catalogues in East Asia," in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, ed. Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Richard K. Payne, Handbook of Oriental Studies (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Chen, "The Formation of Early Esoteric Buddhism in Japan: A Study of Three Japanese Esoteric Apocrypha."; Chen, "The Construction of Early Tendai Esoteric Buddhism: The Japanese Provenance of Saichō's Transmission Documents and Three Esoteric Apocrypha Attributed to Śubhākarasiṃha."; Lucia Dolce, "Reconsidering the taxonomy of the esoteric: Hermeneutical and ritual practices of the Lotus *Sūtra*," in *The Culture of Secrecy in Japan*, ed. Bernhard Scheid and Mark Teeuwen (London, New York: Routledge, 2006); Gardiner, "Tantric Buddhism in Japan."; Rolf W. Giebel and Dale E. Todaro, *Shingon Texts: On the Difference between the Exoteric and Esoteric Teachings, The Meaning of Becoming a Buddha in This Very Body, The Meanings of Sound, Sign, and Reality, The Meaning of the Word Hūṃ, The Precious Key to the Secret Treasury translated from the Japanese (Taishō volume 77, nos. 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2426) and The Mitsugonon Confession; The Illuminating Secret Commentary on the Five Cakras and Nine Syllables translated from the Japanese (Taishō nos. 2527, 2514)*, BDK English Tripiṭaka 98-I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII, (Berkeley, Calif.: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2004; repr., UBC Press, 2006); McBride II, "Is There Really 'Esoteric' Buddhism?."; Hirai Yūkei 平井宥慶, "Chūgoku no mikkyō girei gairon 「中国の密教儀礼概

and, where some find distinguishing factors, others reject them. Terms like proto-tantric have also been applied.[30] Even the word "Buddhism" however, is a non-native term – a modern construct like "religion" – and as Aaron Proffitt confers "In coming to terms with Buddhism, we are not only simply trying to understand something out there in the world; we are simultaneously engaging with the history of a field of academic inquiry that has not only mediated our access to this thing we call Buddhism but has also, in some sense, created it."[31] The earliest foundations of Buddhist Studies were in some sense established by Eugene Burnouf (1801-1894) whose foray into the textual world of Buddhism began in 1827 as Donald Lopez points out began when Brian Hodgson (1800-1894) sent a cache of Sanskrit scrolls to Europe.[32] Over the past few decades there has emerged a sense of urgency to critically re-evaluate the terms Tantric and Esoteric in Buddhism.[33]

Notwithstanding, in early medieval Japan, what scholars have now come to refer to as Esoteric Buddhism dominated Japanese ritual culture and is often defined in relation to the

---

論」 (General Remarks on Chinese Esoteric Buddhist Rites)," in *Chūgoku mikkyō* 「中国密教」 *(Chinese Esoteric Buddhism)*, ed. Tachikawa Musashi 立川武蔵 and Yoritomi Motohiro 頼富本宏, Shīrizu Mikkyō シリーズ密教 (Esoteric Buddhism Series) 3 (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1999); Matsunaga Yūkei 松長有慶, *Mikkyō kyōten seiritsu shiron* 「密教経典成立史論」 *(Exposition on the development of the Esoteric Buddhist canon)* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1980); Proffitt, *Esoteric Pure Land Buddhism*; Richard K. Payne, "84. The Fourfold Training in Japanese Esoteric Buddhism," in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, ed. Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Richard K. Payne (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Robert H. Sharf, "On Esoteric Buddhism in China," in *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store Treatise* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002); Koichi Shinohara, *Spells, Images, and Maṇḍalas: Tracing the Evolution of Esoteric Buddhist Rituals* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014); Michelle C. Wang, *Maṇḍalas in the Making: The Visual Culture of Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang*, vol. Brill (Leiden, 2018); Payne and Leighton, *Discourse and ideology in medieval Japanese Buddhism*.

[30] Dalton, "How Dhāraṇīs WERE Proto-Tantric: Liturgies, Ritual Manuals, and the Origins of the Tantras."

[31] Proffitt, *Esoteric Pure Land Buddhism*. 3

[32] Proffitt, *Esoteric Pure Land Buddhism*. 7

[33] Proffitt, *Esoteric Pure Land Buddhism*.19

practices and teachings found in the tantras which are a loosely defined genre of Indian ritual texts.[34] Esoteric Buddhism is generally perceived as a descendent of this on that it promises rapid attainment of Buddhahood in this body: *sokushinjōbutsu* 即身成佛 – that is, in one's present lifetime[35] – through specialized practices.[36]

I suppose the easiest way to guide this discussion is to borrow from Allan Grapard who suggests that the esoteric Buddhist traditions emphasize the transmission of doctrines through a series of "secret initiatory unction's" but accord greater importance to ritual practices considered as the main vehicle for the attainment of Buddhahood in this body, which includes the utterance of mantras 真言, and *dhāraṇīs* along with corresponding meditative visualizations.[37] One of the main distinctive features according to this view of Esoteric Buddhism is the use of *mudras* 印 (hand gestures)[38] and *mandalas* 曼陀羅 which are graphic representations of the parallel structures of the cosmos of the body of the buddha Mahāvairocana Tathāgata 大日如來.[39] Four types delineated by Grapard are the *daimandara* 大曼荼羅 (great *mandala*) with an image that represents each deity, *samayamandara* 三昧耶曼荼羅 (or convention *mandala*) in which the various deities are represented by various ritual emblems, *hōmandara* 法曼荼羅 (*dharma*

[34] Proffitt, *Esoteric Pure Land Buddhism*. 2 For discussion of Tantra in the West as it pertains to Kundalini Yoga and the Indic goddess, Kali see Tanya Brittain, "Kali Ma & Kundalini: Serpent Goddess Rising," *S/He: An International Journal of Goddess Studies* 1, no. 1 (2022).
[35] Proffitt, *Esoteric Pure Land Buddhism*. 3
[36] Proffitt, *Esoteric Pure Land Buddhism*.xii; Christian K. Wedemeyer, *Making sense of Tantric Buddhism: history, semiology, and transgression in the Indian traditions*, South Asia across the disciplines, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013, 2013); Herbert V. and Chogyam Trungpa Guenther, *The Dawn of Tantra* (Boulder, Colorado: Shambhala Publications Inc., 1975).
[37] Tanabe, *Religions of Japan in Practice*. 150 See also Giebel and Todaro, *Shingon Texts*.
[38] Dale E. Todaro, The Meanings of the term Mudrā and a Historical Outline of "Hand Gestures", n.d., Article shared at conference.
[39] An anthropomorphic symbol for the *dharmakāya* 法身 (ultimate reality) Proffitt, *Esoteric Pure Land Buddhism*.

mandala) in which the deities are represented by their seed syllables (*bīja*) and corresponding sound, and the *katsumamandara* 勝磨曼荼羅 (*karma mandala*) in which the deities are represented separately in various forms and symbols identifying their various functions and virtues.[40] Mandala based ritualization of the body, speech, and mind are held to transform the common passions into their corresponding wisdoms leading from the illusory notion that the commoner and buddhas are different to the realization that people ensconced in passions are not actually separate from the Buddha.[41] This highly organized and structured realm of practice drew imperial and aristocratic support during the Heian period[42] and was subsequently marked by the development of a "ritual economy of power" whereby the legitimacy of the ruler was grounded in ritual codes and laws; secrecy and lineage became integral parts of the transmission of knowledge and practice in relation to power.[43]

Kuroda Toshio, a pioneer in the field, first coined what he called the Kenmitsu System in Japan in the 1990s.[44] He argued that the construction of Shintō was largely ideological and developed to provide the Meiji government with support, but that in reality, Japanese Religion had, for at least a millennium, been practiced not as a "phantom Shintō" but rather as part of a complex he called *kenmistsu hōmon* 顯密法門 (roughly exoteric-esoteric Buddhism) which was a combination of doctrines and practices that emerged out of Tendai and Shingon but that came

---

[40] David Gordon White, *Tantra in practice*, Princeton readings in religions, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).150 http://www.loc.gov/catdir/description/prin022/00022890.html; Richard D. McBride II, "The Mysteries of Body, Speech, and Mind: The Three Esoterica (*Sanmi*) in Medieval Sinitic Buddhism," *Journal of the International Association for Buddhist Studies* 29, no. 2 (2006); Gardiner, "Tantric Buddhism in Japan."
[41] White, *Tantra in practice*. 150
[42] White, *Tantra in practice*.150
[43] White, *Tantra in practice*.147, 148
[44] Kuroda and Dobbins, "The Development of the Kenmitsu System as Japan's Medieval Orthodoxy."

to undergird all forms of Buddhism in Japan.[45] His argument, as Shields notes, is highly persuasive and though it has been augmented by others since the 1990s, it remains relevant that this so-called *kenmitsu* system that dominated the medieval religious system in Japan provides a cohesive ideological structure for social and political order and further highlights the distinctive, if not unique, features of the ways in which religion in Japan has been categorized and understood in the west where priority is given to belief over praxis.[46]

The core of *kenmitsu taisei* 顕密体制 was realized in esoteric beliefs and practices around which different exoteric doctrines of Tendai – and others – coalesced, where esoteric practices were thought to embody the truths of Mahāyāna Buddhism; it was a distinct religious system that directly related to the unique character of religion but also of the medieval state (*kokka* 国家) and operated on a level of mutual identity, not opposition.[47] Toshio also considered the question of religion (and religious ideas) from the standpoint of their relationship to authority as it was exercised in the social order of the medieval period. His aim was to reject the superimposition of the past and to "evade doctrinal and devotional perspectives on history," including the official recognition of independent Buddhist sects in the early modern period.[48]

Adding to these conversations Fabio Rambelli has provided insight into the ways in which "secrecy" is understood in the context of esoteric Buddhism.[49] Mikkyō which translates

---

[45] Shields, "Beyond Belief." 134 Kuroda, "The Development of the Kenmitsu System As Japan's Medieval Orthodoxy."
[46] Shields, "Beyond Belief." 137
[47] Shields, "Beyond Belief." 234
[48] Shields, "Beyond Belief." 234
[49] Fabio, "Secrecy in Japanese esoteric Buddhism." Richard McBride and Robert Sharf McBride II, "The Mysteries of Body, Speech, and Mind: The Three Esoterica (*Sanmi*) in Medieval Sinitic Buddhism."; Sharf, "On Esoteric Buddhism in China." have demonstrated that the concept of "secret teaching" is found throughout Mahayana Buddhist texts in China and it was only after the Song 宋 (960–1279) bibliographic differences appeared Proffitt, *Esoteric Pure Land Buddhism*. 28 Also see George A. Keyworth, "The Esotericization of Chinese Buddhist

to "secret teachings" or "hidden doctrines," Rambelli discloses, is something that developed in conjunction with particular emerging philosophical reflections on signs and the formation of practices related to the production of their meaning.[50] Esoteric Buddhism was, then, understood as a discursive formation that presupposed a particular cosmology, attitude toward reality and episteme; put another way it can be seen as a "system of knowledge and practices concerned with the interpretation of reality as well as with the production, selection, conversation, and transmission of knowledge."[51] Lucia Dolce has noted that the distinction between *kengyō* and *mikkyō* was often assumed to be crucial in the classification of currents of Japanese Buddhism but that such a division was undoubtedly historically created to position *mikkyō* as a superior category; it was a hermeneutical strategy – one that allowed the pronouncement of esoteric (or Tantric) teachings as a superior form of Buddhism.[52] This reformulation of *'mikkyō'* by Tendai lineages of scholar-ritualists was, Dolce notes, characteristic of the Taimitsu "esotericization" of the *Lotus sūtra* – which was a non-esoteric scripture among the most popular in East Asia.[53] This semantic and hermeneutical operation that occurred at both the doctrinal and liturgical levels imparted the status of "secret teaching" to the *Lotus* that belonged to the exegetical (non-

Practice," in *Estoeric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, ed. Henrik H. Sorensen Charles D. Orzek, and Richard K. Payne (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011).{Orzech, 2006 #4911

[50] Rambelli, "Secrecy in Japanese esoteric Buddhism." 107

[51] Rambelli, "Secrecy in Japanese esoteric Buddhism." 107 Mikkyō divides the Buddha's teachings into two general kinds: kengyō and mikkyō – superficial and secret. The first are provisional ldoctrines tagught by Sakyamuni Buddhat, the latter are profound doctrines beyond faculties of sentient beings that teaches the content of the Buddhas' enlightenment, somehting that is, in other Buddhist thought, beyond representation and seems to reveal secret and hiddent things and not to conceal them (108). The problem with the term *himitsu* (secret) that Rambelli posits is that in Buddhist teacghings that secret is esentially contextual and refers to something that is unkown to someone but known to others. 108

[52] Dolce, "Reconsidering the taxonomy of the esoteric: Hermeneutical and ritual practices of the Lotus sutra." 130

[53] This is the *sūtra* that was copied and dedicated by the Rokujūrokubu *hijiri*.

esoteric) tradition (of which it was already considered a secret teaching) however, Taimitsu thinkers re-evaluated the connotation of secret that pre-existed and incorporated it as "esoteric teachings."[54] In this way, she argues, they "transformed *mikkyō* into a more sophisticated and complex concept in which the distinction esoteric/exoteric was less clear-cut than is usually assumed."[55] Echoing this sentiment, Proffitt observes that such rigid binaries espoused in the academy have been used to paint tantra/esoteric Buddhism in an "unflattering light" and that such approaches are undergirded with "Orientalist evaluative structures," and, I suggest further, used in many instances to exoticize the so-called 'other.'[56]

Pilgrimage

Pilgrimage has been defined by Katharina Blomberg as a visit to a place associated with a "saint or deity" for the purpose of obtaining benefits, of which the theme – complex with multiple variations – in Japan is associated with visiting temples and shrines famous for the deity to whom they are dedicated, for the founder, or for sacred mountains.[57] Paulo Barbaro has described pilgrimage as a "multi-sensory experience protracted in time and space."[58] On Japanese pilgrimage (particularly the Shikoku *henro*) Ian Reader has written extensively.[59]

---

[54] Dolce, "Reconsidering the taxonomy of the esoteric: Hermeneutical and ritual practices of the Lotus sutra."131
[55] Dolce, "Reconsidering the taxonomy of the esoteric: Hermeneutical and ritual practices of the Lotus sutra." 131
[56] Proffitt, *Esoteric Pure Land Buddhism*. 23 Wedemeyer, *Making sense of Tantric Buddhism*; Said, *Orientalism*.
[57] Catharina Blomberg, "Ise Jingū, Nōsatsu Kai and Indulgences: Pilgrims in Tokugawa Japan Viewed by Two Swedish Travellers," in *Religious Transformation in Modern Asia: A Transnational Movement*, ed. David Kim (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2015).
[58] Paolo Barbaro, "The Senses, the Path, and the Bus," *Traditiones* 36, no. 1 (2007). 95
[59] Reader, *Pilgrimage*; Ian Reader, "Dead to the World: Pilgrims in Shikoku," in *Pilgrimage in Popular Culture* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1993); Reader, Andreasen, and Stefánsson,

According to Reader, pilgrims commonly express pragmatic wishes as the primary reason behind performing pilgrimage[60] which connects to his and George Tanabe's work on *genze riyaku* 現世利益 (practical this-worldly benefits) in the sense of bringing benefits to the pilgrim that are secured through proper procedures. Genze *riyaku* as put forth by Reader and Tanabe is what is generated through the performance of any number of ritual actions at temples and shrines including (but not limited to) offering money, clapping hands, ringing bells, venerating the buddhas and bodhisattvas, copying *sūtra*s, offering prayers, and taking home (or leaving behind) any number of different material objects associated with the *kami*, buddhas, and bodhisattvas; their research highlights the performative aspect of Japanese religious objects (e.g. *omamori, ofuda, ema*) a move that was significant at a time when textual and soteriological foci still dominated the field and as such worldly benefits had for too long been ignored in the scholarship, often being relegated to the sphere of superstition or corrupted religion.[61]

Japanese pilgrimage routes from the Heian period onward have been linked to the activities of religious mendicants known as *hijiri* 聖 who promoted Buddhism and emphasized pilgrimages to important temples.[62] These wandering holy men symbolized liberation and emerged from the *kenmitsu* system as described by Kuroda Toshio and the *shūkyō ikki* 宗教一揆 (religious uprisings) during the Heian that spanned nearly four hundred years and included the

---

Japanese Religions: Past and Present; Ian Reader and Paul L. Swanson, "Editor's Introduction Pilgrimage in the Japanese Religious Tradition," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies24* 24, no. 3/4 (1997 1997); Reader, "An unwelcome minority: banning Buddhist practices, marginalising itinerants, and constructing heritage in a Japanese pilgrimage."; Reader, *Making Pilgrimages: Meaning and Practice in Shikoku*.

[60] Reader, *Making Pilgrimages: Meaning and Practice in Shikoku*. 13.

[61] Ian Reader and George Joji Tanabe, *Practically Religious: Worldly Benefits and the Common Religion of Japan* (Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998).

[62] Reader, *Making Pilgrimages: Meaning and Practice in Shikoku.* 107

founding of Tendai and Shingon.[63] It was at this time, Kuroda notes, when the outlooks *ishiki* 意識 thoughts *shii* 思惟 wishes *ganbō* 願望 dreams *gensō* 幻想 and religious beliefs *shinkō* 信仰 of the people started to express themselves in economic activities, social and private lives, as well as in their reactions to authorities of both old and new orders; these were crucial aspects of the people's opposition both in outlook and thought to the ancient "thaumaturgic bonds" represented by political authorities and in somehow finding liberation from these bonds.[64] James Foard also discusses the *hijiri* and how the term indicated a distinctive lifestyle reflected in clothing, behaviour, and dwelling places.[65] Writing of the Saigoku, he says that virtually all of the thirty-three sites served by the end of the Heian period were residences for the *bessho* (religious outposts detached from major temples) *hijiri* which played a part in the origins of pilgrimage: the experience established the "sanctity of [a] particular place" and their wayfaring established the courses among those to be followed by later pilgrims. In this way *"bessho hijiri* plotted a sacred geography which would serve as a basic spatial dimension of Japanese culture through the Middle Ages." [66]

Speaking of sacred spaces Grapard proposes three distinct categories that evolved in medieval Japan of which he categorizes as the "sacred site" the "sacred area" and the "sacred nation;" sacred sites emerged from the sacred area that was a "more extensive geographical area that the sacred stie, usually consisting of the territory covered by a pilgrim during pilgrimage." [67]

---

[63] Kuroda, "The Development of the Kenmitsu System As Japan's Medieval Orthodoxy." 237
[64] Kuroda, "The Development of the Kenmitsu System As Japan's Medieval Orthodoxy." 238
[65] James H. Foard, "The Boundaries of Compassion: Buddhism and National Tradition in Japanese Pilgrimage," *Journal of Asian Studies* 41, no. 2 (1982).
[66] Foard, "The Boundaries of Compassion: Buddhism and National Tradition in Japanese Pilgrimage." 233
[67] Grapard, "Geosophia, Geognosis, and Geopiety: Orders of Significance in Japanese Representations of Space." 196

Sacred areas in esoteric Buddhism during the Heian marked a culmination of stages in the evolution of sacred geography in Japan and although pilgrimage is generally regarded as visits to a sacred site, in esoteric Buddhism, the practice of pilgrimage is intimately related to the Buddhist notion that the "religious experience was a process (ongoing practice) rather than simply the final goal of practice. Through practice, a larger consciousness was opened, and consequently, a larger spatial realm of human experience could be discovered."[68]Gradually, networks of roads were mapped out leading to various sacred spaces and sites.[69] These studies are relevant to contextualize the role of pilgrimage and the connection to *goshuin* from this perspective as well as to define the religious spaces in which they are conferred and received.

Benzaiten: Goddess Indicative

Looking further afield at an aspect of Japanese religion that exemplifies perfectly one of the questions raised in this research is the goddess Benzaiten, of whom the best and most thorough study of the Indic goddess remains the work of Catherine Ludvik in her Ph.D. Dissertation (2001) where, through textual sources, artistic representations, inscriptions, and historical records of India, China, and Japan she examines the conceptual development of Sarasvati from India to Benzaiten in Japan. Ludvik correctly notes that although the Indic goddess Sarasvati has been the subject of many studies, Benzaiten has received far less scholarly attention.[70] Ludvik has filled a

[68] Grapard, "Geosophia, Geognosis, and Geopiety: Orders of Significance in Japanese Representations of Space." 205,206
[69] Grapard, "Geosophia, Geognosis, and Geopiety: Orders of Significance in Japanese Representations of Space." 206
[70] Catherine Ludvik, "From Sarasvatī to Benzaiten" (PhD PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 2001); Catherine Ludvik, "A Harivaṃśa Hymn in Yijing's Chinese Translation of the Sutra of Golden Light," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 124, no. 4 (2004); Catherine

major gap in this area of research, yet still much remains. Ludvik has contributed an amazing study of Benzaiten to the field, for which she should be commended, that could easily be picked up on and developed further – particularly regarding *goshuin*. This research is beneficial to this project in that is helps me to frame in more detail the ways in which the Restoration did not completely succeed in separating Buddhism from Shintō: Benzaiten is the only Indic Buddhist deity that is now worshipped both as a Buddhist deity and a Japanese kami even within the same sacred areas.[71]

Goshuin: Where is the conversation?

English-language scholarship on *goshuin* remains virtually unexplored with only a handful of scholars having even cursorily addressed the topic. The closest approximation to a more in-depth incursion into the study of *goshuin* as it pertains to this research is the work of Michel Strickmann (1942–1994 and his brief discussion of *nōkyōchō* 納経帳, the precursor of—and oftentimes alternate name for *goshuin* — where he describes them in consideration of the practicing of "touching holy books" in regard to "the notion of contact with seals."[72] Every Japanese temple and shrine, he maintained, has it own characteristic seal and many Japanese

---

Ludvik, *Sarasvatī: Riverine Goddess of Knowledge; From the Manuscript-carrying Vīṇā-player to the Weapon-wielding Defender of the Dharma*, vol. 27, Brill's Indological Library, (Leiden: Brill, 2007); Catherine Ludvik, "La Benzaiten à huit bras: - Durgā déesse guerrière sous l'apparence de Sarasvatī -," *Cahiers d'Extrême Asie* 11 Nouvelle études de Dunhuang: Centenaire de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient (1999-2000).

[71] For discussion on sacred spaces and sacred areas see Grapard, "Geosophia, Geognosis, and Geopiety: Orders of Significance in Japanese Representations of Space."; Grapard, "Flying Mountains and the Walkers of Emptiness: Toward a Definition of Sacred Space in Japanese Religion."

