

THE SENSES, THE PATH, AND THE BUS

A SENSORY ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE SAIGOKU PILGRIMAGE

PAOLO BARBARO

This paper describes and analyzes the Saigoku pilgrimage in contemporary Japan from the point of view of the senses. The description of the most common sensescapes that pilgrims encounter and produce follows a general presentation of the pilgrimage and its broader context. The subsequent analysis of the modes of production and consumption of the sensescapes reveals the formation of similarly patterned clusters of perceptions around similar socio-cultural, behavioral, and environmental factors.

Keywords: *pilgrimage, Saigoku, senses, Japan.*

V razpravi je opisano in s stališča čutov analizirano romanje Saigoku (»romanje v zahodne province«) v sodobni Japonski. Opisu najpogostejših čutnih pokrajin, s katerimi se romarji srečajo in jih proizvedejo, sledi splošna predstavitev romanja v širšem kontekstu. Na tem temelječa analiza načinov produkcije in rabe čutnih pokrajin razkrije oblikovanje podobno vzorčenih skupkov percepcij ob podobnih družbenokulturnih, vedenjskih in okoljskih dejavnikih.

Ključne besede: *romanje, Saigoku, čuti, Japonska.*

This paper seeks to describe and analyze the experiences of the contemporary pilgrims of Saigoku, from the point of view of their senses. The Saigoku route is one of the most ancient and most popular Japanese pilgrimages. To complete it, pilgrims have to visit, in a set order, 33 specific temples situated in various locations of the Kansai region in Japan. There is no set route to go from one temple to another, and pilgrims take various roads and use various means of transportation to complete the circuit. The total length of the pilgrimage is over 1,000 kilometers. The various routes that the pilgrim can choose from are not merely physically different paths: they are different approaches to places, which correspond to patterned clusters of sensory phenomena, and which can generate very diverse experiences of the pilgrimage. In fact, from the planning of the pilgrimage onwards, the pilgrims are continuously confronted with choices regarding the use of their bodies. They are the architects of the experiential process. General choices such as the amount of walking they will do, the road to take, the kind of food to eat, and what to wear shape the pilgrimage experience in very different ways, and eventually create very different kinds of pilgrimages.

CONTEXTUALIZING THE STUDY

Before addressing the ethnography of the pilgrimage, three preliminary facts must be highlighted. The first is a methodological issue: because of the pilgrimage structure, length,

and settings, the pilgrims are exposed to a potentially very rich variety of sensescapes, and to countless sensory experiences, which cannot all be described. Therefore, to provide a satisfactory account, I employ two overlapping but complementary approaches: the environmental, or macro-perspective, and the pilgrim-centered, or micro-perspective. The former consists of describing the major factors that preside over the clustering of similar groups of sensations and the resulting sensescapes. I have identified the following frameworks: traveling season, means of transportation, pilgrimage structure, settings of the temples visited, and pilgrims' behaviors. For the pilgrim-centered perspective, I have tried to describe the most common role that pilgrims assign to each of the traditional senses.¹

The broader academic context of this paper also deserves a brief introduction. The Saigoku pilgrimage has been the object of numerous studies in Japanese,² but its existence is rarely mentioned in Western literature on pilgrimages. There are no full-length studies, and only three articles focus on it in English [Gump 2005; Hoshino 1997; Leavell and Reader 1988].³ Moreover, despite the abundance of Japanese material, no study has focused on the role that the senses play in Japanese pilgrimages. By furnishing ethnographic data on a pilgrimage little known in Western anthropological literature, and examining it from a sensory perspective, not previously applied to this subject, this paper makes a modest contribution to the future development of comparative analysis and theoretical hypotheses in both anthropology of the senses⁴ and pilgrimage studies in anthropology.

Finally, a brief remark is necessary on the use of the term "sensescape," its synonyms, and semantically close expressions, which recur frequently in the following pages. Sensescapes are not fixed entities, but processes during which the pilgrim is simultaneously the creator and the user of the environment. Sensory backgrounds, and the features composing them, are not static elements, but continuously changing situations in which the pilgrims are co-creators of their surroundings: they choose their environments, shape them through their behaviors, and recollect them (or forget them) after the experience is over.

PILGRIMAGE ROUTES IN JAPAN

The terms course, circuit, or multi-site pilgrimage refer to a form of pilgrimage unknown in the Judeo-Christian or Muslim traditions. Its existence is attested in the past in China,

¹ The choice to describe a five-senses approach is due to necessities of analytic reduction and to cultural conventions. However, this does not entirely match the more complicated reality of sensory perception.

² The research on pilgrimages in Japanese is rich. The Saigoku pilgrimage has been analyzed in numerous monographic studies and in many articles. In addition, it has a section, or at least a mention, in virtually all the texts analyzing Japanese pilgrimages [cf. Shinno 1996 (1): 1–142; Shinjō 1982].

³ A few articles and sections of books treat related issues; for example, Mac Williams [1997; 1990]. See also Reader and Swanson [1997: 225–228].

⁴ While sharing the point of view expressed by some authors on the importance of not creating a new subfield of anthropology [Benedix 2005: 3–8], I appreciate the potential of the senses approach.

and in India similar forms of pilgrimage exist. In Japan, the Buddhist tradition probably mingled with, and reorganized, pre-existing modes of religious and ascetic itinerancy, developing distinctive characteristics [Gorai 1989].

The Japanese multi-site pilgrimage consists of going to a fixed and numbered sequence of temples, following a given order.⁵ The Saigoku pilgrimage-course is comprised of 33 temples, numbered from one to 33. It is usually – but not exclusively – performed starting from temple number one or from temple number 33, following an ascending or descending numerical progression. The two directions have no special difference or significance, and usually the choice of whether to start from one point or another is made according to geographic convenience. On other pilgrimage courses, the most prominent being the Shikoku *henro*,⁶ the pilgrims start from any temple in the sequence. A circuit is considered finished only when all of the temples that form it have been visited. Sometimes, especially since the industrialization of Japan, and the consequent reorganization of work-life, which has confined free time to weekends or very short holidays, many perform the pilgrimage in legs, going as far as possible on one day (a practice known as *higaeri*), usually on Sunday, and starting over the next time from where the course was left off. Pilgrims traditionally receive a stamp or seal (*nōkyō*) from each temple they visit, and collect them in a book (*nōkyōchō*) or on a scroll (*kakejiku*).

The signifier of the circuit, a figure venerated at all the temples, can be a divinity, a group of divinities, or a holy man.⁷ The Saigoku route is an exemplary specimen of the *honzon* pilgrimage class: the main image of every temple (*honzon*) is the bodhisattva Kannon, an important figure in Japanese religion, to be examined below.

Multi-site pilgrimages are widespread in Japan. Their popularity boomed during the Edo period (1600–1868) and, since then, they have had variable fortunes: new circuits were born and old ones neglected in response to demographic and economic changes, socio-cultural transformations, fashions, or the birth of new religious groups. Nevertheless, the overall number of pilgrimage-courses has increased.

The ancient pilgrimage circuits, such as the *Saigoku junrei* or the *henro* pilgrimage in Shikoku, originated as training paths for ascetics, to perform religious austerities and progress

⁵ In addition to multi-site pilgrimages, single-site pilgrimages are also known in Japan, in which believers make devotional trips to one religious center. Among the popular ones, the Ise shrine is probably the best known and most visited.

