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Symbolic Representation and the Mobility of Pilgrimage Sites

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Abstract

In this article I draw attention to a little-studied phenomenon in the study of pilgrimage and sacred sites: how famed pilgrimage locations and routes may be replicated on a smaller scale in other locations. The article focuses mainly on Japanese pilgrimages, using primarily the example of the 1300-kilometre-long Shikoku pilgrimage, and shows how local small-scale versions of this pilgrimage developed historically throughout Japan from the seventeenth century onwards and were also taken abroad by Japanese migrants. A key factor in the development of these localised versions of the pilgrimage was that, for most people in earlier times, long distance pilgrimages were difficult if not impossible. Yet there was a widespread sense that such pilgrimages and the sacred figures associated with them were universal in nature and should be available to all. As such, localised replications on a smaller scale were developed so that those unable to go to sacred sites and make long journeys to distant famed pilgrimage sites, could have access in their own localities. While outlining key factors behind such developments in Japanese contexts the article shows that this is not something only evident in Japan; it is a phenomenon found globally and across numerous religious traditions and geographic settings. Examples are provided of similar developments in Catholic, Hindu and Buddhist contexts globally. In outlining some of the underlying implications of this phenomenon, of pilgrimages and sacred sites being replicated in localised versions, the article particularly highlights the issue of movement and mobility, a topic that has rightly been highlighted as an analytical theme in studies of pilgrimage. However, thus far, discussions of mobility and movement in pilgrimage contexts have focused on movement to and around sacred sites, and on the people—pilgrims—who do this. As the article argues, movement can

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also go the other way: of pilgrimages and sacred sites moving to where potential pilgrims are, and it flags up this issue along with the need for more research into replicated pilgrimages as key areas of pilgrimage studies research.

Keywords: pilgrimage studies, Shikoku pilgrimage, mobility of pilgrimage, symbolic representation, localisation of pilgrimage, replication of pilgrimage

Introduction

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many Japanese people migrated for economic reasons to Hawaii, mainly to work in the sugar cane fields there. The migrants came largely from impoverished areas of Japan, notably Shikoku, the fourth largest island in the Japanese archipelago, and other, smaller, islands in Japan's Inland Sea and, as is common with diasporic communities, they took many aspects of their home culture with them, from foods, festivals and cultural traditions to religious practices. They established Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples (the mainstream religious traditions of Japan) in Hawaii and brought with them also the pilgrimage customs of their Japanese homeland. They also constructed physical representations of the pilgrimages they did in Japan by setting up small-scale versions of the Shikoku pilgrimage in Hawaii. In doing this, they were replicating traditions from their home regions, where localised small-scale versions of the Shikoku pilgrimage, along with veneration of the holy Buddhist figure Kōbō Daishi, who is the main figure of worship in the Shikoku pilgrimage, had become a prominent feature of religious and cultural life since the eighteenth century (Reader 1988; Shibatani 2008). The Shikoku pilgrimage—known in Japanese as the *Shikoku henro*, with *henro* being one of many Japanese terms that is commonly translated as 'pilgrimage'[1]—has historically been one of Japan's foremost pilgrimages, and it was the paramount pilgrimage in the regions (Shikoku and the Inland Sea region) from which the migrants largely came. Many of the smaller Inland Sea islands already had such localised small-scale versions of this pilgrimage and performing such replications had become parts of their religious culture. As such, the Japanese migrants to Hawaii were extending an already widespread practice of creating local replications of the Shikoku pilgrimage, to their new home. Two of these replicated small-scale versions of the Shikoku pilgrimage still exist on the Hawaiian island of Kauai.[2]

Such replicas are often referred to in Japanese as *utsushi reijō* ('translated/replicated pilgrimages'—*reijō* being another common Japanese term for pilgrimage or pilgrimage site), as *chihō reijō* (regional/localised pilgrimages), or simply as *mini* (small scale) Shikoku. What the Japanese immigrants in Hawaii did was not unique either in Japan or more widely; rather, it was a manifestation of a recurrent practice found widely in multiple religious contexts and cultures globally. In Japan, for example, one finds many hundreds of such small scale localised replications of the Shikoku pilgrimage and its sites, as well as similar replications of other well-known pilgrimages. In other countries and religious traditions, too, similar themes can be found, of famed pilgrimage sites and routes being widely replicated and localised. Later in this article I will outline some examples from various religious contexts and geographic settings, from Catholic Christianity to Tibetan Buddhism and Hinduism, and from Europe and the USA, to India, to illustrate just how widespread this practice and phenomenon is.

While this practice of localising and replicating (invariably on a smaller scale) famed pilgrimage sites may be widespread, it has received little attention in the study of pilgrimage more broadly. Even though Japan abounds in replicated versions of famed pilgrimages, and even though there is an extensive array of academic scholarship about pilgrimage in Japan more generally both in Japanese and English languages,[3] very little attention has been paid to this topic, as both the Japanese scholar Shibatani Sōshuku[4] (commenting on Japanese scholarship in her discussion of local and small scale Japanese pilgrimages) and I (discussing the spread of such replica Shikoku pilgrimage sites across Japan's Inland Sea) have commented (Shibatani 2008, 73; Reader 1988). It is a topic that has barely been studied in other pilgrimage contexts either[5] and it this gap in the academic literature that I seek to fill, initially in this article, which raises some points about replication and transplantation and that are intended to serve as an introduction to a book-length study of the topic that I am currently working on. Here I will particularly focus on what such processes of copying and replication indicate about the universality of pilgrimage sites and what they tell us about mobility as an element in the dynamics of pilgrimage. I will do this first by focusing on Japanese pilgrimage contexts, and particularly on the *Shikoku henro* and how it has been replicated historically, before outlining some other examples from other religious traditions and drawing out critical themes that can be

discerned within them and that add to our understandings of pilgrimage and pilgrimage sites more generally.