[72] Strickmann, "The Seal of the Law: A Ritual Implement and the Origins of Printing." 76

carry with them "blank books in which they collect impressions of the seals of the temples they visit."[73] The more serious and systematic, he continues, follow recognized pilgrimages routs and the seal-impressions which they gather attests to the authentic completion of the route. A trained Tendai postulant explained to him that "Old people visiting the temples to which he and his fellow-postulants went would give them alms and then ask to borrow their books of temple-seal impressions, which the pressed against those parts of their bodies needing treatment [from ailments]."[74]In this way the impressions stood in place of the seals themselves and signified the "cumulative power of the holy book and the merit of the young monks' pilgrimage."[75] Strickmann's contribution though small is invaluable as it focuses on the seals and the act of sealing and moreover, he refrains from referring to them as stamps. This is significant, as we shall see.

Perhaps the most attention garnered in English is the scholarship of Ian Reader where he has discussed them as "the acquisition of souvenirs that can serve as reminders and signifiers of places visited."[76] Nōkyōchō are introduced by Reader but in contradistinction to the degree of significance Strickmann conferred on them, Reader states they are "simple concertina-like books of plain paper with a pilgrimage inscription that the pilgrims have stamped… a completed book (and the same is true for scrolls) is evidence of a completed pilgrimage." [77]Elsewhere he has expressed that "the practice of *nōkyō* – getting the temple seal (*shuin*) imprinted or stamped into

[73] Strickmann, "The Seal of the Law: A Ritual Implement and the Origins of Printing." 76
[74] Strickmann, "The Seal of the Law: A Ritual Implement and the Origins of Printing." 76
[75] Strickmann, "The Seal of the Law: A Ritual Implement and the Origins of Printing." 76
[76] Reader, *Making Pilgrimages: Meaning and Practice in Shikoku*. 151
[77] Reader, *Making Pilgrimages: Meaning and Practice in Shikoku*. 152

a special pilgrim's book or onto a scroll … is one of the most common and popular of all pilgrimage acts."[78]

Mia Tillonen also briefly mentions *goshuin* within the context of pop culture at Seimei jinja 晴明神社 in Kyoto.[79] Tillonen says that in the "case of seal stamps… visitors collect the stamps in a special stamp book"10 and she suggests that the collection "seal stamps" in "*goshuin* stamp book[s]" has become a "popular hobby and a reason to visit shrines and temples."[80]Tillonen further suggests that somehow the "materiality of the stamp raises a question of authenticity."[81] While some of the parts of the *goshuin* are stamped, she says, the name of the shrine is usually written by hand."[82] Elsewhere they have been called "pilgrim stamps" and suggested that "there has been an explosion of interest in pilgrim stamps and the little books in which they are collected…what are called goshuin [*sic*] reflect new aesthetic tastes and a renewed appreciation for calligraphy…their popularity is revealed in the novel and cute goshuin [*sic*] created by shrines and temples…"[83]

These limited and perfunctory discussions remain but a fleeting glance at just the surface layer of the intricacies of *goshuin* and their incredibly rich historical features. Strickmann provides the most substantive material for my research with his in-depth study on the act, form, and function of seals and sealing. Ian Reader's contribution is helpful but cursory as his focus was on pilgrimage and not the *goshuin* themselves. The latter two studies are helpful to the

---

[78] Reader, *Pilgrimage*. 22
[79] Mia Tillonen, "Constructing and Contesting the Shrine: Tourist Performances at Seimei Shrine, Kyoto," *Religions* 12, no. 1 (2020/12/28/ 2020), https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12010019.
[80] Tillonen, "Constructing and Contesting the Shrine." 11
[81] Tillonen, "Constructing and Contesting the Shrine." 11
[82] Tillonen, "Constructing and Contesting the Shrine." 12
[83] "Pilgrim Stamp Hunting," The Japan America Society of Chicago 93rd, 2023, accessed April 29, 2024, https://jaschicago.org/event/pilgrim-stamp-hunting/ (Online Event).

degree that they contextualize and place my perspective and approach outside of contemporary popular culture. Overall, however, considering the deficiency in English-language scholarship, I have relied heavily on Japanese sources and fieldwork carried out over two summers in Japan to conduct this research.

Conclusion

What I wish to suggest here is that the relationship between *goshuin*, esoteric Buddhism, and *shinbutusu bunri* warrants a serious conversation that ought to be given consideration. This is a conversation that, until now, has not been necessitated in the literature. For this to happen, I would argue, a new approach must be taken; rather than focusing on obscure or theoretical issues and certainly not through the imposition of Eurocentric ideologies, we must approach the topic of *goshuin* and the practices surrounding them with a degree of sincerity and appreciation for what is important to the Japanese without the liability of western values. Following the calls put forth by senior scholars in the field I too am critical of Eurocentric ideologies. To echo the sentiments of Fabio Rambelli, it is time to take this discussion beyond the "ambit of anthropology and folklore" that all-too-often places the object of study as something inferior and pertaining only to popular mentalities thereby relegating them to the sphere of "superstitious."[84] In this regard, the study of *goshuin* need not be sidelined to either/or (text and doctrine) nor popular (ritual and object) classifications but rather comprise a multifarious nature.[85]

[84] Rambelli, *Buddhist materiality*. 5
[85] Rambelli, *Buddhist materiality*.1-11

Chapter Three: Historical Overview of Goshuin

The "graven seal" seems at first glance a relatively dull item with a monotonous use as it was, for much its history, a commonplace item in East Asia, particularly on mainland China and through osmosis, Japan.[1] Seals functioned predominantly as official and judicial markers that served to authenticate documents and to identify the bearer, their primary purpose being the authentication of deeds, official documents and contracts whereby a person's official seal embodied his judicial identity; [2] in this way they fulfilled (and still do – often even today a small seal is carried to authenticate and authorize documents acting as a "virtual…second self")[3] the same function as a handwritten signature.[4] The seal in effect was a stand in for the owner, it became the owner's representative: "his official double."[5] Official seals (*shuin* 朱印) were prominent markers of the Heian nobility in Japan and became popular among military commanders during the Sengoku period (1467-1615) 戦国時代 (*sengoku jidai*).[6] Vermillion seals came to become signifiers of the *shōgun*'s 将軍 (general in charge of Japan, ca. late sixteenth—nineteenth centuries) authorization. During the Edo period when travel was limited in Japan and was closely linked to pilgrimage it was the *shuin* of the *shōgun* that allowed for one to

[1] Strickmann, "The Seal of the Law: A Ritual Implement and the Origins of Printing." 6
[2] Strickmann, "The Seal of the Law: A Ritual Implement and the Origins of Printing." 36
[3] Strickmann, "The Seal of the Law: A Ritual Implement and the Origins of Printing."36
[4] Strickmann, "The Seal of the Law: A Ritual Implement and the Origins of Printing."35
[5] Strickmann, "The Seal of the Law: A Ritual Implement and the Origins of Printing."6
[6] Yagi Tōru 八木透, *Edo. Bakumatsu. Ishin shishi. Yukari no chi de itdaku. goshuin hando buku.* 「江戸・幕末・維新志士ゆかりの地でいただく御朱印ハンドブック: 日本を洗濯した志士の御朱印を厳選紹介!*!* 」[Handbook of goshuin from places associated with Edo, Bakumatsu, and Meiji Restoration patriots] (Tokyo 東京: Tastsumi Publishing, Co.辰巳出版, 2019). 97

travel. Seals of family crests were also in use at this time, largely on tombstones and articles of clothing; they are a now a chief component of shrine *goshuin*.[7]

In the first half of the sixty century a set of instructions in a proto-tantric scripture – the *Dharani Book of Atavaka, General of the Demons* – directions for therapeutic sealing were indited.[8] In the text, the Buddha presents the first spirit-seal called "heart of all the Buddhas of past, future and present" and expressed that some "of its seals are intended not only for pressing on the body or directing off into space, but also for printing on paper" which seems to be the earliest explicit reference to the use of seals to print paper talismans.[9] It was in the context of tantric Buddhism that the practice was introduced to Japan, in the ninth century if not earlier.[10] Seals were also printed on all official ritual documents and like seals in the ordinary world of "workday officialdom" they guaranteed the authenticity of the text and, as we might expect, these "highly official emblems and tokens were firmly established at the very center of ritual activity."[11]

---

[7] Yagi Tōru, *Edo. Bakumatsu. Ishin shishi. Yukari no chi de itdaku. goshuin hando buku.* 「江戸・幕末・維新志士ゆかりの地でいただく御朱印ハンドブック: 日本を洗濯した志士の御朱印を厳選紹介!!」102-103
[8] Strickmann, "The Seal of the Law: A Ritual Implement and the Origins of Printing."36
[9] Strickmann, "The Seal of the Law: A Ritual Implement and the Origins of Printing."37
[10] Strickmann, "The Seal of the Law: A Ritual Implement and the Origins of Printing."37
[11] Strickmann, "The Seal of the Law: A Ritual Implement and the Origins of Printing." 37

The Birth of Goshuin: Rokujūrokubu Kaikoku and Nōkyō

Figure 5 Polychrome woodblock print*:*

"The Luminary and Leading Rokujūroku-bu *kaikoku* Pilgrim in Japan." (Image: RISD Museum - Images for Academic Publishing)

Japanese scholars and researchers have traced the prototype of modern *goshuin* to the Rokujūroku-bu *kaikoku hijiri*: solitary Buddhist "sages" who traveled around the country

depositing dedicated copies of the *Lotus Sūtra* (*Hokkekyō* 法華経) copied according to a prescribed etiquette, enclosed in *sūtra* tubes (*kyōtsutsu* 教筒) and often placed or buried them in *sūtra* mounds (*kyōdzuka* 経塚) at sixty-six sites in the sixty-six provinces of old Japan.[12] In doing so they received acknowledgment letters or "payment receipts" (*nōkyō ukyōuketorijō* 納経受取状).[13] Over time, this practice grew and led to the establishment of popular pilgrimage routes like the Saigoku Sanjūsan *sho* and Shikoku *hachijūhachi sho* 四国八十所.[14] The origins of *goshuin* certainly began with Japanese Buddhist pilgrimage practices, but their influence has vastly evolved to encompass a sphere far broader and much more involved.[15] Although nōkyō and goshuin are now used interchangeably historically, "goshuin" was used to refer to the *shuinjo* 朱印所 *shōgun*'s seal and before the start of the Shōwa, Tetsuki Murakami a *goshuin* researcher in Japan says that it appears temple seals themselves did not actually have a fixed name but eventually came to be known as *goshuin*.[16] One theory he puts forward for the shift semantics is that religious intuitions were faced with a sense of crisis in the face of a massive "stamp boom" happening whereby the stamp collectors were treating the temple seals in the

[12] For a detailed study see: Kojima, *A Study of the Sixty-Six Rokujūrokubu Nihon kaikoku no kenkyū* 「六十六部日本廻国の研究.」
[13] Kojima, *A Study of the Sixty-Six Rokujūrokubu Nihon kaikoku no kenkyū* 「六十六部日本廻国の研究」; Murakami Tetsuki *Kokon goshuin kenkyūjo* 「古今御朱印研究所.」
[14] There are many studies in English on the Shikoku Pilgrimage whereas studies on the Saigoku are more limited, and the vast number of other pilgrimage routes remain virtually unexplored.
[15] Kojima, *A Study of the Sixty-Six Rokujūrokubu Nihon kaikoku no kenkyū* 「六十六部日本廻国の研究」; Murakami Tetsuki *Kokon goshuin kenkyūjo* 「古今御朱印研究所.」
[16] Murakami Tetsuki *Kokon goshuin kenkyūjo* 「古今御朱印研究所.」

same fashion as other stamps. In response to this the temples started to call their seals "*goshuin*" as a way to differentiate them from commemorative style stamps.[17]

There are various theories about the origin of the Rokujūroku-bu *kaikoku*, but historical documents from the thirteenth century seem to provide evidence of its existence as far back as the Kamakura period (1185–1333).[18] This could be tied to the fact that *sūtra* copying is a central tenet of Buddhist praxes. It appears, however, that the Rokujūroku-bu *kaikoku* was carried out in the first half of the thirteenth century and became popular during the Muromachi period (1336–1392).[19] This also seems to be the time when shrines and temples where *sūtra*s were being dedicated began issuing "payment receipts" called *nōkyō ukyōuketorijō*. [20] The period from the late seventeenth to the early eighteenth centuries was most consequential to the history of *goshuin* because this was when the *nōkyōchō* 納経帳 was introduced.[21] Around the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Rokujūroku-bu *kaikoku hijiri* began carrying special books to collect their seals, and the custom of writing the temple/shrine name, the name of the deity, and imprinting the temple seal became commonplace with the system eventually spreading to the public. Over time, the requirement for the dedication of a *sūtra* declined, and monetary payments became acceptable. However, it should be noted that there are still some temples today that require a dedicated *sūtra* to obtain the *goshuin*.[22]

---

[17] This "stamp boom" that is in recent times a concern for some temples is not novel; it has happened before notably in the Shōwa and Taishō periods. See
[18] Murakami Tetsuki *Kokon goshuin kenkyūjo* 「古今御朱印研究所.」
[19] Murakami Tetsuki *Kokon goshuin kenkyūjo* 「古今御朱印研究所.」
[20] Murakami Tetsuki *Kokon goshuin kenkyūjo* 「古今御朱印研究所.」
[21] Murakami Tetsuki *Kokon goshuin kenkyūjo* 「古今御朱印研究所.」
[22] Yagi Toru 八木透, *National goshuin encyclopedia Zenkoku goshuin zukan* 「全国御朱印図鑑」; Yumi, *Yoku wakaru Kyoto no goshuin* 「大きくてよくわかる京都の御朱印.」

Emergence of Hijiri

In the ninth century the common people's desire to overcome the ancient system and to perceive of themselves as active agents found meaning with the establishment of Tendai and Shingon.[23] A time when a differentiation between sagely *sei* 聖 and unenlightened *bon* 凡 was being applied at a societal level,[24] followed by the spread of the *mappō* 末法 in the twelfth century[25] these desires increased, along with the social and political instability of the time.[26] The emergence of *hijiri* in the medieval sense of the term was, therefore, particularly noteworthy.[27] The word *hijiri* appears frequently from this time onward and is accompanied by expressions like the "hidden sage *onshin no shōnin* and "incarnated sage" *keshin no hijiri.*[28] The *hijiri* movement saw a rapid increase in numbers in large part because it encouraged self-assertion and "critical spirit among self-reliant individuals;"[29] associations and *hijiri* groups residing at *bessho* were united by a shared religious regulation and a common bond.[30] Hijiri are, Kuroda explains, essentially, a Tendai creation realized with esoteric practices.[31]

---

[23] Kuroda and Dobbins, "The Development of the Kenmitsu System as Japan's Medieval Orthodoxy." 255
[24] Kuroda, "The Development of the Kenmitsu System As Japan's Medieval Orthodoxy." 246
[25] End of times.
[26] Kuroda, "The Development of the Kenmitsu System As Japan's Medieval Orthodoxy." 255
[27] Kuroda and Dobbins, "The Development of the Kenmitsu System as Japan's Medieval Orthodoxy."255
[28] Kuroda, "The Development of the Kenmitsu System As Japan's Medieval Orthodoxy." 259
[29] Kuroda, "The Development of the Kenmitsu System As Japan's Medieval Orthodoxy." 259
[30] Kuroda and Dobbins, "The Development of the Kenmitsu System as Japan's Medieval Orthodoxy."260
[31] Kuroda and Dobbins, "The Development of the Kenmitsu System as Japan's Medieval Orthodoxy."261

Figure 6 Rokujūroku-bu *kaikoku hijiri*, *sūtra* mounds (*kyōdzuka*).
Osaka, 2023.

Meiji Impact

The Meiji government banned the Rokujūroku-bu *kaikoku* in 1871 as a direct result of *shinbutsu bunri*, and the number of people making pilgrimages to the eighty-eight temples in Shikoku and the thirty-three along the Saigoku decreased dramatically.[32] Nonetheless, surviving Buddhist *nōkyōchō* from this period do exist and provide evidence of their continuity, despite the state-sanctioned prohibitions against the practice. The custom of obtaining *goshuin* seems to have remained popular and led to the introduction of the now prevalent folded book-style *goshuinchō* that started to appear in the Taishō period. Many temples and shrines also underwent a transition

[32] Murakami Tetsuki *Kokon goshuin kenkyūjo* 古今御朱印研究所.

in their methods of marking: first, with the *nōkyō* there was writing alone, then there were the affixing of seals combined with script, and later – for a period – particularly at shrines it seems, only sigillation. This may be due to the advent of *goshuinchō* and its absorption into the mainstream: Tetsuki Murakami theorizes that ink calligraphy may have fallen out of fashion because of the size of the new *shuinchō* which were much smaller than the traditional *nōkyōchō.*[33]

Conclusion

Goshuin were originally *nōkyō*, a form of proof that one had dedicated a Buddhist *sūtra*, that stems from the Rokujūroku-bu *kaikoku hijiri*. The practice spread and became a common activity at temples and shrines. When the Meiji government ordered the separation of Buddhism and Shintō there was a slight decrease in the number of pilgrimages yet surviving documents indicate that the practice of obtaining goshuin remained consistent and although there was a shift in the presentation of shrine and temple goshuin that became more pronounced in the later Meiji and early Taishō onward the practice remains alive all the way to present day.

The original name of the seal was at one time only referred to as the *goōhōin*, rather than *goshuin* as *goōhōin* refers to the vermillion seal. The *goōhōin*, or treasure seal, contains the Sanskrit syllabary used in ancient India and refers to the principal image of worship.[34] These seals have existed for a long time and often perform as talismans – the most representative of

[33] Murakami Tetsuki *Kokon goshuin kenkyūjo* 「古今御朱印研究所.」 There is the consideration of print technology that could address this curiosity.
[34] Yagi Tōru, *Edo. Bakumatsu. Ishin shishi. Yukari no chi de itdaku. goshuin hando buku.* 「江戸・幕末・維新志士ゆかりの地でいただく御朱印ハンドブック: 日本を洗濯した志士の御朱印を厳選紹介!!」

which is the *goōhōin* – which is a talisman stamped using woodblock prints that is used in esoteric Buddhist temples to ward off evil spirits.[35] Seals used for *goshuin* are varied and can include the *goōhōin*, in the case of shrines the family crest, or any number of other motifs that depict something that has a deep connection to the temple or shrine.[36]

The evolution of *goshuin* from its origins as *nōkyō* among the Rokujūroku-bu *kaikoku hijiri* reflects a rich intersection of Buddhist practice and pilgrimage tradition in Japan. Initially serving as proof of *sūtra* dedication, *goshuin* have endured through centuries of social and political change, adapting from strict ritual requirements to more flexible forms accepted by modern temples and shrines. Despite challenges such as the Meiji-era bans on pilgrimage and the subsequent shifts in presentation, the practice of collecting *goshuin* has persisted, offering not only a tangible connection to spiritual journeys but also a vibrant cultural heritage that continues to thrive today. As *goshuin* maintain their relevance in contemporary Japan, they stand as poignant reminders of the enduring power of ritual and devotion in Japanese religious life.

[35] See Strickmann on sealing Strickmann, "The Seal of the Law: A Ritual Implement and the Origins of Printing."

[36] Yagi Tōru, *Edo. Bakumatsu. Ishin shishi. Yukari no chi de itdaku. goshuin hando buku.* 「江戸・幕末・維新志士ゆかりの地でいただく御朱印ハンドブック: 日本を洗濯した志士の御朱印を厳選紹介!」; *Introduction to Goshuin: Definitive Edition Goshuin nyūmon: Ketteihan* 御朱印入門: 決定版, ed. Tankosha Editorial Department 淡交社編集局編 (Kyōto: Tankosha 淡交社, 2008).

Chapter Four: Results

The results from this research have been condensed to fit within the scope of this thesis. After two dedicated research trips to conduct fieldwork in Japan I amassed enough data to complete numerous projects. As such, I have filtered through it all to present here the most pointed and relevant information as it pertains to the discussion at hand. This was a most challenging exercise, and it is my hope that the evidence provided herewith will be sufficient at fulfilling the task set out before me.

In this section I introduce some early period *nōkyō* – the precursor of and alternate name for goshuin – that help to contextualize the transformation from seemingly 'simple' payment receipts to more complex signifiers of worship as well as in many instances material manifestations of connections to the buddhas, bodhisattvas and *kami* (sometimes even performing a talismanic function). I also share the maps I spent many months creating and explain in detail the importance and relevance of this methodology highlighting my unique contribution to the field. Sharing a preliminary digital archive, I am able to use images that the many ways in *goshuin* have transformed but also how they have remained consistent. Because the goddess Benzaiten is another important aspect that addresses the aftermath of *shinbutsu bunri*, I have shared some of the findings over the past six years of my abiding interest in her.

Nōkyō Through Time

The *nōkyō* pictured below is dated to 1654 and was received by a Rokujūrokubu *kaikoku hijiri* from Shitennōji as proof of *sūtra* dedication. The payment acceptance letter is dated the second

year of Jōō (alt. *shōō*) 承応 (1652-1655). The letter was not merely a commemoration of the donation but also verified that the practitioner had traveled around the country to donate *sūtras.*[1] We can see that originally the *nōkyō* was quite simple in presentation, however, they were still valued as important material objects that carried with it profound importance and significance.

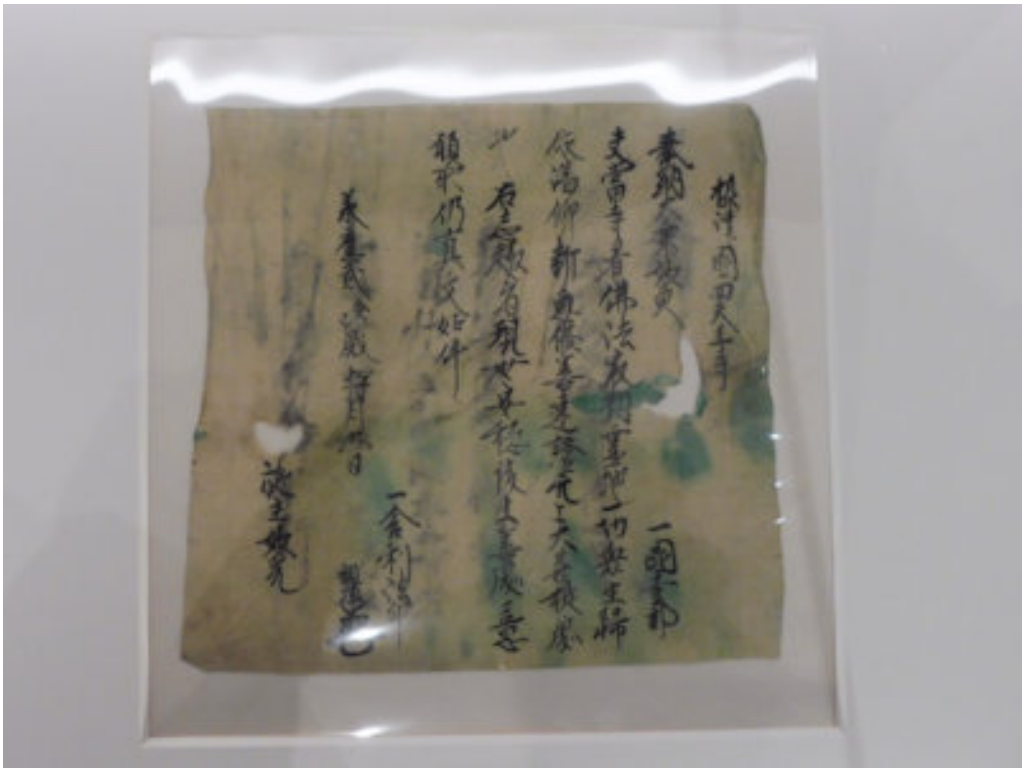


Figure 7 December 1654 *nōkyō* Payment inscription from Shitennōji. (Image: Kokin *Goshuin* Research Institute Tokyo National Museum).

