

CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined the history of charitable giving along the Shikoku pilgrimage route in Japan and the reasons for participation in this selfless activity for such a long period of time. Although the custom had a long history throughout Japan, it eventually faded away in other areas due to the increasing modernization and commercialization of the pilgrimage routes. Only in Shikoku has there been continuation of the custom in a manner that reflects its original form. This can be attributed to Shikoku's inaccessibility and to the strong religious culture of the local people who venerated Kōbō Daishi.

The power of Kōbō Daishi, and the tales and legends that were formed about him, permeated all levels of society in Shikoku. The legends, which focused on themes such as rewards and punishments or cause and effect, influenced the charitable behaviour of the local people. They were certain that their actions would determine the consequences that came to them, whether good or bad. In Shinnen's *Kudokuki* (功德記), many tales reinforced the message that a person who participated in charitable giving was ensured a reward of some sort and would not experience misfortune. Famous stories like that of Emon Saburō demonstrate the importance of treating a pilgrim kindly, who could be the Daishi in disguise, to avoid any 'karmic retribution' from the venerated founder of the pilgrimage route.

In Chapter One, the answers to the questions of who gave charity, who received charity, and why participate in charitable giving were presented. For each question, there were a variety of answers. For example, those who gave were individuals often acting spontaneously, groups of individuals acting in a semi-institutionalized fashion and the

local authorities who were extremely institutionalized. The people who received charity consisted of men and women, further divided into categories including honest, sick, professional and ‘non-desirable’ pilgrims. As a result of the increasing numbers of ‘non-desirable’ pilgrims, who seemed to flock to Shikoku because of the opportunity to live off the charity of others, the local people and authorities attempted to control and extradite such people through restrictions and regulations. However, such measures seemed to have little effect.

Most importantly for the examination of charitable giving, it is imperative to examine the motives or reasons why people engaged in such activities. This thesis has shown that the belief in merit or the obtaining of merit (*kudoku* 功德) was one of the most important factors to the people. Having merit would allow someone a good life here on earth, and a happy rebirth in the next life for oneself and one’s family. And while such an intangible reward was sought after, having a tangible token of their kindness was also treasured. This was the name-slip, or *osamefuda*, of a pilgrim. In Shikoku, these were distributed by pilgrims to the donors of charity or left at temples and shrines. The *osamefuda* seen along the Shikoku pilgrimage route were given away freely and were not the type bought from priests. These name-slips were believed to be protective amulets, which would protect one’s family and home from any disaster or misfortune. Some people even attempted to collect large numbers of them to put into a straw ball and hang from the ceiling of their homes. Obtaining a *fuda* from a pilgrim was believed to be the same as receiving a gift from the Daishi, and thus one would be protected by his benevolent grace.

The following three chapters dealt with the forms of charity given to pilgrims in Shikoku. Chapter Two looked at different types of housing – some that were entirely free and some that were only partially free. Pilgrims could stay at buildings on the grounds of a temple, a person's home or some other form of lodging. The earliest of such accommodation was the Ekiroji that originated just before 1600. Even today, places to lodge are offered for free, but their numbers have drastically decreased since the Tokugawa period. Owners of such facilities now charge money to ensure their economic survival and building upkeep. Throughout the past four hundred years, people who have offered accommodation for free have had their homes called a 'good-deeds inn' or *zenkonyado*. This meant that the owner of such a house would obtain 'good-deeds', or in other words, merit, an aspect of the Daishi faith.

Another connection to Daishi was the period during which most people offered their homes to pilgrims. This phenomenon is seen most during the spring months of March and April, which has always been the peak pilgrimage season, because Kōbō Daishi is said to have passed away on the twenty-first day of the third month, which has become March 21st in the modern day. People celebrated the Daishi's 'special day' (*ennichi*) on this date. People also opened their homes on 'memorial days' of someone who had passed away. Such action shows that the custom of charitable giving was closely connected with a belief in Kōbō Daishi. In other cases, people provided places to stay out of concern or sympathy for the pilgrims who had to suffer while traveling the 1,400 kilometers through Shikoku.