1. The Shikoku Pilgrimage in Japan and Its Replications

The Shikoku *henro* (pilgrimage) involves the pilgrim visiting eighty-eight Buddhist temples in a circuit of around 1300 kilometres around the island of Shikoku. In legendary terms the pilgrimage was established by the Buddhist holy figure Kōbō Daishi, one of the most revered figures in Japanese religious history, who is depicted as a miracle-working holy wanderer who forever travels the country bringing benefits, helping the needy, healing the sick and leading people to salvation and enlightenment. Kōbō Daishi is in actuality a posthumous title meaning "the great teacher who spread the law of Buddhism" that was bestowed by the Japanese Emperor, in 921, on the Buddhist monk Kūkai (774–835), who was from Shikoku and is regarded as one of the most prominent figures in Japanese religious history. Kūkai founded the Shingon Buddhist sect in Japan (one of the country's most important Buddhist traditions), established its famed mountain religious centre of Kōyasan, wrote numerous important texts and carried out numerous charitable works. According to Shingon Buddhist legends he did not die but entered into eternal enlightenment at Kōyasan; subsequently, as Kōbō Daishi, he became the focus of multiple legends depicting him as a miracle-working itinerant Buddhist holy figure. Kōbō Daishi legends (*Kōbō densetsu*) spread across Japan and can be found in virtually every part of the country; there are few places that do not have their own local Kōbō Daishi legends in which he is said to have visited the area, establishing temples, carving Buddhist statues, performing miraculous deeds and bringing various benefits to local communities.

One of the most prominent Kōbō Daishi legends relates to Shikoku, the island where he (as Kūkai) was born in the eighth century, and it states that he founded the Shikoku pilgrimage there in the year 815. The pilgrimage, it is claimed in such legends, is based on Kūkai's ascetic travels around Shikoku, through which he attained enlightenment and the spiritual powers that led to him being venerated in his afterlife as the miracle working Kōbō Daishi. The pilgrimage, in this legendary formation, thus symbolically traces his journey to Buddhist enlightenment, and by following this path pilgrims are considered to walk with and be guarded over by Kōbō Daishi, on their

own journeys to enlightenment. Pilgrimage lore also stated that due to Kōbō Daishi's grace, people doing the pilgrimage could be cured of illnesses and receive numerous benefits for themselves and their family and ancestors. In pilgrimage iconography and in legend Kōbō Daishi is always depicted as a pilgrim, and the normative attire that Shikoku pilgrims wear to this day reflects the image of Kōbō Daishi and the pilgrim's identification with him (Reader 2005, 10–14).

These foundation stories are just legend; there is no viable record of Kūkai being in Shikoku in 815 let alone founding a pilgrimage there. In reality, the pilgrimage developed some centuries later due to the travels of Shingon Buddhist ascetics from Kōyasan who sought to visit places associated with their founder in Shikoku; their travels gradually gave rise to a formal pilgrimage route that incorporated eighty-eight Buddhist temples in a circuit around the island. Historically it is clear that a formal pilgrimage existed by the seventeenth century, initially performed only by monks and ascetics, but by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries being performed by lay people. Those who made the pilgrimage, according to popular belief, accrued all manner of benefits and healing, and, in popular lore, absolution from sins and entry (on death) into the Buddhist Pure Land.

2. Factors in the Development of Localised Replicas of the Shikoku Pilgrimage

Yet it was clear that few could realistically hope to gain such rewards in earlier times, for the pilgrimage was long and difficult. Until modern times, and the advent of bus and car travel, pilgrims had no choice but to walk and to make a long journey that took many weeks and was fraught with difficulty and danger. Even today, it takes around 40 days to walk, and seven to ten days at least for those who use modern modes of transport such as buses (Reader 2005, 18–20).

In earlier times, when the only option was to walk not just around Shikoku but to it, something that would take people from areas beyond Shikoku many days or weeks, the time and expenditure required was far greater. For most people in the pre-modern era the pilgrimage was next to impossible. Feudal restrictions on movement meant most people were unable to ever travel beyond local areas, while few had the wherewithal to support their travels or have the time to get away from their families

and obligations. Moreover, many people were simply unable, due to age, gender or infirmity, to make the arduous journey to and round Shikoku.[6]

Yet this did not mean that such people were excluded from the benefits of pilgrimage, or from accessing Kōbō Daishi's grace; if such grace was universal then, it stood to reason, it could be accessed anywhere—a notion that was underpinned also by the image of Kōbō Daishi as an itinerant pilgrim forever walking around Japan dispensing miracles. Legends depicting him appearing in various places to establish local versions of the famed pilgrimage began to develop from the early seventeenth century onwards, and numerous localised versions of the pilgrimage began to take shape across the country. Some even incorporated physical elements of Shikoku into their structures, as pilgrims brought soil from the temples back to their home regions. The first localised replication of the Shikoku pilgrimage about which we have historical records dates from 1625 when an ascetic from Mikawa region (now part of Aichi prefecture in central Japan) who had performed the Shikoku pilgrimage several times, collected soil from the courtyards from each of the temples and brought them back to his home province. He then inaugurated a local version of the *henro* by installing soil from the eighty-eight Shikoku temples in temples in his home region (Yoritomi and Shiragi 2001, 161).