[1] Murakami Tetsuki *Kokon goshuin kenkyūjo*「古今御朱印研究所」.

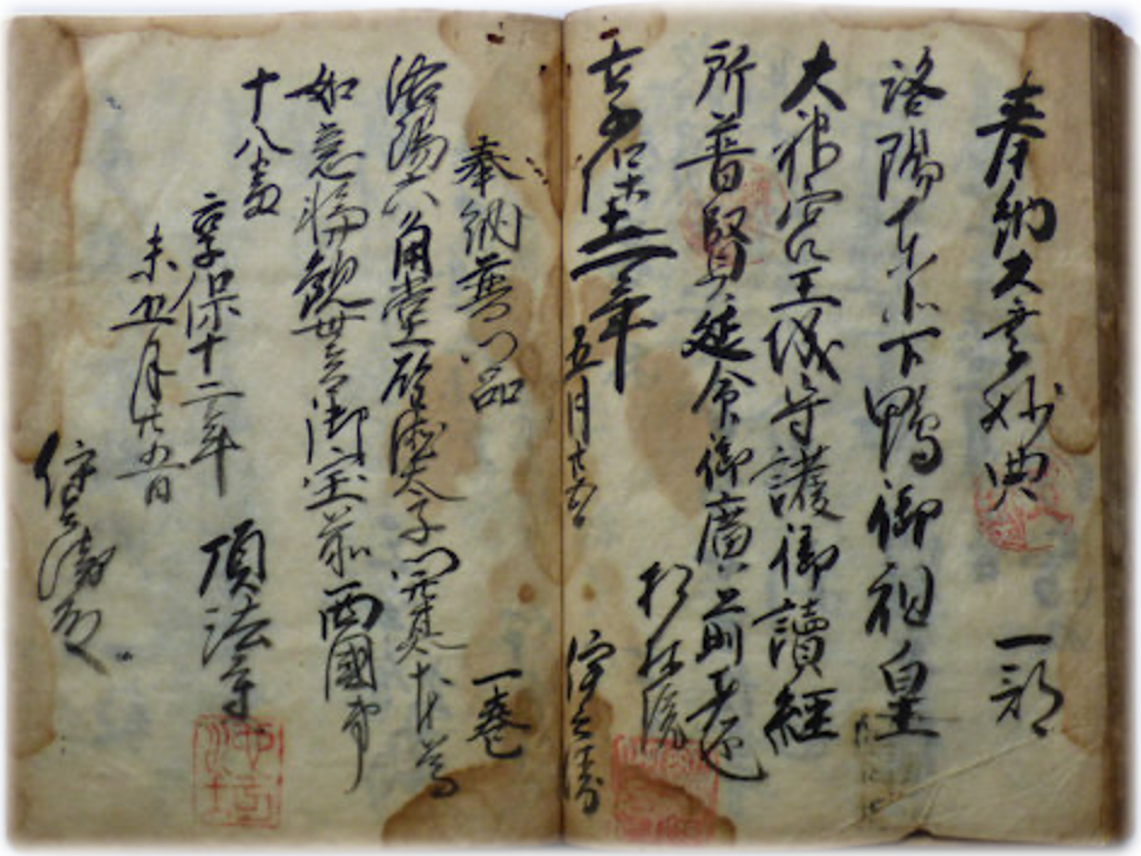


Figure 8 *nōkyō* 1723 to 1727 Shimogamo Shrine 下鴨神社(right) and Saigoku No.18 Chōhōji 頂法寺. [Tendai] (left). (Kokin Goshuin Research Institute).

We can begin to see that in the 1700s both the temples and shrines started to add a seal, we also see how they are quite similar in style. Without being able to read one could not tell simply by looking that one was from a temple and the other from a shrine. Below I provide a later *goshuin* from Chōhōji to further highlight the evolution of *goshuin*.

Figure 9 *goshuin* 1867. Chōkyuji and on the left Kōfukuji [Tendai] Saigoku No. 9 [2]

In 1867 right before the Restoration we can see that the *nōkyō* are becoming more like what we now call *goshuin* in their appearance, with a seal imprint located in the center. We can see that the practice of using explicit esoteric symbols (e.g. *bījas*) however, has not quite yet begun.

[2] Murakami Tetsuki *Kokon goshuin kenkyūjo* 「古今御朱印研究所」.

Figure 10 Saigoku No.18 Chōhōji Shōwa period (dates illegible). Personal collection.

This *goshuin* from the Shōwa book I obtained is from Chōhōji (Tendai) Temple which is No. 18 on the Saigoku. We can compare it to the earlier one above and notice that esoteric elements have become more pronounced by this time, with the *bīja* located in the center.

The image below is from the same *goshuinchō* purchased from an online auction in Japan. The original owner of the book filled its pages during the early Shōwa era and visited various temples and shrines throughout Western Japan. Although the seals do not record a sequenced pilgrimage and seem almost spontaneous, the owner did, over time, complete the Saigoku.[3] On the

[3] Unknown, "Shōwa" (*goshuinchō*, n.d.), Private Collection.

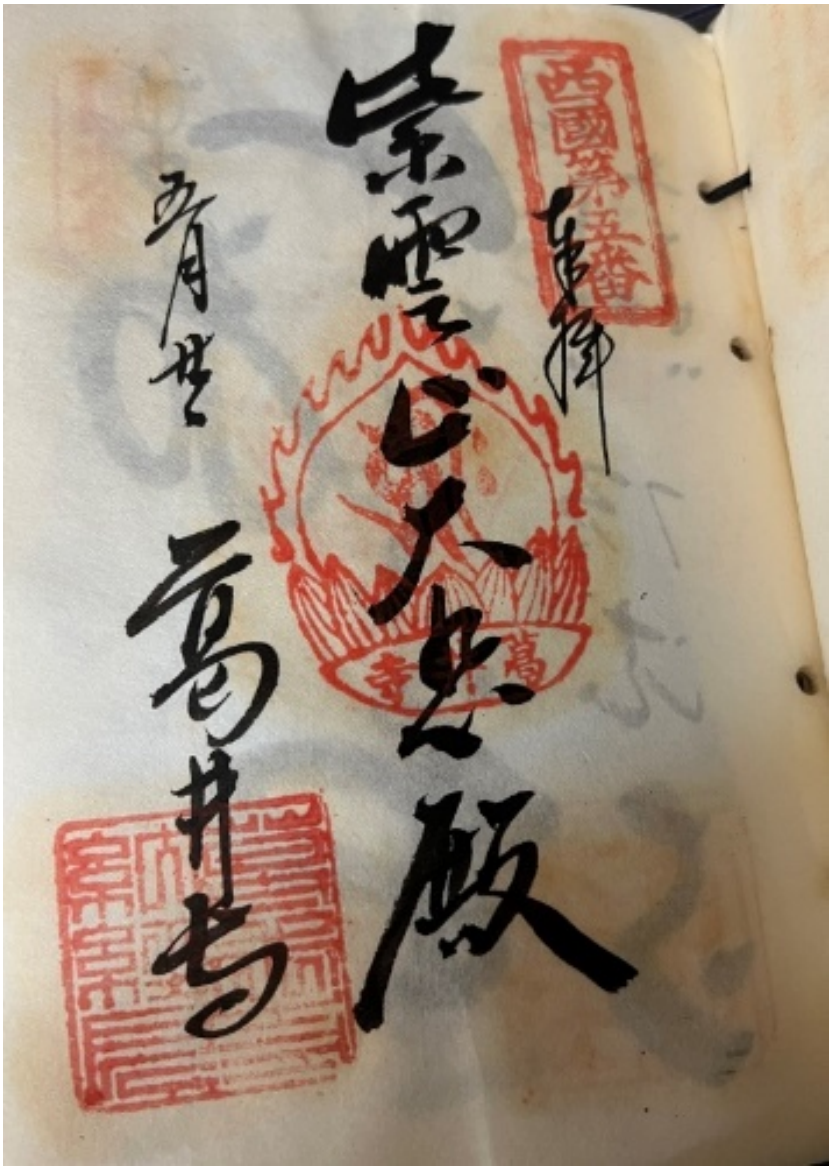


Figure 11 Shōwa goshuin from personal collection.

left side, we see the date this *goshuin* was inscribed which reads, 3rd month, 21th day (March 21). In this example, we find the *kanji* for *hōhai* 奉拝, meaning "worship" (*hō*: observance, offer, dedicate; *hai*: to bow in respect), written in black ink in the top right corner. This inscription is a customary feature indicating that one has visited and venerated the image. Behind this inscription, we see a red impression. In this case, the imprint indicates the numerical order of the temple according to the Saigoku pilgrimage route. It reads *Saigoku daigo-ban* 西国第五番 which tells us this is the fifth site of the Saigoku pilgrimage route, Fujidera (Kakai Temple) 葛井寺 – a Shingon temple – in Osaka prefecture.[4] The treasure seal *sanhoin* 三宝印 is in the centre which signifies the Buddha Dharma and Sangha – collectively the three teachings of Buddhism are called the Three Treasures of Buddhism – with a *gohōin* 御宝印 containing the *bonji* 梵字

[4] Refer to map and table also.

(Sanskrit syllables known as *bīja*) representative of the principal image which, in this case, is Thousand-arm Kannon 千手観音 (Sk. Sahasrabhuja-Avalokiteśvara).[5] The script in black ink down the centre is the name of the *gohonzon*. The seal on the bottom left is the temple seal in seal script (or *reisho* 隷書 which is an ancient highly angular style of *kanji*) and in black ink over that is the temple in ink script.

The next three images below are *goshuin* from Hiyoshi Taisha Jinja (Shintō shrine) from three different periods. The image on the top left is from the Shōwa *goshuinchō*, next to it on the right is a contemporary Reiwa goshuin that I collected myself, and below is one from the Taishō era. We can see a great deal of similarities, although there are minor differences to note also.

[5] Shizuka Jien, *Hajimete No `bonji No Yomikaki' Nyūmon* (Tōkyo: Selva Publishing, 2010); Kodama Yoshitaka, *Bonji de Miru Mikkyō: Sono Oshie, Imi, Kakikata* (Tōkyō-to Shibuya-ku: Daihorinkaku, 2002).

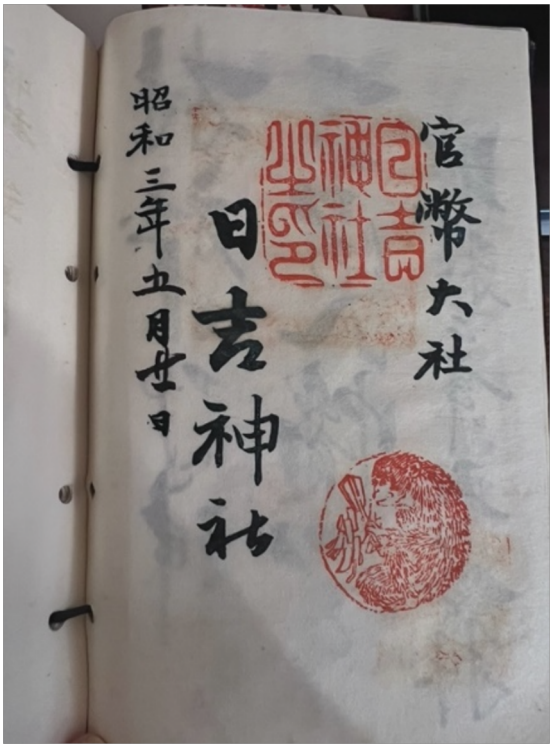


Figure 12 Hiyoshi Taisha, Shōwa. Author's.

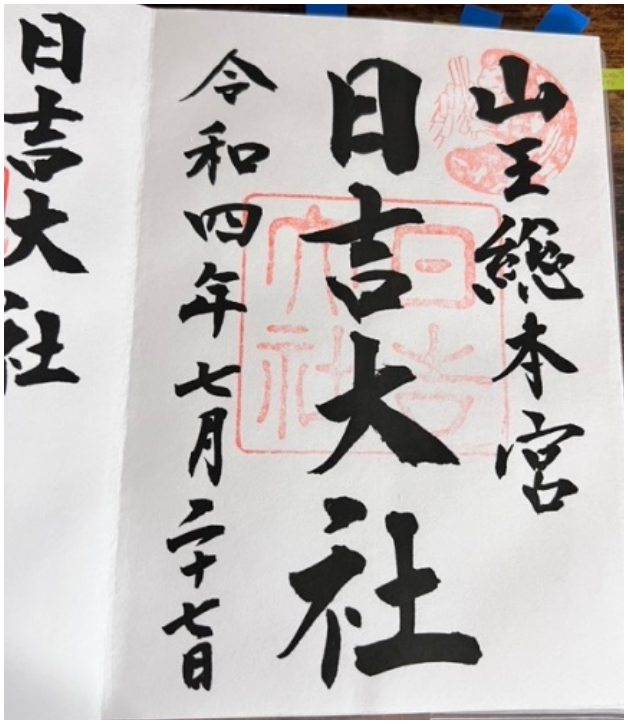


Figure 13 Hiyoshi Taisha, Reiwa. Author's.

Figure 14 Hiyoshi Taisha, Taishō, personal collection.

In the mid-Taishō era, with the advent and popularization of the folded book-style *shuinchō* remarkable changes become evident. The first is that an increasingly high number are sealed but do not contain any scipt. This is especially noticeable for those imprinted at shrines, where most of them have only a seal, and it appears that it was rare to have any ink script. Temple *goshuin*, however, have not changed much since the Edo period and at some places, like Zenkōji, they have remained virtually unchanged for over 200 years.[6] In other words, *goshuin* took their current form during the Edo period and came to resemble contemporary *goshuin* in the Taishō and early Shōwa periods. Incidentally, it was during this period that the seals given by temples and shrines increasingly became called "*goshuin*."

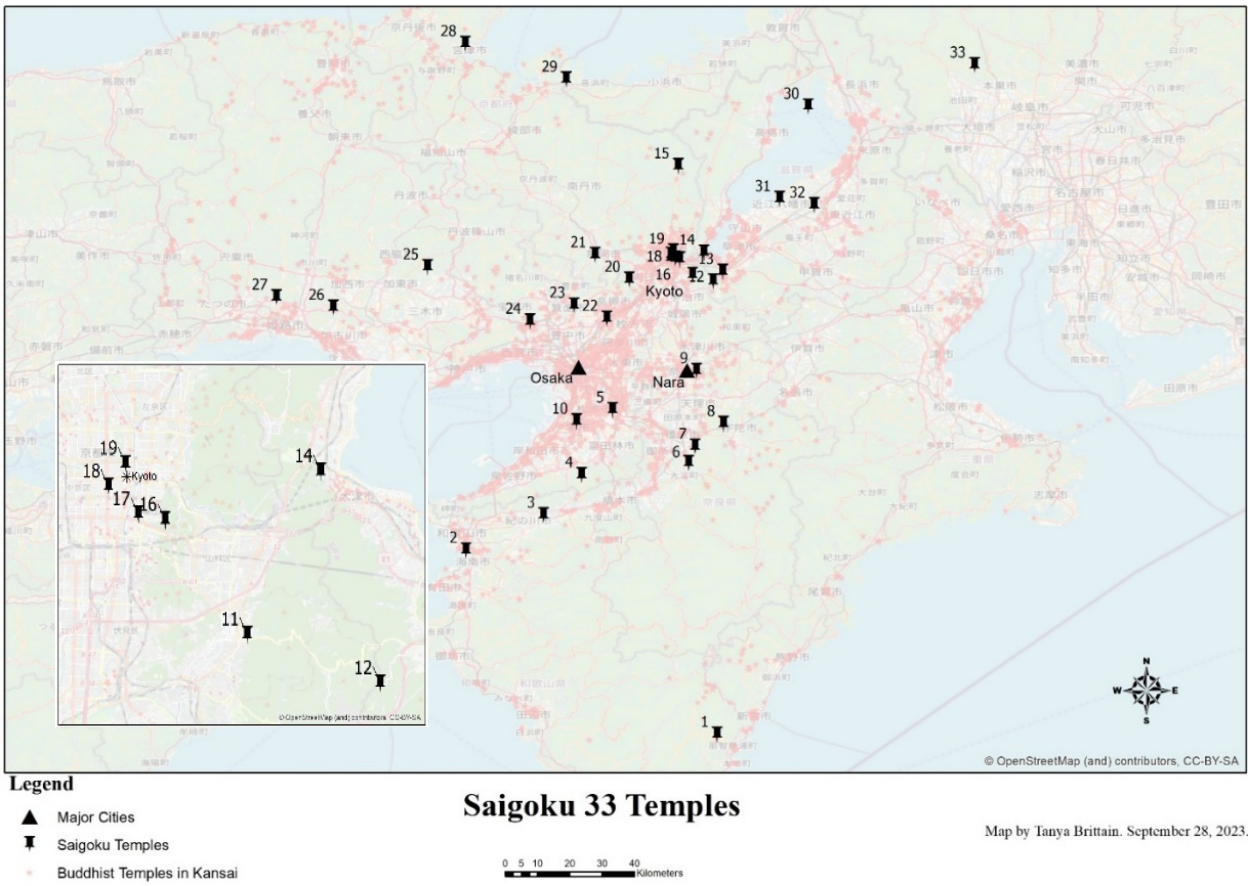
GIS: Mapping History

Most historical research is of a narrative form but using mapping techniques allows for the development of a geographic or spatial aspect to contribute more to the discipline.[7] Digital technology allows for geographical data to be used in ways that are far more powerful than other approaches permit and can offer a great deal to our understanding of our research, allowing us to go beyond traditional forms of visualization.[8] This can be useful in determining and asking questions about how people interacted with one another and with the environments around them.[9] The advantage of using GIS is that it allows the historian to structure, integrate, analyze, and display data in new and interesting ways.[10] The key ability of GIS is that it allows a

[6] Murakami Tetsuki *Kokon goshuin kenkyūjo* 「古今御朱印研究所.」
[7] Clark, "Placing History.." 1038
[8] Gregory, *Historical GIS*; Clark, "Placing History.."; Piovan, "Historical Maps in GIS."
[9] Gregory, *Historical GIS*; Clark, "Placing History.."; Piovan, "Historical Maps in GIS."
[10] Gregory, *Historical GIS*; Clark, "Placing History.."; Piovan, "Historical Maps in GIS."

geographical database to be created and the data to then be integrated and displayed; mapping is an obvious form of visualization that can be used effectively to explore Geographical Information (GI in the broadest sense is any information that refers to a place on the earth's surface). Once a database has been created that records the GI (e.g. coordinates), that information can then be mapped.[11] Anything can be mapped including historical monuments, texts referring to places, drawings and even photographs.[12]

[11] Gregory, *Historical GIS*; Clark, "Placing History.."; Piovan, "Historical Maps in GIS."
[12] An interesting study was done by a woman using old Russian playing cards. See her project The Imperia Project here: https://imperiia.scalar.fas.harvard.edu/imperiia/index



Map 1 Map of The Saigoku Thirty-Three Pilgrimage Sites of the Western Circuit

Map 1 details the pilgrimage route associated with the thirty-three temples dedicated to Kannon Bōsatsu (the bodhisattva of compassion). We can see the concentration in the center of the Kyoto region as well as the various important temples on the periphery. The faded pink icons highlight the vast number of temples in the Kansai region, and the placement of the Saigoku temples in relation.

The most onerous, and arguably under-valued aspect of GIS is the creation of the databases that are required.[1] The map above was created using ArcGIS which required me to create a database consisting of all the coordinates of the temple locations along the Saigoku. Using ArcGIS I started with a base map and chose the appropriate underlay. I then used an opensource database to map all the Buddhist temples in the polygon space (i.e. Kansai).[2] From there, I used the two separate databases I created in Excel (one of the Saigoku temple locations and the other for Kyoto, Nara, and Osaka), converted it to a CSV file and overlaid the information onto the map. I then added a numbering system to identify the temples according to their appropriate number along the Saigoku route. Mapping spatial fingerprints like cultural tourism, urban studies, and literary analysis – in this case a pilgrimage route – allows for collaboration with other fields of academic inquiry; sharing research using visual methods makes the research more accessible to a wider audience. Because this research is only at the master's level I was limited in time and scope but there is a great deal more that can be done to enhance and continue the current map, including the creation of an interactive map that attaches images of goshuin to each site along the route.