⁶ The pilgrimage of the 88 temples of Shikoku, generally known as the *henro* pilgrimage, is an old course approximately 1,400 km long that goes around the island of Shikoku. Today it is probably the best-known Japanese pilgrimage route, and is started from any temple, disregarding the number, in both directions, although the numeric progression is usually respected. It is constructed around the figure of the Buddhist monk Kōbō Daishi (774–835). See Hoshino [1997] for a short introduction or Reader [2006] for a monographic study.

⁷ A few classification systems have been constructed for Japanese pilgrimages. The majority of them, in addition to the classes cited above, also include the “regional circuit pilgrimages,” as in Shinno [1996]. Other classifications include the types “single-site pilgrimage” and “mountain pilgrimages.” See Kitagawa [1987] and Reader and Swanson [1997].

spiritually. For centuries, they primarily attracted mystics and wandering clergy (*jugyō-sha* or *shugen-sha*). In early-modern times, these paths became very popular among the common people and laymen.⁸ Although today the great majority of pilgrims easily also fit into the class of secularized tourists, the ideal of spiritual progression through ascetic practices (*shugyō*) is strictly linked to an idealized, pure, and original form of pilgrimage. According to certain scholars, this ideal form of pilgrimage is still part of the collective consciousness of the Japanese and represents the ideal pilgrimage [Blacker 2000: 164–165].

Since its birth, the *Saigoku junrei* has been the model for the creation of other circuits, often referred to as copy-pilgrimages (*utsushi reijō*). Copies of the famous national courses are visible in all regions of Japan. Their size can range from a miniature pilgrimage inside a temple garden, comprised of 33 stones, to a circuit of 33 temples 2,000 kilometers long. From a religious point of view, the value of a copy pilgrimage is ambiguous. In fact, although the act of completing a circuit is considered a spiritual merit regardless of the circuit, some courses renowned at a national level, such as Saigoku, are held in special consideration, as shown by miracles, fluxes of pilgrims, or pilgrimage literature and discourses on pilgrimages.

The Saigoku circuit is by far the most copied of all the national pilgrimages.⁹ The copies of the Saigoku route are often named after it; for example, the “Pilgrimage of Saigoku in the country of Tosa.” Copy-pilgrimages frequently use objects to augment the sacred link with the original circuit, such as reproductions of sacred images enshrined in the original temples, or soil transplanted from the original sacred sites.¹⁰ In contemporary Japan, there are about 100 pilgrimage circuits of 33 sacred sites to Kannon,¹¹ not counting miniature pilgrimages.

⁸ Popularization is a process that took many centuries, and some say that it started as early as the end of the Heian period (784–1185). A visible rise in the popularity of pilgrimages among the common people is evident between the 16th and 18th centuries. This trend transformed (and was due to the transformation of) pilgrimages into a mainly leisure activity similar to contemporary tourism [Graburn 1983].

⁹ Although most of the Saigoku pilgrims come from neighboring regions – and although pilgrims from certain distant regions of Japan are very much a minority [Satō 1989: 192], therefore contradicting Bhardwaj’s well-accepted definition of “national pilgrimage” [Bhardwaj 1973] – it can be argued that the combination of the peculiarity of Japanese imitation pilgrimage and Saigoku’s role as a main pilgrimage model on a national scale could constitute an exception to this established definition.

¹⁰ Transplanting soil from the original sites of the temples is typical of copies of the *Shikoku henro*.

¹¹ The cataloguing of Japanese pilgrim circuits is an unfinished task. At least three compendia of pilgrimage routes in Japan have been published, plus a number of lists in guidebooks, but they are all incomplete for various reasons. Moreover, none of them distinguish between “dead” and active circuits, and none list the miniature pilgrimages. Therefore, the exact number of pilgrimage circuits in Japan remains unknown. See, for example, Nakao [1974], Ōji [2001], and *Zenkoku reijō daijiten hensanshitsu* [2000]. According to the most complete compendium, the *Zenkoku reijō daijiten hensanshitsu* [Great Dictionary of the Entire Country’s Places of Pilgrimages, 2000], which lists more than 300 pilgrimage routes, 82 are multi-site pilgrimages of the 33 Kannon.

THE SAIGOKU JUNREI

Often named Saigoku *junrei*,¹² the *Pilgrimage to the 33 fuda-sites of Kannon in the western provinces* starts in the south of the Kii Peninsula and, after a tortuous course of more than 1,000 kilometers, ends in Gifu Prefecture. The *fuda* are both name slips that the pilgrim leaves, one at each temple, and amulets received at each temple.¹³ They are usually made of paper and contain offerings, the name of the pilgrim, and his prayers. They are frequently used as souvenirs for friends and relatives.

The temples of the circuit are called *fuda-sho* (literally *fuda*-sites), or *reijō*, places where the spirits gather. The temples on the Saigoku course belong to different Buddhist schools: there are two Hossō temples, 16 Tendai-lineage temples, and 15 of Shingon-lineage. Often, the pilgrims extend their path to reach Mount Kōya, an important spiritual center and headquarters of a school of esoteric Buddhism, not far from temples seven and eight. Occasionally they visit other religious sites, such as the famous temples of Nara and Kyōto, and

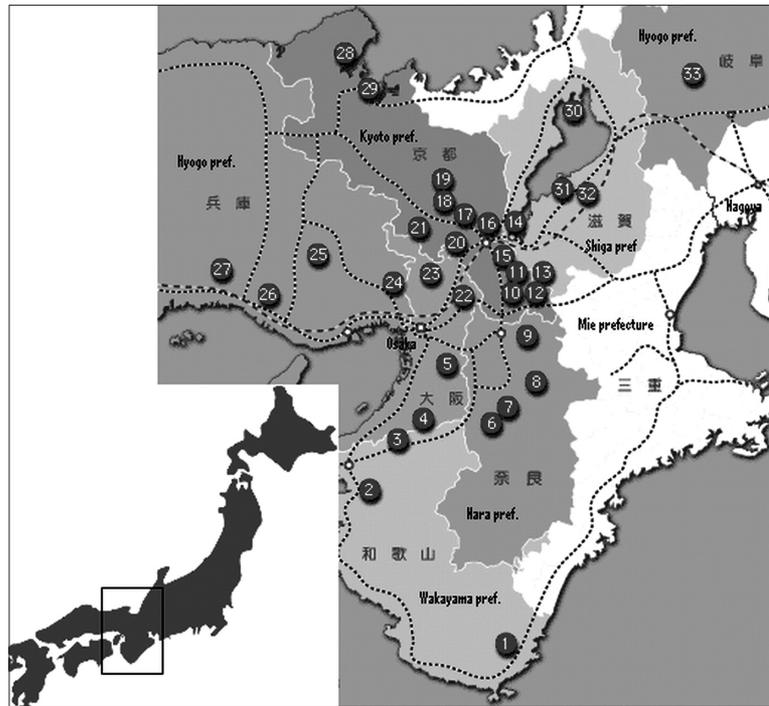


Fig. 1: Map of the Saigoku pilgrimage.

¹² *Saigoku* or *Saikoku* refers to the western provinces and *junrei* is a frequently used, but not the exclusive, word for pilgrimage. Therefore *Saigoku junrei* literally means the “pilgrimage to the western provinces.” The circuit is also referred to as *Saigoku* (or *Saikoku*) *meguri*, or with more extensive forms “Pilgrimage to the 33 *fuda*-sites of Kannon in the western provinces” (*Saigoku sanjūsan Kannon fuda-sho junrei*) and “Pilgrimage to the 33 sites where the spirits gather in the western provinces” (*Saigoku sanjūsan reijō junrei*). I have chosen the spelling Saigoku because it is more accurate.