Many of the earliest of these localised replications of the *henro* developed on small islands close to Shikoku, and they invariably were based on the notion that if Kōbō Daishi had visited and established a pilgrimage on one island (Shikoku) he could well have done the same elsewhere. The eighty-eight site pilgrimage on the island of Shōdoshima, just north of Shikoku and with perhaps the best-known of all the regional versions of the Shikoku pilgrimage, has a foundation legend that claims Kōbō Daishi visited there in 814 to found this pilgrimage, before he established the one on Shikoku itself. Local people on the island, and priests at various temples there have repeated this legend in interviews with me, claiming that if the Daishi had visited and set up the pilgrimage in Shikoku he could well have done so elsewhere as well.[7]

These local replications took the form of the Shikoku pilgrimage in having eighty-eight sites to visit—just like Shikoku—and using the image of the pilgrim walking with and guarded over by Kōbō Daishi. Commonly (although not always) the sites themselves were referred by the names of the Shikoku temples themselves, while the pilgrimages were commonly termed *henro* (i.e. using the special Japanese term used for the Shikoku pilgrimage itself). Often these local pilgrimages also incorporated the

name of the local region where they were developed; the eighty-eight site pilgrimage around the island of Shōdoshima, for example, is commonly known as the *Shōdoshima henro*, while the henro around the Chita Hantō, a peninsula in Aichi prefecture with another well-known regional eighty-eight site pilgrimage that developed over two hundred years ago, incorporates both the regional name and that of Shikoku, and is known as the *Chita Shikoku henro* (Tominaga 2002). They also frequently (as with the earliest example in Mikawa mentioned above) used soil from the individual Shikoku temples, to create a physical link between the local replica and Shikoku, so that the Shikoku pilgrimage was in a real sense physically incorporated and embedded in the local version.

Such localised versions or replications were invariably far shorter than the Shikoku pilgrimage; the Shōdoshima *henro* is perhaps the best known of all these local versions in Japan, and is around 150 kilometres in length (compared to the 1300-kilometre-long Shikoku pilgrimage). It replicates the Shikoku pilgrimage not just in having eighty-eight sites and being focused on Kōbō Daishi (with its own legends claiming that it was founded by the holy Buddhist figure) but in circling the entire island. By foot it takes several weeks less than the *Shikoku henro* itself. It is actually one of the longest of such transplanted pilgrimages; most are much shorter and can be performed in a very few days or even less. One of the most common forms of such replications consists of a row of small statues or simple shrines each representing one of the Shikoku temples and commonly inscribed with the names of the individual Shikoku temples. Often, too, such miniature pilgrimages also included samples of soil from each of the eighty-eight Shikoku temples placed under a stone in front of each of the miniature representations of the temples so that by walking across them people would thus be treading on the soil of Shikoku and the pilgrimage temples themselves. In such ways, they could symbolically walk the entire pilgrimage in a short space of time. As such localised versions developed and could be found widely across Japan, tt meant that anyone—even the old and infirm—could readily do the pilgrimage and step on the sacred soil of Shikoku within their home area. It made the pilgrimage available to all.

These localised representations were developed by numerous authorities and activists in Japan from the seventeenth century onwards. Some were established by pilgrims who sought to make the pilgrimage accessible to people in their home regions by bringing back soil from Shikoku, as with the aforementioned ascetic from

Mikawa. Many were established by devout local priests who wanted to enhance the cult of Kōbō Daishi by setting up their own local versions of the holy figure's pilgrimage, often within their temple courtyards or by coopting other temples in their region to set up an eighty-eight-site pilgrimage. Some were developed by feudal authorities that established their own versions of famed pilgrimages within their domains to enable their subjects to go on pilgrimage without leaving the fiefdom. Such authorities were worried that the wish to go on pilgrimage to Shikoku or elsewhere would cause people to cast aside their feudal obligations and abandon the fields to set out for distant pilgrimage sites. Fearful that this could weaken feudal authority and damage the local economy, many feudal lords created local replicas of famed pilgrimages within their domains in order to counter this threat. Well-off farmers and community leaders keen to enhance their own status and simultaneously exhibit their piety also engaged in the practice of establishing local copies of famed pilgrimage sites. Local competition often played a part as well, with some communities fired up to establish a localised replica of the Shikoku pilgrimage after hearing that a nearby village or region had done likewise (Shinjō 1982, 1103–1144; Reader 1988, 55).

