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## Coping with Anxiety in a Long-living Society : Elderly Japanese Pilgrims and Their Life Design for “Living Happily Ever After”

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## **Coping with Anxiety in a Long-living Society: Elderly Japanese Pilgrims and Their Life Design for “Living Happily Ever After”**

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The development of medical technology has enabled us to enjoy longer lives than ever. But it has also enhanced the possibility of becoming bedridden for many years in a maze of tubes and sensors. This so-called “Spaghetti Syndrome” is a harsh reality now confronted not only by those who suffer from obscure illnesses but by everyone who sees or experiences the aging process today.

Gerontology and anthropological studies of aging have focused on the relationship between practices and patient self-satisfaction in specific societies. They have pointed out that going on a pilgrimage is one of the best ways for older adults to find satisfaction and well-being.

In this paper, I will examine the practices of elderly pilgrims based on my fieldwork at a temple called “Bride Free” in Okayama prefecture. I will discuss these practices in terms not only of well-being and self-satisfaction but also of life-design as a collaborative process. One can plan life by oneself but cannot design it without others, and design is what we need in actual existence.

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## 1. Introduction

In contemporary Japan, where the population is aging and the birthrates declining extremely rapidly, pilgrimage sites famous for conferring the blessing of “sudden death” are growing in popularity, especially among older adults. Pilgrims come to pray for health and longevity without long periods of being bedridden. Sites where such prayers are granted are called “Pokkuri”, “Korori” or “Bride Free” shrines/temples”. “Pokkuri” and “Korori” in Japanese imply sudden death without lasting pain, and “Bride Free” refers to living through old age without everyday assistance, especially with bowel functions or changing adult diapers. Such an existence is “Bride Free” because it is brides who are associated, both in the Japanese imagination and in reality, with the care of aging parents. All of these terms indicate a life of independence until the very moment of death.

The development of medical technology has enabled us to enjoy longer lives than ever. But it has also enhanced the possibility of becoming bedridden for many years in a maze of tubes and sensors. This so-called “Spaghetti Syndrome” is a harsh reality now confronted not only by those who suffer from obscure illnesses but by everyone who sees or experiences the aging process today. The onset of aging brings unease. Elderly pilgrims to “Pokkuri”, “Korori”, or “Bride Free” shrines/temples hope to ease that anxiety by ensuring an ideal death: death with dignity (Songen-shi) or, in Okano’s words, death with satisfaction (Manzoku-shi) (Okano 2007).

In this paper, I would like to examine the prayers of pilgrims in depth and challenge the seemingly simple understandings of elderly pilgrims. I would like to discuss the meaning of a pilgrimage from the perspective of collaborative life design, using as a case study one pilgrimage site especially famous for “Pokkuri” and “Bride Free” blessings (*cf.* Suzuki 2009a; 2009b; Suzuki *et al.* 2010). And I would like to show that these pilgrims, in their journeys, are engaging in such life design even without having clear-cut images of their last breaths.

## 2. Studies of Pilgrimage Sites Frequented by Older Adults

### 2.1. “Pokkuri”, “Korori”, or “Bride Free” Shrines/Temples in Japan

“Pokkuri”, “Korori,” or “Bride Free” shrines/temples can be found all over Japan. Anichi

Temple<sup>1)</sup> and Kichiden Temple<sup>2)</sup> in Nara Prefecture are two of the best-known “Pokkuri” temples, attracting pilgrims from every corner of Japan. As for “Korori” shrines/temples, three of the best known are in Fukushima Prefecture. Kouan Temple<sup>3)</sup> is one of these, known for the pillar pilgrims hug while they are still fit and mobile enough to come pray for health and longevity.

“Bride Free” shrines/temples are fewer in number, but there are some famous ones: one in Okayama prefecture and another one in Yamaguchi prefecture<sup>4)</sup>. The latter has two statues of Kannon, the Bodhisattva of Compassion and the Buddhist deity of mercy. One is named “Bride Free” and the other “Senility Free”. Those in charge of the Okayama temple once contrived a new name, “Bride in Comfort”, thinking that “Bride Free” might sound like a rejection of daughters-in-law; “Bride in Comfort” also proved susceptible to misinterpretation, however, so “Bride Free” remains the much more popular nickname.

