



Japanese Buddhist Pilgrimage

Michael Pye

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Japanese Buddhist Pilgrimage explores the ritual practice of "circulatory pilgrimages" - the visiting of many temples in a numbered sequence. Every year, hundreds of thousands of pilgrims travel such temple routes, seeking peace of mind, health and wellbeing for themselves and others as the benefits of such meritorious endeavour. This form of pilgrimage appears to be unique to Japan. The practice began centuries ago and involved visiting 33 temples devoted to the Bodhisattva Kannon, spread widely over western Japan. Soon afterwards the equally famous pilgrimage to 88 temples on Japan's fourth island of Shikoku came into prominence. This is the first comprehensive study of all the major and many of the minor routes, The book also examines how the practice of circulatory pilgrimage developed among the shrines and temples for the Seven Gods of Good Fortune, and beyond them to the rather different world of Shinto. The varying significance of the different pilgrimages is also explored. In addition to all the information about the routes, the book includes numerous illustrations and examples of the short Buddhist texts chanted by the pilgrims on their rounds.

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