

Brands of Zen: *Kitō jūin* in Contemporary Japanese Sōtō Zen Buddhism

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Universität Heidelberg, vorgelegt von: Tim Graf, M.A.

Erstgutachterin: Prof. Dr. Inken Prohl

Zweitgutachter: Prof. Dr. Harald Fuess

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Table of Contents

Introduction	6
Research Questions and Goals for This Study	7
A Theory of Religious Practice	9
Towards a Working Definition of <i>kitō</i>	13
Material Religion	16
Religion and Marketing	17
Methods	19
Chapter Outlines	23
Chapter One: Historical Perspectives on ‘Zen’ and <i>kitō</i>	27
Introduction	27
Prayers for State Protection in Early Japanese Buddhism	27
<i>Kitō</i> in Medieval Japanese Sōtō Zen Buddhism	30
Dōgen and <i>kitō</i>	30
Keizan and the Spread of <i>kitō</i> in Medieval Japan	32
Between Memorial and Prevention	34
<i>Kitō</i> in Early-Modern Japanese Sōtō Zen Buddhism	37
Pilgrimage to <i>kitō jūin</i>	39
<i>Kitō</i> in Modern Japanese Sōtō Zen Buddhism	43
Buddhism and the Nation State	43
Buddhist Modernism	46
<i>Kitō</i> and the Rhetoric of ‘Decline’ in Sectarian and Academic Discourses	47
Kasuisai and the Separation of <i>kami</i> and Buddhas at Mt. Akiha	54
The Cult of Akiha Sanjakubō Daigongen	54
How Akiha Came to Kasuisai: Restructuring of the Akiha Cult in the Wake of <i>shinbutsu bunri</i>	56
The Integration of Akiha in Modern Japanese Sōtō Zen Buddhism	61
Teaching Assemblies (<i>kyōkai</i>)	61
Negotiating a Modern Doctrinal Foundation without Local Gods	63
Conclusion	66
Chapter Two: Everyday Life at Kasuisai – Branding and Marketing <i>kitō</i>	68
Introduction	68
The Setting	69
Keeping a ‘Mountain Ghost’ Without a Mountain	69

A Miniature Pilgrimage	71
Accessibility in an Aging Society	75
Understanding Kasuisai's Marketing of Tokugawa History as a Redistribution of Spiritual Capital	77
Ritual Circuits of Worship	82
Performing Urgency: <i>Kitō</i> as a Staged Moment of Crisis	82
A Festival for Fire Protection	89
The Crowds and the Senses: New Year as <i>kitō</i> Peak Season	94
Marketing Akiha Devotion: Perspectives on a Once-Every-Sixty-Years Fire God Exhibition	100
<i>Kitō</i> on Dry Ice, on DVD: Daiyūzan Saijōji and the 2010 Public Exhibition of Dōryō in Tokyo	103
<i>Zazen</i> and <i>kitō</i>	108
Lay Voices from the Monks' Hall	111
Conclusion	116
Chapter Three: From Civic Engagement to Emptiness – Akiha <i>kō</i> Groups and the Marketing of Responses to Their Decline	119
Introduction	119
<i>Kō</i> Groups at Kasuisai	122
Perspectives on the Proliferation of Temple Support Associations and their Organizational Structures	125
Akiha Temple Support Associations under Depopulation	132
Signs of Depopulation outside the Main Gate	137
Changing Family Structures and the Redistribution of Religious Knowledge	142
Innovations in Response to Declining <i>kō</i> Group Activity	147
Overnight Temple Stays (<i>shukubō</i>)	149
Conclusion	164
Chapter Four: Monastic Training at <i>kitō jūin</i> – <i>Kitō</i> and Authority	169
Introduction	169
Training-Steps and Licensing	171
<i>Kitō</i> and Legitimacy	178
<i>Kitō</i> and Merit Transfer as Part of the Sutra-Chanting Morning Service	181
Embodied Knowledge: Authority and Etiquette	184
Habitus and Distinction: Visual Markers	190
The Ideal of Renunciation in Practice	196
On Becoming a Monk	196
Asceticism and the Community	202

Conclusion	210
Chapter Five: Beyond Zen – Interactions of <i>kitō</i> and ‘Spiritual Care’ in Post-2011 Japan	214
Introduction	214
The Dead Still Wander Japan: Untimely Death and the Stigma of Ghosts	215
The Rhetoric of Divine Protection	223
External Delegitimizing Factors	229
The Renegotiation of <i>kitō</i> as Spiritual Care	233
Perspectives on the Intersections of Buddhism, Spiritual Care, and Modern Psychotherapy in Japan, and Why Non-Professional Care Remains Relevant	239
1995 and 2011 as Turning Points in the History of Religions in Japan?	246
On the Training of ‘Interfaith Chaplains’	256
Conclusion	262
Conclusions	268
Glossary	277
Works Cited	302

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Introduction

This dissertation examines contemporary Japanese prayer monasteries (*kitō jiin* 祈禱寺院) as sites of religious branding and priestly training. It also explores ways Sōtō Zen prayer monasteries shed light on the broader topic of interplay between training and branding in the making of this-worldly benefits (*genze riyaku* 現世利益). From the fifteenth century to the present day, prayer monasteries have reflected a vital yet neglected side of Japanese Sōtō Zen Buddhism and its socio-historic, pragmatic, and performative aspects as a lived religion. Attracting several hundred thousand pilgrims and tourists each year, many of whom take part in elaborate *kitō* 祈禱 (prayer) rituals for this-worldly benefits conducted by the monks on behalf of temple visitors, *kitō* monasteries such as Kasuisai (Fukuroi, Shizuoka Prefecture) and Daiyūzan Saijōji (Minamiashigara, Kanagawa Prefecture) stand out from the majority of Zen Buddhist parish temples – not only in terms of size and popularity, but also in matters of practice and economic clout. The Sōtō Zen sect relies on prayer monasteries financially and it depends on them as sectarian training centers, where the practice of ‘ritual sitting’ (*zazen* 坐禪) takes place. This study of Sōtō Zen Buddhism covers new ground in showing how prayer monasteries, as sites of religious branding, tourism, and monastic training, work together in the making of this-worldly benefits. The thesis explores how Zen prayer temples provide a template for modes of religious professionalization and suggest ways of understanding how religious authority is constructed in contemporary Japan more broadly.

Zazen (meditation) and *kitō* (prayer) are interactive and complementary aspects of Zen monastic training. However, while *zazen* became the best-known Zen practice in the modern world, Sōtō Zen Buddhist prayer rituals for this-worldly benefits are hardly ever observed anywhere else but at Japanese prayer monasteries. ‘Zen’ stands in for meditation, literally and by association, and many people simply do not know that prayer has long comprised a major part of Japanese Zen Buddhist practice. Many *kitō* participants are not familiar with Zen Buddhist thought or with the sectarian affiliation of particular prayer temples, nor do they necessarily belong to one of the Zen Buddhist sects themselves. They are instead drawn to prayer monasteries in large part thanks to legendary tales (*engi* 縁起) about local temple-guarding gods who promise protection, health, or wealth. Here, I argue that this lack of portability of *kitō* as practiced at prayer monasteries is rooted in the environmental setting of *kitō jiin*, or prayer temples. The material culture that structures Zen prayer appears resistant to the transferability evident in Zen meditation and texts. There are widespread assumptions that *kitō* lacks a foundation in Sōtō Zen scripture (see Sakurai 1989; Satō 2003; Satō 2008 for

criticisms of this presumed lack of legitimacy) and modernist, reductive descriptions of prayer rituals as ‘magic’ (Tamamuro Taijō (1964) went as far as calling *kitō* a “blemish” (*shimi* しみ 汚点) in the history of the Zen Buddhist sects) remain commonplace in descriptions of these temples. Prayer rituals, in order to function in the eyes of practitioners, require ritual spaces that provide vital spheres of social interaction between myriad gods, monks, and lay associates. These components combine within distinct environmental and material settings that enable *kitō* as a practice for disaster prevention, crisis management, recreation, and ludic entertainment. It is within this context that Kasuisai and Daiyūzan rose to fame as hubs for civil society groups. Kasuisai is currently affiliated with some 900 support groups, including neighborhood associations, local businesses, associations of fire fighters, and disaster insurance groups. Daiyūzan exhibited its local temple-guarding god Dōryō in Tokyo in 2010, where some 5,000 supporters gathered for the main event. Kasuisai organized a similar exhibition of fire god Akiha 秋葉 on its temple grounds in 1998, when it gathered more than twelve millions dollars in donations.

Research Questions and Goals for This Study

This dissertation investigates ways prayer monasteries market their rituals and material offerings, and it explores how that marketing both reflects and shapes various global and local brand images of ‘Zen’. These marketing strategies reflect the vagaries of a Japan that now struggles with a rapidly aging population, rural depopulation, and other challenges. The presumed unorthodox nature of prayer rituals for this-worldly benefits furthermore raises questions about ways in which Sōtō Zen priests are currently trained to perform *kitō*, and how that training plays out within different social and local contexts on the ground. In order to situate Sōtō Zen sect training, and in order to compare different modes of religious professionalization, certification, and branding in contemporary Japan, this dissertation compares the training of monks at prayer monasteries with monastic training within post-2011 religious aid initiatives, where Zen Buddhist monks and other religious professionals are trained to become ‘interfaith chaplains’. By showing how traditional sectarian training regimens provide blueprints for the training of ‘interfaith chaplains’ and the marketing of ‘spiritual care’, my thesis offers suggestions for a framework for understanding multi-religious relief collaborations in post-2011 Japan and the transformation of religion in post-2011 Japan into a phenomenon promoted as a public contributor. In a broader context, this

thesis aims to elaborate on theories of religion and religious practice, the recent history of religions in Japan, and the ongoing global transformation of Buddhism.

In order to demonstrate the broader relevance of what I observe in my research sites, my thesis draws on my findings to expand upon theoretical inquiry into religious practice. To do this, I employ a multi-methodological approach that takes into account socio-historical developments and participant-related perspectives. Based on my ethnographic fieldwork in Japan, my argument draws on general theoretical concepts of religious practice (Riesebrodt 2000), material religion (Morgan 1998), religious aesthetics (Prohl 2006), and religious marketing (Kelso 2006; Einstein 2007). Scholarship on Zen has long emphasized a study of Buddhist doctrine, and scholars of religion have tended to fortify a trend to marginalize Buddhist ritual practice by choosing Protestant terms that valorize Buddhism's doctrinal and philosophical aspects over its temple-based ritual traditions (see Gladigow 1988 and Prohl 2003). With the exception of Williams (2005; especially chapter four), and Bodiford (1993), no major Western publication addresses the history of Zen prayer monasteries. More recently, a dissertation by Dominick Scarangelo (2012) that examines the infrastructural changes in the wake of the disassociation of Buddhas and kami (*shinbutsu bunri* 神仏分離) ordered by the Meiji-government in 1868 presents important perspectives on the integration of a local deity cult within Sōtō Zen Buddhism, but does not go into depth about *kitō*. Studies by Bouchy (2005) and Smyers (1999) deal with the *inari* 稲荷 cult at two major temples but lack a focus on the history of prayer temples. The Japanese academic literature on *kitō* is likewise limited. No major publication addresses the practice of *kitō* and *kitō jiin* in contemporary Japan, let alone the marketing of prayers for this-worldly benefits, the embeddedness of *kitō* in monastic training, or the interactions of *kitō* and 'spiritual care' in the wake of the March 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disasters. The latest publications on religious mobilization in the wake of the 3.11 disasters in Japan have shown in detail what kind of role religious groups have played in the disaster relief process (see eds. Fountain et al. 2016; eds. Mullins and Nakano 2016). The role of multi-religious 'spiritual care' initiatives has also been addressed (McLaughlin 2013). However, relatively little has been introduced about the ways in which post-disaster treatment initiatives relate to 'traditional' religion. I anticipate that my practitioner- and setting-related approach to the study of *kitō jiin* as sites of sectarian training and the branding of 'Zen' in contemporary Japan will advance theoretical inquiry into material religion, religious marketing, and religious and civic engagement.