Such localised pilgrimages helped also to strengthen a sense of local identity and create community bonds; in numerous interviews with people throughout Japan I have commonly heard them express pride in their local pilgrimage. The island Iyo Ōshima, for example, has an annual festive event called the *henro ichi* ('pilgrimage market/festival') commemorating the local version of the Shikoku pilgrimage. The island's local version of the *henro* was established in 1807 by local devotees.[8] Because there were (and still are) only four temples on the island, small unmanned wayside shrines and Buddhist statues were also co-opted into the route to make up the rest of the eighty-eight sites. Each year in spring the island residents hold the *henro ichi*, in which the normally unmanned wayside shrines are opened up by local people, who offer alms to pilgrims at them. During the *henro ichi* (which lasts three days) many people originally from Iyo Ōshima but who have subsequently left the island to live and work elsewhere,[9] return to the island to participate in this annual event and thereby to reaffirm their local identity. People on the island whom I have interviewed have spoken about the sense of local pride and identity that this pilgrimage and the festive event associated with it, provides for them and for the island.[10]

These are but a few examples of a recurrent theme of replication associated with the Shikoku pilgrimage that has given rise to multiple local versions of it appearing

throughout Japan. The underlying concept behind such localised replications of the Shikoku pilgrimage was that, since Kōbō Daishi was a universal sacred figure who, in legend, could manifest any and everywhere, and since the pilgrimage itself was an especially powerful and universal sacred activity, they could not be restricted by physical boundaries. Nor should such sacred sites and pilgrimage locations be restricted only to the fortunate few who were able to make the Shikoku pilgrimage itself. Nor, as the role of local authorities, feudal regimes and local activists in setting up such replications indicates, should people be prevented from creating their own versions of such pilgrimages. As a result, small-scale versions of the Shikoku pilgrimage proliferated throughout Japan, while replicas of the pilgrimage were also transplanted beyond Japan, following the paths of Japanese migrants, as with the example of Hawaii mentioned earlier. While these localised versions began appearing in the seventeenth century, and the high point of their development was in the following century, they have continued to appear ever since, and it is estimated that many hundreds or even thousands of them still exist across the country.[11]

3. Beyond Shikoku: Other Replications in Japan

This phenomenon of replicating a pilgrimage and its sacred sites in symbolic and localised forms is not limited to the Shikoku pilgrimage, which is just one example of how major pilgrimages and pilgrimage sites in Japan have been replicated and made accessible in localised versions. Alongside Shikoku, the best known and historically oldest and most venerated Buddhist temple pilgrimage in Japan is the Saikoku pilgrimage. This involves a journey taking in thirty-three Buddhist temples dedicated to Kannon, the Buddhist figure of compassion, in west-central Japan around the ancient capitals of Nara and Kyoto. The Saikoku pilgrimage, which developed earlier than that around Shikoku, also has given rise to large numbers of local and regional replications, often created by ardent priests or by feudal and local authorities for similar reasons to those pertaining to Shikoku replicas. Other sacred pilgrimage sites in Japan that have given rise to localised versions include various sacred mountains, such as Mount Fuji, that were the focus of mountain pilgrimage cults but that were inaccessible in earlier times to most people and were, in the winter months, closed even to devout ascetics.[12]

4. Beyond Japan: Replicas and Localised Pilgrimages in Other Asian Traditions

Japan is not a unique case in terms of multiple replications and localisations of major pilgrimage sites. Rather, it is an exemplar of a far wider, and potentially universal, phenomenon that can be found across multiple religious' traditions and geographic locales. I will here just outline a small number of examples to illustrate this point before discussing some of the implications this has for studies of pilgrimage and understandings of sacred sites. In Buddhist contexts, pilgrimage replication and localised representations can be found widely not just in Japan but elsewhere where Buddhism has flourished. In his study of Tibetan Buddhist pilgrimage, for example, Toni Huber refers to how Tibetan Buddhists have replicated famed but often difficult to reach pilgrimage sites on smaller, accessible scales across the Tibetan region. In his study of the cult of Dakpa Sheri, the Tibetan Buddhist pilgrimage site in south-west Tibet known in English as Pure Crystal Mountain, Huber indicates that numerous localised replications of this sacred site that have made it possible for the Tibetan Buddhist faithful in regions far from Dakpa Sheri to do this pilgrimage within their own localities, and with greater ease than would be needed to make the long pilgrimage to, and arduous ascent of, Dakpa Sheri (Huber 1999, 32–33, 54).

In other Asian religious traditions, too, similar processes and practices can be readily found. Hindu sacred sites and pilgrimages have, for example, been widely replicated across the Indian region. Varanasi on the River Ganges is widely viewed as one of Hinduism's holiest places; for many it is the holiest of all holy sites, while its most prominent temple, the Sri Vishwanath temple, is regarded by many as the most important temple in the country. It has given rise to vast numbers of small-scale replicas throughout India, often within the courtyards of other important temples, so that Hindu worshippers across the Indian subcontinent can readily make a pilgrimage to Sri Vishwanath even if they are far from Varanasi. As a result, according to Christopher Fuller, would-be pilgrims in India do not need to actually go to Varanasi because it is found (symbolically) and can be visited everywhere in India. The Sri Menakshi temple in Madurai, for example, is one of southern India's most important temples and a prominent pilgrimage site in its own right; it also has three replicas of the Sri Vishwanath temple in is precincts so that pilgrims to Sri Menakshi can also make a pilgrimage to Varanasi and Sri Vishwanath at the same time (Fuller 1992,