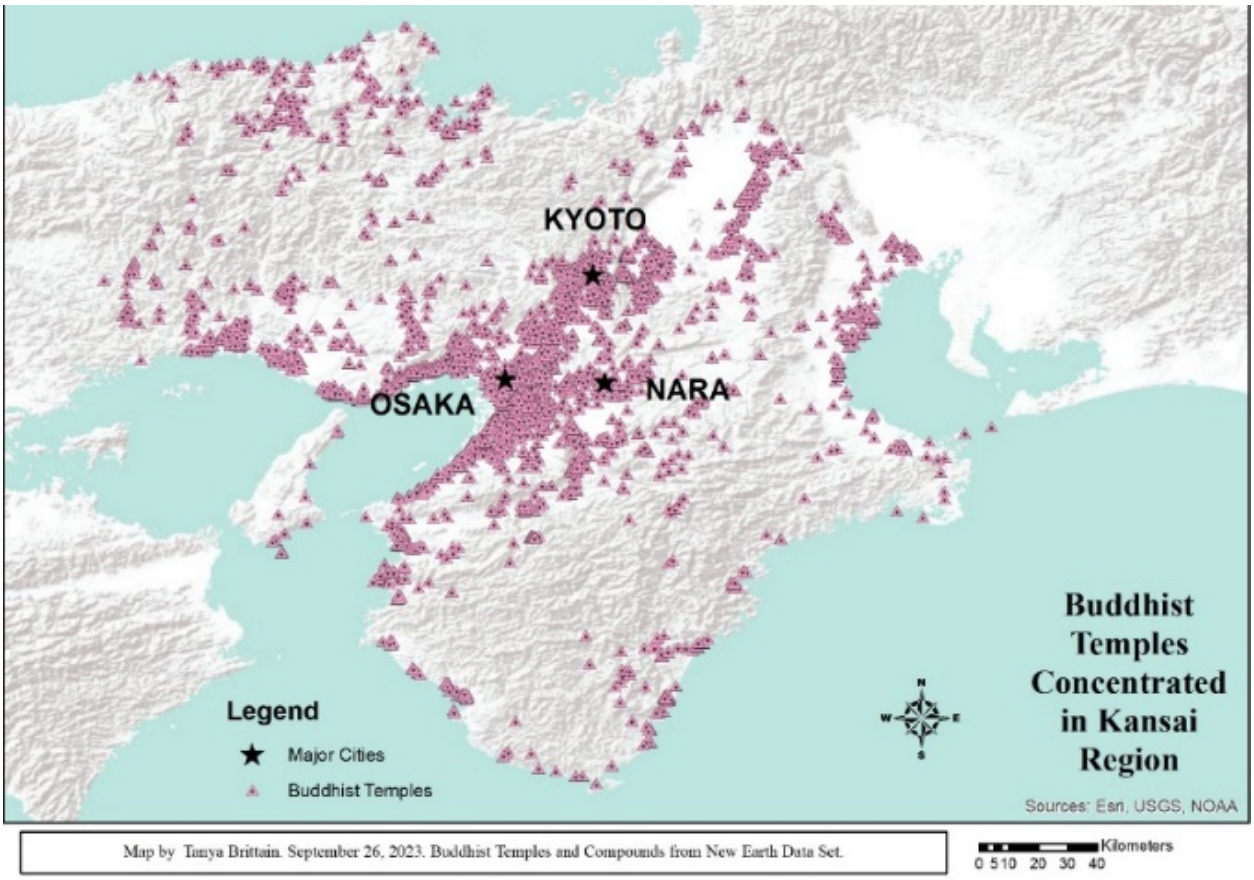
[1] Gregory, *Historical GIS*.
[2] "Natural Earth Free Vector and Raster Map Data," (2024). https://www.naturalearthdata.com/downloads/.

#	Name	Honzon 本尊- [Kannon 観音]	Sect	Prefecture
1	Seigantoji 青岸渡寺	Nyoirin - 如意輪観音	Tendai 天台宗	Wakayama 和歌山県
2	Kongohoji 金剛宝寺	Juichimen - 十一面観音		Wakayama
3	Kokawadera 粉河寺	Senju - 千手観音	Tendai	Wakayama
4	Sefukuji 施福寺	Senju -	Tendai	Osaka 大阪府,
5	Fujidera (Kazui) Temple 葛井寺	Senju -	Shingon 真言宗	Osaka
6	Minamihokkeji 南法華寺	Senju -	Shingon	Nara 奈良県
7	Ryugaoji 龍蓋寺	Nyoirin -	Shingon	Nara
8	Hase-dera 長谷寺	Juichimen -	Shingon	Nara
9	Kōfukuji 興福寺	Fuku Hosaku - 不空羂索観音	Hossō 法相宗	Nara
10	Mimurotoji. 三室戸寺	Senju -	Tendai	Kyoto
11	Daigoji 醍醐寺	Juntei - 准胝観音	Shingon	Kyoto
12	Shoboji 正法寺	Senju -	Shingon	Shiga 滋賀県
13	Ishiyamadera 石山寺	Nyoirin -	Shingon	Shiga
14	Miidera 三井寺	Nyoirin -	Tendai	Shiga
15	Kannonji 観音寺	Juichimen -	Shingon	Kyoto 京都府
16	Kiyomizudera 清水寺	Senju -	Hossō 法相宗	Kyoto
17	Rokuharamitsuji 六波羅蜜寺	Juichimen -	Shingon	Kyoto
18	Chōhōji 頂法寺	Juichimen -	Tendai	Kyoto
19	Gyōganji 行願寺	Senju -	Tendai	Kyoto
20	Yoshimineji 善峯寺	Senju -	Tendai	Kyoto
21	Anaoji 穴太寺	Sho - 聖観音	Tendai	Kyoto
22	Sojiji 総持寺	Senju -	Shingon	Osaka
23	Katsuoji. 勝尾寺	Senju -	Shingon	Osaka
24	Nakayamadera 中山寺	Juichimen -	Shingon	Hyōgo 兵庫県
25	Kiyomizu 清水寺	Senju -	Tendai	Hyōgo
26	Ichijoji 一乗寺	Sho -	Tendai	Hyōgo
27	Engyoji. 圓教寺	Nyoirin -	Tendai	Hyōgo
28	Nariaiji 成相寺	Sho -	Shingon	Kyoto
29	Matsunoodera. 松尾寺	Bato - 馬頭観音	Shingon	Kyoto
30	Hōgonji. 宝厳寺	Senju -	Shingon	Shiga
31	Chōmeiji 長命寺	Senju -	Tendai	Shiga
32	Kannonshōji 観音正寺	Senju -	Tendai	Shiga
33	Kegonji 華厳寺	Juichimen-	Tendai	Gifu 岐阜県

Table 1 List of Saigoku Pilgrim Route Temple Names, Associated Number, and Main Kannon Image

Table 1 lists the temple names, regions, Buddhist tradition affiliations, and which Kannon Bōsatsu is sought out for veneration and blessings at each site along the Saigoku. The temples are numbered, and this table serves to complement and assist the reading of Map 1 which uses their associated numbers rather than the names.

Another aspect of digital research is the seemingly base creation of tables and charts. Although it may, on the surface, seem elementary, the creation of tables and charts is of great importance and can be used, as in this case, as complimentary devices to maps. This chart helps to read the map above by providing further context that is relevant to the understanding of the pilgrimage route and each of the sites the map represents.



Map 2 HGIS Map of Buddhist temples in the Kansai Region

Map 2 shows how many temples are in the Kansai region of Japan. This does not include Shrines Buddhist temples in the Kansai region of Japan. It highlights the density of temples in the core region and emphasizes the specific network of temples associated with my research.

This map was again created using ArcGIS. As you can see, a different underlaying map was chosen to highlight the mountainous terrain through which pilgrims often traverse. I chose in this map not to specify the pilgrimage route but rather to show the incredibly dense concentration of Buddhist temples in the region. I did not map Shintō shrines because there was no pre-set dataset available, and I did not have the time to create one for this project. There are many things this project would have benefited tremendously from through more mapping however, given the parameters of this undertaking there simply was not time to do so.

A Preliminary Digital Archive

Another aspect of digital humanities research is the creation of (and digitization of pre-existing) databases. I collected and created thousands of images while conducting my research and it is, therefore, impossible to provide all of them here. I have, like with the rest, selected a chosen few for this thesis, leaving many images out.

Pilgrims of the Saigoku often carry a scroll *nōkyōjiku* 納経軸 either in addition to or other than a *nōkyōchō*. The Saigoku *nōkyōjiku* have a depiction of Kannon in the center as the main image around which temple seals and script are affixed. When completed, it constitutes a representation of the energy of the *gohonzon* 御本尊 (main image), a symbol of Kannon's mercy, and, often costly, these are works of art to be hung in the home as a commemoration of the journey.[3] An investment not only of time but also money, blank *nōkyōjiku* range anywhere

[3] Ian Reader, *Religion in contemporary Japan*, Transferred to digital printing ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001, 2001).

from $150 to $550 Canadian dollars, with each seal being on average 500 yen (approximately $5). Mounting them can be as expensive as $4,000 making pilgrimage is a serious endeavor. The temple hutch at Shitennōji 四天王寺 in Osaka, where *goshuin* are conferred, is an excellent indication of this. On the temple grounds, rather than the typical kiosk, there is a fair-sized free-standing building adorned with an assortment of *nōkyōjiku* prayer scrolls associated with a plethora of pilgrimage routes and an array of pilgrimage paraphernalia on display for purchase.[4] While attending flea markets in the summer of 2023 in search of *goshuinchō* I came across a completed and mounted *nōkyōjiku* of the Saigoku for sale at the Tōji 東寺 temple flea market in Kyoto.[5] The script on the scroll differs slightly from what is found in *goshuinchō* in that no dates have been recorded.[6] It is therefore difficult to say when exactly the scroll was completed. But the style of the main image provides some hints, and I believe the pilgrimage was carried out during the late Shōwa 昭和, between 1945 and 1989, to the mid-Heisei 平成 (1989–2019) eras.[7] The temple seals are, however, consistent with those recorded in *goshuinchō* and form a studied sequence that attests to the authentic completion of the pilgrimage route.

[4] Other pilgrimage items include things like a *hakui* (white pilgrim vests), *wasega* (stoles worn around the neck), *kongozue* staff, *zudabukuro* (a white shoulder bag for carrying *nōkyōchō*, *sūtra* books, candles, incense, and *osamafuda* (name slips) are also on display for purchase.
[5] When asked who the scroll belonged to the seller explained it came from an "unknown pilgrim."
[6] Another notable difference between the two is that *nōkyōjiku* are exclusive to pilgrimage routes whereas *goshuinchō* are not.
[7] The style of the mounting, the age of the paper, as well as the fading of the artwork also provide clues.

Figure 15 *Nōkyōjiku* purchased at the Tōji Temple Flea Market during fieldwork in the summer of 2023. The photo and scroll are both property of the author.

Figure 16 Close up of main image, author's photo.

Figure 17 Close up of seal and inscription, author's photo.

Figure 18 *Goshuin* from Shitennōji. Author's.[8]

[8] Shitennōji in Osaka is often regarded as Japan's oldest official temple; it is the Japanese Buddhist temple that spurred diplomatic relations and was used as a base for both foreign and domestic affairs. [8] In his attempt to bring Buddhism to the fore, legends tell that Prince Shotoku commissioned the construction of Shitennōji over 1400 years ago with the founding of the great monument dated to 593. The temple, which name refers to the Four Heavenly Kings in Buddhism (Shitennō) who guard the world from evil, was built to aid in the promulgation of Buddhism and long-held traditions purport that if one turns to the temple or becomes a devotee one can instantly attain Enlightenment. Today the temple is a prodigious institution catering to every pilgrimage route available connected to every denomination of Buddhism in Japan.

Figure 19 Map and Display of Goshuin, Miidera 2023. Map of halls and display board showing the various goshuin available. Author's photo.

On the grounds of Miidera (Tendai temple complex) one can perform a miniature pilgrimage with a large variety of options of *goshuin* to choose from at each hall. I managed to complete the entire circuit, collecting a total of eight goshuin out of the six halls.

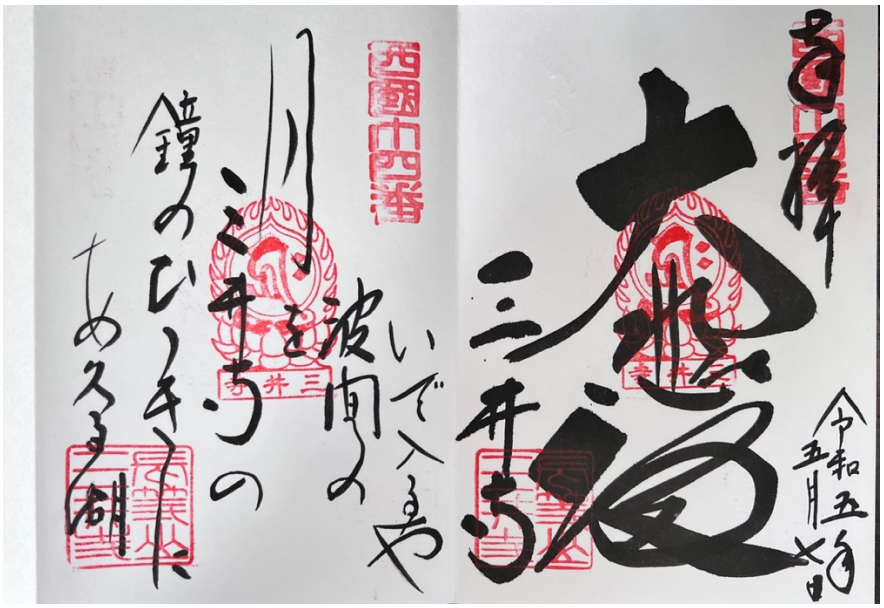


Figure 20 Goshuin from Miidera. Author's.

These are a few examples of the *goshuin* I collected from Miidera in the summer of 2022.

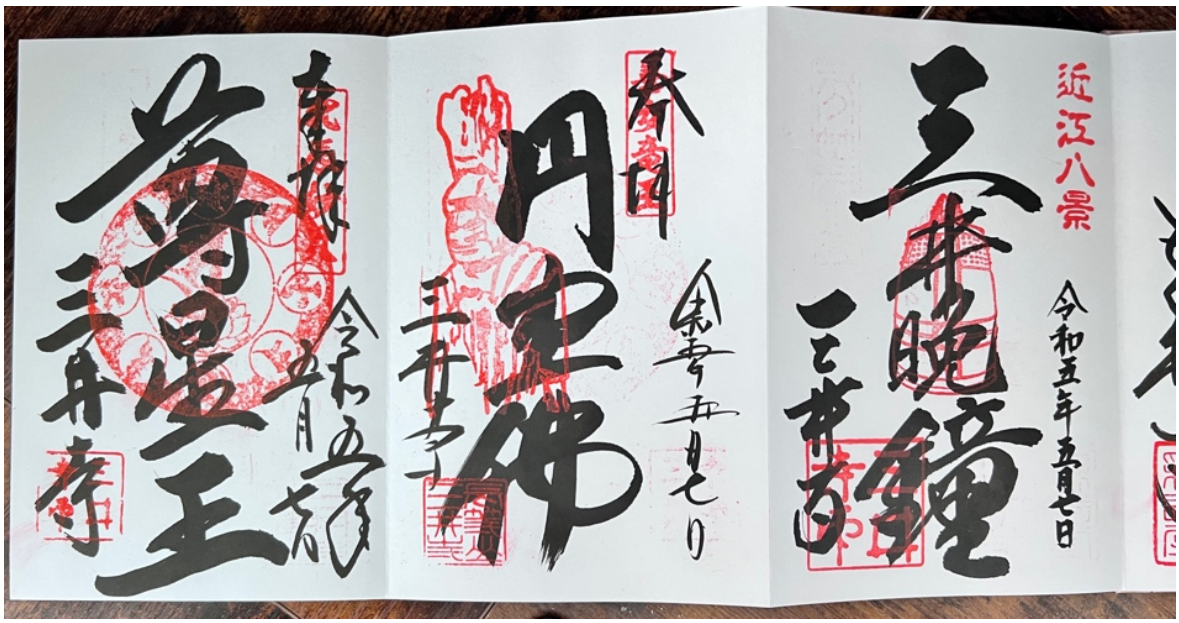


Figure 21 Goshuin from Miidera. Author's.

These are two *goshuin* from Kōyasan, one from the Shōwa *goshuinchō* and one that I collected in 2023. Again, it is interesting to note the tremendous continuity in the style.

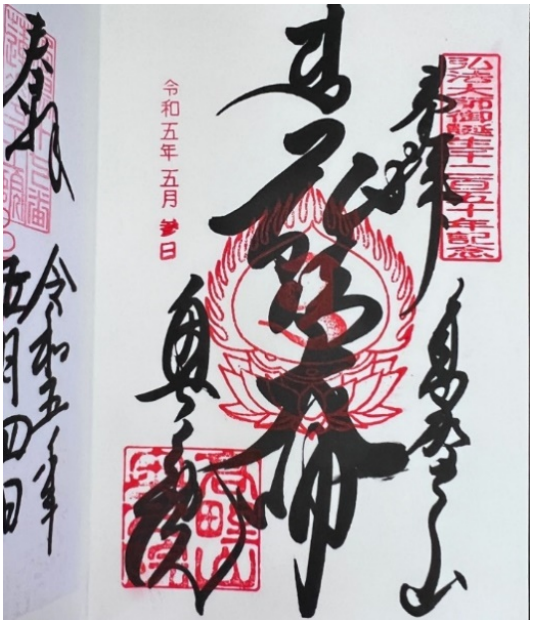


Figure 23 Reiwa period. Author's.

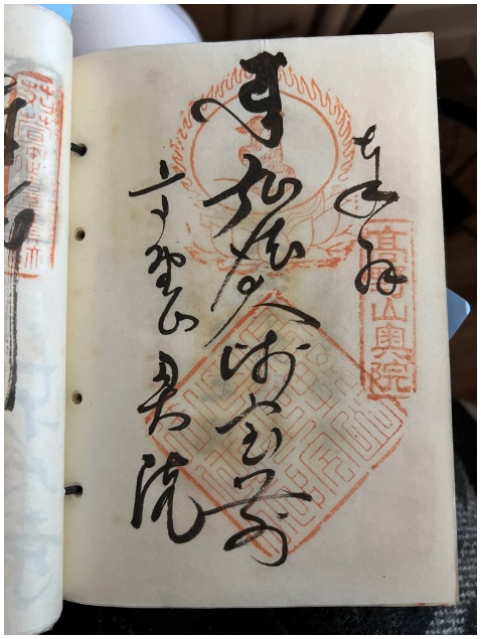


Figure 22 Shōwa period. Author's.

Below are images of three goshuin from my personal collection that all came from Kiyomizudera (Hossō – Tendai lineage). The top left is from the Shōwa, the bottom is from Heisei, and the top right from Reiwa. Once more it is incredible how similar they are across these three periods.

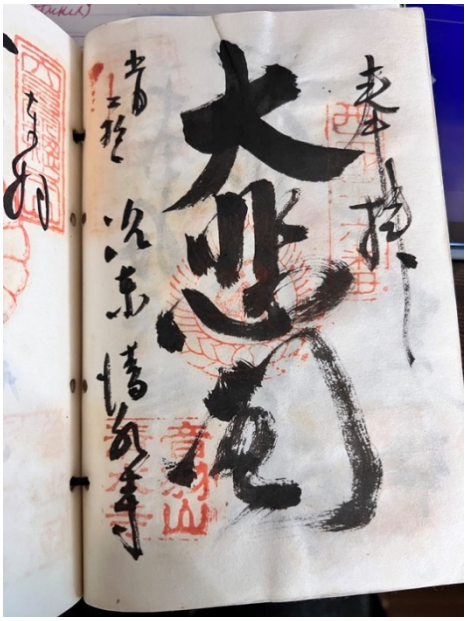


Figure 24 Shōwa period. Author's.

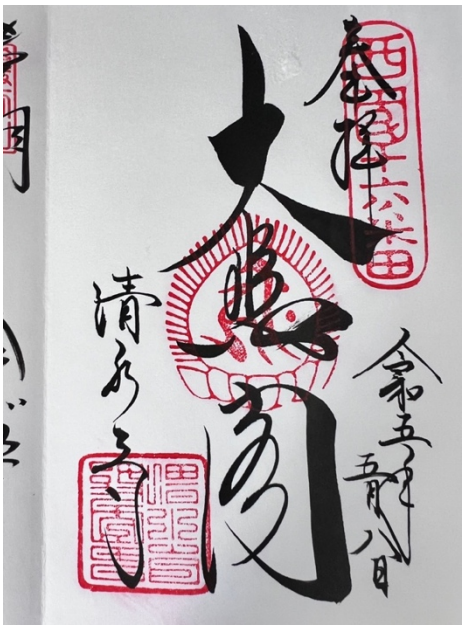


Figure 25 Reiwa period. Author's.

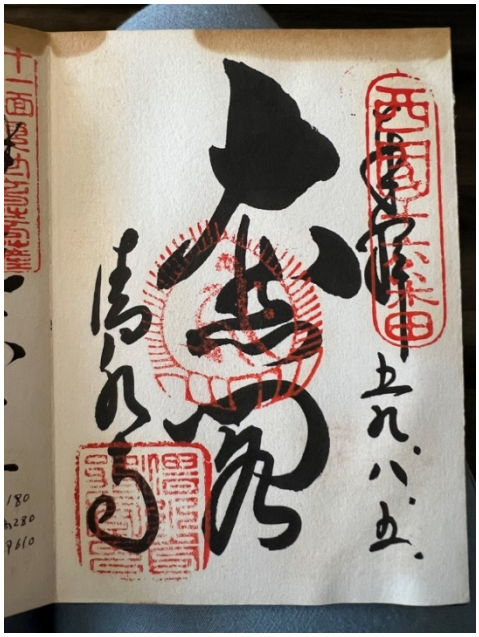


Figure 26 Heisei period. Author's.

Benzaiten

Figure 27 Scroll of Benzaiten. Author's.

Benzaiten is a goddess I have always taken a deep interest in though I did not study her singularly from the perspective of *goshuin* she helps provide context with regard to the Meiji Restoration.

The Indic goddess is found all over Japan – one need not go searching, for she is found at nearly every temple and shrine – as both a Buddhist deity and a Japanese *kami*. The goddess enjoys widespread popularity as a deity associated mainly with wealth, prosperity, luck, and all things auspicious. She is usually depicted as playing a biwa (lute) or, sometimes, carrying weapons. [9] The goddess has become demonstratively weaved into the very fabric of Japanese culture, religion, and society. Her pervasiveness in Japan simply cannot go unnoticed; there are countless temples and shrines dedicated to her and she is one of — and the only female[10] included in — the *shichifukujin* 七福神: the seven "lucky" gods of Japan. [11] She is not an indigenous *kami* of Japan, a Buddha nor a bodhisattva, rather, she is classified as a *deva* (J. ten, Sk. deva).

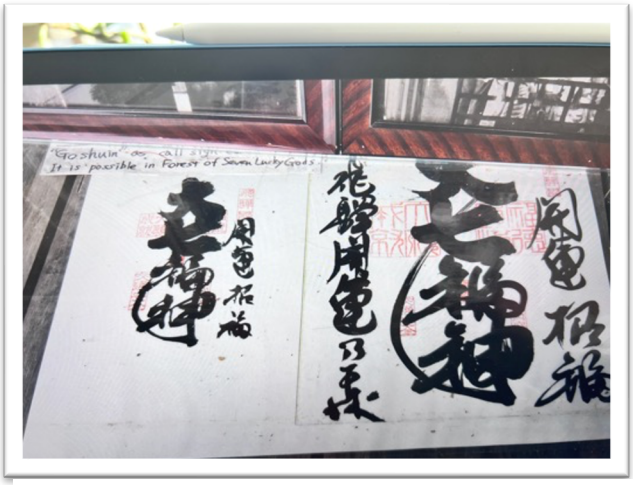


Figure 28 Goshuin on display. Author's photo.