A Theory of Religious Practice

In order to define the relationship between ‘Zen’ and *kitō*, this study draws on working definitions of religion and *kitō*. Buddhism, Zen, and *kitō* are terms used by scholars and religious practitioners alike, to describe a wide range of beliefs and practices, and often in distinctly normative ways. Different understandings of religion are not always made explicit by those who employ the term as a descriptive or analytical category, nor can we presume that practitioners of religion reflect on the term’s various connotations, and their embeddedness in different local and global fields of discourse. The goal of this study is therefore not to describe Zen Buddhism in its ‘entirety’ – an endeavor that would be bound to fail, as it implies an essentializing view of Buddhism,¹ but to deliver an account of *kitō* in contemporary Japanese Sōtō Zen Buddhism that encompasses assessing the historical, social, and cultural conditions and complexities of modernity in ways that facilitate a further exploration of theoretical approaches to the study of material religion, religious practice, and, more specifically, the interplay of religious branding, marketing, and training.

The understanding of ‘real’ Zen as anti-ritualistic is largely the product of the translation and transformation of Buddhism by Asian and Western apologists of modern Zen, notably the lay Buddhist and scholar D.T. Suzuki (1870-1966), who sought to develop a reformed Buddhism that was compatible with Western concepts of modernity, rationality, and the natural sciences (Faure 1993; Sharf 1995; McMahan 2008; see also Chapter One of this dissertation). D.T. Suzuki stressed that the essence of ‘Zen’ could not be put into words, but this did not stop him from writing extensively about the philosophy and teaching of Zen (Prohl 2003c: 205). In doing so, he promoted an essentializing idea of Zen as an experience beyond the influence of human agency; one that not least functioned as a source of Japanese cultural identity (see Sharf 1998). It is within this context that modern and transculturally shaped images of Zen contributed to the exoticization of Zen as a marker for Japanese ‘otherness’. Scholars have conceptualized these trends using the terms orientalizing and self-orientalizing (see Said 1978; Prohl 2000a; Prohl 2003b; McMahan 2008; Borup 2015).² Descriptions of ‘real’ Zen as anti-ritualistic are thus not representative of the social reality as found in the great majority of Buddhist temples in Japan, but modernist understandings

¹ Bernard Faure (1998: 6) suggested using the term Buddhism in plural, as in many Buddhisms that are distinguished by and social historical developments and contexts.

² Suzuki, the most prominent translator and promoter of modernist views of Zen, was not the only advocate of Buddhist modernism in Japan who criticized the Buddhist establishment, and the practice of rituals. Tanaka Chigaku (1861-1939) and others also criticized the clerical system, and the priests’ reliance on funeral. See Cuevas and Stone (2007: 3-4).

remain influential within the reception of Zen Buddhism in the West, in the Western scholarship on Zen, and, as Chapters Two and Three will show, do even influence the practice at Zen monastic training centers in contemporary Japan to some extent.³

The underlying idea of established Buddhist institutions as ‘corrupt’ is by no means specific to Japan, nor is it specific to ‘Zen’. Asian advocates of Buddhist modernism typically formulated their ideals in ways that implicitly or explicitly criticized institutionalized religion, orthodoxy, and traditional religious beliefs and practices that seemed ‘unmodern’ to them. The well-known Sinhalese reformer Anagārika Dharmapāla (1864-1933) was eager to stress that his message of the Buddha was “[...] free from theology, priestcraft, rituals, ceremonies, dogmas, heavens, hells and other theoretical shibboleths.”⁴ Stephen Covell (2005) and Mark Rowe (2011), in their seminal works on contemporary Japanese temple Buddhism, have shown how images of ‘funerary Buddhism’ (*sōshiki Bukkyō* 葬式仏教) continue to shape the self-image of Buddhist sects in Japan today. While some sectarian scholars downplay the importance of mortuary rituals and Buddhist culture (*Bukkyō bunka* 仏教文化) as the economic foundation of Japanese temple Buddhism, others valorize them. Yet even in emphasizing the importance of Buddhist culture, sectarian elites tend to distinguish the Buddhism practiced at temples from selective interpretations of Buddhist doctrine (*Bukkyō kyōri* 仏教教理) as the presumed ideal of ‘real’ Buddhism, which places mortuary rituals and rituals for this-worldly benefits into the vagueness of merely being tolerated for practical purposes, but not as ‘Buddhist’ per se.⁵ Mark Rowe, in examining the publications and surveys of Buddhist research centers addressed to temples and for public consumption, was able to show why it matters to understand Buddhist research centers as ‘places of action’ (*genba* 現場), where Buddhist beliefs and practices are not merely reflected but specific ideals are negotiated, envisioned, promoted, and shaped (see Rowe 2004; Rowe 2006; Rowe 2011). I follow the approach of Rowe, whose study “[...] seeks not merely to counter an emphasis on

³ The article on Zen Buddhism in the German encyclopedia of religion *Metzler Lexikon Religion*, for instance, states that Zen understands itself as a “special transmission beyond orthodox teaching.” Zen thereby presumably “emphasizes an individual experience of enlightenment over a sophisticated ritualistics” (Beyreuther 1999 (translation Tim Graf)).

⁴ Anagārika Dharmapāla; quoted in Cuevas and Stone 2007: 3.

⁵ “Funerary Buddhism” as a pejorative term was first used by historian Tamamuro Taijō (1902-1966) in 1963 (see Chapter One of this dissertation). The concept of *Bukkyō bunka* and *Bukkyō kyōri* as two different but interrelated aspects of Japanese Buddhism was introduced by the Sōtō Zen intellectuals Nara Yasuaki and Tanaka Ryōshō (see Rowe 2006: 247-248; Tanaka 2008: II-III; Chapter Four of this dissertation).

doctrine with thick descriptions of temple life, but also strives to explore in detail the manner in which Buddhist teachings are discussed and implemented in a variety of settings and, in so doing, to illustrate that there are in fact a number of “Buddhisms” at play” (Rowe 2006: 12).

Contemporary ascriptions to Buddhism range from Buddhism understood as an atheistic religion to the idea of Buddhism as a rational religion compatible with the natural sciences, the understandings of Buddhism as a religion free from institutions, as a peaceful world religion and religion for salvation, down to the ascription that Buddhism is not a religion at all (see Lopez 2005: 1). Until recently, questions on the origins of these ascriptions were largely ignored in the scholarship. Euro- and Christocentric views and assumptions (see Ahn 1997) continue to constitute the lens through which Buddhism is being discussed. Understandings of Buddhism as what could be described an ahistorical, monolithic block are reflective of the lack of focus on setting- and practitioner-related approaches in the study of religions (see Prohl 2003a). Far from being concerned with a search for ‘real’ Buddhism, this dissertation instead examines different points on what could be described as a broad spectrum of beliefs, practices, and norms that define the relationship of Zen and *kitō* in contemporary Japanese Buddhism. Pulling at the thread of *kitō*, as shall be shown, unravels complex problems and tensions within the Sōtō Zen sect, and between advocates of different priestly ideals and social norms. The limited focus on Sōtō Zen Buddhism allows for an in-depths analysis of *kitō* on all levels of organization, encompassing the opinions of sectarian elites as well as local temple priests, lay associates, and other agents in different historical, social, and local contexts. The practitioner-centered approach simultaneously not only allows for an examination of the ways in which local and global brand images of Zen play out locally, but it expands the study beyond Zen, by showing how different local practices are embedded in distinct cultural, geographic, political, religious and social settings.

Sociologist of religion Martin Riesebrodt (2000: 40-42) defines religious practice as a form of social practice that is founded in the assumptions of practitioners about the existence of supernatural powers, gods, transcendental entities, ideas or concepts beyond the immediate reach of human control. Access to these powers is restricted under normal circumstances, and subject to the authority of professionals. In many cases, religious specialists that have undergone some sort of training or qualification are believed to be able to regulate the ways in which these extraordinary powers influence human lives. Based on these premises, Riesebrodt distinguishes between three different types of religious practice: Interventionist practices, which are considered to be of central importance; discursive practices; and derived practices.

Practices subsumed under the category of interventionist practices are, for example, prayers, ascetic practices, or offerings aimed at gaining access to extraordinary or supernatural powers. Interventionist practices often involve or address the body – birth or mortality – and intend to prevent crises. According to Riesebrodt, interventionist practices are at the foundation of any religion. Discursive practices, on the other hand, encompass verbal interactions between religious practitioners about these extraordinary powers and their handling. They organize and systematize religious knowledge, and enable and control interventionist practices.⁶

Based on her research of religious practice in contemporary Japan, Inken Prohl (2003a: 31) argues that discursive practices most often derive from the interventionist practices they aim to negotiate. Religious elites rely on discursive practices to legitimize themselves and their norms, to circulate their message, and to authorize interpretations of dogmas and texts that are otherwise considered to be unchangeable and exclusive. A primary goal of discursive practice is the adaptation to changing social expectations and conditions. It is therefore important to recognize the specific interplay of interventionist and discursive practices, as defined by Riesebrodt, and to distinguish between normative and descriptive dimensions of religious texts and discourses. The expectations, norms and wishes of trained religious professionals and sectarian intellectuals, and the religious texts they discuss and interpret, are not necessarily reflective of the social reality of ‘ordinary’ religious practitioners (Prohl 2003a: 41). While scholars of religion often presume that practitioners are familiar with the teachings that scholars consider to be at the foundation of Buddhism, like the Four Noble Truth, or that an intellectual reflection of religious teachings takes place, it would be wrong to presume that the majority of Buddhist practitioners in Japan are familiar with Buddhist doctrines or sutra texts, let alone the specific sectarian theological foundations of *kitō*, or a lack thereof.⁷

⁶ Derived practices, the third type of religious practice defined by Riesebrodt (2000: 41), derive from non-religious everyday practices, and are practiced in order to obtain the favor of gods or supernatural beings that practitioners believe to be beyond the control of human agency. The rather vague sub-category of derived practices can be ignored for this study of *kitō*.