¹³ More on *fuda* can be found in Shirasu [1974: 16–17].

especially the temples called *bangai* (literally outside the numbers): temples not included in the route, but considered of religious or historical interest as part of the circuit.¹⁴

Table 1: The temples of the Saigoku pilgrimage.

N.	Temple name	Characters	Main Image	School/Sect	Location
1	Seiganto-ji	青岸渡寺	Nyoriin	Tendai	Wakayama pref.
2	Kongōhō-ji	金剛宝寺	Jūichimen	Kuse	Wakayama pref.
3	Kokawa-dera	粉河寺	Senjūsengen	Kokawa	Wakayama pref.
4	Sefuku-ji	施福寺	Jūichimen Senjūsengen	Tendai	Ōsaka-fu
5	Fujii-dera	葛井寺	Jūichimen Senjūsengen	Shingon	Ōsaka-fu
6	Minami Hokke-ji	南法華寺	Jūichimen Senjūsengen	Shingon	Nara pref.
7	Oka-dera	岡寺	Nyōirin	Shingon	Nara pref.
8	Hase-dera	長谷寺	Jūichimen	Shingon	Nara pref.
9	Nan'en-dō	南円堂	Fukūkenjaku	Hossō	Nara city
10	Mimuroto-ji	三室戸寺	Senjū	Honzan	Kyōto-fu
11	Kami Daigo-ji	上醍醐寺	Juntei	Shingon	Kyōto city
12	Shōhō-ji	正法寺	Senjū	Shingon	Shiga pref.
13	Ishiyama-dera	石山寺	Chokufūnihinyoirin	Shingon	Shiga pref.
14	Onjō-ji	園城寺	Nyoirin	Tendai	Shiga pref.
15	Kannon-ji	観音寺	Jūichimen	Shingon	Kyōto city
16	Kiyomizu-dera	清水寺	Jūichimen Senju	Hossō	Kyōto city
17	Rokuharamitsu-ji	六波羅蜜寺	Jūichimen	Shingon	Kyōto city
18	Chōhō-ji	頂法寺	Nyoirin	Tendai	Kyōto city
19	Gyōgan-ji	行願寺	Senjū	Tendai	Kyōto city
20	Yoshimine-dera	善峰寺	Senju Sengen	Tendai	Kyōto city
21	Anao-ji	穴太寺	Shō Kannon	Tendai	Kyōto city
22	Sōji-ji	総持寺	Senju Kannon	Shingon	Ōsaka-fu
23	Katsuō-ji	勝尾寺	Jūichimen Senju	Shingon	Ōsaka-fu
24	Nakayama-dera	中山寺	Jūichimen	Shingon	Hyōgo pref.
25	Kiyomizu-dera	清水寺	Jūichimen Senju	Tendai	Hyōgo pref.
26	Ichijō-ji	一乗寺	Shō Kannon	Tendai	Hyōgo pref.
27	Engyō-ji	圓教寺	Nyoirin	Tendai	Hyōgo pref.
28	Nariai-ji	成相寺	Shō Kannon	Shingon	Kyōto-fu
29	Matsu no o-dera	松尾寺	Batō	Shingon	Kyōto-fu
30	Hōgon-ji	宝巖寺	Senju Sengen	Shingon	Shiga pref.
31	Chōmei-ji	長命寺	Senju Jūichimen Shō	Tendai	Shiga pref.
32	Kannonshō-ji	観音正寺	Senjūsengen Jūichimen	Tanritsu	Shiga pref.
33	Kegon-ji	華巖寺	Jūichimen	Tendai	Gifu pref.

¹⁴ Popular *bangai* temples of the Saigoku pilgrimage are the Hanayama temple, which was one of the starting points of the circuit before its formalization in its present shape, and the Hasedera temple, linked to the figure of the legendary founder of the circuit, Tokudō Shōnin. See Shirasu [1974: 203–210].

The circuit goes through the prefectures of Aichi, Hyogo, Shiga, and Wakayama, the metropolitan area of Ōsaka, and the ancient capitals of Nara and Kyōto. As mentioned, there is no established or standardized way to go from temple to temple, and the pilgrims are free to choose the route they prefer. The region in which the pilgrimage is centered is called Kansai.

Traditionally, pilgrims dress in white clothes and a conical straw hat, and walk with a pilgrim's staff, although the number of people with these distinguishing features is fairly low today.¹⁵ The first records clearly documenting the existence of the pilgrimage date from the 12th century.¹⁶

Many texts, mostly composed during the Edo period, describe an ancient formulation of the course. These texts and their content are called *engi*. The most diffused *engi* states that the course was founded in 718 by the Buddhist monk and holy man Tokudō Shōnin, and rediscovered by the emperor Kazan in 988 thanks to a dream in which the bodhisattva Kannon explained the existence of the circuit to the emperor and asked him to re-establish it. This story is still reported in pilgrimage guides. Today, Emperor Kazan is often considered the founder of the circuit, or the authority that sanctioned its existence, and many pilgrims believe in the foundation of the circuit by Tokudō Shōnin. In any case, historical evidence shows that the contemporary shape of the course was fixed in the Muromachi period (1333–1573).

Today the Saigoku pilgrimage route attracts thousands of pilgrims every year.¹⁷ The

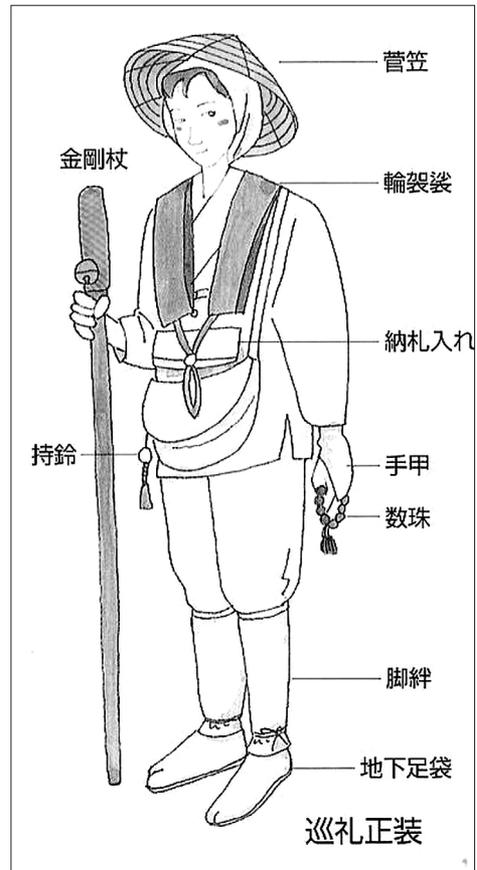


Fig. 2: Traditional pilgrim attire [Drawing from West-Japan Rail 2005: 5].

¹⁵ During field research conducted in February 2006, for example, I met a busload of pilgrims in temple number two. Only two women in the group (which consisted of about 20 people) were wearing the traditional attire, although in seasons with milder weather the percentage rises visibly, and even buses in which the majority of pilgrims are dressed in white are visible. It is quite rare to see the traditional straw hat in Saigoku. The staff is a much more common feature, and baskets of pilgrims' staffs are often at the disposal of pilgrims, ready to be used when getting out of their vehicles or entering the temple area.

¹⁶ See Gump [2005] for a brief introduction or Shinjō [1982] for a very detailed history. Shinjō [1982: 422] reports the first document and the following ones.