## **2.2. Studies of Pilgrimage and Elderly Pilgrims**

Pilgrimages to “Pokkuri”, “Korori” and “Bride Free” sites started increasing rapidly in the 1970s, which is also when a growing number of people visited places famous for fetus memorial services (Mizuko Kuyō). Accordingly, some scholars have linked both phenomena to the rapid aging and the falling birth rates that characterize Japan’s society (Matsuzaki 2004, 2007). Other factors may include propaganda from facilities promoting religious tourism (Rinschede 1992; Swatos & Luigi 2002; Timothy & Olsen 2006; Vukonic 1996) and the development of medical technology that increases fears of being bedridden for long periods without hope of recovery (Yamanaka 2006; Obitsu 2008; Tanaka 2010).

In a society of longevity, people take for granted the prospect of a long life. Anthropological studies of aging and gerontology have focused on the relationship between practice and self-satisfaction in specific societies (Markides & Mindel 1987; Tilak 1989; Rosen 1982). Some scholars have pointed out that going on a pilgrimage is one key to well-being for older adults (Mehta 1997; Runyon 1989), and many have also used “pilgrimage” as a metaphor for aging itself (Kimble & McFadden 2003), pilgrims being wanderers in life much like Jacob in the New Testament (Hebrews 11: 13–16).

In the following sections, I would like to examine the practices of elderly pilgrims in terms not only of well-being and self-satisfaction but also of collaborative life design, for life can be planned alone but cannot be designed without others. I will argue this point with a case study of “Bride Free Temple” in Okayama prefecture.

## **3. “Bride Free” Temple in Okayama Prefecture**

### **3.1. “Bride Free” Temple and its Pilgrims/Visitors**

Not many pilgrims call it by its real name. Officially, it is Hinoshiriyama Kannon Temple, said to have been founded by Gyōki (668–749)<sup>5)</sup> in 737. It is the 21<sup>st</sup> site in a group of holy places known as “Setouchi 33 Kannon Sanctuaries”. It also has a miniature replica of the Kansai Kannon pilgrimage site<sup>6)</sup>.

The Setouchi 33 Kannon Sanctuaries were organized in 1985, relatively recently compared to other groups of sanctuaries. The group’s creation is tied to a recent upsurge in tour-



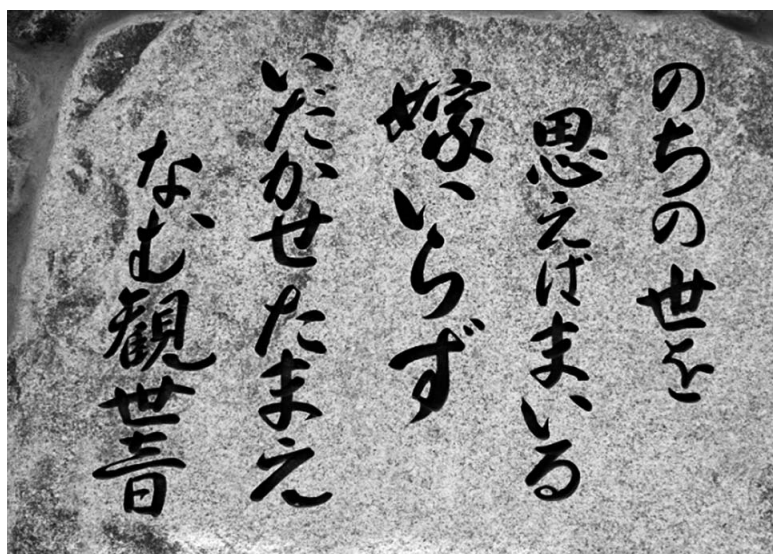
**Photo 1** “Bride Free” Temple in Okayama Prefecture (Photo by author)

ism, and therefore it can be said that Hinoshiriyama Kannon Temple or Bride Free Temple is being restructured under “the Tourist Gaze” (Urry 1990).