⁷ Mark Rowe informs us: “It is almost a cliché in Japan now that the younger generation of urban Japanese will not learn of their particular sectarian affiliation until there is a death in the family and they have to find a Buddhist priest for the funeral” (Rowe 2006: 4). On the lack of differences between religious groups in Japan among contemporary Japanese, see Inoue 2000: 58; Reader 1993: 144.

Kitō prayer rituals for this-worldly benefits provide a prime case study for an examination of the interplay of interventionist and discursive practices. The practice is hardly researched in the context of Sōtō Zen Buddhism. This is not least due to the fact that *kitō* has been widely considered to be incompatible with modernist ideas of Buddhism, as promoted by sectarian intellectuals and scholars, and due to the aforementioned assumptions that *kitō* lacks a foundation in Sōtō Zen scripture. Sectarian research on *kitō* reflects a strong desire to either legitimize or discredit the practice. It is within this context that the study of discursive practices pertaining to *kitō* elucidates the fabric of Buddhist identity in contemporary Japanese Sōtō Zen Buddhism, by showing deep seated issues and dilemmas facing priests and lay associates in the face of rapid rural depopulation, urbanization, and changing family structures, among other social changes.

Towards a Working Definition of *kitō*

The Sōtō Zen sect began to research *kitō* in the late 1980s. The publication of an edited volume titled *Kitō* 祈祷 in 1989 in a series called *Shūmon shinkō he no michi shirube* 宗門信仰への道しるべ (*A Guide to Beliefs in the Sōtō School*; see Sōtōshū shūmuchō kyōkabu ed. 1989) marked the start of research efforts that culminated in the three-volume standard works *Sōtōshū kitō taikai* 曹洞宗祈祷大系 (*Overview of the kitō Prayer Rituals of the Sōtō Zen Sect*) in 2003 (see Nakano ed. 2003).⁸ Various definitions of *kitō* resulted from the effort to conceptualize the practice within a Sōtō Zen context through collaborative research initiatives under the leadership of sectarian researchers, whose work can be characterized as mostly apologetic of rituals for this-worldly benefits. Asahi Taihō, for example, who was head of the Sōtō Zen edification section (*kyōka buchō* 教化部長) in 1989, described *kitō* as a central element of Japanese religiosity, along with rituals for ancestor veneration (*kuyō*), and in that regard as a constitutive element of Sōtō Zen Buddhism (see Asahi 1989: 115).

The study and practice of *kitō* within the Sōtō Zen sect is charged with conflict. In his foreword to *Kitō*, Ishizuka Ryōkō confirms that this-worldly benefits (*genze riyaku*) are generally said to be a defining characteristic of Japanese religions, but he also makes it very clear that he and his research fellows comprise a minority, insofar as the agents of Sōtō Zen edification – clergy concerned with sustaining and adapting the official brand image of Sōtō

⁸ On the history of earlier research about *kitō* conducted by individual priests and scholars, see Chapter One of this dissertation.

Zen – tended to devalue this-worldly benefits by describing them in pejorative, reductive terms, whereas the important role of ancestor veneration was generally acknowledged.⁹ The theme of a marginalization of *kitō* is also brought forward by Satō Shunkō (2003: 9). Criticisms of *kitō* were fueled by the presumed association of *kitō* with the so-called New Religions – understood as ‘dangerous cults’ – and the association of *kitō* with ‘folk belief’, understood as superstition (see Ishizuka 1989: 2-3).¹⁰

In arguing that the field of *genze riyaku* should not be left over to the so-called New Religions (see Chapter Three of this dissertation), Ishizuka (1989) calls for strengthening practices for this-worldly in Sōtō Zen Buddhism. Most sectarian definitions of *kitō* thus come down to attempts to legitimize the practice in comparison with prayer-related interventionist practices as found in other religions around the world, by distinguishing *kitō* from “black magic” (see also Matsumoto 1989: 42; Sasaki 1989: 8-11), and by emphasizing that *kitō* responds to the needs of “ordinary people” (*shomin* 庶民; *ippan no hitobito* 一般の人々 being words that are frequently used in this context). The renowned Sōtō Zen intellectual Sasaki Kōkan (1989: 8-9), for example, situates *kitō* by presenting a broad overview of different terms used for “prayer” (*kitō* 祈祷; *kigan* 祈願; *kinen* 祈念; *inori* 祈り). *Kitō* is thereby distinguished from other terms in its capacity as a formalized ritual that involves invocations to the Buddhas and local gods for the purpose of this-worldly benefits, notably disaster prevention, crisis management, protection of the family, a long life, and healing.¹¹ The terms *inori* and *kigan*, on the other hand, are term used for prayer in a broader sense of the word. Ōmura Tetsuo (forthcoming: 49-50) clarifies that *kitō* is different from “prayer” in a Christian sense of a dialogue between human agents and a god, whereas Sōtō Zen priests performing *kitō* are concerned with transferring merits in formalized prayer rituals. The priests, at least in their own view, according to Ōmura, thereby function as mediators who

⁹ In order to support his thesis concerning dominant negative views of *genze riyaku* among the agents of Sōtō Zen edification, Ishizuka quotes a sectarian article from 1980 titled *Ashita no shūmon wo kōsō suru* 明日の宗門を構想する (“Envisioning the Sōtō Zen sect of tomorrow”; see Ishizuka 1989: 2-3).

¹⁰ For an examination of these issues, see Chapters Three and Five of this dissertation.

¹¹ Matsumoto (1989: 44-45) points out that the formalization of *kitō* developed under the influence of the esoteric schools of Buddhism (*mikkyō* 密教) on Sōtō Zen (see also Chapter One of this dissertation), but he also makes sure to note that the structure of *kitō* is subject to local customs and temple-specific variations. Perhaps surprisingly, Matsumoto’s personal understanding of *kitō* is that of an ascetic practice (*shugyō* 修行). On the structure and functions of *kitō*, and different ascriptions to the practice by clergy and lay associates, see Chapters Two and Four of this dissertation.

negotiate between the gods and the recipients of this-worldly benefits. Other explicit or implicit definitions of *kitō* are found in texts that elucidate the role of *kitō* in the history of Japanese Sōtō Zen Buddhism – notably by reassessing Dōgen’s views of *kitō* – in mentioning the history and practice of specific *kitō jiin*, by discussing the effects of *kitō* on practitioners and recipients of care, or by giving detailed descriptions on the ritual components of *kitō* in ritual manuals.

A recurring theme in the sectarian research on *kitō* in Sōtō Zen Buddhism addresses the recipients of this-worldly benefits, and the types or quality of these benefits. Sectarian scholars often implicitly argue that the legitimacy of *kitō*, and the means of promoting the acceptance of *kitō* in society, rely on assumptions about answers to the question as to how these benefits and their recipients are defined. The appropriateness ascribed to *kitō* is thereby linked to questions about how the expectations and norms pertaining to these benefits and their recipients have changed in the course of religious pluralization, among other transformations of Japanese society in the postwar era.¹² Within this discourse, presumably altruistic prayers for the benefit of others are favored over seemingly egoistic prayer requests, and prayers for financial success in particular. This denial of the fact that Buddhist sects and their temples require financial income to maintain their institutions, and the overall disregard of the fact that Buddhist institutions compete with other providers of religious services on the marketplace, reflect modernist assumptions of Buddhism rooted in a Protestant concept of religion.¹³ An understanding of Buddhism as a religion free from worldly desires may not be considered as representative of the practice and history of *kitō* as found in *kitō jiin*.

Eschewing pretense that a definition of *kitō* should be concerned with a normative ranking of ‘acceptable’ prayer purposes, I instead define *kitō* in accordance with Martin Riesebrodt’s definition of religious practice. In doing so, I define *kitō* as prayer rituals for this-worldly benefits. This thesis is first of all concerned with *kitō* as an interventionist practice, but also encompasses the discursive embeddedness of the practice, and the ascriptions being made to *kitō* by practitioners, scholars, and others. A defining characteristic of *kitō* as explored in this study is the involvement of one or more Buddhist priests in the ritual, and the idea of a religious professional who mediates between the wishes and

¹² For a discussion of religious pluralization, and the redistribution of religious knowledge, see Chapters Three and Five of this dissertation).

¹³ On the market of religions, see Zinser 1997. On the commercialization of religion, see Shimazono 1996b; Prohl 2000b; Prohl 2003a.

expectations of the recipients of this-worldly benefits, and the power of presumed local gods and the Buddha dharma.¹⁴ This dissertation is particularly concerned with exploring *kitō* prayer rituals for disaster prevention and crisis management at *kitō jiin*. This is partly due to the choice of Kasuisai as a case study – the monastery is known for promising fire protection. Being selective in the choice of this-worldly benefits furthermore allows for a more detailed historical overview within the limited framework of this dissertation, and, perhaps more importantly for this study of *kitō*, enables comparative views of *kitō* through the lens of disasters in recent Japanese history, as discussed in Chapter Five on interactions between *kitō* and spiritual care.

Material Religion

Understanding how practitioners make ‘sense’ of religion means asking how religion looks, tastes, smells, and feels. Religion, in other words, is subject to the senses and sense-perception; it is not only a cognitive endeavor (Prohl 2006: 34). Material religion as a theoretical approach (see Morgan 1998; Morgan 2005; Morgan 2009; Morgan ed. 2010; Plate ed. 2015) aims to assess materializations of religion more broadly than to study ritual objects and their meanings. Material religion asks how interactions with presumed supernatural powers, gods, or the Buddha dharma involve the body and the senses. Focusing on materialization as a process, understood as an intentional means of mediating religious beliefs and making them tangible, requires assessing the cognitive, sensual, habitual, and social arrangements that enable religious experiences. The embodiment of religious beliefs in ritual practices, interactions between the body and the setting, and the visual, auditory, and olfactory sensations of religion are all subject to this exploration. Material religion is thus concerned with the ways that manifestations of a presumed transcendence is felt, perceived of, and interpreted by religious practitioners or subjects, and with the particular ways that access to presumed divine powers is negotiated. It is within this context that approaches to material religion are comparable to the approaches developed within the sub-field of religious aesthetics, which was introduced in Germany by Hubert Cancik and Hubert Mohr (1988), and

¹⁴ The idea of the involvement of a religious professional as a defining marker of *kitō* is shared by Sasaki Kōkan (1989: 14-15), and should not be considered as unique.

which is also concerned with the interplay of cognitive and sensory triggers and aspects in the reception of religious beliefs and practices.¹⁵

This dissertation employs theories of Material religion to explore the training of priests at prayer monasteries (see Chapter Four), to examine alternative modes of religious professionalization (see Chapter Five), and to demonstrate how *kitō*, in order to function in the eyes of practitioners at prayer monasteries, requires unique environmental, material and ritual settings (see Chapter Two). More specifically, I draw on Birgit Meyer's concept of "sensational forms" to further define *kitō*. Meyer describes "sensational forms" as "relatively fixed authorized modes of invoking and organizing access to the transcendental" (Meyer 2008: 707; quoted in Prohl 2015: 12. See also Meyer 2006). The concept of "sensational forms" works to aptly reflect the formalized character of *kitō*, and the material and logistic contexts within which prayer rituals for this-worldly benefits are currently practiced at Japanese Sōtō Zen prayer monasteries. The characteristics of a "sensational form" are reflected in the set and setting of special worship halls at Sōtō Zen Buddhist prayer monasteries. The concepts of "sensational forms" elucidates why only few 'ordinary' temples in Japan have been able to turn *kitō* into a main source of income, and why the practice of *kitō* is not easily made portable. It is within this context that I define the "religious sensation" of *kitō* at Kasuisai as a 'staged moment of crisis'. Far from mistaking the practice of *kitō* as a signifier for a crisis or emergency in the lives of practitioners, I argue that a defining characteristic of *kitō* performances is that a sense of crisis is generated within the practice. The ritual performance is designed to make actual crises moments manageable, by allowing practitioners to actualize past crisis moments, by preparing them for future hardship mentally, and by offering opportunities for attentive listening and spiritual care. In a broader context, theories of material religion and the concept of "sensational forms" provide answers to the question how religious organizations in contemporary Japan promote their offerings and bind their adherents.