Chapter Three examined objects that pilgrims used to help themselves get safely around the pilgrimage route. First of all, there were lanterns and path markers along the

streets and the pilgrim path. In the case of the path markers, there were four men who are most well known for having placed such objects during the Tokugawa period. Then there have been the 'guides,' or *sendatsu*, seen as early as the Middle Ages in other areas of Japan, but later in Shikoku because the emphasis of the Shikoku route was more on traveling as individuals than in groups. However, these guides did exist and their function has grown to be an organized institution today with various ranks and qualifications needed to move up within the hierarchy. They have played an important role not only by guiding, but also by sharing the tales of Kōbō Daishi, and by promoting the religious aspects of the pilgrimage. Finally, the importance of guidebooks was highlighted and the fact that many of these books were given away for free to other people. In these books, the authors provided details on the origins of each temple, shared legends, told of personal experiences, but also provided important practical advice for potential pilgrims. The authors were certainly under no obligation to provide details such as these, but clearly their charitable action helped in making the Shikoku pilgrimage more popular and helped by guiding pilgrims before and during their trip.

In the final chapter, other forms of charitable giving were discussed. The first section testifies to the wide range of forms that charity took. For example, footwear, footcare, haircuts, the giving of food and tea, transportation and post offices services. The second section dealt with the ways in which the local people or authorities treated pilgrims who were sick or who had died. The behaviour of the authorities does at times seem to contradict their restrictive actions in attempting to prohibit, control, round up or expel pilgrims. However, pilgrims even in this desperate situation could be assured that,

if sick, they would be treated with free food and lodging, and if they died would be given a proper burial.

The motives of the Shikoku people, both at the local and authoritative level, along with those from areas such as Wakayama, Okayama, Kyūshū were also examined in this study. It appears that the reasons for charitable giving are many, with plausible explanations including: 1) to give an offering to Kōbō Daishi; 2) to remember one's ancestors on an *ennichi*, or *kijitsu*); 3) to participate vicariously in the pilgrimage or 4) to show sympathy towards the hard religious training of the pilgrim.¹⁸⁷ Others reasons include: to receive merit, to assist the Daishi in disguise and to avoid bad karma.

The custom of charitable giving has lasted in many forms over the past four hundred years in Shikoku with people from inside Shikoku and those traveling from across the Inland Sea to take part in it every year. Today such activity can still be seen and read about in the many travel diaries of modern day pilgrims. However, it must be remembered that this great phenomenon, still continuing in some forms today, was more prevalent during the Tokugawa period. The custom has continued longer in Shikoku than anywhere else in Japan because of the local people's strong faith in Kōbō Daishi. It is from his Buddhist teachings that *settai* has grown, continued and has helped to preserve the religious nature of the Shikoku pilgrimage route for such a long period of time.

¹⁸⁷ Hoshino (1978) 177; Maeda (1972) 222; Baba (1999)

Prospects for Further Studies

The amount of materials and scholarly studies on different aspects of the Shikoku pilgrimage route are severely lacking in the English language, so the number of different new studies that could be conducted by a Western scholar on this topic are seemingly numberless. Such studies could include further examination into the history of charitable giving (*settai*) based on further fieldwork or smaller topics such as: Shinnen's hermitage, lodging facilities, foreigners along the Shikoku route, women and children on the route are all worth researching. Furthermore, a closer look into the origins, development, history and motives of the local people and charity groups that served the pilgrims would be another interesting study.

The contribution of this thesis towards the study of the Shikoku pilgrimage route is that one can understand the great influence Kōbō Daishi has had on the people within Shikoku or those from such distant places as Kyūshū, Wakayama, Okayama or Hiroshima to be so charitable for so long. The stories about him or others who have suffered for not being kind have been effective in encouraging people to be charitable. However, the Buddhist concepts of obtaining merit, ofuda or Buddhahood in this life were also influential in their actions.

In the present day, charitable giving continues but with modernization and commercialization, the route is changing, walking pilgrims are disappearing and temples have to deal with bus after bus of pilgrims during the busy season. What will happen to the Shikoku pilgrimage route and the custom of giving? Will it fade out eventually as it did along other routes or will the influence of the legends of Kōbō Daishi continue to influence the people? Such questions make for other appealing research themes.

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