Setouchi 33 Kannon Sanctuaries includes 33 pilgrimage sites spread over Hyogo, Hiroshima and Okayama prefectures. Four denominations are represented: Shingon Buddhism (by 23 locations), Tendai (4 locations), Sōtō (3 locations) and Rinzai School (3 locations).

Bride Free Temple in Okayama prefecture belongs to Shingon Buddhism<sup>7)</sup>. The principal image of this temple is Guanyin with eleven faces<sup>8)</sup>, and its slogan is “think of your after-life, come to this place, let yourself nearer to Guanyin”. A pamphlet interprets the slogan thus: “If you visit this place, you will receive the blessings of perfect health and happiness, causing no trouble to your daughters-in-law and entering peacefully into the bliss of Heaven”. The “Bride Free” promise thus equates to “You will be perfectly healthy until the moment you die (because you will die abruptly); there will be no need for daughters-in-law to care for you and change your diapers, because you will not be bedridden: you will be able to care for yourselves until the very end”. Because of this slogan and acclaimed blessings, many pilgrims, mostly older adults, come to visit the temple. According to statistics, 180,000 people paid visits there in 2007.

That said, not all these visitors are devout pilgrims. There are those of course who visit regularly every five or ten years and who offer prayers to Guanyin every day at home, but there are also those who simply drop by to enjoy the beautiful views of and from the temple, who want to take water from the “miraculous spring”<sup>9)</sup> without paying respect to the Guanyin



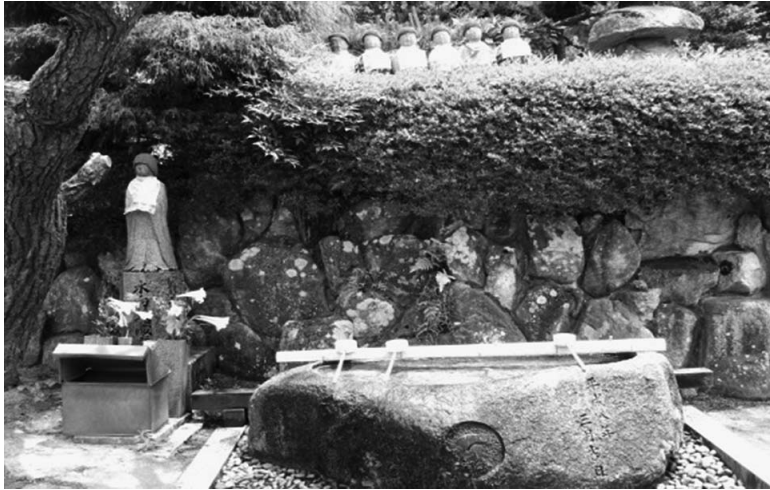
**Photo 2** The slogan written on a stone plate (Photo by author)



**Photo 3** Since it commands a nice view, this temple also serves as a good place for walks (Photo by author)

statue. These people are included in the total number of visitors reported each year.

The temple has two grand festivals: one on the spring equinox and one on the autumnal equinox. The 17<sup>th</sup> of each month is also celebrated as a regular festival. Many people visit on these occasions, and as is often the case with each New Year in Japan, a number of people visit between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January. These include many students preparing for entrance



**Photo 4** One of the Miraculous Springs at “Bride Free” temple in Okayama Prefecture (Photo by author)

examinations, as well as their parents. Some revisit the temple several days before entrance exams take place.

### **3.2. Wooden Votive Tablets**

As may be seen elsewhere, there are many wooden votive tablets painted with pictures of horses offered in prayer or as thanks for a prayer answered. One says, “May I not be bedridden and enjoy longevity” while one from a schoolboy says, “May I be allowed to enter (certain) junior high school” and others say things like “May I become a dancer in the future” and “May I become a baseball player”. Because this temple is famous for something to do with brides, there are also tablets saying, “Please find a good bride for my eldest son”, and “May my two daughters meet good partners and be good wives someday not far from today”. These people seek brides or the experience of being a bride, contrary to the spirit of “Bride Free”, which hopes that a bride will not be necessary in certain ways.