Religion and Marketing

Studies at the intersection of religion and marketing explore advertising as a method of promoting religious beliefs and practices, or may even discuss advertising as religion (see

¹⁵ On religious aesthetics, see Münster 2011; Prohl 2012; Prohl 2015. On religious aesthetics in the context of Zen Buddhism in Germany, see Prohl 2004a.

Kelso 2006: 1-3). Research concerned with the latter approach to the study of marketing and religion is based on the premise that narratives and aesthetics used in advertising and their functions can be understood as analogous to religion. It addresses the relationship between marketing and religion by comparing the rhetoric of advertising specialists with the rhetoric of religious professionals, or by showing how advertisers appropriate religious symbols, themes, and objects in the marketing of ‘secular’ commodities, such as ‘Zen’-branded cereals, pillows, and MP3-players. Other studies are concerned with brands and their followers (Einstein 2007), with the process of brand building (Grant 2000), and “corporate religion” (Kunde 2000). Using the example of Harley Davidson and Apple, among other brands, Mara Einstein introduced the category of “brand cults” to describe “self-selected groups that surround a particularly powerful branded product” (Einstein 2007: 91). It is therefore clear that interactions between marketing and branding and religion have since expanded the scope of religious studies as cultural studies to also encompass assessing seemingly ‘secular’ products and their influence on ‘traditional’ or institutionalized religion through the lens of marketing, advertising, and branding. In contrast to classical theories of religion and economy, these recent approaches to religious marketing draw on social and cultural studies, in order to trace identity-construction in the consumer age (see Hankiss 2006), and to elucidate the relationship of religion, spirituality, and consumerism in highly industrialized societies (Carrette and King 2005). They are generally no longer based on the premise that qualitative differences between religious and non-religious products and market spheres exist.

This dissertation examines the role of *kitō jiin* as sites of religious advertising and branding, by looking at the marketing of religious objects and rituals at prayer monasteries, the promotion of local deity cults, the interplay of marketing and training, and the ways in which different brand images of ‘Zen’ are reflected in, and shaped by, local marketing and advertising initiatives. Advertising is thereby understood as a part of the marketing process, “which consists of myriad strategies and tactics that relate to creating, defining, and packaging a product; determining how it should be priced; deciding on places of distribution; and devising promotional methods – of which advertising is but one option” (Kelso 2006: 1). While the origins of modern advertising are often sought to have developed in North America and Europe in the nineteenth century, as a method of advocating faith (see Kelso 2006: 2-3), Zen Buddhist prayer monasteries in early modern Japan employed comparable marketing strategies as found in Western contexts around the same time. *Kitō jiin* are global branding pioneers, as their history of the marketing of local temple-guarding gods demonstrates. Prayer monasteries in Japan today employ multi-layered marketing strategies for different audiences

that relate to different intersecting, and at times contradicting local and global brand images of Buddhism, ‘Zen’, spirituality, and Japanese culture (see Chapters One to Three). The dissertation furthermore demonstrates how modern, transculturally shaped understandings of modern ‘Zen’ have since influenced the religious practice of prayer monasteries, including *kitō*, among other practices for this-worldly benefits, and how different brand images of Zen and Japanese Buddhism are currently generated, conceived of, and negotiated at prayer monasteries, by whom, and under what kinds of conditions and with what kinds of intentions. A primary goal of this study is thus to show how interactions between monks, lay associates, and tourists have changed in adaptation to modern social changes, and how prayer monasteries adjust their marketing to attract new groups of supporters and temple visitors in the face of a changing religious marketplace, rural depopulation, changing family structures, and the redistribution of religious knowledge in Japan’s aging society (see Chapter Three).

Both religion and marketing are processes of communication. What distinguishes religion is that the process of mediation is typically denied, as religious practitioners tend to ignore the role of media in the process of religious mediation entirely. In the words of Birgit Meyer: “The point is that from a religious perspective, media are made to vest the religious mediations in which they take part with some sense of immediacy—allowing believers to experience a direct encounter with the divine—yet become more or less downplayed or even invisible in the process” (Meyer 2015: 142). This denial of mediation is reflected in the religious marketing and branding at prayer monasteries, and in the interplay between training and branding in the making of this-worldly benefits, the exploration of which comprises a primary goal of this study. It is for these reasons that I choose to apply the theoretical premises of material religion to the study of religious marketing and branding.

Methods

The dissertation is based on more than two years of fieldwork in Japan. I conducted participant observation at Kasuisai and Daiyūzan Saijōji, and at smaller temples across Honshū (central Japan), as well as in Kumamoto in southern Japan. I visited Kasuisai and Daiyūzan on a regular basis to observe temple festivals, interview priests and temple visitors, examine both monasteries’ circuits of ritualized worship, and to participate in lay *zazen* classes and other activities for temple visitors. In September 2011, I spent nearly a month with monks at Kasuisai to examine their training and everyday life, followed by participant observation on the training of ‘interfaith chaplains’ at Tohoku University in Sendai in 2013

and 2014.¹⁶ I was granted access to prayer request forms, ephemera, and rare books on Akiha devotion for the purpose of this research – sources that have not yet been addressed in scholarship. I employed historical-philological methods to further contextualize these on-the-ground perspectives by assessing the broader Japanese sectarian discourse on *kitō* through text-based research, using hitherto untranslated sources.

I chose methods of distant participant observation (see Prohl 2006) to explore the everyday life of prayer monasteries, particularly at Kasuisai, where I also examined the training of priests. Regular visits and overnight stays at Buddhist temples and training venues for ‘interfaith chaplains’ aside, I spent more than half a year living in temples together with Buddhist priests and their families. My long-term fieldwork at Buddhist temples was preceded by regular visits and research stays of one to ten days, aimed at establishing a relationship of mutual trust and respect, and for ethnographic filmmaking. Apart from the available literature on doing fieldwork in Japan (see eds. Bestor, Steinhoff, and Bestor 2003; Schnell 2006; McLaughlin 2010), two workshops taught at Heidelberg-University by John Nelson in 2007 and by Levi McLaughlin in 2010 were of great help regarding the preparations for my participant observation. I employed historical-philological methods to further contextualize my findings by assessing the broader discourse on *kitō* in Japanese Sōtō Zen Buddhism through text-based research, using sources that were hitherto untranslated. Including an analysis of Sōtō-Zen-Buddhist intellectual discourse proved to be fruitful for strengthening the understanding of Buddhist doctrines and practices as they relate to prayer temples.

Doing fieldwork at *kitō jūin* required nearly a year of preparation. This involved the writing of introductory letters, where I outlined my research interests, and regular visits to Daiyūzan Saijōji and Kasuisai. A relationship of mutual trust and respect with my informants at both monasteries strengthened in the course of ethnographic filmmaking at both sites in August 2011, and intensified in the course of my research and filmmaking on Buddhist disaster relief initiatives in areas afflicted by the March 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disasters in Japan (see Graf 2012). It is within this context that years of study and the careful

¹⁶ I conducted fieldwork in Japan from October 2010 to September 2011, as a JSPS foreign researcher at Tokyo University. Additional short-term field trips in December 2011 and January 2012 were enabled by the Heidelberg University Collaborative Research Center Ritual Dynamics, which also enabled a preliminary field trip in September 2009. I furthermore conducted a year of fieldwork as a Research Assistant at Tohoku University’s Faculty of Law from October 2013 to September 2014, followed by more than two months of fieldwork at a Buddhist temple in Kesenuma, Miyagi Prefecture. Follow-up research in Japan was conducted between March and May 2015, and in March 2017.

planning of my fieldwork began to show fruitful results near the end of my stay in Japan as a JSPS fellow in 2011. I conducted additional fieldwork on Buddhist responses to the 2011 disasters between 2013 and 2017, including long-term stays of up to three months at Buddhist temples in the disaster zone, where I also explored the training of ‘clinical religious specialists’ at a Tohoku-University affiliated disaster relief project called the Kokoro no sōdanshitsu 心の相談室 (‘Spirit Counseling Center’). Conversations with local scholars of religion and priests of various sects in the Tohoku area have sharpened my questions concerning the relationship of disasters and rituals for this-worldly benefits more generally. I chose to anonymize information that might identify some of my informants, particularly in cases where criticisms of particular organizations or practices are expressed.

At Kasuisai, I participated actively in the everyday monastic routine of trainees. This involved more than ‘just sitting’. By 10 a.m. on an average day, I had practiced *zazen*, took part in the sutra-chanting morning service, including a *kitō* prayer ritual, had breakfast, collected leaves outdoors with the monks, and finished cleaning eighteen toilets. From turning on the artificial waterfall near the stairs to the ‘mountain gate’ to folding toilet paper, every procedure pertaining to everyday monastic tasks was strictly regulated. I was authorized to spend the afternoons in the privacy of my room, but eventually rejected this privilege in favor of researching as many practical aspects of monastic life and training as possible. Participation in communal cleaning provided rare opportunities to record hour-long conversations with monks in training. It is within this context of active participation in the life at Kasuisai that I was eventually bestowed the privilege to help monks guide guests to their seats on the occasion of public lectures, and to even advise a visiting family in *zazen* in the monk’s hall. During my stay, I assisted in preparing the vegetarian cloister cuisine, the meals for the monks, and washed dishes for higher-ranking clergy. I cleaned the communal bath, polished incense holders and ritual objects, and joined some fifteen trainees in bagging some six hundred hand-written ceremonial cards by the abbot, which were sent as gifts to parishioners and lay supporters on the occasion of his official inauguration. Being trained in Japanese studies and religious studies helped me communicate my research interests, and my interest in religious practice and participant observation.