208).[13] Anne Gold, in her ethnographic study of the pilgrimage practices of Rajasthani villagers, shows that while they perform occasional pilgrimages across India to sacred sites where they perform special rituals for their deceased kin, they also have local sites that enable them to do more distant pilgrimages readily within their own locality. Their village has four local shrines that together represent the Char Dham – four sacred pilgrimage sites at each corner of India. Char Dham pilgrimages involve many thousands of kilometres of travel and much expense; by using these four local shrines to represent the Char Dham sites the villagers are able to do this pilgrimage locally, and within the framework of their normal lives, and without the necessity of extended absences from their fields, families and livelihoods (Gold 1988, 34). Similarly, as Ann Feldhaus has observed in her study of sacred sites in the Indian state of Maharashtra, it is common for places in central and southern India to replicate the religious geography of the northern Indian Hindu heartlands, for example by claiming that a local site is a replica or southern version of a major northern Indian Hindu site. Thus Maharashtra has various local versions of Prayaga, the confluence of the Yamuna and Ganges and one of Hinduism's most significant pan-Indian pilgrimage sites (and the focus of the Kumbh Mela every twelve years), as well as of Kasi (i.e. Varanasi) (Feldhaus 2003, 158–159).[14] As Feldhaus indicates, creating such a sacred geography within their region enables people there not just to form a sense of identity within their home region but also to relate it to, and assimilate themes from, the wider Hindu and Indian context within they exist.

5. Christian Replicas: Localising Jerusalem, Lourdes and Other Sites

In Christianity one can also see this phenomenon widely. The historian of Catholic material culture, Colleen McDannell, has commented that "Religious replication is a critical aspect of Catholic culture" (McDannell 1995, 160) and this point is certainly evident in the way that sacred sites and pilgrimage locales have been replicated in numerous local contexts. From early on, sacred sites related to the Christian Bible and particularly to the life of Jesus and his mother Mary have been replicated and transplanted wherever Christian culture has developed so that Christians, the vast majority of whom, in pre-modern times, had no hope of visiting the Christian Holy Land, could access these sites more locally. Jerusalem in particular was widely

represented in such localised versions. While it may be an earthly place, it is also highly symbolic in Christian terms, representing the idea of a transcendent realm, and as such it has been widely reproduced across Christian domains as an archetypal pilgrimage locus. In medieval Europe, when the Christian Holy Land was largely inaccessible or hard to reach, labyrinths, small designs that represented a symbolic journey to a sacred centre, were developed as ways through which people could still access and make symbolic pilgrimages to Jerusalem. These labyrinths, as substitutes for going Jerusalem, were known as 'Jerusalems' or 'chemin de Jérusalem' (road to Jerusalem) (Boss 2007, 135). Chartres Cathedral, for example, had a labyrinth built into the cathedral floor and this served as a surrogate Jerusalem pilgrimage, as did several others across the continent, and one can find examples of labyrinths—some themselves small and symbolic—in many Catholic churches and cathedrals across Europe and, more recently, in North America as well.[15] One finds symbolic replications of Jerusalem in some of the earliest regions in which Christianity took root, such as Ethiopia where, in the thirteenth century King Lalibela, guided by visions and instructions he had received from angels, ordered the creation of a 'new Jerusalem' in his realm at the place, Lalibela, that now bears his name. Consisting of thirteen rock-cut churches that signify and represent the sacred pilgrimage sites of Jerusalem, including the House of Golgotha and the Holy Sepulchre, Lalibela is not so much a direct replication of the geography and physical outline of the 'real' Jerusalem as a symbolic imagining of it transplanted into Ethiopia (Ousterhout 1990, 118–119). Lalibela has become the most important pilgrimage site for Ethiopian Orthodox Christians, serving as their Jerusalem and holiest centre, to which they can make pilgrimages and, in effect, be in Jerusalem.

Catholic replications often focus on the Virgin Mary and on creating or transplanting, in distant lands, sacred sites associated with her and Jesus's lives. Walsingham, in England, is one such example, developed in the eleventh century after a noblewoman there had a vision in which Mary appeared before her and commanded her to build a copy of the Holy House of Nazareth (the place in the Christian Holy Land where Mary is believed to have lived) in Walsingham so that local people unable to make the dangerous and long journey to Palestine, could make pilgrimages there while remaining in their own localities. As such Walsingham originated as a copied sacred site and localised representation of the Christian Holy Land, and developed into an important English pilgrimage location that was commonly referred to as

'England's Nazareth'.[16] There are other versions of Mary's Holy House of Nazareth elsewhere in Catholic Europe, including, most famously, at Loreto in Italy, where legends claim the Holy House was actually transported by angels from its location in the Holy Land to Loreto in the thirteenth century to enable pilgrims to visit it at a time when access to the Christian Holy Land was difficult. [17] Subsequently numerous replications of the Loreto Holy House have developed across Europe to make it even more widely accessible.[18]

Another important Marian pilgrimage site that has given rise to multiple global replications is that of Lourdes in south-western France. Lourdes has become one of Catholicism's most visited pilgrimage sites and main centres of Marian devotion due to its reputation for healing. It developed as a pilgrimage site after a local girl, Bernadette, had visions of the Virgin Mary there in 1858. The grotto where Mary showed Bernadette a spring of water that could heal illnesses rapidly became the main focus of pilgrimages at Lourdes, and it attracted attention of Catholics across the globe. Especially in the nineteenth century, an age when long-distance and international travel was not readily viable for most people, Lourdes replica grottoes sprung up in numerous places to enable people to 'visit' Lourdes. Hundreds of such localised Lourdes shrines have developed in Europe alone[19] and many have appeared in more distant places such as Japan and the USA.