### **3.3. “Bride Free” Temple as a Multi-functional Place**

Pilgrimage sites provide visitors with various meanings and diversified functions. People can pray, meditate, or seek help, as well as strengthen family ties, meet other people, enjoy scenery and relax, or take water from a miraculous spring for healing or even just cooking purposes. These are multi-functional places that can help every visitor realize personal hopes and relieve unique anxieties.

In the next section, I would like to go into the hopes of elderly pilgrims to “Bride Free” Temple, where the granting of prayers ultimately means the supplicant’s own “sudden death”.

## 4. Coping with Anxiety

### 4.1. “Bride” That Matters

It is not clear who a “Bride” is for members of Japan’s contemporary society, with its rapid aging and declining birthrate. “Bride” literally means “daughter-in-law,” but as we will see, this narrow definition is not as widely applicable as it used to be.

For example, the woman of Case 1 below is her 60s and doesn’t have a son. She doesn’t have a daughter-in-law for a “bride”; instead she has an only daughter.

<Case 1> a woman living in Fukuyama City, Hiroshima

I come here, well, once a year at least. I visit this place with my husband mostly, but sometimes with my grandchildren as well. My daughter never comes with us; she won’t even go to a hot spring with us. She says, “Such places are for the elderly, not for me”. We live together and all I hear from her are complaints. She complains, and I take care of my grandchildren. Of course my grandchildren are so cute for me but [her complaints about her only daughter continue].

My mother is 84 years old now. She lives alone in Fukuoka, but the family of my brother lives near her and they make it a point to visit her every Sunday. It apparently sparks discussions and quarrels because the bride of my brother doesn’t want to visit my mother every Sunday week after week.

[Do you also pray for your mother’s health and longevity at this place?] Oh, dear, I’m embarrassed to say, but never. I hadn’t thought about that until now. I have always prayed for myself. [dialogue on 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2009].

<Case 2> a woman in her 70s living in Asaguchi City, Okayama Prefecture

This is my fourth time. I used to come with my husband but this time I wanted to climb up to see that<sup>10)</sup>, so I came with my friends. After looking around here, we are going to visit Denchu Museum. [What brought you here? Did you come to pray for the sake of your mutual friend or something?] It was just because we were in a good mood. We don’t come here for anybody else. When we come, we come here for ourselves to thank Guanyin for giving us this happiness and health, and pray for sustained happiness in the future. [dialogue on 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2009]

Both women above have daughters but no son. For them, “bride” means their own daughters. They told me that they didn’t want to be bedridden in the first place, but if they were, they would prefer to enter a nursing home rather than causing trouble for their daughters.

The women in <Case 1> hadn’t seen herself as a potential caregiver for her mother. It may be said that her life design, included neither her daughter caring for her nor herself caring for her mother.

<Case 3> indicates that having a son does not necessarily mean having a daughter-in-law.



<Case 3> a Woman living in Ato Town, Yamaguchi prefecture

I have been coming here for 33 years. I am 84 now but still working actively at Pancake stand<sup>11)</sup> with my son. I feel I can continue working for many more years. I owe my health today to this temple, this Guanyin. [dialogue on 17<sup>th</sup> July]

Her son divorced long ago and they haven't seen his ex-wife in years. For this woman, "Bride Free" is already a literal reality, and "Bride Free" in the prayer's sense means "healthy enough not to bother my son".

These cases show that the "brides" of prayers may be one's own sons or daughters as well as daughters-in-law. They can also be spouses, in fact: more often than not, pilgrims visit this "Bride Free" temple to pray that they don't bother their partners. These pilgrims might have their own son or daughter or both, but perhaps these grown-up children live in a remote or work hard with almost no spare time. So they feel they should not or cannot count on their children to be caregivers, and hope to die without bothering them.

As shown above, "bride" can in reality indicate a son, a daughter, a wife, or a husband. The term's referent depends on whether one's spouse is alive and well, whether one has a son or a daughter, and whether one lives with or near children. Thus the meanings of "bride" vary pragmatically with circumstances.