I participated in these activities willingly, self-reflectively, and without expressing a commitment to any particular religious persuasion. I clarified my research intentions in interactions with informants to my best abilities, and while I expressed my interest in Buddhism, I consistently stressed that I was neither ordained, nor planning to becoming a

priest. Cutting my hair short, in combination with wearing a work robe that monks lent me, has nonetheless given me a somewhat priestly appearance, and some temple visitors indeed mistook me for a member of the monastic order, until I informed them otherwise. It was impossible for me to clarify my status as a researcher in cases where circumstances did not allow for an interview with visitors, who may have identified me as a Buddhist priest, judging by my visual appearance. As with the work that was assigned to me during my stay at Kasuisai, I considered the opportunity to wear a monk's work robe to be a sign of trust and respect in my abilities and intentions, considering that clergy were well aware of the visual power of the work robe and its capacity to evoke notions of religious authority, identity, and community.

Waking up at five a.m. to sit in *zazen*, followed by a day of monastic activities furthered my fieldwork skills. Participation in monastic life was in fact required as a means for me to build connections with my informants.¹⁷ Not only did communal cleaning sessions provide opportunities to conduct interviews with monks, who were otherwise too occupied to find the time to talk with me, but lower-ranking trainees in particular used to treat me like a guest initially, regardless of the fact that monks in office had advised them to treat me as one of them. Cutting my hair short, yet refraining from shaving it like the monks did, allowed me to diminish this gap between me and my informants, while at the same time I maintained a critical distance. I made this choice intentionally – not in terms of an expression of a personal interest in Buddhist beliefs, but as a means of expressing that I was willing to make sacrifices, and in no need of exclusive rights concerning my status as a researcher. None of the thirty or so monks at Kasuisai was allowed to wear hair. As Chapter Four will demonstrate, being self-reflective about my appearance, and changing my appearance as a means of transitioning in and out of my Kasuisai not only furthered my understanding of material Buddhist culture in action, but was in fact necessary to bridge the stark contrasts between the lived realities within and beyond the monastery's precincts.¹⁸

¹⁷ On the importance of making oneself useful to informants as a researcher in the field, see McLaughlin 2010.

¹⁸ On the growing trend among scholars to eschew pretense at keeping a 'critical distance' in favor of self-reflexivity, see Graf 2016b. In my research note, I discuss issues pertaining to research ethics, by drawing on my fieldwork and ethnographic filmmaking in the wake of the March 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disasters in Japan.

Chapter Outlines

Chapter One provides historical background by tracing the relationship between Zen, *kitō*, and the state in Japan, followed by a discussion of *kitō* in the context of the modern study of Buddhism and Buddhist modernism (McMahan 2008). Using the example of the monastery Kasuisai, where I conducted fieldwork for extended periods between October 2010 and January 2012, this chapter examines the modern Akiha cult in the wake of the forced separation of Buddhas and *kami* (*shinbutsu bunri*), and Kasuisai's role as a head temple for the veneration of fire god Akiha. The chapter outlines Dōgen's view of *kitō*, discusses the scriptural foundation of *kitō* in a Sōtō Zen context, as well as the spread of *kitō* in medieval Japan under Keizan, and shows how rituals for prevention and practices for the commemoration of ancestral souls comprised interactive components that facilitated the spread of Buddhism in medieval Japan. Sub-chapters about *kitō* in early-modern Japanese Sōtō Zen Buddhism are structured by focusing on four factors: The formalization of affiliations between Buddhist temples and parish households in Tokugawa Japan; the emerging trend of tourism to religious sites; the rise of *kitō jiin* and temple support associations (*kō* 講); and the diversification of Buddhist material culture and practices for this-worldly benefits. Pilgrimage to *kitō jiin*, and *kitō* at *danka* 檀家 temples are also addressed. Transitions to modernity are explored from three angles: the relationship of Buddhism and the modern nation state, *kitō* and the rhetoric of 'decline' in sectarian and academic discourses, and Meiji intellectuals' critique of *kitō* and its legacy. Using the example of Kasuisai, Chapter One closes with an in-depth look on the monastery's transformation into the head-center for the veneration of Akiha Sanjakubō 秋葉三尺坊. The rivalry between Kasuisai and other religious sites of Akiha devotion is also addressed, along with the integration of local deity cults into Sōtō Zen's modern sectarian framework.

Chapter Two examines the marketing of *kitō* and other ritual practices and material offerings at Kasuisai in quotidian contexts and shows how this marketing relates to the monastery's setting, ritual circuits of worship, and affiliated networks. The first part introduces Kasuisai's setting through the lens of the monastery's role as a site of Akiha devotion, and presents an overview of the precincts by showing how monks advertise Kasuisai's attractions in form of a recreational miniature pilgrimage for this-worldly benefits. This section also shows how the monastery's setting relates to its different identities as a *kitō jiin*, Zen temple, 'power spot', and as a tourist site where visitors can interact with Tokugawa history. Matters of accessibility of *kitō jiin* in Japan's aging society are also addressed. This

introduction is followed by a closer look at Kasuisai's ritualized circuits of worship, and the various ways in which prayer monasteries like Daiyūzan Saijōji and Kasuisai initiate and organize public exhibitions to promote their faith. In order to show how *kitō* involves the senses and the body, I draw on the aforementioned theories of material religion and religious aesthetics. The final part of the chapter addresses the relationship between *kitō* and *zazen*. At Kasuisai, as shall be shown, different views of *zazen* and the relationship between meditation, ritual sitting, and this-worldly benefits coexist in seemingly separate spheres of practices addressed to different types of lay practitioners and temple visitors, but these coexisting spheres of practice do intersect in material, spatial, and logistic arrangements. As a result of their local embeddedness, various hybrid images of Zen, *kitō*, and Japanese culture at prayer monasteries are constantly being contested, confirmed, and reinvented.

Chapter Three explores temple support associations (*kō*), their role in religious civil society, and ways in which Kasuisai adjusts its marketing in the face of the fact that these groups are disappearing, due to the depopulation of rural areas, changing family structures, and the redistribution of religious knowledge in Japan's aging society. The first part demonstrates how these groups at Kasuisai are organized, and introduces their activities. The single most pressing issue for Kasuisai and its affiliated temple support associations, as shall be shown, are the various social changes that mark the end of these groups, and thus uproot the overall system of multi-generational temple support networks funding the activities of *kitō jin* and their sects. The chapter elucidates how the discontinuation of *kō* groups is perceived and discussed, and shows how monks and lay supporters of Kasuisai make sense of the social changes that affect their communities and individual lives. In order to provide the broader context for the understanding of these issues, the chapter also addresses how the so-called New Religions and spiritual intellectuals in Japan participate on the market of religions by offering this-worldly benefits. In discussing overnight temple stays (*shukubō* 宿坊), the final part of this chapter provides an on-the-ground view of Kasuisai's responses to decreasing *kō* group activity. In picking up on the discussion of Chapter Two, this section shows how monks draw on various brand images of 'Zen' in the search for ways to attract a new clientele. Some of the financial and soteriological challenges confronting monks in their effort to establish lasting, profitable, and mutually meaningful connections with temple visitors are also discussed, along with questions as to how the image of Zen portrayed in overnight temple stays relates to *kitō*, and how the practice of *kitō* is being altered in the context of the implementation of religious innovations.

Chapter Four draws on the aforementioned theories of religious aesthetics and material religion to illustrate how *kitō jūin* generate authority and legitimacy as monastic training centers, where monks learn to embody a specific monastic etiquette (*igi* 威儀) and special procedures (*sahō* 作法). The chapter considers how this training plays out – or does not play out – in different social and local contexts, as well as asks how various definitions of the path to religious authority in a Sōtō Zen context draw on popular understandings of asceticism, training, and this-worldly benefits as somehow being interrelated. In order to situate the training of monks at Kasuisai, the chapter includes punctual comparisons with monastic training at other Sōtō Zen training monasteries, and with the training regimens of other major Japanese Buddhist sects. Focusing on Kasuisai, the first part of this chapter is primarily concerned with the legitimization of *kitō* through training, and the legitimization of training through *kitō*. The second part demonstrates how monks in training at Kasuisai engage with Buddhist teachings in corporeal forms, and shows how access to embodied knowledge is being restricted and constrained within the monastery’s hierarchy. The third part draws on theories of material religion to explain how monks distinguish themselves and their practice by the use of visual markers and priestly accoutrements, and illustrates how trainees learn to walk, talk, and act like a monk by adhering to a formalized etiquette and special procedures. This discussion is followed by an examination of the ideal of renunciation in practice, which elucidates the process of integrating a new trainee, asks what local community members expect from monks in terms of renunciation, and compares the role of renunciation within the lives of trainees as well as ordained temple priests. The chapter closes with a discussion of self-regulation at *kitō jūin*; a system based on the interplay of restrictions and incentives aimed at stabilizing the rhythms of monastic life, and designed to ensure the continuation of monasticism as practiced at Kasuisai. Within the monastic community at prayer monasteries, renunciation is often promoted and rewarded with worldly incentives and privileges. The system of self-regulation therefore presumes an understanding of worldliness and renunciation as two interactive and complementary components of monastic life. As the final part of Chapter Four shows, however, problems may arise when visiting guests interact with Kasuisai based on different premises and understandings of what renunciation in a monastic Buddhist context entails.

Chapter Five examines how new approaches to religious professionalization in post-2011 Japan enable religious professionals to develop multiple identities as temple priests, ‘interfaith chaplains’, or working combinations of both as they pursue their vocations in

temporary housing units, hospitals, hospices, and through home-based care. This chapter expands the scope of research beyond Zen to present comparative perspectives on prayer rituals and *kitō jūin* as sites of sectarian training and branding. I am particularly concerned with recent interactions of *kitō* and ‘spiritual care’ in the context of multi-religious aid initiatives in post-2011 Japan. The first two parts of the chapter provide background to this study, by outlining the functions and meanings ascribed to *kitō* in crisis moments generally, by presenting perspectives on responses to different natural disasters in postwar Japanese history, and by addressing issues pertaining to untimely death, beliefs in ghosts and ghost possession, as well as various interpretations of the concepts of divine protection and divine punishment. Sub-chapter three to six demonstrate how ‘spiritual care’ is currently being defined in Japan, and how ‘spiritual care’ plays out on the ground, particularly within multi-religious disaster relief collaborations that have since been expanded to contribute to society at large. Far from claiming that clinic-inspired modes of religious care have replaced traditional modes of religious care, the chapter demonstrates how new approaches to ‘spiritual care’ draw on *kitō* and related beliefs and practices in the practical training of ‘clinical religious specialists’, and furthermore shows how *kitō* as a means of non-professional care remains relevant in the lives of ordinary Japanese. The chapter concludes with reflections on the concrete ways in which religion-related aid initiatives in their capacity as social contributors in post-2011 Japan have since enabled religious professionals to practice *kitō* in terms of ‘spiritual care’. As the case studies in this chapter will show, this is particularly significant in cases where orthodox sectarian views prohibit or restrict the practice of *kitō*.