In the USA replicas of the Lourdes grotto began to appear in the latter part of the nineteenth century at a period when overseas travel was beyond the scope of the vast majority of American Catholics. A Lourdes replica was built, for example, on the campus of Notre-Dame University, a Catholic institute of higher education in Indiana, in 1877. Notre Dame already by that time had replicas of other prominent Catholic pilgrimage sites from Europe such as the Loreto Chapel (built at Notre Dame in 1859) and Assisi (whose Church of St Mary of the Angels was replicated on the campus in 1860 and where the faithful were told they could obtain the same indulgences for making a pilgrimage there as for going to Assisi itself (McDannell 1995, 156). Other replica Lourdes grottoes include ones in the Bronx in New York, several in Japan (the first of which was built by a French missionary, Albert Pelu, who had a Lourdes grotto built at Imochiura in the Goto peninsula with the assistance of Japanese converts in 1897), and a number in the United Kingdom. The Lancaster Catholic diocese, for example, has its own Lourdes grotto at Cleator Moor in Cumbria, while at Carfin near Motherwell in Scotland, a Lourdes grotto was established in the 1920s and became an

important pilgrimage destination for Scottish Catholics (Harris 2015). These Lourdes grotto sites continue to function as local pilgrimage sites even as Lourdes has become readily accessible due to France's highly developed international and national transport infrastructures; Carfin continues to attract local pilgrims while the Cleator Moor grotto is the official pilgrimage site of the Roman Catholic diocese of Lancaster; once a year in September, the diocese has an official pilgrimage to the grotto; most who take part travel there by car or bus (and as at Lourdes, a number of those who attend are infirm and in wheelchairs).

Just like Japanese migrants to Hawaii, Latin American Catholic migrants (the vast majority from Central America) to the US have carried their home pilgrimages with them. The most highly venerated and visited pilgrimage site of Mesoamerica is the Tepeyac, the sacred hill and pilgrimage site at Guadalupe in Mexico that is famed and venerated for its Marian apparition. In Des Plaines in Illinois, USA, a 'second Tepeyac' has been created by Mesoamerican immigrants in the US Midwest to enable them to access this holiest of sites from their homeland. As Elaine Pena has indicated, the 'second Tepeyac' enables the immigrants to engage in their devotion of Mary and to affirm, in their new land, their Mesoamerican identity. What is striking, too, about this local replication, is that the Guadalupe Tepeyac religious authorities at the original Mexican site have been highly supportive of the 'second Tepeyac' and helped it develop by providing items such as a statue and soil brought from Guadalupe for the Illinois site.[20]

6. The Significance, Implications and Meanings of Localised Replications: Reinforcing the Original

As Pena states, the creation of the 'second Tepeyac' provides an answer to a recurrent cosmological problem, related to how people can engage in practices that are related to specific places when one is unable to actually go to or be at those places (Pena 2011, 117). This point resonates throughout the examples I have cited, from Japanese replications and localisations of the *Shikoku henro* to Tibetan Buddhist and Hindu sites, to the Catholic examples cited above. It is a recurrent theme in the context of pilgrimage and it points to some key elements in the nature of pilgrimage and the sacred sites associated with it that I will only be able to touch on in the scope of this article but that I will explore in greater length in the book I am working on.

A first point to make here is that replicating, transplanting and localising such sites does not so much demean the status of the original but the reverse. As Ann Feldhaus has commented about replications of the sacred Hindu site of Varanasi, the very act of replicating is a recognition of its power and significance (Feldhaus 2003, 184). The same is true in Japan, where localised versions of the Shikoku pilgrimage can be seen as affirmations of the transcendent and universal significance of that pilgrimage—a point that has come out in my discussions with priests, pilgrims and pilgrimage authorities in Shikoku over the years. Indeed, the extent to which such original sites have cooperated to enable replications is testimony to this; authorities in Guadalupe have, as I indicated, given support to the 'second Tepeyac' in Illinois, and similarly temple authorities in Shikoku have readily facilitated the creation of localised versions of their pilgrimage by allowing people, from seventeenth century ascetics onwards, to take soil from their courtyards in order to construct replicas elsewhere. The transplantation of pilgrimages is an affirmation, in essence, of the universality both of the sacred locales themselves and the figures associated with them. The Lourdes grotto replications that span the globe affirm the universality of Mary and her capacity to appear any and everywhere; they are a statement that while Lourdes may be a single physical location in south-western France it is also a manifestation of a transcendent universality related to the sacred nature of the Virgin Mary and a sign of Lourdes's own universality. Similarly, the Shikoku pilgrimage and the ever-wandering Kōbō Daishi can manifest anywhere and equally be embedded in the physical terrain of Shikoku.

Moreover, as authorities at these major sites are aware, replications do not of themselves make people less likely to go to the major sites. In earlier times, when such travels were difficult or impossible, replication often served as an introduction to pilgrimage for local people, spread awareness of the sacred sites concerned and created a wish among the faithful to be able to make a pilgrimage to them if at all possible. As Robert Ousterhout has commented in his discussion of local and replicated sites in pre-modern Christianity, "a good copy could inspire the faithful to pilgrimage" (Ousterhout 1990, 118). This is a point I have heard from priests in Japan and from people in the pilgrimage tour industry: that such replications and localised versions often served as an introduction that encouraged people to later make the pilgrimage to Shikoku.[21] The Japanese ethnographer Kadota Takehisa, in his study of pilgrimage and tourism intersections in Japan, shows, via his fieldwork on Sado (an

island in the north-east Japan) that pilgrimage tours of Shikoku organised for people on Sado by a local entrepreneur had, in the 1960s, spurred interest in and helped revive the local Shikoku replica that had existed on the island in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but that had fallen into abeyance. This revived interest in the local pilgrimage in turn helped boost the numbers of residents interested in making the pilgrimage to Shikoku (Kadota 2013, 163–167). Localised replicas as such have enhanced the stature and reaffirmed the significance of the original while reminding us that pilgrimage need not be something associated with distance. Indeed, as the examples I have touched on here show, it has a powerful local dimension that needs to be considered in continuing analysis of pilgrimage as a phenomenon and practice.