#### 4.2. Mismatch between Anxiety and Prayers

With that in mind, it is interesting that no one I interviewed mentioned professional caregivers or nursing home or hospital staff members as possible "brides". Though the term is open to some interpretation, then, it must refer to someone within the family. Though prayers for "health and longevity" and those for "dying without causing any trouble" are treated as equivalent, the supplicants clearly think more of the former than the latter. They have an ambiguous image of their anxiety about death, and they don't notice the contradiction in their prayers. To avoid becoming bedridden for a long period, one has to embrace a sudden death. Otherwise, the possibility of "spaghetti syndrome" increases. But no one prays specifically for car accidents or heart attacks. A sudden death that causes no trouble remains a vague and indistinct concept.

If the pilgrims' fear and anxiety is directed toward "spaghetti syndrome", what they might want is to pass away peacefully at home in the care of a "bride". To enjoy a "bride free" old age, especially the latter half of it, they definitely need a "bride". However, as enjoyable images of health and longevity overshadow those of the actual dying process, they are not exactly praying for sudden deaths at the "Pokkuri", "Korori", and "Bride Free" temples dedicated to such deaths. That is to say, their life designs don't include the concrete process of dying, even when they pray for it, and their life stories remain as incomplete as ever. They hope their stories end by saying that they lived happily ever after; there is never any mention of a final chapter describing death itself.

## 5. Prayers for and through Underwear

### 5.1. The Process of Making Blessed Underwear

At a “Bride Free” temple, the superior gives pilgrims the opportunity to receive blessings for underwear. Some “Pokkuri” sites provide similar services. The undergarments are publicized as good-luck charms, especially as protectors of the lower body.

The process of receiving blessings is very simple. Pilgrims bring in new underwear on the 17<sup>th</sup> of any month. The underwear must be brand new and placed in a plastic bag with a paper giving the owner’s name and address. After collecting them, the superior begins to offer prayers, holding up the garments one by one while calling out the names of their owners. Pilgrims sit behind the superior in several lines. Those who can’t come on the 17<sup>th</sup> may send in underwear to be blessed for an extra postage fee. Those pilgrims who forgot their underwear or didn’t know this service would be offered can buy special underwear that has been blessed in advance at a stand near the temple.

### 5.2. The Meaning of Blessed Underwear in Transition

Offering prayers to underwear has a long tradition. It used to be done to cure or alleviate the pain of sexually transmitted disease or gynopathy. But what today’s pilgrims want to protect their lower bodies from are things like urinary incontinence, dementia, and being bedridden. This fact illustrates that the goals of pilgrimages vary according to generation and gender. Likewise, the meaning of the amulet depends on the pilgrim. Underwear amulets used to be worn to cure disease miraculously or mitigate pain at least, but now they are worn to guard against future immobility or dementia. In this way, pilgrimage sites define themselves in accordance with their times, their visitors, and their resources.



Photo 5 Blessed Underwear (Photo by author)

## 6. Life Design in Collaboration with a “Bride” and Others

### 6.1. Praying for the Status Quo

What we have seen above can be summarized as follows. Elderly pilgrims at “Bride Free” temple pray to avoid future situations such as dementia and immobility. They pray that their mental and physical health never leave them, that they remain as fit as they are at the time of their pilgrimage. They are not victims of suffering who hope to change their current situations; they may not be perfectly satisfied with everything, of course, but for the most part they are satisfied with the status quo. Their prayers will be considered fulfilled as long as nothing new happens to them medically, but the onset of a disease such as dementia might prove at any time that those prayers were not answered in the first place. In this sense, fulfillment may be assumed at any given point but is always waiting on the final verdict, which may not come until death.

### 6.2. Elderly Pilgrims and their Collaborators in Life Design

Nobody can predict when life will end; life design must always take place in the midst of uncertainty. Moreover, when a trouble-free death brings final confirmation that earlier prayers were answered, the people who made those prayers are gone and can no longer give thanks at “Bride Free” temple. If anyone returns to the temple at this point, it is a family member of the original supplicant.