Across the span of three trips to Japan from 2019-2023, I followed the goddess in all her forms. At Tōdaiji, in 2019, the temple museum stored an incredible collection of artifacts which

[9]Catherine Ludvik, *Sarasvatī: Riverine Goddess of Knowledge; From the Manuscript-carrying Vīṇā-player to the Weapon-wielding Defender of the Dharma*, vol. 27, Brill's Indological Library, (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

[10] Sometimes one will also find Kichijō included, like, for example, in Hida Village in Takayama where massive wooden statutes are displayed and include two females: Benzaiten and Kichijō. The historical reasons for this are complex and Catherine Ludvik does an excellent job diving into this fascinating history.

[11] These *shichifukujin* (七福神) are an integral part of and hallmark of Japanese culture; they are everywhere. I was able to visit several temples and shrines located in various cities that were entirely — or partially — dedicated to Benzaiten. Moreover, I attended a grove of giant wood-carved images of the *shichifukujin* 七福神 in Takayama, Gifu prefecture which included the *biwa* playing version of Benzaiten. To this end it must be noted that there are countless amulets and charms of the goddess and the *shichifukujin* 七福神 all over Japan.

included an eighth-century poly-chromed wood carving of Benzaiten. Originally installed in the Kichijō hall of Tōdaiji it was then stored in the museum where it was to be kept safe from natural disasters, destructive temperatures, and so forth.[12] The eight-armed sculpture of the goddess dated to 754 C.E. is the oldest known existing image of Benzaiten in Japan.[13] Moreover, the museum collection displayed a section of scroll from the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa Sūtra*: Kichijō-ten 吉祥天 [Mahāśrī] (Rite of repentance). Dated to the Heian period in the ninth century it was labeled vol 6-10 of the *sūtra.* These artifacts provide evidence that shows just how central the role of the *sūtra* was in early Japanese state-centred Buddhism.

[12] Temple placard, 2019.
[13] Temple placard, 2019.

Just an hour South of Tokyo in Kamakura at Hase-dera Temple 長谷寺 one finds a money bath and cave complex dedicated entirely to Benzaiten. The temple complex has numerous statues and carvings of the goddess consisting of both her eight-armed and biwa-playing version. When I visited in 2019 and 2022, the temple was very busy on both occasions with tourists and devotees alike, the latter of which are known to literally bathe their money in the waters of the fountains. This particularly happens during the New Year with the hope that the goddess will bless the money-bathers with good fortunes and wealth in the coming year. Moreover, miniature wood carvings of the goddess can be purchased for 300 yen and placed among the thousands of others that line an inner complex of a cave. Various statues of her are located around the grounds and wish-fulfilling scrolls can be purchased for 100 yen.

Figure 29 Benzaiten statue. Author's photo.

Conclusion

The amount of data I collected over three visits to Japan conducing fieldwork amounts to more than one could ever hope to present in any one project, regardless of length. I have, therefore, been extremely selective with not only which pieces to include but also which aspects of them to consider. There are many possible ways to analyze, assess, and approach this research and the greatest challenge has been navigating what to include and what to discard. I chose to limit myself to a handful of examples of *goshuin* that are directly connected to the Tendai and Shingon lineages and from those I chose to focus on, ones that were not only part of the Saigoku, but also *goshuin* that I could trace myself through the materials I collected, at times comparing them to older *nōkyō* found online. Similarly, I chose the Saigoku because of its relevance and popularity and because its roots in the esoteric Buddhist traditions of Tendai. My decision to include Benzaiten is based on the fact that no other aspect of Japanese religion exemplifies the myriad ways in which Shintō and Buddhism came to terms with the separation and mediated this change.

This thesis represents but a fraction of the extensive research conducted, offering merely a glimpse. Through extensive fieldwork in Japan, I have gathered a wealth of data that has been condensed to fit the confines of this thesis. My research has focused on the transformation of *nōkyō* into *goshuin*, shedding light on their significance as markers of worship and connections to spiritual entities as well as indicators of change and continuity vis-à-vis the Meiji Restoration. The early nōkyō exemplifies a simpler form, evolving over time to incorporate seals and esoteric symbols, eventually resembling the *goshuin* we recognize today.

The creation of databases and digital archives has been crucial in documenting and preserving the cultural and historical significance of *goshuin*. These digital resources not only

enhance our understanding but also make the research more accessible to a wider audience. Moreover, maps have been instrumental in visualizing the spatial aspects of my research, particularly in understanding the Saigoku Thirty-Three Pilgrimage Sites and the density of Buddhist temples in the Kansai region.

My study of Benzaiten has further provided a unique perspective on the intersection of Shintō and Buddhism in Japanese religious practices. Her widespread presence in Japanese culture underscores her significance as a deity associated with wealth, prosperity, and auspiciousness.

Chapter Five: Analysis

Emperor Shōmu (701-756, r. 724-749), a devout Buddhist and founder of Tōdaiji (established in 743), is well-known for his scholastic and political affiliations. He promulgated the recitation of the *Golden Light Sūtra* (J. *Konkōmyōkyō*, alt. Sk. *Suvarṇabhāsottama Sūtra* Ch. *Jin guangming jing*) and, at one time, an entire network of national monasteries established by Nara rulers, particularly Emperor Shōmu, explicitly identified the *sūtra* and its power as a means to protect the state. This led to the establishment of at least two state-sponsored annual rituals: Misaie 御斎会 and Saishōkō 最勝講 (Golden Light Lectures). In the eighth century, the Buddhist rite of the Misaie Assembly was inaugurated by the emperor and held at the palace to adopt the image of the ideal Buddhist King depicted in the Golden Light *Sūtra*. [1]

The *Golden Light Sūtra's* significance extended beyond religious practice to shape the cultural and political landscape of ancient Japan. Its teachings, which emphasized state protection and spiritual enlightenment, resonated deeply within the imperial court and permeated society at large. Annual rituals such as the Misaie Assembly, underscored the *sūtra*'s central role in fostering a sense of divine protection and auspiciousness. Central to the Golden Light *Sūtra*'s influence was the elevation of Benzaiten, the goddess of knowledge and protection, who came to be revered as a guardian deity of the Japanese nation. This syncretic fusion of indigenous beliefs with Buddhist doctrine exemplified the dynamic interplay between religion and politics in ancient Japan, shaping the country's religious landscape for centuries to come.

[1] Gummer, "Suvarṇabhāsottama*sūtra*."257.

Against this backdrop of religious fervor and political patronage, the Saigoku pilgrimage emerged as a hallmark of Japanese spirituality. This sacred journey, spanning thirty-three temples dedicated to Kannon, the bodhisattva of compassion, epitomized the intertwining of religious devotion with cultural heritage. Pilgrims, drawn by the promise of spiritual enlightenment and divine favor, embarked on this arduous pilgrimage, forging a profound connection with the sacred sites and their storied past. Central to the pilgrimage experience were *goshuin*, sacred seals imbued with esoteric significance and bestowed upon pilgrims as symbols of divine blessing. These seals, adorned with Sanskrit syllables and symbolic imagery, served as tangible reminders of the pilgrim's spiritual journey and the sanctity of the temples visited.

Benzaiten and The Golden Light

Like any Indic deity, Sarasvatī – a Hindu goddess associated with knowledge and literature – is encompassed in an extremely rich and complex mythology, kaleidoscopic in nature, whose origins date as far back as the *Ṛg Veda* where there are numerous spells and rituals invoking her power.[2] She is known as a benevolent goddess who bestows gifts upon her worshippers: wealth, vitality, pleasure, fame, progeny, and even inspired thought. A detailed study of Sarasvatī is not possible here and must be bracketed to later discussions. What can be said, however, is that The eight-armed Sarasvatī was a prominent development in the cult of the Great Goddess Durga[3] that

[2] The *Rg. Veda* is the earliest of the Vedas which are sacred Hindu texts. For more on this refer to the work of Catherine Ludvik. Ludvik, *Sarasvatī: Riverine Goddess of Knowledge; From the Manuscript-carrying Vīṇā-player to the Weapon-wielding Defender of the Dharma*, 27; Ludvik, "A Harivaṃśa Hymn in Yijing's Chinese Translation of the Sutra of Golden Light."; Ludvik, "La Benzaiten à huit bras: - Durgā déesse guerrière sous l'apparence de Sarasvatī -."; Ludvik, "From Sarasvatī to Benzaiten."

[3] Durga is a great warrior goddess in Hindu mythology. She is the great mother and a fierce protector — she is an extremely important figure.

conflated with and assumed the identity of the two-armed *biwa-playing* version of Sarasvatī. [4] The eight-armed Sarasvatī (Benzaiten) came to be known as the defender of the Dharma[5] and in her arms, she wields a halberd, bow, lasso, long-handled vajra, arrow, sword, axe, and wheel.[6] It was during the ninth century when the two-armed lute-playing Sarasvatī made her way to Japan as Myōonten.[7] It was also during this period that *mikkyō* was introduced to Japan where the two-armed goddess of music is portrayed in the Taizōkai *mandala*. The two-armed version of the goddesses is also the one is the that assumed her place among the ranks of the *shichifukujin*.

The *Golden Light Sūtra* was heavily disseminated and famed for its supreme powers in state protection. Central and interrelated claims made by the *sūtra* itself are that it is an extension of the eternal body of the Buddha and that its recitation and veneration is efficacious both as a means of state protection and as an alternative path to Buddhahood. An excerpt describes its protective powers and the benefits one can expect to be bestowed:

> …shines in the dwellings of all the gods, bestows supreme blessings on all beings, dries up all the woes of the hells, the animals, the world of Yama, destroys the continuity of all hunger, removes all the oppression of illness, overthrows all the planets, creates supreme tranquility, removes grief and trouble, removes the various afflictions, destroys the hundreds of thousands of afflictions. When, dear Lord, this excellent Suvarnabhāsa, king of *Sūtra*s, is being expounded in detail in the assembly, by merely hearing this Law and

---

[4] For more on this see Ludvik, 2001 #6051} Ludvik, "A Harivaṃśa Hymn in Yijing's Chinese Translation of the Sutra of Golden Light."; Ludvik, "La Benzaiten à huit bras: - Durgā déesse guerrière sous l'apparence de Sarasvatī -."; Ludvik, *Sarasvatī: Riverine Goddess of Knowledge; From the Manuscript-carrying Vīṇā-player to the Weapon-wielding Defender of the Dharma*, 27.
[5] Dharma is the teachings of the Buddha, the founding principles of Buddhism.
[6] Catherine Ludvik, "Uga-Benzaiten: The Goddess and the Snake," *Impressions,* No. 33 (2012): 96.
[7] Catherine Ludvik, "Uga-Benzaiten: The Goddess and the Snake," 94-109.

> by the nectar juice of the Law, the divine bodies of us four great kings together with or armies and retinues will wax with great might. In our body there will be produced prowess, strength and energy… upon worship and honour to this excellent Suvarnabhāsa, king of *Sūtra*s, will give salvation, assistance, defence, (69) peace… And there will be defeat for the Asuras. Thus, for the sake of this excellent Suvarnapbhāsa, king of *Sūtra*s, which overcomes all foreign armies, you will give protection, will give assistance, defence, peace, welfare to those monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen…[8]

The text goes on to prescribe a ritual dedicated to the goddess. An expert on this topic, Natalie Gummer suggests that the efficacy of the *sūtra* is supported by the rich assortment of rituals included within it which ultimately offer specific means to address suffering and enhance well-being on a personal, communal, and cosmic level.[9] Moreover, the *sūtra*'s influence transcended linguistic barriers, with the translation by the renowned Chinese monk Yijing exerting particular sway over Japanese interpretations, notably portraying the deity as an eight-armed goddess associated with protection. [10]

The island of Chikubushima 竹生島 on Lake Biwa 琵琶湖 and Enoshima 江ノ島 an island located just south of Kamakura are entirely dedicated to the goddess and it was therefore not surprising to find her there. I visited Chikubushima twice in 2023 and Enoshima once in 2022. Kuramadera 鞍馬寺 however, where I had visited four times between 2019 and 2023 during my first (and equally each subsequent) trip I could not help but notice the goddess enshrined along a foot trail down the mountainside. This is an ancient Buddhist temple that

[8] Gummer, "Suvarṇabhāsottama*sūtra*."253.
[9] Gummer, "Suvarṇabhāsottama*sūtra*."253.
[10] Yijing is an important Chinese Buddhist monk from the Tang era who is famed as a traveler and translator. This translation is titled Konkōmyō saishō ō kyo (Eng. Victorious Kings of the Golden Light *Sūtra*).

maintains a shrine dedicated to Benzaiten as a Japanese *kami*. I point these out because they highlight how this Indic deity functions as both a Buddhist deity and a Japanese *kami*. Kurama is not the exception either this confluence is found all over Japan; she is ever present on a massive scale. She is, one might argue, the best example of how the separation did not work as intended.

The Saigoku Junrei: Esoteric Buddhist Pilgrimage

The Saigoku, which begins in Kumano, circles western Japan around the old capitals of Nara and Kyoto and takes the pilgrim to thirty-three culturally significant temples where Kannon 観音菩薩, the bodhisattva of compassion (Sk.Avalokiteśvara) whose *engi* 縁起 (origin stories) and oral traditions abound with tales of the bodhisattva's great compassion, mercy, and intercession is enshrined.[11] Journeying to temples and shrines connected administratively, or according to some divine or geographical principle, is well documented in Japan and has been a dominant religious activity since at least the early Heian period when the Buddhist monk Ennin 円仁 (794–864) recorded his sojourn to China in search of the Dharma (Buddhist law) as a "pilgrimage" (*junrei* 巡礼).[12] His diary, *Nittō guhō junrei kōki* [alt. *gyōki*] 入唐求法巡礼行記 (Record of a Pilgrimage to Tang [618–907] China in Search of the Dharma), has been well-known to English readers since Edwin O. Reischauer translated most of it in 1955.[13] Especially famous are the

[11] Reader, *Religion in contemporary Japan*.
[12] Reader and Swanson, "Editor's Introduction Pilgrimage in the Japanese Religious Tradition."
[13] Reischauer, Edwin O., *Ennin's Diary: The Record of a Pilgrimage to China in Search of the Law* (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1955) and *Ennin's Travels in Tang China* (New York: Ronald Press Company, 1955). 226–70.

Shikoku Eighty-Eight and the Saigoku Thirty-Three.[14] The Shikoku pilgrimage is a Shingon Buddhist journey associated with Kūkai (Kōbō Daishi 弘法大師, 774–835; in China 804 – 806) comprised of eighty-eight sites on the island of Shikoku. Comparatively speaking (to the Shikoku and Kumano) the Saigoku is an understudied subject, yet it is a highly relevant pilgrimage route in Japan that serves as a model for many replicated pilgrimages throughout the country.

The thirty-three temples along the Saigoku are centers that have historically been associated with power and culture and are a mix of (mainly) Tendai and (some) Shingon: eighteen are Tendai-lineage (including two Hossō) and fifteen are Shingon – sometimes, however, pilgrims extend their path to include Mt. Kōya 高野山— an important spiritual center and headquarters of the Shingon school of esoteric Buddhism;[15] it was quite common in premodern Japan for pilgrims to worship at various shrines and temples they passed which came to be considered *bangai,* or places with a link to the pilgrimage route[16] – of which the earliest clientele consisted primarily of aristocrats and member of the Imperial court who followed in the footsteps of ascetics (*hijiri*) who developed these routes and served as guides.[17] The first reliable

[14] Peter Ackermann, Dolores Martinez, and Maria Rodriguez del Alisal, eds., *Pilgrimages and Spiritual Quests in Japan*, 1st edition (London: Routledge, 2008). *Pilgrimages and Spiritual Quests in Japan*, 1st edition ed., ed. Peter Ackermann, Dolores Martinez, and Maria Rodriguez del Alisal (London: Routledge, 2008).
[15] Barbaro, "Senses, Path, and Bus." 91
[16] Reader, *Making Pilgrimages: Meaning and Practice in Shikoku*. 17
[17] Reader, *Making Pilgrimages: Meaning and Practice in Shikoku*. 107

evidence of the Saigoku, it appears, was during the Heian (794–1185) when the Tendai priests Gyōson 行尊 (ca. 1055–1135) and Kakuchū 覚忠 (1118–1177) completed the circuit.[18]

Many of the Saigoku temples are set in dramatic places, like Kiyomizu-dera 清水寺, which straddles a ravine, Hōgonji 法厳寺, which dominates the island of Chikubushima 竹生島 on Lake Biwa 琵琶湖, and Sefukuji 清福寺 in the high hills of Osaka.[19] The temples along this route, situated in striking locations, have amassed popular legends that testify to their power.[20] This combination of a series of places of spiritual power (*reijō* 霊場)—where spirits are said to congregate and miraculous events occur—serves, at least from the perspective of the pilgrims, to heighten the sense of a relationship between the figure of worship and the pilgrim, and to increase the potential *riyaku* gained from visiting centers of power in general.[21] Moreover, many are repositories of some of the greatest artistic works in Japan and have been designated important cultural properties that, in effect, take the pilgrim on a cultural and historical tour around Western Japan.[22] Ten benefits of performing the Saigoku as listed in the *Saikoku junrei saikenki* 西国巡礼細見記 published in 1776, are as follows:[23]

> One will not be reborn in hell or as a hungry ghost or animal; One will truly reflect (on Amida) at death; The pilgrim's household will have friendly relations with the Buddha; The Sanskrit letters of the six Kannon will be set in one’s forehead; One's wellbeing will be perfect;

[18] Blomberg, "Ise Jingū, Nōsatsu Kai and Indulgences: Pilgrims in Tokugawa Japan Viewed by Two Swedish Travellers."
[19] Reader, *Religion in contemporary Japan*. 158
[20] Reader, *Religion in contemporary Japan*. 158
[21] Barbaro, "Senses, Path, and Bus."95 Reader and Tanabe, *Practically Religious*; Reader and Swanson, "Editor's Introduction Pilgrimage in the Japanese Religious Tradition."157
[22] Reader, *Religion in contemporary Japan*.
[23] Foard, "The Boundaries of Compassion: Buddhism and National Tradition in Japanese Pilgrimage."236

> One's descendants will flourish; At the end of one's life a memorial service will be given by a priest; One will be born in Fudaraku (Kannon's paradise); One will definitely be reborn in the Pure Land; All one's wishes will be fulfilled.[24]

Guidebooks from as early as 1776 instructed pilgrims on what items to bring on a pilgrimage. One such item was a scroll for the purpose of receiving seal imprints.[25] According to Ian Reader, and my own research, these scrolls subsequently followed the traditional *nōkyōchō,* became widespread in the postwar era, and are extremely popular today.[26] These scrolls function as a manifestation of the main image of the pilgrimage and are cumulative artifacts that encapsulate and, via the image at the heart of the pilgrimage and the seals that represent the sites, replicate the entire pilgrimage.[27] Sometimes used as ritual objects, Saigoku scrolls may be used in funerals to lead the spirit of the dead around the pilgrimage while chanting each temple's sacred song (*go-eika* 御詠歌), symbolically taking the spirit to each site, thereby allowing it to enter the Pure Land (*jōdo* 浄土 or *Gokuraku* 極楽; Sukhāvatī).[28]

With close ties to the Rokujūroku-bu, which, as we have seen, is paramount to the study of *goshuin*, the Saigoku is a laudable representation of a particular network of important temples in the Kansai region. Beginning in the southern peninsula of Honshū, the Saigoku route runs through seven prefectures including Wakayama 和歌山, Osaka 大阪, Nara 奈良, Shiga 滋賀,

---

[24] Foard, "The Boundaries of Compassion: Buddhism and National Tradition in Japanese Pilgrimage." 236
[25] Foard, "The Boundaries of Compassion: Buddhism and National Tradition in Japanese Pilgrimage." 235
[26] Reader, *Religion in contemporary Japan*; Reader, *Making Pilgrimages: Meaning and Practice in Shikoku*.
[27] Ian Reader, *Pilgrimage in the Marketplace* (New York, London: Routledge, 2014); Reader, *Religion in contemporary Japan*; Reader, *Pilgrimage*.
[28] Reader, *Religion in contemporary Japan*; Reader, *Pilgrimage in the Marketplace*.

Hyōgo 兵庫, and after one thousand kilometers ends in Gifu 岐阜.[29] Tokugawa-era guidebooks tell us the Saigoku began at Nachi 那智 Falls, went around the Kii 紀伊 Peninsula near present-day Wakayama, curved back inland through Nara, and then in the center contained several stations in and around the capital.[30] From there it went in a generally western direction as far as Himeji 姫路, before going nearly straight north to the Japan Sea, where it turned east and then north to its conclusion in Gifu.[31] The pilgrim would encounter not only the sacred places of pilgrimage but also the thoroughfare of the Tōkaidō 東海道, the ancient capitals of Nara and Kyoto, and many of the famous natural sites of Japan.[32] The heart of the pilgrimage is Kyoto—the center of Japanese cultural history. Among all Japanese pilgrimage traditions, only the Saigoku blended sacred geography with cultural and commercial geographies so thoroughly.[33]

Esoteric Properties of Temple Goshuin

Buddhist *sūtra*s and *dhāraṇīs,* known for their mysterious powers, provide a context for further understanding the esoteric qualities of *goshuin*. Treasure seals and the intrinsic spell power of letters, including Sanskrit *bīja*s (Jp. *Bonji* Ch. *Fanzi*), names of gods, and talismanic shapes, all contribute to a powerful aspect of *goshuin* connecting the bearer to the enshrined deity. Goshuin

[29] Barbaro, "Senses, Path, and Bus."
[30] 231–49. Foard, "The Boundaries of Compassion: Buddhism and National Tradition in Japanese Pilgrimage."
[31] Foard, "The Boundaries of Compassion: Buddhism and National Tradition in Japanese Pilgrimage."237
[32] Foard, "The Boundaries of Compassion: Buddhism and National Tradition in Japanese Pilgrimage." 237
[33] Foard, "The Boundaries of Compassion: Buddhism and National Tradition in Japanese Pilgrimage."237

are more than merely commemorative markers of pilgrimage in that they have come to function as an alter-ego of the main image and through their esoteric Buddhist properties oftentimes function in a talismanic way. Seal impressions gathered along the way signify the cumulative power of the book and such seals may also be applied to the pilgrim's clothing serving both as verification and talismanic protection.[34] Similarly to *bīja* -mantras – seed syllables – each of which represents a particular deity in the Tantric Buddhist pantheon are used as talismanic characters of power in Sanskrit script as a material realization of the ritual sealing of the body.[35] Moreover, they exist in a world of representation that aligns with various ways Japanese scholars have attempted to classify talismans and amulets in Japan including mandalas, *sūtra*s, and treasure seals, exemplifying their connection to a broader talismanic tradition.