Chapter One: Historical Perspectives on ‘Zen’ and *kitō*

Introduction

This chapter provides historical background to this dissertation by presenting perspectives on *kitō* and Sōtō Zen Buddhism from four different angles: by tracing the relationship between Buddhism and the state in Japan; through discussion of the scriptural foundation of *kitō*; by situating *kitō* within the modern academic study of Buddhism; and by exploring the integration of local deity cults into Sōtō Zen’s modern sectarian framework. Using the example of Kasuisai, one of the largest Sōtō Zen prayer monasteries in Japan today, the chapter examines the ways in which modern government policies pertaining to the separation of Buddhism and Shintō (*shinbutsu bunri*) and the ‘unity of rite and government’ (*saisei itchi* 祭政一致) have enabled the transformation of Kasuisai into the head-center for the veneration of Akiha Sanjakubō – a local mountain ghost (*tengu* 天狗) noted to promise protection from fire. It is within this context that the modern period is of particular concern for the understanding of *kitō* at *kitō jiin* in Japan today. Not only did the social and political developments in the second half of the nineteenth century enable Kasuisai’s rise to popularity, but persisting views of *kitō* as superstition or ‘magic’ were formulated around the same time. In addressing these issues, the chapter combines studies of inner-Japanese Buddhist reform efforts with research on transcultural flows between Japan and the so-called West. The transformation of Zen, as observed in the making of a modern brand image of ‘Zen’ as a religion free from rituals and institutions, is rooted in this period of massive cultural exchanges, and so are the modernist interpretations of Dōgen’s presumed rejection of *kitō*, and the understanding of Zen as a religion compatible with scientific rationalism. By considering what kind of impact the academic study of *kitō*, sectarian and intellectual discourses, and local practices at prayer monasteries have had on each other, this chapter sets the stage for the exploration of Zen as a religion that comprises multiple brand images. *Kitō jiin* are the sites where these seemingly disparate local and global brand images of Zen and *kitō* intersect in everyday, quotidian terms on the ground: in the marketing and practice of prayer rituals for this-worldly benefits, and in the training of Sōtō Zen monks.

Prayers for State Protection in Early Japanese Buddhism

The idea of Buddhism as a religion for the protection of the state was not exclusive to Japan, nor was it specific to Zen or its Chinese equivalent Ch’an. State protection was an integral

component of Japanese Buddhism ever since the official arrival of sutra copies and a Buddha statue in the year 538 or 552 CE, when the court of Paekche sent a mission to introduce Buddhism to the Yamato court (Bowring 2005: 17:19-20).¹⁹ The introduction of Buddhism in Japan was a political move aimed at legitimizing power and protecting the state. Accordingly, the primary purpose of *kitō* rituals was to protect the state and to guarantee the wellbeing of the imperial household (Sakurai 1989: 58-59; Sasaki 1989: 18).

The ritual and dogmatic repertoire of Buddhism faced little competition by local providers of religious beliefs and practices in Japan at the time.²⁰ Emperor Kinmei, however, seemed hesitant to accept the new religion. When an epidemic plague befell the country soon after a tentative veneration of Buddhism, Kinmei ordered to drown the Buddha statue in the Naniwa canal. A newly constructed temple had to be burned. This reaction was arguably not as much an expression of skepticism towards Buddhism, as it was an expression of the rivalry between three ruling families. The clan of the Soga supported Buddhism to gain prestige and political influence, while the clan of the Nakatomi, responsible for the cultic support of the imperial household, formed an anti-Buddhist alliance with the clan of the Mononobe to curb the rising power of the Soga. In the circumstances of this dispute, Buddhism was accepted only after a fire broke out at the imperial palace, following the destruction of the material Buddhist objects (Kleine 2001: 170-172).²¹

¹⁹ The exact time of the arrival of Buddhist specialists, statues, teachings and sutra copies in Japan remains unknown. The donation of Buddhist material objects by Paekche-Korea, which is commonly understood as the ‘introduction of Buddhism in Japan’, was politically motivated insofar as Paekche was interested in finding an ally against the neighboring states of Silla and Koguryō. It is possible that the clan of the Soga explicitly requested these presents from Paekche (see Bowring 2005: 17;19).

²⁰ The introduction of Buddhism in Japan raises issues about a possible ‘indigenous’ religion in Japan. The understanding of Shintō as the ‘indigenous religion of Japan’ is problematic, as Richard Bowring (2005: 3-4;38-41) illustrates. Early textual sources like the *Nihon shoki* (720) are already indicative of Buddhist and other Chinese influences. The existing early chronicles lack descriptive accuracy in their retrospective historiography, especially concerning religion. Local shrine cults and the emperor cult, which emerged from a local clannish cult, are far more likely for the period preceding the introduction of Buddhism than a trans-local systematized Shintō (see also Kleine 2001: 173). It is often claimed that Buddhism filled a gap in dealing with death that had not been addressed by Japan’s ‘native’ religion, considering that devotion to local gods (*kami*) was regulated by concerns over pollution (*kegare* 穢れ) caused by death. Jacqueline Stone and Mariko Namba Walter (2008: 6) show that the historical reality was for more complex.

²¹ The three ruling clans competed for positions at the imperial court. Occupying prestigious positions at court became an important means of gaining political influence in the course of the establishing *kabane* 姓 system of titles and ranks as early as early as 400 C.E.

Buddhism marked the lines of conflict, along which power and wealth were contested. The Soga asserted the official status of Buddhism by defeating the Mononobe. Emperor Yōmei, who reigned from 585 to 587, was the first emperor to seek refuge to Buddhism with hopes to cure his illness. The Taika reform²² of 645 further established Buddhism as a duty for the wellbeing of the state under the authority of the imperial household. The purpose of Buddhism was to “avert misfortune and bring good luck” (*jōsai shōfuku* 攘災招福) (Kleine 2001: 171-174;176). *Kitō* was a “basic religious rite” (*kihonteki na shūkyō girei* 基本的な宗教儀礼) for state protection and public peace (Satō 2003: 23).

“Ordination was not a personal matter of individuals in the search for enlightenment, but an act of state for the benefit of the nation and the imperial household,” as Christoph Kleine (2001: 176) remarks.²³ If a member of the ruling elite fell ill, mass ordinations were ordered. If the ill happened to die, the state arranged for fasting ceremonies at Buddhist temples. Ascetic practice in the mountains was only allowed with the official approval by state officials (see Kleine 2001: 181). When and where *kitō* had to be practiced, was regulated as part of a ritual calendar. Monastic training centers, for example, administered the practice of *kitō* for the wellbeing of the emperor and the state on special holidays (Sakurai 1989: 58-59). In return for their services, priests were exempted from tax burdens and compulsory labor. Some clergy even held high political offices,²⁴ which enabled the establishment of a

²² After a successful coup against the Soga, the clan of the Fujiwara (Nakatomi no Kamatari (614-669) received the name Fujiwara for his merits) continued to disintegrate the aristocratic *kabane* system, which was considered obsolete. It was abolished in the course of the Taika reform of 645. The Fujiwara were able to stay in power as the most influential ruling family at court for over four hundred years. In order to weaken the powerful land owners, land and people were completely put under the control of the emperor (*kōchi kōmin* 高知公民) (Kleine 2001: 175 and Bowring 2005: 22).

²³ Christoph Kleine addresses the problematic use of nation elsewhere, clarifying that: “The term nation is, of course, not less modern and not less complicated than the term state. I use it here in rather general terms, in the sense of a community formed by a common history, tradition, religion, culture, language, and residential area, as well as the declared intention to love together within the order of a state.” (Kleine 2001: 170, n. 4). Theorists of nationalism stress that the use of the term ‘nation’ is problematic for premodern contexts (see Özkirimli 2000: 57;60). Maruyama Masao (1989: 45) argues that the Japanese nation state was essentially the product of the Meiji oligarchy.

²⁴ The extent to which some of the priests pursued political goals is vividly expressed in the so-called Dōkyō incident of 766. The priest Dōkyō (?-722) won the favor of Kōken Tennō (718-779), the daughter of Shōmu Tennō (701-756), as well as gained the rank of ‘priestly chancellor’ (*dajō daijin zenji* 太政大臣禪師). He was furthermore venerated as *hōō* 法王 (‘Buddhist king’, or ‘king of the dharma’). Dōkyō’s plan to become heir to the throne had been impeded, however, and he was subsequently sent into exile. It is sometimes argued that

nationwide network of Buddhist denominations in the Nara period (710-784).²⁵ The Buddhist establishment became so powerful during the Heian period (794-1185) that some temples maintained private armies of so-called warrior monks (*sōhei* 僧兵) to protect their private property, which had been acquired by some temples in the form of *shōen* 莊園²⁶ since the mid-eights century. Access to Buddhist rituals and temples, however, was still a privilege of the ruling elite, and mostly out of reach for commoners until the Kamakura period (1185 or 1192-1333).²⁷

Kitō in Medieval Japanese Sōtō Zen Buddhism

Dōgen and *kitō*

The founding of the Zen denominations in Japan took place at a time of Buddhist reform efforts and movements during the Kamakura period. Sōtōshū was founded by Dōgen (1200-1253), Rinzaishū by Eisai (1141-1215). Both sects were imported from China, but their development in Japan distinguished Zen from Chinese Ch’an.²⁸ Jōdō (Pure Land) Buddhism, Jōdō shin (True Pure Land) Buddhism, and Nichiren Buddhism also emerged around this time. The founders of these schools were charismatic leaders who enabled the spread of Buddhism beyond elitist circles by promoting the promise of salvation for everyone.

Dōgen criticized the Buddhist establishment and its reliance on *kitō* prayers for state protection by ‘magical’ means (*jujutsu kitō* 呪術祈禱). The understanding of the relationship between Buddhism and the state as interdependent, however, was never really questioned by

the construction of Heiankyō – today’s Kyoto – as the new capital was a move aimed at curbing the influence of Buddhist institutions. See Kleine 2001: 180-181.

²⁵ Not all priests conformed to the law, however, and cases of illegal land occupation by Buddhist temples were already reported in the early eights century, according to the *Shoku Nihongi* 続日本紀, which was compiled in 797 as the first of six Japanese history books commissioned by the emperor. Several edicts were issued in response to this problem, to further norm and classify the activities of Buddhist priests more strictly (Kleine 2011: 176-178). The names of the six Nara schools are: Risshū, Jōjitsushū, Kushashū, Sanronshū, Kegonshū und Hossōshū.

²⁶ During the Heian period, the imperial household increasingly sold land in the form of *shōen*, which de facto functioned as private property under the fiscal authority of the *shōen* owner. Many farmers who worked on land assigned by the court were often unable to pay their tax load. Since they weren’t allowed to sell their land, they ‘donated’ it to the *shōen* owners. Another reason for the donation of land was protection.