¹⁷ The last statistics on fluxes of pilgrims to Saigoku are almost 20 years old, and indicate fluxes of pilgrims ranging between 60,000 and 80,000 during the 1980s [Saitō 1989].

pilgrimage is made mainly by middle-aged and elderly Japanese, and most of the pilgrims come from the Kansai area or neighboring regions [Satō 1989: 192].

TOURISTS AND PILGRIMS

Although the Saigoku circuit seems to have a clear religious framework, a talk with a pilgrim or a look at a guidebook is enough to blur the assumed difference between religious and leisure travelers. The overwhelming majority of the pilgrims that I have met on the circuit told me that the major motivations for the pilgrimage are culture, nature, history, leisure, tradition, or socializing with their relatives or friends. The viewpoint that Saigoku is a sightseeing pilgrimage (often referred to as a travel pilgrimage, *junrei no tabi*) is common, and the acceptance of the fact that pilgrimages are also made because of pleasant natural settings, historical sites, good company, or tasty food is often found even in sermons written by Buddhist monks for travel guides.

The amount of time generally dedicated to religious activities is rather limited. Normally, the time spent in the temples is a modest portion of the day, and it may be argued that many of the activities conducted there are nonreligious: taking pictures, obtaining temple stamps, and buying souvenirs or amulets.

However, a clear-cut dichotomy between tourists and pilgrims on the circuit is neither feasible nor useful.¹⁸ In addition to the fact that generally *the contemporary use of the terms, identifying the pilgrim as a religious traveler and the tourist as a vacationer, is a culturally constructed polarity that veils the motives of the travelers' quest* [Smith 1992: 1], in the case of the Saigoku circuit the tourist-pilgrim division is even more evidently a semantic construction that polarizes toward two idealized stereotypes: the religious devotee and the leisure traveler. This involves a much more complex set of behaviors, acts, and cultural specificity; for example, the close link of Japanese religion with leisure, the generally non-dogmatic and tolerant approach of Japanese culture toward religion, or the fact that in Japan forms of itinerant devotion are historically superimposed onto forms of tourism [Formanek 1998; Graburn 1995].

The pilgrim-tourist duality, similar to the traveler-tourist dichotomy [cf. Urbain 1991], refers to a meta-speech on the qualities of travel and on measuring feelings, intentions, and beliefs through behaviors that is not scientific. I therefore consider a Saigoku pilgrim to be every person that visits the 33 temples of Saigoku in the given order, collecting the stamps or seals of the temples, with the expressed intention of completing the circuit, without engaging in evaluations on the pilgrims' beliefs, and in defining what a pilgrim is.¹⁹

¹⁸ The issue of the tourist-pilgrim distinction has been addressed by numerous scholars. Probably Derrida's phrase *every tourist is a pilgrim and every pilgrim is a tourist* synthesizes in a few words the heart of the problem. See Cohen [1992], Coleman and Eade [2004: 9–13] and Smith [1992].

¹⁹ The problem of precisely defining a pilgrim in Japan has been addressed by many scholars and remains a subject of debate. See Reader and Swanson [1997: 228–232] and Coleman and Eade [2004: 1–25].

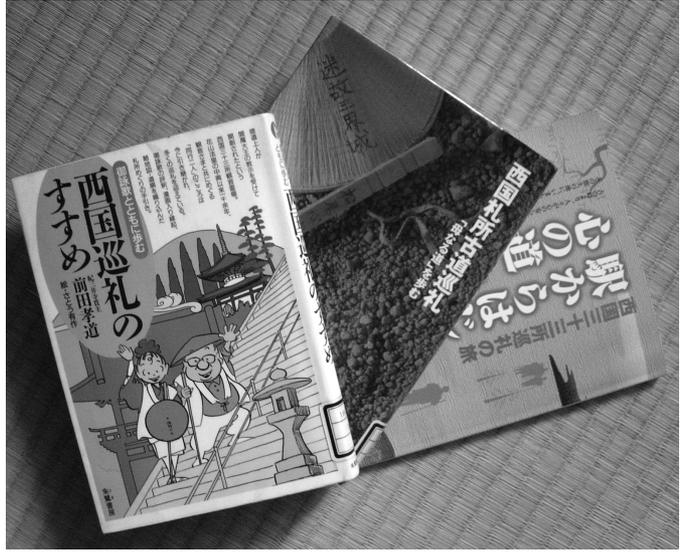


Fig. 3: Pilgrimage guidebooks [Photo by P. Barbaro].

KANNON

The bodhisattva Kannon (Avalokiteśvara in Sanskrit), is the main image of every temple on the Saigoku pilgrimage, the object of worship of the pilgrims, and the signifier that links the temples in a circuit. Its cult has been present in Japan at least since the 7th century AD. Represented as a male in Indian, Tibetan, and Southeast Asian iconography, this bodhisattva acquired female features in China. In Japan both female and male forms exist, although often feminine traits persist in the representations of male Kannon. In English she is usually referred to as the Bodhisattva of Compassion. Since ancient times she has held a special place among the Japanese, as also shown by the fact that in Japan the 25th chapter of the Lotus sūtra,²⁰ entitled “The Chapter on the Sammantamukha of Avalokiteśvara”, the texts that extensively narrate the story of Kannon, attained the status of an independent sacred book many centuries ago, under the title Kannon Sūtra (Kannon-gyō).

Avalokiteśvara can be translated as the ‘Lord that regards all’, and the Chinese and Japanese translations have tried to maintain this meaning. Kannon is in fact a shortened form of Kanzeon, meaning ‘[The one that] observes the sounds of the world’. According to the *Kannon Sūtra*, she is in fact the bodhisattva that

constantly surveys (kan) the world (ze) listening for the sounds (on) of suffering. Hearing sounds of distress, this ‘Sound Observer’ – by virtue of ‘unblemished knowledge,’ the ‘power of supernatural penetration,’ and ‘expedient devices’ – is able to display his body ‘in the lands of all ten quarters’. Kannon does so ‘by resort to a variety of shapes’,

²⁰ The Lotus Sūtra – *Saddharma-pundarika-sūtra* in Sanskrit, *Fa-hua-ching* in Chinese, and *Hoke-kyō* in Japanese – has a distinctly important place in the history of Japanese Buddhism.

*changing into the most suitable of 33 different forms for preaching the Dharma to save all who are suffering.*²¹

This passage of the sūtra is generally considered the explanation for why there are 33 temples in the pilgrimage. Although the sūtra cites 33 bodies,²² there are seven traditional forms of representations of Kannon in Japan.²³



Fig. 4: Image of Kannon.

Also related to the origin and development of the pilgrimage circuits is the popularity of Kannon among mountain religious wanderers. *From as early as the seventh century, mountain Buddhist ascetics (gyōja, shugenja) worshiped Kannon as a spiritually powerful divinity believed to have beneficial powers to drive away evil and beckon good fortune (josai shōfuku no gorishō)* [MacWilliams 1997: 376; see also Hayami 1970].

THE TEMPLES

The diverse locations of the temples, and their cultural, natural, and historical characteristics, are among the most appealing features of the circuit for the pilgrims. For example, the Kiyomizu-dera in Kyōto (temple number 16), or the temple complex of Kumano

²¹ Translation of the Lotus Sūtra from MacWilliams [1997: 375].

²² The 33 bodies of Kannon are listed in Tani [2002: 113]. A list of the 33 Kannon is provided in Tani [2002: 131].