Bījas

Perhaps the most recognizable *bīja* today, particularly for those of us in the western world, is that of *Oṃ* (Aum), the ancient seed-syllable representing the sacred sound of the Supreme Absolute in Indic traditions. In both Hinduism and Buddhism, the *bīja* ("seed"; Jp. *shūji* 種子) is used as a metaphor for the origin or cause of things. *Bīja*s, "seed syllables," contain potent powers belonging to the ancient script of India and are believed to be sacred. Along with the Buddhist teachings and texts (canon) as discussed in the first chapter, these *bīja*s were transmitted to Japan via China. There are more than 1800 Buddhist deities that have been handed down to Japan including Nyorai (Tathāgata), Bosatsu (bodhisattva), and Myōō 明王 (Kings of Mystical

[34] Strickmann and Faure, *Chinese Magical Medicine*.189
[35] Strickmann and Faure, *Chinese Magical Medicine*. 189

Knowledge or Sk. *vidyā*), to name but a few of the categories.[36] There are also devas, as we learned in earlier chapters, such as Benzaiten. Each deity is capable of bestowing blessings on those who venerate them appropriately, and their powers are invoked for various things including anything from recovering from illness to passing entrance exams. Each deity has its unique characteristics and personality and is therefore sought out for specific benefits, and each is represented through a *bonji*. To illustrate this let me share the example of Monju Bosatsu 文殊菩薩 (Mañjuśrī) who is known for his bestowal of blessing success in entrance exams (*gagugyō* 学業), better fortune (*kaiun* 開運), and wisdom (*chie* 智恵).[37]

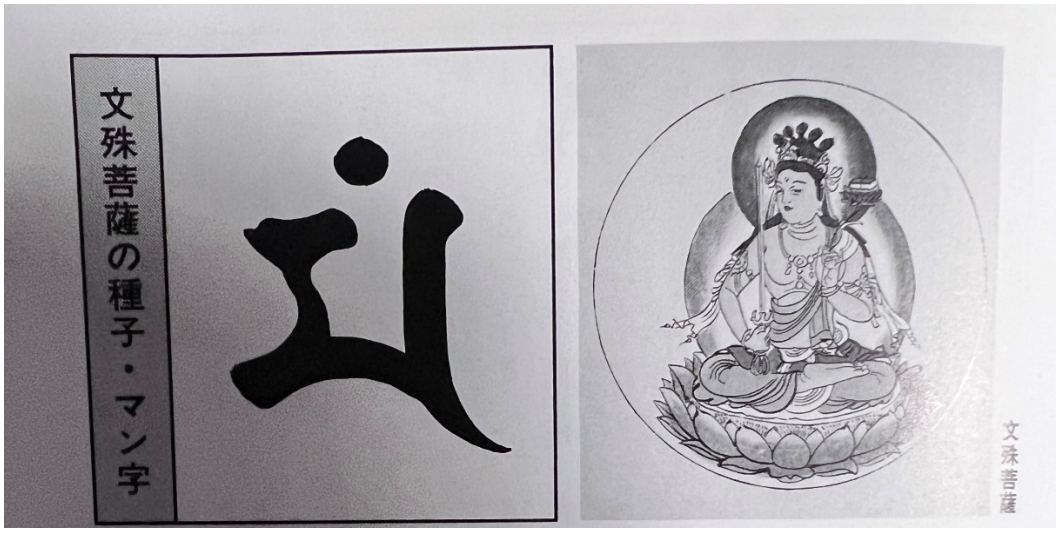


Figure 30 Monju Bōsatsu *Bīja* (Image: *Bonji de Miru Mitsu: Sono e Imi Kakikata*)

[36] Py Kobo, "Sanskrit & Buddhist Deities -Wishing Something Happy! - PY KOBO," May 8, 2021, https://kobo.patandyuko.com/top-2/study-room/sanskrit-buddhist-deities/.
[37] Mantra: *on arahasha nō* (おん　あらはしゃ　のう).

On the left side is the *bīja* of Mañjuśrī and on the right side an image of the bodhisattva. The Katakana reading of the Sanskrit *bīja maṇ* is マン which is read *ma-n*. According to Giryu Kodama, the seed of Mañjuśrī is derived from the name of Mañjuśrī and is the Sanskrit syllable that represents the cutting off of ego.[38] Mañjuśrī is considered one of the oldest and most significant bodhisattvas in Mahāyānā literature and due to his early references in the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras*, he came to symbolize the embodiment of *prajñā* (Jp. *chie*), or transcendent wisdom. He is depicted as a male with a sword in his right hand, signifying the realization of transcendant wisdom that cuts down ignorance and duality. The wisdom possessed by Mañjuśrī helps in cutting off worldly desires.[39]

*Bīja*s are an incredibly complex field of study that requires far more thought and contextualization that I could possibly provide herein. However, it is important to note that they appear everywhere there is Tendai and/or Shingon influence. For example, in the image below we can see historic examples of wood-stamped *bīja* in Siddham for the five *kami* of Mt. Kōya at Kanshinji 觀心寺.

[38] Robert Hans van Gulik, *Siddham: An Essay on the History of Sanskrit Studies in China and Japan*, Sarasvati-vihara Series, v. 36, (Nagpur, India: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1956; repr., New Delhi: Sharada Rani, 1980). 86.
[39] van Gulik, *Siddham: An Essay on the History of Sanskrit Studies in China and Japan*. 86

Figure 31 Wooden Talismans (Image: Kyoto National Museum Catalogue, 2022)[40]

[40] "Kyoto National Museum, Ed. Kanshinji to Kongōji: Shingon Mikkyō to Nanchō No Isan: Tokubetsuten Kawachinagano No Reichi 観心寺と金剛寺 : 真言密教と南朝の遺産 : 特別展 河内長野の霊地 [Kanshin-Ji and Kongō-Ji: Two Temples of Kawachinagano Esoteric Buddhist Art and the Legacy of the Southern Court]. ," (Kyoto: Kyōto kokuritsu hakubutsukan 京都国立博物館, 2022). Top front and back seed syllables Gozu Tennō (same esoteric Buddhist "*kami*" as Gion shrine in Kyoto—to ward off plagues/pestilence) with the *bīja* inside a disk on a lotus "throne." Muromachi Period, dated 1554. Bottom front and back are the seed syllables of Gosha Myōjin, Muromachi Period 1554. From Kanshinji. *Itae shuji Gozu Tennō narabi ni Gosha Myōjin zu* 板絵種子牛頭天王幷五社明神図. The five *kami* of Mount Kōya. *Sengūsha ichirō Hōin Shūson* 遷宮者一臈法印秀尊, which translates as [transcribed or written or copied by] Hōin (a monastic rank) Shūson, on the occasion of the rituals performed [on behalf of these *kami*] at the end of the summer retreat.

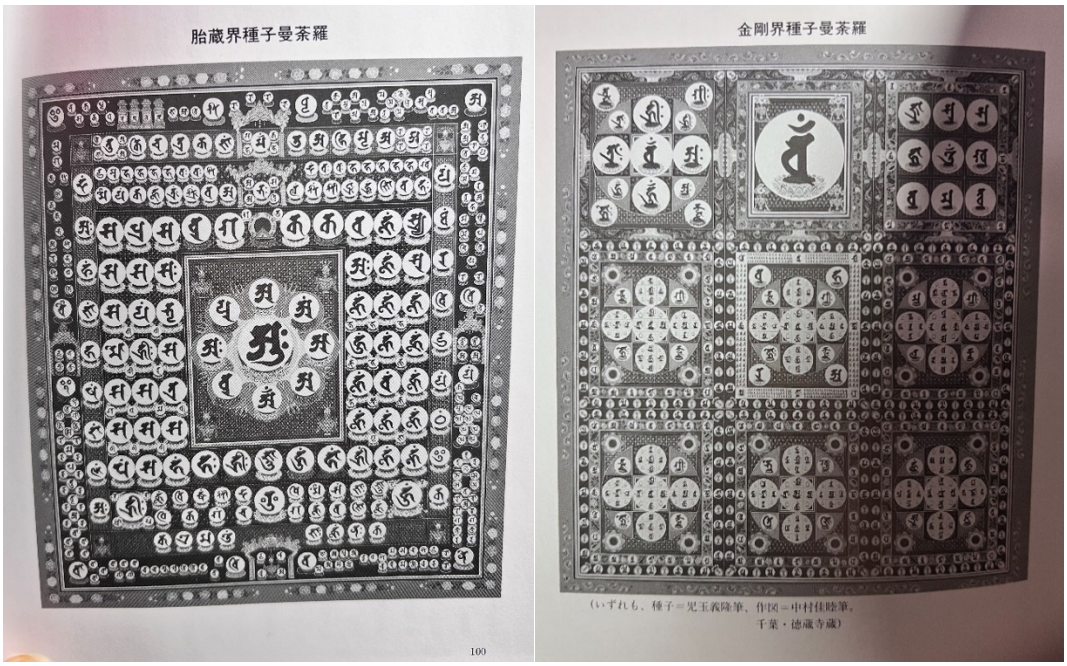


Figure 32 Examples of mandalas made up with the *bīja*s of deities. (Image: *Bonji de Miru Mitsu: Sono e Imi Kakikata*)

A powerful talisman issued by temples and shrines the *goōhoin* 牛王宝印 is said to be extremely powerful; in fact, it is often regarded as the most powerful of all talismans. It contains a seal print on a piece of paper with various kinds of figures and images. The red treasure seal, believed to be the source of its power when imprinted on paper draws a connection between the seals owned by temples and shrines. The first character 牛 is typically read *gyū* and stands for "cow" (and if one were not careful, they could actually interpret *goōhoin* as "beef ball" or "cow ball" seal). The reason for this is that the first character represents the ox in Chinese medicine. Although these talismans are recognized by their unique appearance, their substance lies in the red "treasure seal" which is the source of its power when it is impressed on paper.

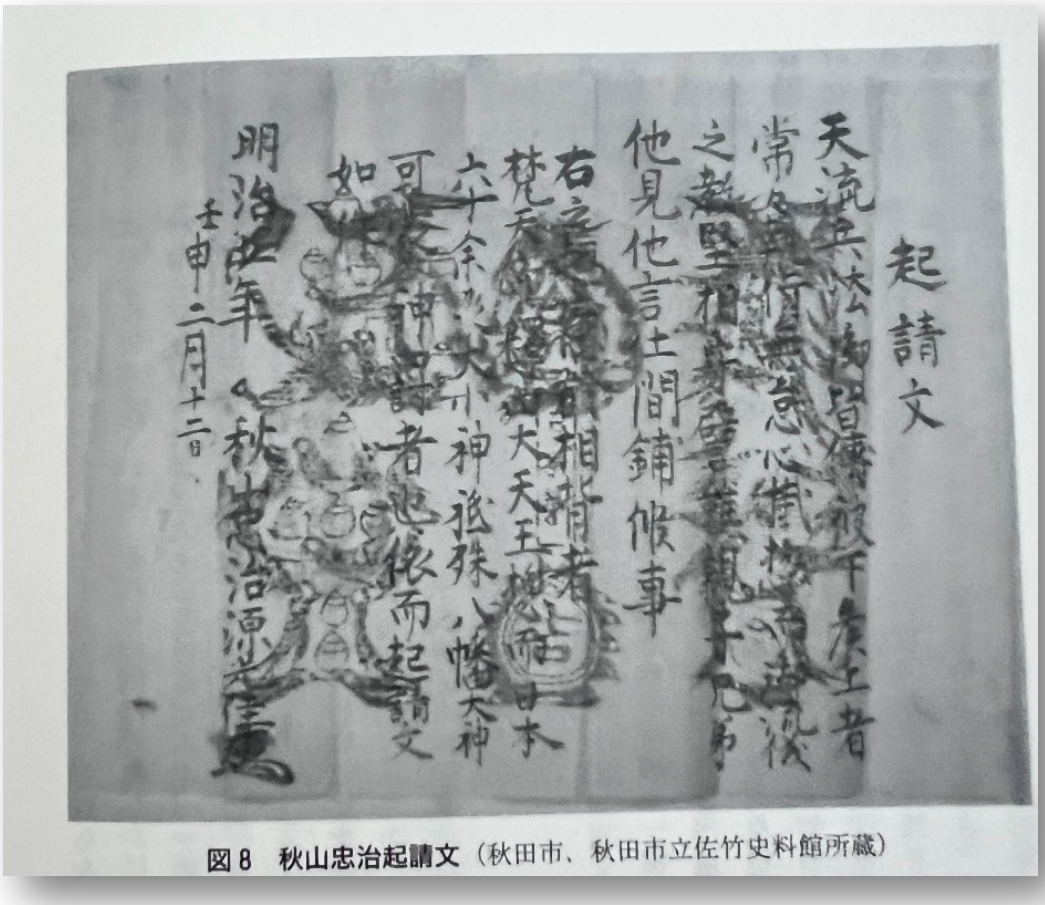


Figure 33 *goōhoin.* [Image: Nihon no Gofu Bunka]

Conclusion

Goshuin are excellent indices of both continuity and change vis-à-vis the Meiji Restoration. Post-Meiji (all the way to present-day) shrine goshuin differ from those given at temples.[41] Shrine

[41] I am speaking of only Tendai and Shingon temples here as Nichiren, Zen, Jodo, etc. all have their own unique features. They are still quite different from shrine goshuin but for the sake of this discussion I have not addressed them at all.

goshuin tend to me much more simplistic and their characteristics differ in form and (often) function. The *goshuin* below if from Nishiki Tenmangu Jinja 錦天満堂 in Kyoto. The first striking difference is that there is no Siddham treasure seal; shrine goshuin tend to have one or two main seals as opposed to three, like those given at Buddhist temples and none are esoteric Buddhist seals. Shrine *goshuin* are generally imprinted with the name of the shrine in the center and something the name of the shrine or enshrined deity is above in script. A shrine emblem (usually a family crest though there are many variations including some related to enshrined *kami* and those of the shrine families) may be placed above the name of the shrine. Similarly to temple *goshuin* the word *hohai* is printed in the upper right corner and the date of the visit is located in the lower left corner. The *goshuin* in this instance was obtained Reiwa 5 (2023) 7th month, 30th day (July 20).

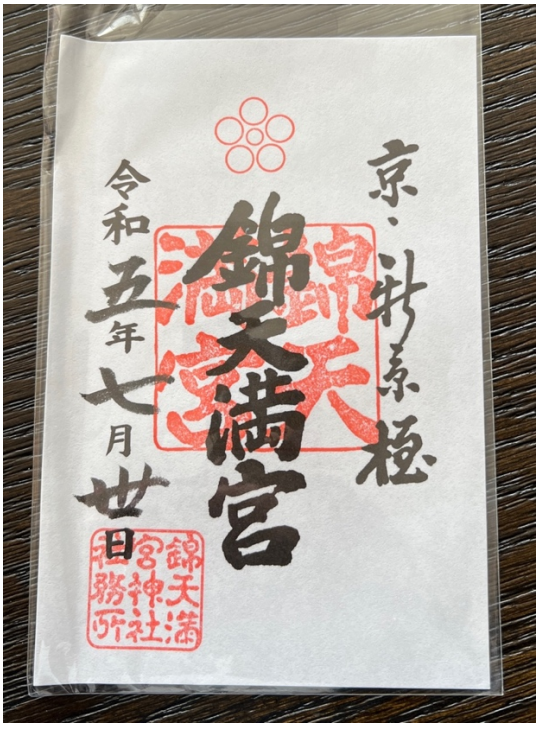


Figure 34 Shrine goshuin, Reiwa. Author's.

Goshuin are material manifestations of not only religious traditions that signify a relationship with buddhas, bodhisattvas, and *kami* but provide a window onto the ways in which the Meiji reforms not only succeeded but failed in practice. Products of the Meiji are found evident in goshuin which remains a living, breathing custom and maintains a continuity to today. We have seen how before the Meiji reforms shrine and temple nōkyō were indistinctive but that after *shinbutsu bunri* shrine goshuin looks strikingly different. No doubt this was to accentuate the political motivations of elevating state Shinto but even though Buddhist pilgrimages, like the Rokujūroku-bu were banned, evidence survived not only in *nōkyōchō* from the period but in the fact that even today goshuin are a serious aspect of Japanese religiosity.

Senkōji 全興寺 in Osaka is yet another example of how seriously the act of giving and receiving goshuin is taken. A peanut of a temple tucked away in a local shopping district the "Hell Temple" is part of a long history with its first statue of Yakushi nyorai 薬師如来 (Medicine buddha) erected around 1400 years ago. The Hondō 本堂 (main hall) was partially burned down in 1615 and was reconstructed in 1661 which is one of the oldest wooden structures in Osaka Prefecture. The day I attended there was a local family that had just attended a funeral and couple of old men that sat in the rest area along the path chatting quietly together, and a group of old women enjoying some tea. After appropriately completing the circuit of this temple and honoring the *honzon*, I made my way to the kiosk and, as per usual, stood in line. Although the line was not particularly long it is worth noting that there is almost always a line at each temple and shrine. When it was my turn to present my *goshuinchō* to be inscribed, the woman working informed me that the monk had gone on lunch and asked me to please wait. It was clear to me just how seriously this was taken here, like many of the others. The woman disturbed the

monk during his lunch and came back with the inscribed *goshuin*. She gripped the *goshuinchō* with both hands and bowed as she raised her arms to hand the book to me. In the time I spent collecting hundreds of *goshuin*, this was almost always the way it was done.

Emperor Shōmu's stands as a pivotal era in Japanese history, marked by profound developments in religious patronage and cultural integration. A devout Buddhist, Shōmu's endorsement of the Golden Light *Sūtra* (Konkōmyōkyō) and the establishment of Tōdaiji in Nara underscored his dual role as a religious leader and a political sovereign. The *sūtra*'s prominence in state rituals, notably the Misaie Assembly and Saishōkō (Golden Light Lectures), positioned it as not merely a religious text but a cornerstone of imperial legitimacy and state protection.The Golden Light *Sūtra*'s theological precepts, advocating for both individual enlightenment and collective auspiciousness, resonated deeply within the imperial court and permeated wider Japanese society. Its propagation facilitated the integration of Buddhism into the political sphere, reinforcing the divine mandate of the emperor while concurrently safeguarding the realm against external and internal threats. The *sūtra*'s invocation of Benzaiten, the goddess of knowledge and protection, symbolized a syncretic fusion of Buddhist principles with indigenous beliefs, further solidifying Buddhism's role in shaping Japan's religious landscape.

The Saigoku pilgrimage emerged as a hallmark of Japanese spirituality during the Heian period, encompassing thirty-three temples dedicated to Kannon, the bodhisattva of compassion. This pilgrimage, spanning cultural and historical landmarks across Western Japan, became a conduit for spiritual transformation and communal cohesion. Pilgrims embarked on arduous journeys seeking spiritual enlightenment, divine favor, and personal blessings, thereby forging a profound connection with sacred sites and their cultural significance. Central to the pilgrimage experience sacred seals imbued with esoteric Buddhist properties were obtained at each temple

visit. These seals served as conduits of spiritual power, proof of veneration and dedication that reinforced the pilgrim's connection to the sacred. The ritualistic practices surrounding *goshuin* exemplified Japan's rich tradition of blending religious devotion with material culture, reflecting the enduring influence of Buddhism on Japanese religious practices and identity.

Figure 35 *Hotoke no kuni* (Land of the Spirits) statue hall (including Kobo Daishi) and stained-glass mandala on the floor, Senkōji, Osaka 2023

Chapter Six: Conclusion

This thesis has delved into the intricate world *goshuin*, transcending their commonly misperceived role in English language scholarship as "pilgrim stamps." It has explored the world of *goshuin* through a lens that goes beyond mere categorization or description, critically assessing the scholarly discourse that contextualizes and informs our understanding of *goshuin*, challenging simplistic labels. I have unveiled a multifaceted and profoundly ritualized dimension of *goshuin* that draws striking parallels to broader traditions of sacred objects and talismans in Japan. While some scholars may contest the classification, this research has presented compelling reasons to embrace the categorization, emphasizing that *goshuin* are far from being mere "stamps."

The world of *goshuin* is complex and multifaceted, reaching far beyond the realm of commemorative markers of visits; they symbolize a deep connection between worshipper and deity, the roots of which can be traced back to the early eighteenth century, evolving from the dedicated pilgrimages of the Rokujūrokubu *kaikoku hijiri*. Over time, this practice expanded to include more than just the designated sixty-six sites, leading to the creation of popular pilgrimage routes like the Saigoku. The historical significance of *goshuin* extends beyond their use as markers of religious devotion, offering a window onto the broader cultural and religious landscape of Japan.

Pilgrimage indeed plays a central role in *goshuin* culture, with routes like the Saigoku proving an excellent example of this. Pilgrims invest not only their time but also their financial resources, as evidenced by the pilgrimage paraphernalia at Shittenō-ji. However, *goshuin* are more than mere collectibles and so much more than just "pilgrim stamps;" they are tangible expressions of faith and devotion and, as I have shown here, perform a variety of talismanic

functions. The layers of *goshuin* are incredibly rich, but their importance and ritual significance is entirely lost when we approach them through a Eurocentric lens.

The *goshuin* performs as almost a stand-in for the actual image of worship (i.e. *kami* and buddhas). This is partly because the vermilion seal itself has the meaning of symbolizing the *gohonzon*, but it is also based on the fact that over time it has become increasingly popular to also inscribe the page with the written name of the *gohonzon* in black script, particularly on temple *goshuin*.[1] A typical *goshuin* therefore, consists of the vermillion seal and black handwritten script with a brush, noting details such as the name of the temple or shrine, the name of the principal deity, and the word *hōhai*. But, as its name suggests, the central seal— the vermillion treasure seal—is the foremost component of *goshuin.* The origins of goshuin have been traced back to the *nōkyō* of the Rokujūroku-bu *kaikoku hijiri* and are directly linked to esoteric Buddhist traditions, namely Tendai and Shingon.

Shinbutsu shūgo, the amalgamation of Buddhist and Shintō elements, marked centuries of religious syncretism in Japan and from the joint construction of Shintō shrines and Buddhist temples to the mutual influence on rituals and beliefs, this syncretic approach underscored the interconnectedness of these traditions. However, the advent of the Meiji period marked a seismic shift with the enforcement of *shinbutsu bunri*. This policy, forcibly disassociating Buddhism and Shintō, reverberated across Japanese society, resulting in profound social, political, and religious transformations. The government's aim to establish Shintō as a state cult and elevate the emperor's divine lineage signaled a pivotal moment in Japan's religious history. As a policy forcibly dissociating indigenous Japanese religion from Buddhism, *shinbutsu bunri* left an indelible mark on the religious and cultural landscape. Temples and shrines, once intimately

[1] Murakami Tetsuki *Kokon goshuin kenkyūjo*「古今御朱印研究所」.

connected, underwent systematic dismantling, leading to the loss of status for powerful Buddhist institutions. The reforms culminated in the *haibutsu kishaku* movement which advocated (and acted on) the abolition of Buddhism and the destruction of Buddhist symbols. The violent aftermath further underscored the societal impact of the Meiji Restoration on religious practices.