7. Replication and Universality: Access, Fairness and the Maintenance of Practice

Replications are not just manifestations of local religious meaning; they are an expression of the idea of fairness as an element in religious universality. The various benefits claimed for pilgrimage (from healing and other worldly benefits to salvation and enlightenment) may be accessed by those capable of the arduous journeys that long distance pilgrimages and travels, especially in earlier centuries, demanded. Yet this has long raised a critical point: why should only those who have the means, time and physical ability to make arduous journeys, be able to access such benefits? If pilgrimages, sacred sites and the figures of worship at them, are universal in nature, why should they and their powers be limited only to those bestowed with the means (physical abilities, money and so on) able to access them? Healing, for example, has often been considered a beneficial dimension of pilgrimage (something that has been central to the flourishing of Lourdes and integral also to the development of the *Shikoku henro*) yet in pre-modern times in particular, it was often those who could be seen to need the benefits of pilgrimage (such as the sick and the aged) who were least able to access them due to their infirmities. Replications are a means of countering this question and making such pilgrimages, their sites and benefits available to all. They express the notion that no-one should be left out or prevented from accessing a pilgrimage and holy figures such as Kōbō Daishi associated with it because of age, infirmity and the like.

They also serve as a way for devotees to maintain pilgrimage practices at times when they have been unable to visit the sites they venerate. I have talked to people in Japan who are doing such small-scale local versions of the Shikoku pilgrimage who have told me that they do this on a regular basis as part of a continuing regime of practice, and as ways to continue doing the pilgrimage in periods when they have been unable to go to Shikoku. One such example relates to the Shiga Shingyōkai, a prominent pilgrimage confraternity based in the town of Nagahama in Shiga prefecture, Japan that was founded by a local man who did the *Shikoku henro* in the 1920s. The Shiga Shingyōkai venerates Kōbō Daishi, organises pilgrimages to Shikoku and encourages people from the Nagahama region to become pilgrims there. In the period from the late 1930s on and through the 1940s, when Japan was immersed in war, and subsequent devastation and economic ruin, it became impossible for confraternity members to make pilgrimages to Shikoku. To deal with this problem Shiga Shingyōkai members established a local version of the Shikoku pilgrimage around Nagahama (and later also installed a smaller scale replica pilgrimage using soil from Shikoku temples, in the courtyard of the Shingyōkai's own hall of worship in Nagahama) to enable them to continue doing the pilgrimage even though it was impossible for them to visit Shikoku. This is but one example of something I found repeatedly in Japan, of people using local replicas of Shikoku as a way to continue to perform the pilgrimage at times when their personal circumstances made it hard or impossible for them to have the time to do the Shikoku pilgrimage itself.[22]

8. Concluding Comments: Mobility, Pilgrimage and Sites on the Move

A final point that I wish to make in this preliminary examination of the phenomenon of replicating pilgrimages in the manner (localised, on smaller scales) that I have outlined is that this should make us think more about the issue of mobility as it relates to pilgrimage. Scholars have naturally recognised movement and mobility as significant analytical themes in the study of pilgrimage.[23] When focusing on movement and mobility, studies have invariably considered this in relation to the people—the pilgrims—who move towards, around and then back home from physical sites of pilgrimage. This is hardly surprising given that without pilgrims and their practices pilgrimage and its sites and routes would not exist. However, there is

another dimension to mobility that needs to be considered as well: that pilgrimages and its routes, sites and symbols, too, may be mobile. While pilgrimage sites may be physically located in one place, they need not be limited to that physical space alone; they can also be mobile. Indeed, I would argue that one marker of the significance of particular pilgrimages and sites is their capacity to move (even as they remained grounded in their physical location) and go to where potential pilgrims are. They are not just universally accessible; they have the capacity to make themselves so. This does not mean that they are simply a commodity that can be appropriated by others who wish to have access and control to them. Being able to be replicated and transplanted in various ways to multiple settings, in other words having the capacity to be mobile and be reproduced any and everywhere while not being diminished in any way in its original locale, is a signifier of the sacred nature, importance and universal dimensions of a pilgrimage.