²³ There are different but similar traditions in Japan, recognizing the six or seven most diffused forms of Kannon. According to the Compendium of Buddhist Images [Tani 2002: 110–131], the seven traditional forms of Kannon in Japan are: the *Sho* or Sacred (often translated Pure) Kannon, the *Jūichimen* or Eleven-Faced Kannon, the *Senju* or Thousand-Armed Kannon, the *Fukūkenjaku* Kannon, the *Nyoirin* Kannon, the *Batō* or Horse-Head Kannon, and the *Juntei* Kannon. Mixed forms also exist, such as the Eleven-Face Thousand-Armed Kannon.

(inside which is temple number one), are among the oldest and most renowned in Japan. The former is a broad ancient temple compound that includes famous features such as the Jishu shrine,²⁴ or the “love stones.” On a hill immersed in greenery in the centre of Kyōto, this temple has been included on the UNESCO world heritage list since 1994, and has a famous and picturesque shopping district, rich in traditional and tourist items, just outside its gates. However, certain routes and regions in the area between temples can be equally valuable and appealing. The temples of Kumano, for example, although located in the beautiful setting of the mountains of the Kumano National Park, and with a famous waterfall inside their compounds, are more renowned because of the ancient Kumano roads (Kumano *kodō*). The Kumano *kodō*, also included on the UNESCO list, are a network of ancient roads and paths, in the Kii mountain range, leading from the Kumano temples to Mount Kōya.

Most of the 33 temples have some special feature or characteristic, such as the famous Hōgōn-ji temple (number 30 of the circuit), which is located on a beautiful island inside renowned Lake Biwa, and is accessible only by ferry. The few temples that have lost their appeal are creating new features; for example, temple number two (Kimii-dera) is carving an impressive, great wooden statue of the Thousand-Armed Kannon.

ON THE TRAVELING SEASON

A first element that should be considered is the fact that the great majority of pilgrims usually travel in the spring or autumn. Recent statistics are not available, but a number of clues can help reconstruct the annual fluxes of pilgrims with fair precision. Traditionally, pilgrims travel during these seasons because of the weather.²⁵ Transportation, tourism companies, and pilgrims’ association, including West Japan Rail,²⁶ primarily organize group pilgrimages or “pilgrimage campaigns” during these two seasons. My observations, as well as my informants’ opinions, confirm this trend. It can be roughly estimated that around 85 percent of the total pilgrimages take place in these two seasons.

This travel pattern entails three consequences. First of all, the majority of pilgrims have similar experiences from the point of view of weather. The second is that, also due to the fact that most of the temples are surrounded by green areas or woods, and include gardens in their compounds, the temples become a place where pilgrims are in a natural environment, and can enjoy the beauty of nature in its spring or fall display of colors and odors. Especially in pre-pilgrimage and post-pilgrimage discourses, temples are often associated

²⁴ In the middle of the temple complex, this Shintō shrine is frequently visited by women because it houses the god of love and good marriages.

²⁵ Through the last four centuries, this pattern has remained roughly stable, with an increase of pilgrims in autumn due to urbanization, which relieved most of the population from very busy harvest labor.

²⁶ See their guidebook *Starting the Pilgrimage from the Station* [West Japan Rail 2005].

with nature. Finally, there is a minority of pilgrims that experience totally different weather and natural settings: the winter cold and eventually snowy weather, the summer heat, or the rainy season. The main reasons behind these choices are economics (off-season prices), avoiding crowds, and work schedules.

MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION AND THE SENSES

A major aspect that frames the sensory traits of the pilgrimage is the road because it is the place where the majority of pilgrims' time is spent, and where most of the experiences occur.²⁷ The road constitutes most of the pilgrimage, not only from a quantitative point of view. Although today miracles on the Saigoku circuit seem to happen much more rarely than in the past, they traditionally occur on the road more than in temples. The road is a mental and physical space, a rare segment of time free from many everyday constraints, during which the pilgrim can contemplate his actions and thoughts.

To cover the distances between the temples, contemporary Saigoku pilgrims use various means of transportation. The most popular are bus and car, and trains are also fairly frequent for longer distances, in combination with local buses or taxis. Walkers, cyclists, and motorcyclists are a very small percentage of the total. There are no recent statistics, but judging from certain evidence (internet sites, travel diaries, and also cautious comparison with *henro* walkers), a rough estimate of 300 to 400 pilgrims walking the path every year can be assumed, which includes weekenders that walk the path between temples but use motorized vehicles to get to and from the pilgrimage. According to the latest studies conducted on the transportation of Saigoku pilgrims, in the 1980s half of the pilgrims used cars, and some 40 percent used the bus.²⁸ The choice of performing the pilgrimage by bus is particularly popular among elderly people. The use of the train is not particularly common, and motorcycles are rarely used. I do not have information about cycling pilgrims, but I would be surprised to learn that there are not any at all.

The choice of transportation from temple to temple signifies a major difference in the approach to the pilgrimage. The decision deeply involves the use of the body, and changes the perception of the experience and the senses involved in the pilgrimage, as exemplified by the road between temple number one and temple number ten. Those going by foot most certainly go through the Kumano *kodō*, enjoying complete immersion in nature (and history and religion, certain pilgrims would add) with their entire body. Train pilgrims must

²⁷ Japanese literature on pilgrimages confirms the importance of the road. With the exception of guidebooks, all the other genres (e.g., novels, diaries, and TV programs) dedicate a great part, and often the majority of space, to narrating road experiences.

²⁸ The use of cars among pilgrims has been growing steadily since the 1960s, due to the increase of this means of transportation among the common people, and this has created structural changes in the pilgrimage traditions. The most visible are an increase in the *higaeri* practice and an increase in mononuclear-family sized groups of pilgrims.

go around the coast, enjoying very scenic views where the mountains meet the ocean, in the southern part of the peninsula, whereas pilgrims in cars or buses generally enjoy less of the beauty of the Kii Peninsula than their compatriots traveling on foot or by train. As a general rule, motorized pilgrims use highways and national roads to save time, and walkers prefer paths or rural roads.

It can be argued that walking the path corresponds to the ideal form of pilgrimage. This statement is delicate, and may be contradicted by valuable arguments because the opinion that walking is a better way to perform the pilgrimage is widespread, but not unanimously accepted. Moreover, the fact that walking pilgrims are a tiny minority, and that the overwhelming majority of the Saigoku pilgrims use motorized vehicles, cannot be ignored. There are indeed individuals that affirm that walking is the only true way to make the pilgrimage, or that walking is the means to achieve progress in the inner world while progressing in the outer one.²⁹ However, there is no formal or codified religious obligation to walk the path, and most religious authorities have a very relaxed and encouraging attitude towards motorized pilgrims. In many cases, Buddhist monks organize pilgrimage buses for people of their community and act as pilgrimage guides (*sendatsu*). Some religious authorities even affirm that using the bus is a more devotional way to make the pilgrimage because more time is spent in religious activities [Reader 2006: 18]. In fact, a portion of the time spent in the bus is generally dedicated to religion-related activities, as we will see later.

If, on the one hand, the origin of the pilgrimage is in ascetic training, we must consider that for centuries walking has been not a religious choice, but the only possible way to make the pilgrimage for most people.³⁰ Since the liberalization of the transportation system in 1872, every technological innovation that made the trip more comfortable or cheaper has been well accepted and integrated into the pilgrims' set of transportation choices. The idea that walking the path is closer to authenticity has probably grown in recent times for a number of reasons, including the socio-cultural and economic characteristics of contemporary Japan, the constant human quest for signification, an idealization of and nostalgia for the past, and the mass-media's indulgence in romantically portraying the Shikoku *henro*.