The Meiji Restoration, driven by fervent ideals of modernization and influenced by "Western" concepts, initiated sweeping changes. State Shintō sought to consolidate control over diverse religious traditions, asserting dominance over Buddhism and Christianity. Simultaneously, Restoration Shintō, emerging from the Kokugaku school, fueled anti-Buddhist sentiments and played a crucial role in the political upheavals that characterized the Meiji era. Yet, amidst the transformative currents of the Meiji Restoration, traditional religious practices endured as a testament to the resilience of cultural heritage. The Meiji Restoration brought about profound reorganizations, but it could not sever the enduring connections between the Japanese people and their rich religious heritage.

The government's attempt to redefine religion extended to the realm of State Shintō, which renounced its religious function to rule over all other religions. The restoration of Imperial rule, presented as a revival of divine authority, led to the legislation of anti-Buddhist measures. Separation edicts, specifically terming Buddhism as the "heretical law" (*jahō* 邪法), aimed to establish Shintō shrines as the focal point of reverence for all Japanese people, reinforcing the doctrine of the Imperial nation. These measures, legislated by figures like Kamei Koremi and Fukuba Bisei, were a significant part of the anti-Buddhist program during the early Meiji era.

The Meiji Restoration stands as a watershed moment in Japan's history, where the collision of tradition and modernity produced intricate narratives of religious evolution. The radical changes brought about by this era were not uniform in their impact; instead, they yielded

a complex interplay between the resilience of traditional practices and the assimilation of new concepts. The struggles with language and conceptual translation, epitomized by the adoption of the term "s*hūkyō*," exemplify the challenges of navigating cultural, religious, and political identities. The Meiji Restoration was not a monolithic force erasing the past but a multifaceted catalyst that prompted a negotiation between tradition and change.

Amidst the sweeping changes of the Meiji era, the enduring presence of *goshuin* provides a poignant lens through which to view the resilience of cultural practices. Goshuin*,* with their rich symbolism and multifaceted applications, represent a testament to the intricate interplay between tradition and adaptation during a crucial chapter in Japanese history. The tradition of *goshuin* played a crucial role in Japanese religious practices during this transformative period. Pilgrims would obtain these seals as they visited various sacred sites, creating a tangible record of their spiritual journey. These vermillion seals, marked with intricate calligraphy and symbols, not only symbolized the pilgrims' devotion but also served as tangible reminders of the syncretic nature of Japanese religious life, intertwining Buddhist and Shintō elements.

Further Research

Given that this research is lacking, English language scholarship would particularly benefit from much further investigation, particularly in the context of GIS. Historians and many in the humanities seem intimidated by the technologies that many others bring to their research. One specific project I plan to carry out is the creation of a database in English created with GIS software which will be made accessible to the general public through an open-source website. I will use my data from the temple and shrine network across more than 150 years to present my research findings using HGIS and transparent tools for an academic and general audience.

To date, the most studied pilgrimage routes are the Shikoku and Kumano. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of pilgrimage routes that remain unexplored. The Rokujūroku-bu discussed in this research would benefit from more research, especially in English where virtually nothing exists as would the Saigoku which remains understudied. Another route that I would love to see researched but did not have the time to do in this project is the Kinki 近畿 336 Fudō-son 不動尊 Pilgrimage.[2]

Another avenue that I did not have the chance to explore here is *senjafuda* **千社札**. Graffiti-like paper slips left by visitors envelop a deep and extremely interesting history but, in a nutshell, so to speak, they are slips of paper that worshippers leave behind after worship and receiving their *goshuin*. It was my initial intent to include a section dedicated to *senjafuda,* however, time and space constraints will not allow it. But as I was researching *goshuin*, I learned just how connected and important they are to one another, and this relationship calls for intensive study.

[2] *Kinki 36 Fudosan Pilgrimage kinki sanjuroku fudo junrei* 「近畿三十六不動尊巡礼」, ed. Supervised by the Kinki 36 Fudoson Sacred Sites Association 「近畿三十六不動尊霊場会監修」, Dai 1-han, kaitei shinpan ed. (Ōsaka-shi: Toki Shobo Col., Ltd. 「株式会社朱鷺書房」, 2011).

Figure 36 Senjafuda, Koyasan. Author's photo.

As for the study of Japanese talismans, the bulk of the research has been on *ema*, *omamaori*, and *ofuda*. The Bernard Frank collection[3] and Josef Kyburz's research are among the most intensive.[4] However, other talismans like nail polish sold at Miidera cry out to be researched. Again, another avenue of the initially intended research that I was not able to explore

[3] Hayek and Kyburz, "Base Ofuda."
[4] Bernard, *Ofuda*; Kyburz, *Ofuda*; Hayek and Kyburz, "Base Ofuda."

fully here, is a fascinating area of research. Nail polish, exclusive to Miidera, contains the *goma* from their fire rituals, and while it does not last as long as regular nail polish and is nearly twice the price, it has been ritually infused for protection.

Bibliography

Abé, Ryuichi. *The Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

Ama, Toshimaro. *Why Are the Japanese Non-Religious? : Japanese Spirituality : Being Non-Religious in a Religious Culture.* Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2005.

Araki, Michio. "Japanese Buddhism." In *Encyclopedia of Religion*, edited by Mircea Eliade and Charles J. Adams, 487-93. New York: Macmillian Press, 1987.

Astley, Ian. "62. Esoteric Buddhism, Material Culture, and Catalogues in East Asia." In *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, edited by Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen and Richard K. Payne. Handbook of Oriental Studies, 709-18. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

Austin, J. L. *How to Do Things with Words.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962.

Barbaro, Paolo. "The Senses, the Path, and the Bus." [In en]. *Traditiones* 36, no. 1 (2007): 87-111.

Barthes, Roland. *Empire of Signs.* Translated by Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1982.

Basabe, Fernando M., Shin Anzai, and Alphonso M. Nebreda. *Japanese Youth Confronts Religion; a Sociological Survey.* Tokyo,: Sophia University in co-operation with C. E. Tuttle Co. Tokyo & Rutland Vt., 1967.

Bell, Catherine. *Ritual Perspectives and Dimensions.* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

———. *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Ben-Ari, Eyal, Brian Moeran, and James Valentine. *Unwrapping Japan : Society and Culture in Anthropological Perspective.* Honolulu

Manchester, Eng.: University of Hawaii Press ;

Manchester University Press, 1990.

Benedetta, Lomi. "Dharanis, Talismans, and Straw-Dolls: Ritual Choreographies and Healing Strategies of the *Rokujikyōhō* in Medieval Japan." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 41, 2 (2014): 255-304.

Bernard, Frank. *Ofuda: Images Gravées Des Temples Du Japon: La Collection Bernard Frank.* Bibliothèque De L'institut Des Hautes Études Japonaises. Edited by Josef A. Kyburz, Junko Frank and Didier Davin. Paris: Collège de France, Institut des Hautes Études Japonaises, 2011, 2011.

Blomberg, Catharina. "Ise Jingū, Nōsatsu Kai and Indulgences: Pilgrims in Tokugawa Japan Viewed by Two Swedish Travellers." Chap. 5 In *Religious Transformation in Modern Asia: A Transnational Movement*, edited by David Kim. Leiden, Boston: Brill.

Blue, Gregory, Martin P. Bunton, and Ralph C. Croizier. *Colonialism and the Modern World : Selected Studies.* Sources and Studies in World History. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2002.

Bodiford, William M. "The Protocol of the Gods: A Study of the Kasuga Cult in Japanese History." *Journal of Asian Studies* 52, no. 4 (Nov 1993): 1015.

http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0021-9118%28199311%2952%3A4%3C1015%3ATPOTGA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-C
http://www.jstor.org/journals/00219118.html.
Breen, John. *Rituals and Power: The Emperor's Meiji Restoration Girei to Kenryoku Tennō No Meiji Ishin* 儀礼と権力 天皇の明治維新. [Ritual and Power: the Emperor's Meiji Restoration]. Tokyo: Heibonsha 平凡社, 2011. Hōzōkan, 2021.
Breen, John, and Mark Teeuwen, eds. *Shinto in History: Ways of the Kami*, Curzon Studies in Asian Religion. Richmond and Surrey, England: Curzon Press, 2000. Reprint, Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000.
Brittain, Tanya. "Kali Ma & Kundalini: Serpent Goddess Rising." *S/He: An International Journal of Goddess Studies* 1, no. 1 (2022): 94-110.
Burnouf, Eugène. *Introduction to the History of Indian Buddhism.* Buddhism and Modernity. Chicago ; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2010, 2010.
Burnouf, Eugène, Jules Mohl, and Théodore Pavie. *Le Lotus De La Bonne Loi (Saddharmapuṇḍarīka), Traduit Du Sanscrit, Accompagné D'un Commentaire Et De Vingt Et Un Mémoires Relatifs Au Bouddhisme Par M.E. Burnouf.* Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1852.
Bushelle, Ethan. "Mountain Buddhism and the Emergence of a Buddhist Cosmic Imaginary in Ancient Japan." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 45, 1 (2018): 1-36.
Buswell, Robert E. and Lopez , Donald S. Jr. "S." In *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014.
Chen, Jinhua. "The Construction of Early Tendai Esoteric Buddhism: The Japanese Provenance of Saichō's Transmission Documents and Three Esoteric Apocrypha Attributed to Śubhākarasiṃha." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 21, no. 1 (1998): 21-76.
———. "The Formation of Early Esoteric Buddhism in Japan: A Study of Three Japanese Esoteric Apocrypha."Ph.D. diss., McMaster University, 1997.
Chen, Jinhua, and McMaster University. Dept. of Religious Studies. "The Formation of Early Esoteric Buddhism in Japan : A Study of the Three Japanese Esoteric Apocrypha." 1997. http://libaccess.mcmaster.ca/login?url=http://wwwlib.umi.com/dissertations/fullcit/NQ30080
Chijiwa Itaru 千々和到, ed. *Nihon No Gofu Bunka 日本の護符文化.* Tokyo: Kōbundō 弘文堂, 2010.
Clark, Stephen. "Placing History: How Maps, Spatial Data and Gis Are Changing Historical Scholarship by Knowles A.K and Hillier." *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 171, no. 4 (2008): 1037-38. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-985X.2008.00561_9.x.
Clarke, Shayne. "Miscellaneous Musings on Mūlasarvāstivāda Monks: The Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya Revival in Tokugawa Japan." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 33, no. 1 (2006): 1-49.
Craig, Timothy J. *Japan Pop! : Inside the World of Japanese Popular Culture.* Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2000.
Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World. Edited by John G. Gager. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
Dalton, Jacob. "How Dhāraṇīs Were Proto-Tantric: Liturgies, Ritual Manuals, and the Origins of the Tantras." In *Tantric Traditions in Transmission and Translation*, edited by David

Gordon White and Ryan Richard Overbey, 199-229. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.
Daniels, Inge. "Beneficial Bonds: Luck and the Lived Experience of Relatedness in Contemporary Japan." [In en]. *Social Analysis* 56, no. 1 (2012). https://doi.org/10.3167/sa.2012.560110. http://berghahnjournals.com/view/journals/social-analysis/56/1/sa560110.xml.
Daniels, Inge Maria. "Scooping, Raking, Beckoning Luck: Luck, Agency and the Interdependence of People and Things in Japan." [In en]. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 9, no. 4 (2003/12// 2003): 619-38. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9655.2003.00166.x. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9655.2003.00166.x.
Davidson, Ronald M. "Studies in *Dhāraṇī* Literature Ii: Pragmatics of *Dhāraṇīs*." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 77, no. 1 (2014): 5-61.
de Jong, J.W. "The Study of Buddhism: Problems and Perspectives." In *Studies in Indo-Asian Art and Culture*, edited by P. Ratnam. New Delhi, 1975.
Deal, William E., and Brian D. Ruppert, eds. *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism*, Wiley-Blackwell Guides to Buddhism 1. Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015.
Deeg, Max, and Tibor Porció. "Reading a Dhāraṇī: Problems Concerning the Indian Sitātapatrā in the Light of Amoghavajra's Transcription and the Tibetan Translations from Dunhuang." Paper presented at the 14th World Sanskrit Conference, Kyoto, Japan, 2009.
Derrida, Jacques. *Margins of Philosophy.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.
Derrida, Jacques, Alan Bass, and Jacques Derrida. *Writing and Difference.* Routledge Classics. Reprinted ed. London: Routledge, 2005, 2005.
"Digital Dictionary of Buddhism." *Digtial Dictionary of Buddhism* 電子佛教辭典 (1995 1995). www.buddhism-dict.net
https://www.google.com/search?q=digital+dictionary+of+buddhism&rlz=1C1LLPF_jaJP1067JP1067&oq=digital+diction&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUqBwgCEAAYgAQyBggAEEUYOTIHCAEQABiABDIHCAIQABiABDIHCAMQABiABDIHCAQQABiABDIHCAUQABiABDIHCAYQABiABDIHCAcQABiABDIHCAgQABiABDIKCAkQLhiABBjlBNIBCjE0NTIwajBqMTWoAgCwAgA&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8.
Dolce, Lucia. "64. Taimitsu: The Esoteric Buddhism of the Tendai School." In *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, edited by Charles D. Orzech. Handbook of Oriental Studies, 744-67. Leiden: Brill, 2011.
———. "Reconsidering the Taxonomy of the Esoteric: Hermeneutical and Ritual Practices of the Lotus Sutra." Chap. 6 In *The Culture of Secrecy in Japan*, edited by Bernhard Scheid and Mark Teeuwen, 130-72. London, New York: Routledge, 2006.
———. "Reconsidering the Taxonomy of the Esoteric: Hermeneutical and Ritual Practices of the Lotus Sutra." Chap. 6 In *The Culture of Secrecy in Japan*, edited by Bernhard Scheid and Mark Teeuwen, 130-71. London, New York: Routledge, 2006.
———. "Taimitsu Rituals in Medieval Japan: Sectarian Competition and the Dynamics of Tantric Performance." In *Transformations and Transfer of Tantra in Asia and Beyond*, edited by István Keul, 329-64. Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter Publishers, 2012.
Earhart, Byron. "Mechanisms and Process in the Study of Japanese Religion." In *Nihon Shūkyō E No Shikaku* 日本宗教　絵の資格, 610-20. Ōsaka-shi: Tōhō Shuppan, 1994.

Eliade, Mircea, ed. *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. Complete and Unabridged ed. 16 vols. New York: Macmillan Pub. Co., 1993.
Elisabetta, Porcu. "Pop Religion in Japan: Buddhist Temples, Icons, and Branding." *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture* 26, no. 2 (2014): 157-72.
"Ema-Gined Community: Votive Tablets (Ema) and Strategic Ambivalence in Wartime Japan." [In en]. *Asain Ethnology* 67, no. 1 (2008 2008): 43-77. https://www.jstor.org/stable/25135286.
Emmerick, R.E. *Sūtra of Golden Light: Being a Translation of the Suvarṇabhāsottamasūtra.* Sacred Books of the Buddhists. 3rd rev. ed. London: Pali Text Society, 2001 ed. Vol. 27, London: Luzac, 1970.
Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia. Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section Four, China. Edited by Charles D. Orzech, Henrik Hjort Sorensen and Richard Karl Payne. Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2011.
Fabio, Rambelli. "Secrecy in Japanese Esoteric Buddhism." Chap. 5 In *The Culture of Secrecy in Japan*, edited by Bernhard Scheid and Mark Teeuwen, 107-29. London, New York: Routledge, 2006.
Faure, Bernard. "The Buddhist Icon and the Modern Gaze." *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 3 (1998): 768-813.
Fitzgerald, Timothy. *The Ideology of Religious Studies.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, 2000.
Fleming, Benjamin J. and Mann, Richard. "Introduction: Material Culture and Religious Studies." In *Material Culture and Asian Religions: Text, Image, Object*, edited by Richard D. Mann Benjamin J. Fleming, 1-21. New York, London: Routledge, 2014.
Foard, James H. "The Boundaries of Compassion: Buddhism and National Tradition in Japanese Pilgrimage." *Journal of Asian Studies* 41, no. 2 (1982): 231-49.
Frazer, James George. *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion.* 3 ed. London: Macmillan & Co,. Limited, 1919.
Gardiner, David L. "Tantric Buddhism in Japan: Shingon, Tendai, and the Esotericization of Japanese Buddhisms." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*: Oxford University Press, 2018.
Geertz, Clifford. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." In *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, edited by Clifford Geertz. New York: Basic Books, 1973.
Giebel, Rolf W., and Dale E. Todaro. *Shingon Texts: On the Difference between the Exoteric and Esoteric Teachings, the Meaning of Becoming a Buddha in This Very Body, the Meanings of Sound, Sign, and Reality, the Meaning of the Word Hūṃ, the Precious Key to the Secret Treasury Translated from the Japanese (Taishō Volume 77, Nos. 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2426) and the Mitsugonon Confession; the Illuminating Secret Commentary on the Five Cakras and Nine Syllables Translated from the Japanese (Taishō Nos. 2527, 2514).* Bdk English Tripiṭaka 98-I, Ii, Iii, Iv, V, Vi, Vii. Berkeley, Calif.: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2004. UBC Press, 2006.
Grapard, Allan. "Geosophia, Geognosis, and Geopiety: Orders of Significance in Japanese Representations of Space." In *Now / Here: Space, Time, and Modernity*, edited by Roger Friedland and Deirdre Boden, 372-401. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1994.

———. "Institution, Ritual, and Ideology: The Twenty-Two Shrine-Temple Multiplexes of Heian Japan." *History of Religions* 27, no. 3 (1988): 246-69.
Grapard, Allan G. "Flying Mountains and the Walkers of Emptiness: Toward a Definition of Sacred Space in Japanese Religion." *History of Religions* 21, no. 3 (1982): 195-221.
———. "Institution, Ritual, and Ideology: The Twenty-Two Shrine-Temple Multiplexes of Heian Japan." [In en]. *History of Religions* 27, no. 3 (1988): 246-69. https://doi.org/10.1086/463122. https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/463122.
———. "Japan's Ignored Cultural Revolution: The Separation of Shinto and Buddhist Divinities in Meiji ("Shimbutsu Bunri") and a Case Study: Tōnomine." [In en]. *History of Religions* 23, no. 3 (1984/02// 1984): 240-65. https://doi.org/10.1086/462953. https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/462953.
Gregory, N. Ian and Ell, S. Paul. *Historical Gis: Technologies, Methodologies and Scholarship.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
Guenther, Herbert V. and Chogyam Trungpa. *The Dawn of Tantra.* Boulder, Colorado: Shambhala Publications Inc., 1975.
Gummer, Natalie D. "Suvarṇabhāsottama*sūtra*." In *Brill's Encylopedia of Buddhism, Volume One: Literature and Languages*, edited by Jonathan Silk, Oskar von Hinüber and Vincent Eltschinger, 249-60. Leiden: Brill, 2015.
Gygi, Fabio R. "Things That Believe: Talismans, Amulets, Dolls, and How to Get Rid of Them." [In en]. *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 45, no. 2 (2018). https://doi.org/10.18874/jjrs.45.2.2018.423-452. https://nirc.nanzan-u.ac.jp/nfile/4683.
Hardacre, Helen. "Conflict between Shugendō and the New Religions of Bakumatsu Japan." [In en]. *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 21, no. 2-3 (1994): 137-66. https://doi.org/10.18874/jjrs.21.2-3.1994.137-166. http://nirc.nanzan-u.ac.jp/nfile/2539.
———. "Creating State Shinto: The Great Promulgation Campaign and the New Religions." [In en]. *Journal of Japanese Studies* 12, no. 1 (1986): 29-63. https://doi.org/10.2307/132446. https://www.jstor.org/stable/132446?origin=crossref.
———. *Kurozumikyō and the New Religions of Japan.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986.
———. "Religion and Civil Society in Contemporary Japan." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 31, no. 2 (2004): 389-415.
———. *Religion and Society in Nineteenth-Century Japan : A Study of the Southern Kant*O Region, Using Late Edo and Eary Meiji Gazetteers.* Michigan Monograph Series in Japanese Studies ; No. 41. Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Japanese Studies the University of Michigan, 2002.
———. *Shintō and the State, 1868-1988.* Studies in Church and State. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989.
———. "The Shintō Priesthood in Early Meiji Japan: Preliminary Inquiries." [In en]. *History of Religions* 27, no. 3 (1988/02// 1988): 294-320. https://doi.org/10.1086/463124. https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/463124.
———. *Shinto: A History.* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.
Hayek, Matthias, and Josef Kyburz. "Base Ofuda." [In fr]. (2019). http://ofuda.crcao.fr/.
Heidegger, Martin. *The Phenomonology of Religious Life.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004.
Hirai Yūkei 平井宥慶. "Chūgoku No Mikkyō Girei Gairon 中国の密教儀礼概論 (General Remarks on Chinese Esoteric Buddhist Rites)." In *Chūgoku Mikkyō* 中国密教 *(Chinese*

Esoteric Buddhism), edited by Tachikawa Musashi 立川武蔵 and Yoritomi Motohiro 頼富本宏. Shīrizu Mikkyō シリーズ密教 (Esoteric Buddhism Series) 3, 279-302. Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1999.
Hirakawa, A., and E.B. Ceadel. "Japanese Research on Buddhism since the Meiji Period." *Monumenta Nipponica* 11, 3 (1955): 221-46.
Introduction to Goshuin: Definitive Edition Goshuin Nyūmon: Ketteihan 御朱印入門: 決定版. Edited by Tankosha Editorial Department 淡交社編集局編. Kyōto: Tankosha 淡交社, 2008, 2008.
Jansen, Marius B. *The Emergence of Meiji Japan.* New York NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
Josephson-Storm, Jason Ānanda. *The Invention of Religion in Japan.* Chicago ; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012, 2012.
Jun'ichi, Isomae. "The Conceptual Formation of the Category "Religion" in Modern Japan: Religion, State, Shinto." *Journal of Religion in Japan* 1 (2012 2012): 226-45.
Kant, Immanuel. *Die Religion Innerhalb Der Grenzen Der Blofsen Vernunft. Die Metaphysik Der Sitten, Kant's Gesammelte Schriften.* Berlin: Reimer, 1969.
Ketelaar, James E. *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and Its Persecution.* 1. Princeton paperback print ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1993, 1993.
Keyworth, George A. "The Esotericization of Chinese Buddhist Practice." Chap. 48 In *Estoeric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, edited by Henrik H. Sorensen Charles D. Orzek, and Richard K. Payne, 516-20. Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011.
———. "On Bonshakuji as the Penultimate Buddhist Temple to Protect the State in Early Japanese History." *Religions* 13, no. 641 (2022): 23 pages. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13070641.
Kim, Sujung. "A Star God Is Born: Chintaku Reifujin Talismans in Japanese Religions." [In en]. *Religions* 13, no. 5 (2022/05/11/ 2022): 431. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13050431. https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/13/5/431.
Kimiaki, Tanaka. *Mandara Ikonorojī.* Tōkyō: Hirakawa Shuppansha, 1987, 1987.
King, Richard. *Orientalism and Religion: Post-Colonial Theory, India and 'the Mystic East'.* London and New York: Routledge, 1999.
Kinki 36 Fudosan Pilgrimage Kinki Sanjuroku Fudo Junrei 近畿三十六不動尊巡礼. Edited by Supervised by the Kinki 36 Fudoson Sacred Sites Association 近畿三十六不動尊霊場会監修. Dai 1-han, kaitei shinpan ed. Ōsaka-shi: Toki Shobo Col., Ltd. 株式会社朱鷺書房, 2011, 2011.
Kishimoto, Hideo. *Japanese Religion in the Meiji Era.* Tokyo: Toyo Bunko, 1969.
Klautau, Orion. "(Re)Inventing “Japanese Buddhism”: Sectarian Reconfiguration and Historical Writing in Meiji Japan." *The Eastern Buddhist, New Series* 42, 1 (2011): 75-99.
Kojima, Hiromi 小嶋博巳 *A Study of the Sixty-Six Rokujūrokubu Nihon Kaikoku No Kenkyū* 六十六部日本廻国の研究. Kyoto: Hozokan 法蔵館, 2022.
Kumamoto, Hiroshi. "Paul Pelliot and the Deśanā-Parivarta of the Suvarṇabhāsa-*Sūtra*." *Bulletin of the Asia Institute, New Series, Iranian and Zoroastrian Studies in Honor of Prods Oktor Skjærvø* 19 (2005): 77-82.
Kuo, Li Ying. "Dhāraṇī Pillars in China: Functions and Symbols." In *China and Beyond in the Mediaeval Period: Cultural Crossings and Inter-Regional Connections*, edited by