Whether it is Christian sites flying across continents to become relocated in more accessible places (as with the legend of Loreto's Holy House) or the construction of localised replications of sacred sites from Lourdes to Jerusalem to Shikoku, this mobility may be primarily symbolic (with the imagined locus of Shikoku or Lourdes represented via a replication of its route or grotto) or legendary but it also has symbolic physical elements to it, as with the soil from Shikoku temples or the items from Guadalupe taken to the 'second Tepeyac'. At times such claimed physical mobility may be located in the realms of legend, via stories of holy locations miraculously flying across continents, and then being reproduced multiple times, or tales about the incessant itinerancy and miraculous apparitions of Kōbō Daishi in Japan. Another aspect of the mobile nature of pilgrimages is their portability and associations with migration and diasporas. This is something that has been encountered earlier in my references to the Japanese migrants to Hawaii who constructed small versions of the Shikoku pilgrimage in the lands to which they have migrated and to the Mesoamericans and their local creation of the holiest site from their homeland. Mobility, as such, may be a key theme in pilgrimage but it need not be restricted to pilgrims, for sacred sites and pilgrimage routes themselves are potentially mobile, transplanted into other locales, carried or borrowed by migrants journeying to other lands and replicated in and by local communities that wish to have their own accessible versions of Lourdes, the Shikoku pilgrimage, sacred Hindu sites and so on in their own localities.

As I noted earlier, the phenomenon of replicated, localised and small-scale versions of famed pilgrimages and sacred sites has received comparatively little attention in the study of pilgrimage. Yet, as the examples I have outlined here, indicate, this is a topic that is highly significant in terms of understanding and studying pilgrimage more generally. It raises numerous questions about the nature of pilgrimage, about mobility, and about localisation and universality. I have only been able, in the limited space of an article, to outline some aspects of this issue, as a first step in a wider examination that, while primarily grounded in my research on pilgrimage in Japan, aims to more fully develop analysis of the phenomenon across pilgrimage contexts more broadly.

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Notes

1. See Reader and Swanson 1997 and also Reader 2005.
2. On these replicated Shikoku pilgrimages in Hawaii see Hoshino 1980 and 2001, 233-240, and Kondo 2005. I visited both these local versions in Kauai in February 2025 as part of the fieldwork on which this study is based.
3. On Japanese scholarship on pilgrimage see Reader 2015 and on Western language studies of Japanese pilgrimages see Ambros 2014.
4. All Japanese names are given in Japanese form (family name first, followed by given name. For example, Shibatani Shōsaku – Shibatani is the family name (so when referring to her the first time I used her full name, and likewise in the list of References). I have given Japanese titles of books and

articles in the standard Romanised form using the Hepburn system rather than using Japanese ideograms and writing systems.

5. Exceptions include Alana Harris's 2015 study of the Scottish site of Carfin, which is a localised replica of the famed French Catholic pilgrimage cetre of Lourdes and Elaine A. Pena's 2011 study of how Mesoamerican Catholic immigrants in Illinois, USA have created a local version of Mexico's most prominent pilgrimage site, dedicated to the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe.

6. Until modern times it was especially difficult for women to manage this arduous journey, while feudal restrictions on travel until the mid-nineteenth century made it hard for most people to travel beyond their local areas (see Reader 2005 and Hoshino 2001: 233-240). The vast majority of pilgrims were male, and many died along the way.

7. I base this both on my fieldwork visits to Shōdoshima between 1985 and 2017 and on the guidebook Shōdoshima Reijōkai (ed.) 2014 produced by the pilgrimage temples of the island

8. See the website of the island's pilgrimage association for this history: https://shima-shikoku.com and notably the following section: https://shima-shikoku.com/rekisi.html

9. The island relies on agriculture and fishing and, like many more rural parts of Japan, hassuffered serious depopulation in modern times, as many especially younger people have left for the more propserious cities and salaried jobs.

10. I base these comments both on a field visit to the island in September 1986 and also on the description of the event on the pilgrimage association's website, which emphasises the importance of the pilgrimage to island identity: https://shima-shikoku.com/hazimeni.html

11. Nakayama (2013, 274) thinks several thousand such replicas are in existence in Japan. While I am unable to evaluate this claim, it is clear to me, based on my travels and research, that the number is certainly many hundreds and probably in their thousands.

12. On Fuji replicas especially in Edo (now known as Tokyo) see Takeuchi 2002 and Earhart (2011, 89-96).

13. Fuller is using the Anglicised (colonial era) name, Benares here. Now, the city is Varanasi.

14. Kasi (also romanised as Kashi) means 'city of light' and is an ancient name for Varanasi, one still used by many Hindus.

15. I have, for example, seen labyrinths representing the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, on the wall of the cathedral in Siena in Italy and in the courtyard of the Grace Cathedral in San Francisco in the US.

16. https://www.walsinghamanglican.org.uk

17. https://www.santuarioloreto.va/en/storia/la-santa-casa-da-nazareth-a-loreto.html

18. I have, for example, visited a replica of the Loreto Holy House in Prague in the Cezch Republic. According to Rousseau (2022, 205 fn 1) seventeen such replicas of the Loreto Holy House developed in Bavaria alone in the seventeenth century.

19. See, for example, Nolan and Nolan 1989.

20. See the official website of the Illinois Tepeyac https://solg.org/en/history/

21. This was especially so in the 1980s and 1990s when I did my earlier research, in an era when organised pilgrimage tours were the main way people did the Shikoku pilgrimage. Hirahata Ryōyū, a priest who set up and ran a nationwide pilgrimage association (the *Junrei no Kai*) told me that many of

those who joined the pilgrimages he organised, started with a local route or two before moving on to Saikoku or Shikoku.

22. This pilgrimage is described in Shingyōkai 1990 while members of this group told me about how it was formed when I visited them in Nahagama in 1991. See also the example I cite in Reader 2005, 254-255.

23. See Coleman and Eade 2004 for fuller discussion of this point.