Walking the circuit is a major challenge for the body. Not only is walking more than 1,000 kilometers a physical feat: some of the 33 temples, and good stretches of the route, are in mountainous regions, and some paths can be particularly hard. Walking pilgrims usually wake up early in the morning and can spend up to ten hours a day walking. The settings of the walks are very stimulating for the senses and the mind: woods and mountain paths, scenic views and delightful nature, natural smells and scents, encounters with wildlife, remote villages, important historical cities, or city traffic. Walking the path is usually described as an

²⁹ The idea that walking the *henro* is an exercise of meditating on a *mandala*, and the only true way to make the pilgrimage, is explicitly expressed in *Henro michi hoson ryōkai* [2004: 2–4].

³⁰ During the Edo period, strict regulations on traffic and transportation made prices rise and forbade many kinds of independent transportation or enterprise, making walking the only possible way for the common people to make the pilgrimage.

once-in-a-lifetime experience. On the other hand, using a motorized vehicle means partially shielding the body from the world, and accelerating space and time.

In any case, it can be affirmed that today the figure of the walking pilgrim dressed in white, while representing a small portion of the total of pilgrims, corresponds to an ideal model, and is a central symbol in the collective Japanese image of pilgrimage. According to some religious authorities, a minimum amount of walking is considered an integral part of the pilgrimage, and the ascent to the temples (which in many cases are on top of a hill) is often considered part of the worshippers' duties. A Buddhist sermon included in a pilgrimage guidebook for another Saigoku pilgrimage circuit,³¹ for example, states that:

Ascending the mountains [of the temples], climbing the long stone stairs one by one, is an excellent shugyō. Don't think: 'Such a high mountain can be avoided. I'll take the bus . . .'. Actually, this tiring 'one step after another' is a precious shugyō . . . which even today gradually erases the misdeeds committed by anyone. [Saigoku aizen reijō (ed.) 1994: 34–5]

The choice of mechanized vehicles is largely due to the contemporary rhythm of life and the organization of work time,³² but the pilgrims that I have encountered often mentioned other reasons for traveling by bus: leisure, comfort, company, and economic reasons.³³

STRUCTURAL OBSERVATIONS

The structure of the Saigoku pilgrimage, constructed on the road-temple duality, strongly influences the experience, and clearly shapes it in series of alternating, somewhat opposing, and somehow repetitive, sections. Each of the two sections can be associated with specific sets of sensory environments: the sensescapes of the temples, and those of the road. This structural point of view partially challenges the distinction of pilgrims' experiences based on transportation. In fact, there are similarities between the motorized and the walking pilgrimage: the road sections of the experience are longer than the temple sections, the sensory experiences are clearly organized in alternating binary sections, and the experience prescribed to accomplish the pilgrimage, the temple, is the same whatever the means of transportation. The circuit structure divides the experience into blocks of different sensory elements, emphasizing the peculiar form of pilgrimage, but this does not imply a sacred-profane dichotomy: the Saigoku pilgrimage is usually conceived of as a unity, even when

³¹ Relying on the popularity of the Saigoku circuit, multi-site pilgrimages called "Saigoku" have developed in recent years and in the past in the Kansai region. Examples are the *Saigoku Yakushi junrei*, a 33-temple pilgrimage linked by the figure of *Yakushi nyorai*, often called the "Buddha of Medicine and Healing" in English, and the *Saigoku Aizen jūnana junrei*, a 17-temple pilgrimage constructed around the figure of *Aizen*, a divinity (*Myō-ō*) of Love.

³² Japanese average work hours are among the highest in the world, and Japanese holidays are the lowest among the G8 countries, according to the Japanese Statistic Yearbook 2006.

³³ Walking the pilgrimage path is many times more expensive than doing it with motorized vehicles.

performed in pieces during different weekends. Continuing the path is as important as the act of devotions made in temples, and only by performing both geographic progression and temple visits is the pilgrimage accomplished.

THE TASTE AND THE PLACE

In Japanese culture, taste plays the distinct role of a geographic marker. Typical food and local specialties are often important symbols in the construction of geographic imagery. As a consequence, taste often plays an important role in the road experience among Japanese travelers. This is shown in the case of domestic tourism by the example of *meibutsu*, the famous specialty of a specific geographical entity. This idea is deeply rooted in Japanese culture: there are dictionaries and compendia of *meibutsu*, and virtually every region, ancient fief, and major city has its own specialty. Pilgrimages are no exceptions: many guidebooks for the Saigoku route suggest trying some of the countless local specialties for which a village or a region is renowned. There are *meibutsu* that have been known at the national level for centuries, and others recently constructed for symbolic and economic reasons. The most famous and best-selling *meibutsu* of Japan is also linked to a pilgrimage site: the *akafuku*, a kind of rice cake (*mochi*) of the sanctuary of Ise, probably the most popular shrine in Japan. *Meibutsu* are a very popular souvenir that pilgrims bring home to relatives, friends, or neighbors, and they are abundantly consumed on spot. They seem to be important more because of their symbolic association with the definition of a place than for their culinary value. A *meibutsu* is famous and valuable before being eaten because it is made in the proper way and in the original place. In consuming (buying or eating) *meibutsu*, pilgrims participate in the symbolic construction of space, in a way similar to visiting famous sites: an act analogous, when in Paris, to seeing the Eiffel tower. In this sense, the acquisition of a *meibutsu* is a process similar to taking photos, or obtaining a *fuda*, which, for the visitor and before the members of his community, symbolically represents his presence in a specific place and the performance of the trip.

The association of tastes and places is not limited to *meibutsu*. Certain dishes, part of the national cuisine, are often considered tastier in the place where they originated. When in the city of Ōsaka, for example, visitors from Tōkyō will likely eat *takoyaki*³⁴ or *okonomiyaki*,³⁵ not because they cannot find them in the capital, but because they are originally

³⁴ *Takoyaki* is primarily sold on the streets and considered a snack or fast food. *Takoyaki* literally means ‘roasted octopus’ and is a round dumpling made of batter, diced octopus, *tempura* scraps (*tenkasu*), pickled ginger, and green onion. It is usually made on the spot in a *takoyaki* pan and served hot, generally topped with *okonomiyaki* sauce and mayonnaise, green laver (*aonori*), and dried bonito flakes (*katsuobushi*).

³⁵ *Okonomiyaki* is a pan-fried dish cooked with various ingredients, sometimes referred to as Japanese pizza. *Okonomiyaki* can be roughly translated as ‘grilled the way you like it’ because the ingredients (often a mix of vegetables, meat, and seafood) are freely chosen by the eater before grilling them

from Ōsaka, and will therefore be consumed *just to give it a try* because they are *done in the proper/original way*. Many pilgrimage guidebooks have sections dedicated to food or local cuisine, and pilgrims are usually eager to try it. Some guidebooks explicitly dedicate space for those in search of original and authentic experiences. Phrases such as *the real taste of the Japanese countryside* are common. The area's adjacent major temples, with alleys rich in shops and eateries, often offer samples of local desserts, tea, and snacks. In the JR guidebook [West-Japan Rail 2005], for example, there is a section for each temple entry, entitled *look what we've found*, dedicated to *local food experiences* and hidden *old-lady-owned cooked-as-in-old-times* restaurants.

Alcoholic drinks are another important feature of the pilgrimage. Associated with relaxed moments, leisure activities, and socialization, alcoholic drinks are often consumed while on pilgrimage, especially (but not only) at dinner and after-dinner gatherings. Although occasionally pilgrims are eager to taste local liquors, alcoholic drinks mainly serve the function of socializing and defining leisure time. Preference goes to beer, sake, and *shōchū*,³⁶ but Western liquors are also consumed. The use of alcoholic drinks is widespread even if pilgrimage “etiquette” suggests abstention from alcohol.³⁷ The custom of having a few drinks with fellow pilgrims at the end of the trip, to celebrate its accomplishment, is very common.