Dorothy C. Wong and Gustav Heldt, 351-85. Amherst, NY and New Delhi: Cambria Press and Manohar, 2014.
Kuroda, Toshio. "The Development of the Kenmitsu System as Japan's Medieval Orthodoxy." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23, no. 3-4 (1996): 233-71.
Kuroda, Toshio, and James C. Dobbins, trans. "The Development of the Kenmitsu System as Japan's Medieval Orthodoxy." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23, no. 3-4 (1996): 233-70.
Kyburz, Josef A. *Ofuda: On Japanese Charms Ofuda: Amulettes Et Talismans Du Japon.* Bibliothèque De L'institut Des Hautes Études Japonaises. Paris: Collège de France, Institut des hautes études japonaises, 2014.
Levi-Strauss, Claude. *The View from Afar.* Translated by Joachim Neugroschel and Phoebe Hoss. New York: Basic Books, 1985.
Lomi, Bendetta. "Dharanis, Talismans, and Straw-Dolls: Ritual Choreographies and Healing Strategies of the *Rokujikyōhō* in Medieval Japan." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 41, 2 (2014): 255-304.
Lopez, Donald. *The Story of Buddhism: A Concise Guide to Its History & Teachings.* Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001, 2001.
Lopez, Donald S. *The Story of Buddhism: A Concise Guide to Its History and Teachings.* lst ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001. http://www.loc.gov/catdir/description/hc042/00054263.html
Lopez, Donald S., Jr., ed. *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
Ludvik, Catherine. "From Sarasvatī to Benzaiten." PhD dissertation, University of Toronto, 2001.
———. "A Harivaṃśa Hymn in Yijing's Chinese Translation of the Sutra of Giolden Light." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 124, no. 4 (2004): 707-34.
———. "La Benzaiten À Huit Bras: - Durgā Déesse Guerrière Sous L'apparence De Sarasvatī -." *Cahiers d'Extrême Asie* 11 Nouvelle études de Dunhuang: Centenaire de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient (1999-2000): 292-338.
———. *Sarasvatī: Riverine Goddess of Knowledge; from the Manuscript-Carrying Vīṇā-Player to the Weapon-Wielding Defender of the Dharma.* Brill's Indological Library. Vol. 27, Leiden: Brill, 2007.
Marcel, Mauss. *General Theory of Magic.* London ; New York: Routledge, 1950.
Mark, Teeuwen, and Rambelli Fabio. *Buddhas and Kami in Japan: Honji Suijaku as a Combinatory Paradigm.* Routledge, 2003. https://resolver.ebscohost.com/Redirect/PRL?EPPackageLocationID=1127567.535087.41556234&epcustomerid=cts1.
Matsunaga, Alicia. *The Buddhist Philosophy of Assimilation: The Historical Development of the Honji-Suijaku Theory.* Tokyo and Rutland, Vermont: Sophia University and C. E. Tuttle Co., 1969.
Matsunaga, Daigan, and Alicia Matsunaga. *Foundation of Japanese Buddhism.* Los Angeles, Calif.: Buddhist Books International, 1974.
Matsunaga Yūkei 松長有慶. *Mikkyō KyōTen Seiritsu Shiron* 密教経典成立史論 *(Exposition on the Development of the Esoteric Buddhist Canon).* Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1980.
———. *Mikkyō No Rekishi* 密教の歴史 *(the History of Esoteric Buddhism).* Sāra Sōsho サーラ叢書. 5th., 1997 ed. Kyoto: Heirakuji shoten, 1969.

Maxey, Trent E. *The "Greatest Problem": Religion and State Formation in Meiji Japan.* Harvard East Asian Monographs 365. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center, 2014.
McBride II, Richard D. "Dhāraṇī and Spells in Medieval Sinitic Buddhism"." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 28, no. 1 (2005): 85-114.
———. "Is There Really 'Esoteric' Buddhism?". *Journal of the International Association for Buddhist Studies* 27 (2004): 329-56.
———. "The Mysteries of Body, Speech, and Mind: The Three Esoterica (*Sanmi*) in Medieval Sinitic Buddhism." *Journal of the International Association for Buddhist Studies* 29, no. 2 (2006): 1-51.
———. "Practical Buddhist Thaumaturgy: The "Great Dhāraṇī on Immaculately Pure Light" in Medieval Sinitic Buddhism." *Journal of Korean Religions* 1 (2011): 33-73.
———. "Wish-Fulfilling Spells and Talismans, Efficacoius Resonance, and Trilingual Spell Books: The *Mahāpratisarā-Dhāraṇī* in Chosŏn Buddhism." *Pacific World, 3rd ser.* 20 (2018): 55-93.
McCreery, John L. "Negotiating with Demons: The Uses of Magical Language." [In en]. *American Ethnologist* 22, no. 1 (1995/02// 1995): 144-64. https://doi.org/10.1525/ae.1995.22.1.02a00070. http://doi.wiley.com/10.1525/ae.1995.22.1.02a00070.
Moerman, D. Max. *Localizing Paradise: Kumano Pilgrimage and the Religious Landscape of Premodern Japan.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005.
Murakami, Shigeyoshi. *Japanese Religion in the Modern Century.* Translated by Harry Byron Earhart. Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1980, 1980.
Murakami Tetsuki, 手つき 村上, Receiving and studying the goshuin stamps that are given as proof of visiting shrines and temples, and introducing goshuin stamps from ancient times to the present day, from the Edo period to the present day., "*Kokon Goshuin Kenkyūjo* 古今御朱印研究所," *Kokon Goshuin Oboegaki* 古今御朱印覚書 *[Kokon Goshuin Memorandum]*, 2014, https://blog.goshuin.net.
Murrieta- Flores, Patricia and Martins, Bruno. "The Geospatial Humanities: Past, Present, and Future." *International Journal of Geographic Information Science* 33, no. 12 (2019): 2424-29. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/13658816.2019.1645336.
"Natural Earth Free Vector and Raster Map Data." April 2024. https://www.naturalearthdata.com/downloads/.
"Nichiren Buddhism Library." *Soka Gakkai Nichiren Buddhist Library*. https://www.nichirenlibrary.org/en/.
Payne, Richard K. "84. The Fourfold Training in Japanese Esoteric Buddhism." In *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, edited by Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen and Richard K. Payne. Leiden: Brill, 2011.
Payne, Richard Karl, and Taigen Daniel Leighton. *Discourse and Ideology in Medieval Japanese Buddhism.* New York, NY: Routledge, 2005. http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0511/2005012119.html
http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0653/2005012119-d.html.
"Pilgrim Stamp Hunting." The Japan America Society of Chicago 93rd, 2023, accessed April 29, 2024, https://jaschicago.org/event/pilgrim-stamp-hunting/ (Online Event).
Pilgrimages and Spiritual Quests in Japan. 1st edition ed. Edited by Peter Ackermann, Dolores Martinez and Maria Rodriguez del Alisal. London: Routledge, 2008.

Piovan, S. "Historical Maps in Gis." In *The Geographic Information Science & Technology Body of Knowledge,* edited by Wilson John P. 2019 https://gistbok.ucgis.org/bok-topics/historical-maps-gis.
Proffitt, Aaron. *Esoteric Pure Land Buddhism*. Honolulu: Hawai'i Press, 2023. eBook.
Puri, Baij Nath. *Buddhism in Central Asia.* Buddhist Traditions, Vol. 4. 1st ed. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987.
Rambelli, Fabio. *Buddhist Materiality: A Cultural History of Objects in Japanese Buddhism.* Asian Religions & Cultures. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2007, 2007.
———. *A Buddhist Theory of Semiotics: Signs, Ontology, and Salvation in Japanese Esoteric Buddhism.* Bloomsbury Advances in Semiotics. London ; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, An imprint of Bloomsbury Pub. Plc, 2013.
———. "The Ritual World of Buddhist “Shintō”: The *Reikiki* on Kami-Related Matters (*Jingi Kanjō*) in Late Medieval and Early-Modern Japan." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 29, 3-4, no. 265-297 (2002).
———. "Texts, Talismans, and Jewels: The *Reikiki* and the Perfomativity of Sacred Texts in Medieval Japan." In *Discourse and Ideology in Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, edited by Richard K. Payne and Taigen Daniel Leighton, 52-78. Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2006.
Rambelli, Fabio, and Mark Teeuwen, eds. *Buddhas and Kami in Japan: Honji Suijaku as a Combinatory Paradigm*. London and New York: Routledge, 2002.
Reader, I. *Making Pilgrimages: Meaning and Practice in Shikoku.* University of Hawaii Press, 2004. https://books.google.ca/books?id=a5oBEAAAQBAJ.
Reader, Ian. "Dead to the World: Pilgrims in Shikoku." In *Pilgrimage in Popular Culture*, 107-246. London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1993.
———. "Letters to the Gods: The Form and Meaning of *Ema*." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 18, no. 1 (1991): 24-50. https://doi.org/10.18874/jjrs.18.1.1991.23-50.
———. *Pilgrimage in the Marketplace.* New York, London: Routledge, 2014.
———. *Pilgrimage: A Very Short Introduction.* London ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.
———. *Religion in Contemporary Japan.* Transferred to digital printing ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001.
———. "An Unwelcome Minority: Banning Buddhist Practices, Marginalising Itinerants, and Constructing Heritage in a Japanese Pilgrimage." *Religion, State & Society* 51, no. 3 (2023): 254-66. https://doi.org/10.1080/09637494.2023.2200368.
Reader, Ian , and George Tanabe. *Practically Religious: Worldly Benefits and the Common Religion of Japan.* Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1998.
Reader, Ian, Esben Andreasen, and Finn Stefánsson, eds. *Japanese Religions: Past and Present*. Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1993.
Reader, Ian, and Paul L. Swanson. "Editor's Introduction Pilgrimage in the Japanese Religious Tradition." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies24* 24, no. 3/4 (1997 1997): 226-70.
Robson, James. "Brushes with Some "Dirty Truths": Handwritten Manuscripts and Religion in China." *History of Religions* 51, no. 4 (2012): 317-43.
———. "Signs of Power: Talismanic Writing in Chinese Buddhism." *History of Religions* 48, no. 2 (2008): 130-69.

Ruppert, Brian Douglas. *Jewel in the Ashes: Buddha Relics and Power in Early Medieval Japan.* Harvard East Asian Monographs, No. 188. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Council on East Asian Studies, 2000.

Sagai Tatsuru 嵯峨井建. *Shinbutsu Shūgō No Rekishi to Girei Kūkan 神仏習合の歴史と儀礼空間.* [History of Shintō-Buddhist Syncretism and Ritual Space]. Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 2013.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism.* London: Penguin Books, 1978.

Sakamoto Koremaru. "The Structure of State Shinto: Its Creation, Development, and Demise." Chap. 272-294 In *Shinto in History: Ways of the Kami*, edited by John Breen and Mark Teeuwen. Richmond and Surrey, England: Curzon Press, 2000.

Sakauchi Tatsuo 坂内龍 雄. *Shingon Darani 真言陀羅尼 (Mantra-Dhāraṇī).* Tokyo: Hirakawa shuppansha, 1981. 2001.

Schopen, Gregory. "Archaeology and Protestant Presuppositions in the Study of Indian Buddhism." In *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India*, 7-22. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997.

———. *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks : Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India.* Studies in the Buddhist Traditions. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997.

———. *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India.* Studies in the Buddhist Traditions. Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997.

———. *Buddhist Nuns, Monks, and Other Worldly Matters: Recent Papers on Monastic Buddhism in India.* Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014.

———. *Figments and Fragments of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India: More Collected Papers.* Studies in the Buddhist Traditions. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005.

———. "The Good Monk and His Money in a Buddhist Monasticism of "the Mahāyāna Period"." *The Eastern Buddhist* n.s. 32, no. 1 (2000): 85-105.

———. "The Lay Ownership of Monasteries and the Role of the Monk in Muulasarvaastivaadin Monasticism." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 19, no. 1 (Summer 1996 1996): 81-126.

———. "The Mahāyāna and the Middle Period in Indian Buddhism: Through a Chinese Looking-Glass." *The Eastern Buddhist* 32, no. 2 (2000): 1-25.

———. "On the Absence of Urtexts and Otiose Ācāryas: Buildings, Books, and Lay Buddhist Ritual at Gilgit." In *Écrire Et Transmettre En Inde Classique*, edited by Gérard Colas and Gerdi Gerschheimer, 189-212. Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 2009.

———. "The Phrase *Sa Pṛthivīpradeśaś Caityabhūto Bhavet* in the *Vajracchedikā*: Notes on the Cult of the Book in the Mahāyāna." *Indo-Iranian Journal* 17 (1975): 147-81.

———. "The Text of the 'Dhāraṇī Stones from Abhayagiriya': A Minor Contribution to the Study of Mahāyāna Literature in Ceylon." *Journal of the International Association for Buddhist Studies* 5, no. 1 (1982): 100-08.

Schurhammer S.J., George. *Shin-Tō the Way of the Gods in Japan: According to the Printed and Unprinted Reports of the Japanese Jesuit Missionaries in the 16th and 17th Centuries.* Leipzig and Bonn: Kurt Schroeder, 1923.

Searle, John. *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Sharf, Robert H. "On Esoteric Buddhism in China." In *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store Treatise*, 263-78. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002.
Sharf, Robert H., and Elizabeth Horton Sharf. *Living Images: Japanese Buddhist Icons in Context.* Arc: Asian Religions & Cultures. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2001.
Shields, James Mark. "Beyond Belief: Japanese Approaches to the Meaning of Religion." [In en]. *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 39, no. 2 (2010): 133-49. https://doi.org/10.1177/0008429810364118. http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0008429810364118.
Shields, Mark. "Immanent Frames: Meiji New Buddhism, Pantheism, and the "Religious Secular"." [In en]. *Japan Review* 30 (2017 2017): 79-95.
Shimada-Sugawa, Akiko. "*Rekijo*, Pilgrimage and 'Pop-Spiritualism': Pop-Culture-Induced Heritage Tourism of/for Young Women." *Japan Forum* 27, no. 1 (2015): 37-58. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/09555803.2014.962566.
Shimazono Susumu. "State Shinto in the Lives of the People: The Establishment of Emperor Worship, Modern Nationalism, and Shrine Shinto in Late Meiji." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 36, no. 1 (2009): 93-124.
Shinohara, Koichi. "Removal of Sins in Esoteric Buddhist Rituals: A Study of the *Dafangdeng Dhāraṇī* Scripture." In *Sins and Sinners: Perspectives from Asian Religions*, edited by Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara, 243-75. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012.
———. *Spells, Images, and Maṇḍalas: Tracing the Evolution of Esoteric Buddhist Rituals.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.
Smet, Peter A. G. M. de, and Ian Reader. *Health-Related Votive Tablets from Japan: "Ema" for Healing and Well-Being.* Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2017, 2017.
Strickmann, Michel. "The Seal of the Law: A Ritual Implement and the Origins of Printing." *Asia Major* 3rd series, 6, no. 2 (1993): 1-83.
Strickmann, Michel, and Bernard Faure. *Chinese Magical Medicine.* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002. http://www.loc.gov/catdir/description/cam021/2001020376.html
http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/cam028/2001020376.html
http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0710/2001020376-b.html.
———. *Chinese Poetry and Prophecy: The Written Oracle in East Asia.* Arc: Asian Religions & Cultures. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005. http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip052/2004023933.html
http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0710/2004023933-b.html
http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0710/2004023933-d.html.
Strong, John. *Relics of the Buddha.* Buddhisms. Princeton, N.J.; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004.
Styers, Randall. *Making Magic: Religion, Magic, and Science in the Modern World.* Reflection and Theory in the Study of Religion. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004, 2004.
Swale, Alistair. *A Cultural History of Late Meiji Japan: Empire and Decadence*. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023.
Swanger, Eugene R., and K. Peter Takayama. "A Preliminary Examination of the "Omamori" Phenomenon." [In en]. *Asian Folklore Studies* 40, no. 2 (1981): 237. https://doi.org/10.2307/1177866. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1177866?origin=crossref.

Takeshi, Matsui. Review of Marketing Strategies of Japanese Pop Culture: The Secret of Japanese Dominance in Anime, Manga, and Cosplay That Conquered the World. Review. *Japan Marketing Academy* 43, no. 2 (2023): 123-26.
Tambiah, S. J. "The Magical Power of Words." [In en]. *Man* 3, no. 2 (1968): 175-208.
Tambiah, Stanley. *Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
Tanabe, George Joji, ed. *Religions of Japan in Practice*, Princeton Readings in Religions. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999.
Tanaka Kimiaki 田中公明. *Indo Chibetto Mandara No Kenkyū インド・チベット曼荼羅の研究 (Study of Indian and Tibetan Maṇḍalas).* Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1996.
Teeuwen, Mark, and Fabio Rambelli. "Introduction: Combinatory Religion and the *Honji Suijaku* Paradigm in Pre-Modern Japan." In *Buddhas and Kami in Japan: Honji Suijaku as a Combinatory Paradigm*, edited by Fabio Rambelli and Mark Teeuwen, 1-53. London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003.
Thal, Sarah. *Rearranging the Landscape of the Gods: The Politics of a Pilgrimage Site in Japan.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005, 2005.
Tillonen, Mia. "Constructing and Contesting the Shrine: Tourist Performances at Seimei Shrine, Kyoto." [In en]. *Religions* 12, no. 1 (2020/12/28/ 2020): 19. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12010019. https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/12/1/19.
Tinsley, Elizabeth. "61. Kūkai and the Development of Shingon Buddhism." In *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, edited by Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen and Richard K. Payne. Handbook of Oriental Studies, 691-708. Leiden: Brill, 2011.
Todaro, Dale E. The Meanings of the Term Mudrā and a Historical Outline of "Hand Gestures". n.d. Article shared at conference.
Toganoo Shōun 栂尾祥雲. *Himitsu Bukkyōshi 秘密佛教史 (History of Esoteric Buddhism).* Kyoto: Hatsubaijo Nagai Shuppan Insatsu Kabushiki-gaisha, 1933. Reprint, Tokyo: Ryūbunkan, 1981.
van Gulik, Robert Hans. *Siddham: An Essay on the History of Sanskrit Studies in China and Japan.* Sarasvati-Vihara Series, V. 36. Nagpur, India: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1956. New Delhi: Sharada Rani, 1980.
Van Schaik, Sam. *Buddhist Magic: Divination, Healing, and Enchantment through the Ages.* First edition ed. Boulder, Colorado: Shambhala Publications, 2020.
Wang, Michelle C. *Maṇḍalas in the Making: The Visual Culture of Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang.* Vol. Brill: Leiden, 2018.
Weber, Max. *The Sociology of Religion.* Boston: Beacon Press, 1963.
Wedemeyer, Christian K. *Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism: History, Semiology, and Transgression in the Indian Traditions.* South Asia across the Disciplines. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013.
White, David Gordon. *Tantra in Practice.* Princeton Readings in Religions. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000. http://www.loc.gov/catdir/description/prin022/00022890.html.
Yagi Toru 八木透. *National Goshuin Encyclopedia Zenkoku Goshuin Zukan 全国御朱印図鑑.* Tōkyō: SB Creative SB クリエイティブ, 2015, 2015.
Yagi Tōru, 八木透. *Edo. Bakumatsu. Ishin Shishi. Yukari No Chi De Itdaku. Goshuin Hando Buku.* 江戸・幕末・維新志士ゆかりの地でいただく御朱印ハンドブック: 日本を

洗濯した志士の御朱印を厳選紹介!! [Handbook of goshuin from places associated with Edo, Bakumatsu, and Meiji Restoration patriots]. Tokyo 東京: Tastsumi Publishing, Co.　辰巳出版, 2019.

Yamamura, Takayoshi. "Pop Culture Contents and Historical Heritage: The Case of Heritage Revitalization through 'Contents Tourism' in Shiroishi City." *Contemporary Japan* 30, no. 2 (2019): 144-63. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/18692729.2018.1460049.

Yumi, Azusa 梓結実 *Yoku Wakaru Kyoto No Goshuin* 大きくてよくわかる京都の御朱印. [Large and easy-to-understand Goshuin of Kyoto]. Kyōto: 淡交社 Tankosha, 2018.

Zürcher, Erik. *Buddhism: Its Origin and Spread in Words, Maps, and Pictures.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1962.

八木透, Yagi Toru. *A Goshuin Handbook: Visit Temples and Shrines and Fall in Love with Goshuin Shiawase Ga Maikomu Goshuin Handobukku: Jisha Sanpai Kara Korekushon Made Goshuin O Suki Ni Nareru Itsusatsu! !*幸せが舞いこむ御朱印ハンドブック: 寺社参拝からコレクションまで御朱印を好きになれる一冊!! Tōkyō: Tatsumi Publishing 辰巳出版, 2012.

忠隆, Shiramizu Tadataka 白水. "*Bangai-Hen 'Sutanpurari' No Kenkyū*　番外編「スタンプラリー」の研協." *Seikatsukyōdōkumiai kenkyū　生活協同組合研究 [Consumer cooperative research]* 473 (2015): 57-61.