²⁷ During the Heian period, the radius of Buddhist ancestor veneration rituals began to expand beyond the imperial household to also include the aristocracy (Fukutō 1993: 262).

²⁸ Ōbakushū, the third of the Japanese Zen sects was founded much later, in 1654.

Dōgen, whose commentaries show that he operated with prayer rituals himself in everyday, quotidian terms, regardless of his preference for ‘just sitting’ (*shikantaza* 只管打坐) (Sakurai 1989: 58-59 and Satō 2003: 24-25). As with Eisai and the other founders of Japanese Buddhism at that time, Dōgen labored strenuously to distinguish his teachings and offerings for his supporters.²⁹ Dōgen’s teaching emphasized an embodiment of Buddha’s enlightenment through the practice of ritual sitting (*zazen*). He gave his followers detailed instructions on how to perform this embodiment or ritual identification with Buddha’s power.

While *kaji kitō* 加持祈祷 incantations were forbidden by Dōgen (Ōmura forthcoming: 51), studies of the *Eihei kōroku* 永平広録, a collection of sermons (*seppō* 説法) and commentaries by Dōgen have shown that Dōgen did not reject *kitō* per se. Satō Shunkō (2003: 14-16) even argues that ritual prayers for this-worldly benefits were of central importance for Dōgen’s religion and a tool for salvation, if not the very foundation of his concept of the salvation of sentient beings. Ōmura Tetsuo (forthcoming) lists the *kitō* prayers that were performed by the founder of Japanese Sōtō Zen as part of Dōgen’s ritual calendar. Prayers for protection from fire, for example, addressed the kitchen god Sōshin 竈神, or god of the stove, who played an important role at a Zen monastery. Sutra recitations for Sōshin (*sōkō fugin* 竈公諷經) were adopted by Dōgen from Song-dynasty Ch’an temples, as was the case with *Sanpachi nenju* 三八念誦 invocations of the names of ten Buddhas. These invocations were scheduled to be performed on the ‘three’ and ‘eight’ days of the month (the 3rd, 8th, 13th, 18th, 23rd, 28th). The goal of the practice was to achieve a transfer of merits to the gods of the soil and the heavens. *Kitō* was furthermore practiced in the monastery’s kitchen garden, where monks grew vegetables. The monk in charge of the garden had an important position. He addressed the *enjū nenju* 園頭念誦 (literally: invocation by the head of the garden) to Shakyamuni and Kannon to transfer good merits to the gods of the soil and the heavens (Ōmura forthcoming: 52-53).

Dōgen’s notion of *kitō* was mostly that of a public practice. Ōmura Tetsuo categorizes them as *kōteki na kitō* 公的な祈祷, or public *kitō*, as opposed to *shiteki na kitō* 私的な祈祷,

²⁹ Eisai, for example, emphasized the unique potential of Zen Buddhism to protect the nation. The other newly-established sects of Kamakura Buddhism considered recognition by the state as an important factor, at least in the course of their advancing institutionalization. For an overview on the doctrinary legitimization and self-identity of different Buddhist sects as protectors of the state, see Kleine (2011: 183-189).

or private *kitō*. *Seisetsu kankin* 聖節看經, silent sutra recitations for a long life of the emperor on the occasion of his birthday, also followed this pattern. The aforementioned types of prayer were not designed to cater for people's individual needs in the first place (Ōmura forthcoming: 52-53).

Keizan and the Spread of *kitō* in Medieval Japan

Sōtō scholars attribute the spread of *kitō* in Sōtō Zen Buddhism to Keizan (1264-1325)³⁰ and his lineage within Sōtōshū, to which over ninety percent of Sōtō Zen temples belong. Keizan supported the integration of local beliefs and practices in Sōtō Zen Buddhism. This process is typically described as the 'esotericization' of Zen, or the adoption of esoteric tantras (see Satō 2003:26;28-29 and Fujii 1993: 273).³¹ William Bodiford (1993: 116-117), however, argues that Sōtō teachers practiced ritual prayers that derived from Chinese Ch'an monastic codes, so as to not undermine their self-ascribed authority as the only representatives of a transmission of enlightenment. In that sense, Zen was already 'esoteric' before it was introduced in Japan. The aforementioned considerations about Dōgen's adoption of the *kitō* prayers practiced at Song-dynasty Ch'an temples supports this argumentation. The actual 'adoption' of esoteric Buddhism can be seen in the conversion of rural chapels – in many cases Tendai or Shingon chapels – into Sōtō temples. The labeling of such chapels as Tendai or Shingon usually referred to their original name or image of worship. In practice, however, "[...] rural chapels served as a center for whatever rituals might be performed by villagers or any itinerant religious teacher who happened to be available" (Bodiford 1993: 112). The most prominent example of such a conversion is found in Sōjiji, one of Sōtō's twin head temples founded by Keizan in 1321. Sōjiji was originally a private Shingon chapel on the Noto Peninsula known as Morookadera, also known as Morooka Kannondō. Under Keizan's leadership, Sōjiji grew into one of the most powerful Zen monasteries in Japan (Irizarry 2011: 18-19).

Keizan's understanding of *kitō* was similar to the practice of Dōgen. Both founders of Sōtō Zen followed a ritual calendar that included prayers for state protection (Sakurai 1989: 60;62-63). *Shukushin fugin* 祝聖諷經 sutra recitations for the benefit of the emperor, for example, were held on the first and fifteenth of a month. However, many more types of *kitō*

³⁰ Keizan's year of birth is typically dated with 1268, which according to William Bodiford (2015: 167) is incorrect.

³¹ See also Faure (1991: 275;282-283) on the 'esotericization' of Zen and the importance of beliefs in local gods in the history of Sōtō Zen.

are documented for Keizan, as compared to Dōgen. A notable difference between Keizan's and Dōgen's *kitō* lies in the gods they addressed. Dōgen's object of *kitō* (*kitō taishō* 祈禱対象) was Buddha Shakyamuni or the Bodhisattvas. The merits generated by the prayers to Shakyamuni or Kannon were then circulated to the god of the soil or the kitchen god, among other gods mentioned above, who formed the object of *ekō* (*ekō taishō* 回向対象) for this-worldly benefits. Keizan, on the other hand, broadened the range of *kitō* by including local gods as the object of *kitō*. Keizan actively incorporated prayers to local gods as an everyday ritual practice (*nichijō gyōji* 日常行事) geared to meet the needs and expectations of the rural population in particular, since most Sōtō temples were located on the countryside (see Ōmura forthcoming: 54-56).

The integration of beliefs in local gods at local temples played an important role for the spread of Sōtō Zen Buddhism. For example, prayers for this-worldly benefits at seaside Sōtō Zen temples in the Tōhoku area, where Sōtō Zen became widespread, were typically addressed to dragon gods (*ryūjin* 龍人) noted for promising bountiful fish catches and protection at sea.³² Local gods were also typically addressed in *kitō* prayers for rainmaking and good weather (*kisei* 祈青) at rural temples in agricultural communities (Satō 2003: 65). An important element of what enabled the spread of Sōtō Zen in the countryside derives from the legends about these gods who guarded these temples. As William Bodiford (2003: 251) points out, “Sōtō temple histories frequently began with the appearance of a powerful monk who subdues demons, ordains the local spirits, and converts local holy men to Zen disciples.” The simple act of precept ordinations, which became popular in medieval Japan, was already believed to prevent ghost hauntings and to erase bad karma (Bodiford 1993: 173-176;178).

The integration of local beliefs and practices within a Zen Buddhist context, or rather: the integration of Zen-style elements within a local context, formed complex ritual and soteriological systems. The study of medieval *kirigami* 切り紙 (literally: paper strip) initiation documents by scholars like Ishikawa Rikizan since the late 1980s illustrates this point. Secret *kirigami* initiation manuals authored by regular monks in medieval Japan reveal an on-the-ground perspective on Zen beyond dogmatic interpretations, and provide valuable sources that reflect on popular religious beliefs and practices of the time. This includes

³² Ryūtakuzan Zenpōji in Tsuruoka, Yamagata Prefecture, is the most popular Sōtō Zen monastery for *ryūjin* worship. While Zenpōji has the Buddha Yakushi Nyorai as its official object of worship, people actually pray mainly to its guardians, male and female dragon gods. See Abe 2007; Abe 2009.

incantations, exorcisms, and prayers to local gods for protection and good fortune (Faure 2000: 6 and Ishikawa 2000: 234-235). *Kirigami* also give clues regarding the practice of ordaining local gods and the ways that precepts for spirits were viewed in medieval Zen training (Bodiford 1993: 179).

Satō Shunkō (2003: 45-48) discusses a late medieval *kirigami* manual of Tenneiji, a Sōtō Zen temple in Kyoto to illustrate the interplay of ‘esoteric’ prayers with *zazen* and *kōan* 公案 recitations, which are practices that are more commonly identified as ‘Zen’. A fire on temple grounds, according to the document, could be extinguished by following the prescript for a ritual that consisted of *kaji kitō* incantations, elaborate secret performances (*hijutsu* 秘術), the recitations of the *Kannonkyō* 觀音經 (*Kannon Sutra*), *kōan* recitations, loud screams (*katsu koe* 喝声), and *zazen*, ritual sitting. Within this combinatory paradigm, “Zen-style elements” (*zen-teki yōso* 禪的要素) like *zazen* and ritual prayers for this-worldly benefits were understood as interactive and complementary (Satō 2003: 44-45;48). The presumed ability to prevent crises by supernatural means appealed to people of different social backgrounds, and not only in rural areas where Sōtō temples became widespread.

As stated above, Chinese Ch’an Buddhism already provided the ritual and scholastic repertoire for prayers for sunshine, rain, or the protection from disasters and plagues. Bodiford mentions “rituals for changing scripture and mystical formulae, to the accompaniment of special gongs and music” (Bodiford 1993: 116). The appeal of the monastic austerity associated with Zen among patrons and lay supporters thereby contributed to the understanding of Zen rituals for this-worldly benefits as particularly powerful. William Bodiford gives an example of scripture recitations performed as supplications that addressed local gods, which required the performing priest to recite the entire scripture in one breath; a feat, as Bodiford explains, that is “not easily accomplished without breath control gained through years of cultivating meditative power (*zenjōriki*)” (Bodiford 1993: 117).

Between Memorial and Prevention

The study of *kirigami* manuals suggests that *kitō* rituals for this-worldly benefits spread along the lines of funerals and ancestor veneration rituals (*kuyō* 供養), as new networks between temples and the rural population began to emerge. The borders between *kuyō* and *kitō*, however, are not as clear as it may seem. Instead of attempting an analytical

compartmentalization of *kuyō* and *kitō*, this chapter presents perspectives on the interplay of this-worldly norms and concepts of the afterlife to demonstrate the interrelatedness of both ritual complexes in the spread of Zen in medieval Japan.