One study of pilgrimages paid a great deal of attention to representative pilgrimages, journeys on behalf of those who physically cannot manage the trip (Aoyama 1999; Kobayashi 2001). In such events the person being represented vows to pay a visit of thanks later on

拝啓 早春の候、ますますご清祥のこととお喜び申し上げます。

さて、先日は御観音院様から母金川キヌエ宛に「お彼岸の大祭」のご案内を賜りましたが、実は母キヌエは昨年11月9日に御浄土に帰らせていただきました。

当時の母は週3日のディケアを楽しみしながら、元気に行っていました。

10月末日に風邪の症状があったので、念のため尾道市民病院に入院して検査していたところ、10日目に血球貪食症候群という原因不明の血液のウィルス性の病魔が襲い、これが命取りとなり亡くなりました。

母は検査のための入院であると理解しており、死亡の前日まで意識はしっかりしておりました。本人自身も亡くなるとは夢にも思っていなかったものと推察しております。

「のちの世を 思えば臨む 嫁いらず」をまるで絵に書いたとおりの最期でした。

これのひとえに御観音院様のお慈悲のお蔭かと故母に替わって深く感謝を申し上げます。末筆ですが、お礼を申し上げます。

敬具

平成21年3月1日

**Photo 6** A Votive Letter from a daughter whose mother died suddenly without much pain, thanks as she says to the Guanyin of the “Bride Free” Temple (Photo by author)

when health permits. With pilgrimages to the “Bride Free” temple, the situation is reversed. The pilgrims remain healthy and mobile as they design their “Bride Free” twilight years. Those who have occasion to give thanks for prayers fulfilled, meanwhile, are the bereaved, for death is what occasions their gratitude. They are thankful not for the death itself, of course, but for its peaceful nature, and their pilgrimage of thanks expresses the supposed thoughts of the deceased family member.

From a different angle, it can be said that the representative pilgrimage of thanks is an act of the life design of the deceased in line with their thoughts. One’s life design must always remain incomplete until one’s survivors collaborate to complete it. Whether the original pilgrim lived happily ever after until the very end depends on decisions made by surviving family and acquaintances. Moreover, a life design does not end when life ends, for people remember the dead, imagine their afterlives, and design their own afterlives to overlap with the imagined ones of those who predecease them. Thus one’s life design is not entirely one’s own work; it will be recollected, added to, and modified by others. These are collaborative efforts. What one designs for oneself can be seen as a sort of blueprint, a file to be updated and saved after one’s death.

### **6.3. Possible Double Meanings for “Bride Free”**

When I asked the woman in <Case 1> if she sometimes prayed for her mother, the answer was “Never”. The woman in <Case 2> also denied having come for the sake of her friends. It seems that pilgrims to the “Bride Free” temple come mostly for themselves, not for others. This might be because they think that a “Bride Free” old age is no one’s business but their own—or, worse, that wishing someone a “bride-free” end is tantamount to praying that no one cares for that person. If a woman goes to the “Bride Free” temple to pray for the well-being of her mother-in-law, for example, she could hardly tell the mother-in-law about it for fear of being misunderstood. As long as there exists the possibility that her mother-in-law will take such pilgrimages as signs that her daughter-in-law refuses to care for her in old age, the “bride” will avoid visiting “Pokkuri”, “Korori”, and “Bride Free” temples, or at least keep any visits secret even if they were done with the best of intentions. These are places at which to pray for health and longevity as well as for sudden death, and the latter can mean either a peaceful death without much suffering or, from a different perspective, a lonely death without the care of others.

## **7. Conclusion**

In this paper I have examined the characteristics of a “Bride Free” temple and its pilgrims, as well as relationships between pilgrims, relatives, and close friends engaged in the process of life design. A life design is not a schedule planned by an individual, but a collaborative work designed and realized both by the person in question and by her or his survivors.

One’s life story does not end at death. It is recollected, modified, tentatively finished by a third party. It is only temporarily complete, subject to slight or drastic revisions, depending on who is telling it. The narration skips back and forth from past to future, including the after-life. Prayers for happiness and well-being are fulfilled exactly in this collaborative fashion.

One may pray for a “Bride Free”, independent old age, meanwhile the prayer itself will be fulfilled in this kind of social inclusion between the protagonist and people who continue to narrate his story. What might remain after the loss of the protagonist are these endless life stories and amulets that s/he once wore, which function as mementos of the deceased as well as reminders for people to visit the “Bride Free” temple when they begin to worry about their own health.