SOUNDSCAPES

While on the road, different sound-environments contribute to constructing the pilgrimage experience. Their differences mainly depend on the means of transportation. On the other hand, once in the temples, all the pilgrims participate in the same sound creation-perception process. On the road, walking pilgrims are completely immersed in the local (often rural or wildlife) sound environment, even if periods of intense talking, during which they are isolated from the environment, are distinguishable. On the other hand, in general motorized pilgrims live in sound-environments closed to the outside world, self-constructed and characterized by a background of engines or mechanical noises. However, car, train, and bus soundscapes differ deeply in many aspects. This is mainly due to the varying composition of the fellow travelers in the group.

Pilgrims in a car are likely to be with friends or family members, and their sound-environment is familiar and intimate: music or radio, chatting, talking, and periods of

together in a kind of pancake, and topping it with *okonomiyaki* sauce, mayonnaise, and dried bonito flakes (*katsuobushi*).

³⁶ A family of liquors obtained by distilling fermented vegetables or cereals.

³⁷ The pilgrimage etiquette is a list of eight to ten rules that the pilgrim is invited to follow while performing the pilgrimage, usually reported in contemporary pilgrimage guidebooks. These include abstention from alcohol and sex, a pure heart and language, and abstention from committing crimes and lying. Compare one version in *Saigoku Aizen Reijōkai* [1994: 34–5].

silence. For pilgrims on the train, usually traveling in small groups of two or three, the soundscape will not differ from an ordinary Japanese train: travelers tend to be quiet, the use of mobile phones is forbidden, and many passengers fall asleep. The rhythmic sound of the train is interrupted by announcements for the next stop, and sometimes punctuated by people chatting.

The case of bus pilgrimages is very different. In fact, as already mentioned, when pilgrims travel by bus, religious behaviors are more frequent. This mostly happens through the creation of religious sound-environments. Using a microphone, the pilgrimage guide tells stories about miracles or the foundation of the temples, explains the origin of the pilgrimage, provides practical and religious information, and uses words to create a symbolic landscape that enriches of meaning the places visited. Moreover, he gives a feeling of participation to the event and a feeling of belonging to a group. On occasion, *sūtras* are read and *goeika* are sung.³⁸

In the temple enclosures, pilgrims generally expect to find a peaceful and quiet environment, although this is not always the case. In general, the temples on the circuit are constructed in peaceful and natural environments, and even those in the metropolitan area



Fig. 5: Pilgrims and guides singing *goeika* [Photo by P. Barbaro].

³⁸ *Goeika* are short songs, played in a simple four-beat rhythm, sometimes performed to the accompaniment of a *rei* (a small bell) and a *shōgo* or *kane* (a metal gong). Every temple in the circuit has its own *goeika*, which refers to events, history, or characteristics associated with the temple. On *goeika*, see Harich-Schneider [1973: 511, 517] and Shimizutani [1992]. Emperor Kazan is traditionally believed to be the composer of the *goeika* songs. According to Harich-Schneider's description [1973: 511], the standard *goeika* is performed as follows: *The rei . . . makes a very delicate whirring sound – it is struck once before the soloist opens the performance with a recitative 'call to prayer'. . . with the second line . . . the chorus joins in, in simple unison and without embellishments. . . Kane and rei mark the metre; the gong strikes every first beat in a bar, the bell every first, third, and fourth beat. At the end of each stanza, the rei has one solo bar . . . after which the solo singer starts again in metronomically exact time.* Many regional variants exist, and contemporary pilgrims tend to reproduce the model above without being overly orthodox in respecting all the rules of execution mentioned. The lyrics of *goeika* are usually short, as in this example of the *goeika* of the 32nd temple: *Spring flowers, Autumn leaves, change the colors, I want to learn the Land of Buddha.*

of Ōsaka are fairly isolated from traffic and city noises. Many temples are located on hills, and the long stone stairways leading from the entrance to the main halls are punctuated by the sound of footsteps and panting. When pilgrims are asked about the most familiar sounds they associate with the temples, common answers are silence and the bell stroke before prayer. However, this ideally quiet and internally oriented sound-environment is not the only possible one. Pilgrims traveling in a group automatically generate the kind of noise that is typical of crowds, chatting and commenting, sometimes (albeit rarely) chanting *goeika* songs, and when they are in small temples they pack them with people. During the weekends and in the mild seasons, many temples are crowded with visitors and tourists. In the case of the most famous temples – for example, the Kiyomizu-dera – it is not easy to find tranquility even during weekdays. Although the majority of pilgrims do not seem to be bothered by crowds and confusion, some (especially among the walkers) are troubled by the masses and chaos, and I have heard disappointed comments about “touristification.”

SIGHT(S)

Pilgrims using motorized vehicles have a more vision-centered approach to the road than walkers. This does not mean that there is an absence of other kinds of sensory occurrences. While in the car, for example, music and the radio are played, cigarettes are smoked, and food is consumed. Sight is predominant in the fact that it is the main link with the world outside the vehicle, the sense that differentiates this trip from another one. In a kind of sensory specialization, sight alone is used to experience the outside world, with control over the geographic dimension, while the other senses are occupied with personal, intimate, or social activities, with the possible exception of taste, as we have seen, in cases in which local products are consumed. According to some scholars, this participation in places with the sole use of sight, similar to watching TV, is typical of tourist behavior of contemporary post-industrial societies, and it has been defined as the “tourist gaze.”

For the bus pilgrims as well, sight plays a similar monopolistic role. When I recently invited two informants to recall their group pilgrimage to Saigoku for me, which took place some 20 years ago, the bus parts were mainly associated with joyful group social interaction, pleasant landscapes, or tiring hours of travel, rather than with religious experience. According to them, even if religious activities took place on the bus, the trip was mainly a sight-seeing tour. The moderation of the monopolistic role of sight by the creation of a religious sound environment seemed not to exist in their memories. Sight appears to play an important role in the intellectualization and recollection of the experience.

Once in the temple areas, the other senses (especially olfaction and hearing) play a much more active role. Especially inside temple halls, where the pilgrims perform most of their acts of devotion, light is scarce and sight is limited, in favor of an expansion of the other senses. Sight maintains a dominant role in pilgrims’ accounts of their temple experiences,

which are often described in terms of visual beauty, magnificence, or other esthetic values. The abundant use of photographs also emphasizes the important symbolic role of sight.

The choice of exteriorization of the pilgrim's state is also mainly based on sight. The use of the traditional white pilgrim's outfit implies a system of signification based on visual semiotics, and is the only explicit rendering of the pilgrim condition. It also contributes to the formation of an ideal, or traditional, pilgrimage landscape.

OLFACTION

According to many pilgrims, the smell of incense is the feature that most reminds them of the temples. This is not surprising, considering the triangular link between this sense, memory, and Japanese religion: smell is a *crucial site of individual and cultural memory* [Bendix 2005: 6], and incense is burned in great quantity in Japanese temples and is mainly associated with religious services.



Fig. 6: Pilgrims breathing in incense [Photo by P. Barbaro].

The typical scent of Japanese temples is a variable mixture that always includes incense, and often the fragrance of the wooden structure and the perfumes of nature. The use of candles in temples is also widespread, and sometimes the aroma of melting wax can be perceived.