Nobody wants to die in pain. Nobody knows how and when death will come. Vague anxiety about death is always present. The “Bride Free” temple accepts people’s prayers for death without asking them to clarify what exactly they want their deaths to look like. Even though its slogan means “Pokkuri”, or sudden death, what pilgrims seek there is not death but future well-being. The future includes death of course, but this can be put out of mind by asking Guanyin to grant health and longevity, as contradictory as that may sound.

There are inner ties between pilgrims and Guanyin, social ties between pilgrims and those around them, and various ties mediated and created by religious materials. We live with such diverse connections and thus manage to survive the uncertainty of each era. To go on a pilgrimage to “Bride Free” temple brings awareness of these connections, which tend to be forgotten in daily life, and therefore the temple functions as a source of inspiration, reminding people that they are included in society and can also actively seek to include others.

## Notes

- 1) Genshin (942–1017), is a title of honor for Eshin Souzu, a high priest in Heian Period who wrote the famous work “*Ōjōyōshū*” and is believed to have been born at this temple. He created a statue in mourning for his mother, and it became the principal image of this temple.
- 2) The image of Amidahta Buddha carved by Genshin is dedicated to this temple. This image is designated as one of Japan’s important cultural properties. It is believed that if people pray not to be bedridden for a long period, their prayers will be fulfilled through this statue.
- 3) Kouan Temple, better known as Nakata Kannon, is also famous for the fact that the mother of Hideyo Noguchi (1876–1928), a bacteriologist whose name has been listed several times as a Nobel Laureate for his work in 1911 and whose portrait has appeared on the front of the 1000 yen note since 2004, used to visit every month.
- 4) According to Matsuzaki, the temples/shrines known as “Pokkuri” and “Korori” can be found throughout Japan but are especially common in the western part of the country.
- 5) Gyōki (668–749) was a Buddhist priest in Japan. He actively spread the teachings of Buddhism, especially in the Kansai region, and many sites there commemorate him. Hinoshiriyama Kannon Temple is one of these.
- 6) We can find many miniature replicas of Kansai Kannon as well as of Shikoku 88 all over Japan.

The replicas are small versions of a pilgrimage site created elsewhere. They are called replicated pilgrimages, replicated miniature pilgrimages, or copied pilgrimages. These have counterparts in other religions. For example, Catholic replicas of Lourdes in France can be found in many places around the world, including Japan. Sacro Monte in Italy is a well-known representation of Jerusalem in the Holy Land. It was built over several regions, and nine places in Piedmont and Lombardy were named World Heritage Sites in 2003.

Miniature replicas of pilgrimage sites were first created to bring the experience of pilgrimage to those who could not undertake the real thing, either for economical or physical reasons or because of war. The Japanese government has been researching the sites' regional distributions, environments, and histories in hopes that some will be registered as World Heritage Sites in the future.

- 7) Shingon Buddhism is one school of Japanese Buddhism. Shingon literally means "True Words". It is also called Japanese Esoteric Buddhism and Orthodox Esoteric Buddhism.
- 8) Guanyin or Kannon is a goddess of mercy. Belief in Guanyin is widespread and has a long tradition. In Japan, we can find statues of the deity dating back to the Asuka Period (592–710). Guanyin was originally depicted as a male figure, but now many female representations exist.
- 9) There are two sources of miraculous water at "Bride Free" temple. Some pilgrims say "this water is tastier than that" while others say, "this water has more healing power than that". "This" and "that" refer to different sources depending on the speaker.
- 10) She mentioned a miniature replica of the Kansai Kannon pilgrimage site at "Bride Free" temple.
- 11) Pancake stands, *Okonomiyakiya* in Japanese, are especially common in the Kansai region and Hiroshima prefecture. Okonomiyaki, a pancake, is a feature of teppanyaki in Japanese cuisine. It consists of flour, grated yam, sauces with bonito and kelp flavors, cabbage, eggs, and usually other special ingredients such as pork, octopus, shrimp, cheese, or *mochi*. Usually it is seasoned with mayonnaise, other sauces, *katsuobushi* (dried bonito), and green laver.

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