The temples' smellscape could be divided into two components: the temple-halls and the temples' open spaces. The former are characterized by an incense-wood mix of scents, with incidental odors (peoples' smell, for example), and the latter changes according to the season and the setting of the temple, but usually includes the scent of a garden or of greenery and trees. However, pilgrims do not seem to differentiate the smellscape of temples in fragmented unities: when inside the compounds, they pass from one to the other many

times, and their description of the smell of temples is a unity composed of different scents from separated places.



Fig.: 7: Incense burning [Photo by P. Barbaro].

TOUCH

Touch is the most difficult sense to analyze in the Saigoku context. It is impossible to describe the continuous tactile impressions that a pilgrim experiences, and there is no specific tactile occurrence associated with the pilgrimage. When asked about tactile experiences, my informants have difficulty finding an answer. Nonetheless, the contribution to perception by tactile impressions is fundamental and endless. The cleansing of hands, a Shintō custom often performed when entering Buddhist temples, is probably more identifiable than the sweat on the skin when climbing the temple stairways, the perception of the wind and sun, and touching the pilgrims' staff, but, together with countless others tactile impressions, they all contribute to the construction of the experience, mainly at a subconscious level. I find proprioception, the perception of body awareness, particularly important: its association with various degrees of bodily involvement, the perception of the experience, and, ultimately, philosophical and ontological matters of existence, choices, and experiences, seems evident.

ON THE ABSENCE OF THE SENSES

This breakdown of the perceptions into single-sense unities, and their subdivision and classification, is made for analytical and systematic reasons. This necessary simplification

does not render the unity of the Saigoku pilgrimage at a sensory level. The body – a social and physical construct, a recipient of the senses, and an actor in the experience – is the central pillar on which the pilgrimage is constructed. Yet the body is not only a sensory recipient: it is an active seeker of sensory experience, and a generator of sensations. Pain, pleasure, odors, and feelings are all sensations generated by the body.

Very few individuals take this fact to its extreme consequences, and actively use their body to foster sensation production, or to deny sensations, in a quest for spiritual growth. I have not personally met any pilgrim that fully engages in ascetic practices. Common ascetic practices traditionally performed are purification under a waterfall (*taki-gyō*), fasting, abstention from sex, alcohol, or eating meat or the five cereals, reclusion in caves, intensive meditation, recitation of mantras, and prayer. On Mont Kōya I encountered a monk that walked the Saigoku pilgrimage engaging in some of these practices. The absence of sensation, the denial of the body, or the use of extreme sensations (such as experiencing extreme cold) is a choice that very few pilgrims (if any) undergo nowadays. Meditation too is not widespread at all among pilgrims, the duration of prayer is very limited, and the pilgrimage “etiquette” is mainly a good manners protocol, often ignored.

CONCLUSIONS

The Saigoku pilgrimage is a multi-sensory experience, protracted in time and space, which is rich in potential sensory occurrences and variations. However, the majority of pilgrims experience similarly patterned sensory events because they have similar behaviors and make similar choices. The role of the pilgrim in creating and experiencing the sensescapes appears more influential than the (nonetheless very important) physical and environmental settings.

Four major factors direct the macro-organization of the sensory environment: the pilgrimage structure, the means of transportation, the traveling season, and the geographic and architectural settings of the temples. These features are not static, but continually changing processes in which the pilgrims act as co-creators of their surroundings. These four major factors cluster selections of sensory experiences into a small number of arrangements from which pilgrims can draw the individual sensory experiences that compose the pilgrimage.

In general, a vision-centered approach to places is observed. Nonetheless, hearing and taste make great contributions to the creation of the pilgrimage sensescapes – the former very socially oriented, and the latter associated with leisure time and with the symbolic definition of space. Sight also appears to play an important role in the intellectualization and recollection of the experience. Olfaction appears to play a minor role, especially linked to temples, defining the sacred grounds, and with memory and recalling events, whereas tactile impressions provide a continuous important contribution to the experience that remains at a subconscious level.

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ČUTI, POT IN AVTOBUS. ETNOGRAFIJA ČUTOV PRI ROMANJU SAIGOKU

Pri romanju Saigoku (»romanju v zahodne province«) v japonski provinci Kansai romar po posebnem zaporedju obiše 33 vnaprej določenih templjev. Pri tem lahko izbira med številnimi možnimi potmi, ki vse merijo več kot tisoč kilometrov. Osrednji lik čaščenja tega starodavnega romanja, katerega glavna podoba je v vseh templjih, je Bodhisattva Kannon.

Raziskava se osredotoča na opis in analizo sodobnih romarjev s perspektive čutov. Zelo razširjeno romanje vsako leto privabi na tisoče romarjev. Med njimi so mnogi motivirani z nereligioznimi razlogi, vendar jih velika večina izpolni osnovne zaobljubne in formalne prakse, s katerimi se romanje izpolni.

Avtor najprej opiše širši zgodovinski, družbenokulturni in religiozni kontekst, nato na kratko predstavi dosedanje raziskave romanja in sklene z razpravo o teoretičnih in analitičnih vprašanjih o osnovnem okviru romanja in vedenju romarjev. Bogastvo čutnih možnosti in raznovrstnost čutnih pokrajin, s katerimi se lahko romar sreča, terja opis celotnega niza telesnih izkušenj, ki jih lahko doživi romar. Tako je naloga prvih analiz poudariti najpogostejše čutne pokrajine, ki ustrezajo vsakemu pomembnemu segmentu romanja. Glavni razkriti čutni okviri so: transportna sredstva, čas in doba potovanja, struktura romanja in obiskani templji. Te možnosti niso statične, gre za nenehno menjavajoče se procese, v katerih so romarji tudi sooblikovalci, saj si izberejo svoje čutno okolje, preden stopijo vanj, pri čemer ga v času doživljanja soustvarjajo s svojim ravnanjem in ga navsezadnje menjajo, po premisleku prestane izkušnje.

Sledeč predstavitvi najbolj običajnih čutnih okvirov se razprava osredotoča na opis najpogostejših čutnih pokrajin (sensescapes), s katerimi se romar sreča. Za lažjo analitično rabo so čutna okolja razdeljena glede na dve glavni komponenti, konstitutivni za romanje, na doživljanje same poti in na templje. Pot je razdeljena glede na kategorije, ki ustrezajo transportnim sredstvom. Podobno je sestavljen splošen opis glavnih čutnih možnosti, ki jih ponuja tempelj. Hierarhija čutov je opazovana in analizirana predvsem na samem potovanju. V teh primerih velja posebej omeniti okulocentrizem – osrediščenost na oko in prevladovanje vida kot najbolj priljubljene in glavne možnosti dostopa do prostora, pri čemer se zgodi prva sistematizacija razmerij med čutnimi pokrajinami in obliko percepcije. V nadaljevanju avtor analizira vsakega od čutov. Opazna je vloga okusa v označevanju izkušnje in simbolične konstrukcije prostora, pri čemer so definirane tri možnosti: lokalne posebnosti, lokalna kuhinja in alkoholne pijače. Opisane so tudi različne zvočne pokrajine romanj, zvočna produkcija in poslušanje romarjev. Posebej izrazita je zvočna pokrajina, značilna za romarske avtobuse. Pomembna je tudi vloga vonja v razmerju s tempeljskim ozračjem in spominom. Avtor sklene razpravo z ugotovitvijo, da so nekatera asketska in glede čutov restriktivna ravnanja skoraj popolnoma izginila.

Paolo Barbaro, Mie-ken, Tsu-shi
Kamihama-cho 4-30-3, Seijurueito 202, Japan