Hank Glassman's study of the *Blood-bowl Sutra* (*Ketsubonkyō* 血盆經) exemplifies the ways in which Buddhist priests in medieval Japan adjusted their practice to shifting social norms and needs by transforming a memorial practice into a commodity for prevention of misfortune in this world (Glassman 2008: 180). The cult of the Blood-bowl Sutra in Japan originated in the fifteenth century, perhaps earlier.³³ The sutra describes the fate of women who, due to the 'pollution' caused by menstruation and childbirth, are bound to fall into the Blood Pool Hell. Buddhist priests performed special memorials in the wake of a funeral to prevent this from happening. The real dangers of pregnancy and childbirth in medieval Japan arguably contributed to the cruel imagery of this afterlife scenario (Glassman 2008: 176-178).

The progression in the ritual use of the sutra from a memorial function (after death) to a preventive function began when women started practicing the Blood-bowl Sutra cult during their lifetime by copying the *Ketsubonkyō* with hopes to prevent a rebirth in the Blood Pool Hell. This transformation resulted in the making of *Ketsubonkyō* talismans during the Tokugawa period. Amulets now allowed women "to move around freely during their menstrual periods without fear of violating taboos against blood pollution." (Glassman 2008: 180).

Sōtō Zen Buddhist priests participated actively in the *Ketsubonkyō* cult by offering salvation in ritual and material dimensions (Williams 2008: 207-211). This involvement should not come as a surprise. In medieval Japan, beliefs in hells or in potentially dangerous, vengeful spirits thirsting for proper ritual care drew their power in part from Buddhist teachings. By offering mortuary rituals that promised a safe rebirth of the dead in Buddha Amida's Pure Land, Sōtō clergy were among the first in Japan to reassure common lay people beyond the ruling elite that they and their loved ones were safe from hells and other harm, which in return ensured the financial stability of the temples (Bodiford 1992: 150; Reader 1993: 139; Cuevas and Stone 2007: 12).

³³ The Blood-bowl Sutra was known in late twelfth or early thirteenth century China. See Glassman 2008: 176-178).

As with *kitō* prayer rituals, which were originally performed to benefit the emperor and the state, the popularization of Buddhist funerals developed against the background of the close relationship between the Buddhist schools and the ruling elite of the Kamakura Bakufu.³⁴ One key aspect of Buddhist funerals is the posthumous ordination of lay adherents as part of a long chain of rituals. The posthumous ordination was invented by Zen Buddhist priests in Japan. No such ritual for lay adherents is documented in the Chinese Ch'an Buddhist codes. During these ordinations, a series of rituals is performed on behalf of the deceased, and a posthumous Buddhist name is bestowed upon them and engraved on a special memorial tablet. The ritual invention of posthumous ordinations and the distinction from the elite-oriented habitus enabled the spread of Zen Buddhism in the fifteenth century, although the majority of temples were founded later, during the Tokugawa period. (Bodiford 1992: 154-155; Stone and Walter 2008: 6; Williams 2008: 207).

The Sōtō Zen Buddhist mortuary rituals, which involved the posthumous ordination of the deceased, advanced to a standard that was adopted by most other Buddhist sects in terms of sequencing and terminology (Bodiford 1992: 150; Bernstein 2006: 25-26). The standardization of *kitō* in Sōtō Zen, by contrast, is mostly explained with the influence of esoteric Buddhism. This view, as has been shown, is problematic, considering that comparable rituals for this-worldly benefits existed in Sōtō Zen from the beginning (Bodiford 1993: 116-117). In any case, local circumstances and needs, rather than sectarian affiliation, were important in the process of shaping the religious practice. While a focus on sectarian affiliation is revealing for our understanding of the integration (and exclusion) of local deity cults and *kitō* at various levels of organization within Sōtōshū, a study of Buddhism should go beyond the focus on a specific sect in exploring local and social contexts. By considering sectarian as well as local and other types of affiliation, we can contextualize the integration (and invention) of local beliefs and practices with the establishment of sectarian networks. This approach, as shall be shown, is of particular importance for the understanding of early modern and modern institutionalization of Sōtō Zen.

³⁴ By offering funerals for powerful sponsors like Hōjō Tokimune (1251-1284), Zen Buddhist priests began to make their mortuary rituals available for lay people (Bodiford 1992: 152). The Kamakura Bakufu was a military government that existed parallel to the imperial court. It was established in 1185 by Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147-1199) in Kamakura city. Military rulers de facto had the governmental power from then on. The military government supported the Zen Buddhist sects in particular.

Kitō in Early-Modern Japanese Sōtō Zen Buddhism

Four factors, all of which are important for the understanding of *kitō* in contemporary Japan, have shaped Sōtō Zen during the Tokugawa period: The formalization of affiliations between Buddhist temples and parish households; the emerging trend of tourism to religious sites; the rise of *kitō* monasteries along with the rise of temple support associations (*kō*); and the diversification of practices and material Buddhist objects for this-worldly benefits.

The Tokugawa government used Buddhist institutions to register demographic change. Temples recorded the accounts of births, marriages and deaths of each household. The primary goal of this surveillance was to disroot Christianity in fear of territorial claims by the Western powers. About three hundred Christian missionaries of mostly Portuguese origin had propagated loyalty to god on Japanese soil since the arrival of Francisco de Xavier (1506-1552) in the year of 1549. Japanese intellectuals frequently and increasingly asserted the need to protect Japan from foreign influences and declared Japan to be the ‘land of the gods’ (*shinkoku* 神国), (see Hur 2007: 14-15; Marcure 1985: 42-47).

Buddhist temples initially concentrated on documenting the religious profiles of identified Christians. Beginning in the 1630s, the time of the ‘isolation’ of the country (*sakoku* 鎖国),³⁵ this documentation developed into the systematic certification of the population (*terauke* 寺請). All families were obliged to participate in an annual inspection by the Buddhist temples to prove their non-Christian identity. Based on this inspection and evaluation by the priests, municipalities were instructed to develop an anti-Christian registry, the *shūmon aratame-chō* 宗門改帳, or register of sectarian inspection in the 1660s. Those without a certificate were proclaimed to be Christians and faced the death penalty. Accordingly, the existential significance of the *terauke-jō* certificate for people in Tokugawa Japan provided a powerful tool that enabled clergy to impose their will on parish households; a measure that opened up new markets and channels of communication (Hur 2007: 14-16; Williams 2008: 207).

The Tokugawa period saw an unprecedented increase in Buddhist temples that provided certificates and ritual services for the rapidly growing population. Approximately 100,000 temples were registered in Japan in the late seventeenth century. This number

³⁵ The policy of closing the country and shutting it off from foreign political influences did not result in a hermetical isolation of Japan. Exchanges continued with the Netherlands and China, among other countries.

remained stable until the Meiji period. Sōtō Zen alone counted 17,500 temples in the mid-eighteenth century (Hur 2007: 1; Williams 2008: 207).³⁶ At least one Buddhist temple was located in nearly all of the 73,000 administrative units consisting of 63,000 villages and 10,000 cities or urban districts, where the population grew from twelve million residents in the sixteenth century to thirty million residents around the year of 1700. An average Buddhist temple was maintained by about sixty households. In the late seventeenth century, about 1,000 Buddhist temples were located in Edo (today's Tokyo) alone. Most of these temples were founded in the latter half of the seventeenth century (Hur 2007: 1;4-5).

Whereas eighty percent of all Buddhist priests in Japan were unable to sustain their temples with the income derived from farming, ritual participation in funerals and ancestor veneration promised enough income for most temples to survive (Hur 2007: 2;8-9;12). Three factors intertwined in the resulting establishment of 'funerary Buddhism' (*sōshiki Bukkyō*): First, residents came under suspicion to breach the law, if they denied participation in the annual temple certification, or if they refused to donate material goods to the temple. The bonds between households and affiliated temples strengthened within this exchange (Marcure 1985: 43). When a family member died, relatives were expected to turn to the Buddhist priest. Second, many people welcomed a ritualized handling of death and the body by a religious professional to cope with loss and work through grief. Buddhist funerals harmonized with the socio-religious needs and expectations of lay people. Both Duncan Williams (2008: 207) and Nam-Lin Hur (2007: 16-17;24) argue that it would be insufficient to say that the acceptance of Buddhist funerals and ancestor veneration rituals was solely founded in the adherence to government policies, considering that Zen Buddhist funerals began to spread well before the Tokugawa period. Third, the genealogical concepts of Buddhism and the claims of authority by the clergy solidified with every death that was handled by the priests (Hur 2007: 24).

The multi-generational system of affiliations between Buddhist temples and supporting families, for which Buddhist temples conduct mortuary rituals and ancestor veneration rituals continuously, is known as the *danka* system (*danka seido* 檀家制度). Consequently, Nam-lin Hur describes the often misinterpreted term *danka* as "[...] funerary patron household or individual who is affiliated with and supports a temple, known as *dankadera* (also called *dannadera* or *bodaiji*)." (Hur 2007: 9). The *danka* system, however,

³⁶ Including the subtemples (*jiin*, *tatchū* and *anshitsu*), the number of temples added up to 200,000 or even 250,000.

was not fixed by law. It was a social norm or custom that solidified over generations by the means of ritual and material care of the ancestors (Hur 2007: 1;13;16).³⁷

For some Buddhist temples, economic power resulted from political and personal connections with the Tokugawa clan, beyond *danka* affiliation. By designating several Sōtō temples as *sōrokuji* (僧録寺), or supervisory temples that oversaw the legal affairs of about 2,500 Sōtō temples and the movement of monks on a regional basis, the Tokugawa government established a Buddhist leadership system that was distinct from sectarian leadership structures. Among these supervisory temples was Kasuisai, one of the most influential Sōtō Zen prayer monasteries in Japan today (Scarangelo 2012: 96-97; Sōtōshū shūmuchō 2011: 53).

The affiliation between Kasuisai and the Tokugawa clan goes back to Senrin Tōzen, a monk who became the eleventh abbot of Kasuisai in the second half of the sixteenth century. Legend has it that Tōzen had provided shelter for the young Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616) and his father in a cave on Kasuisai's temple grounds. Ieyasu did not forget about the monk who saved his life, and so he invited Tōzen to pay him respect, after Ieyasu had become the lord of Hamamatsu Castle. It was on this occasion that Tōzen fell asleep in the presence of Ieyasu, which under normal circumstance was an affront punishable by death. Ieyasu, however, was amused and ordered to let Tōzen rest. In commemoration of this event, Ieyasu asked to have the temple renamed from Tōyōken to Kasuisai, which literally means 'temple where one can sleep'. This rather unusual title for a Buddhist temple underlines the trusting relationship between Kasuisai and the Tokugawa clan. Under the Tokugawa regime, Kasuisai rose to significant power as the *sōrokuji* of the Tōkai provinces of Suruga, Tōtōmi, Mikawa, and Izu.

Pilgrimage to *kitō jūin*

Tourism became a growing industry in Tokugawa Japan, and an important source of income for the 'three great Sōtō Zen prayer temples' (*sandai kitō jūin* 三大祈禱寺院 or *sandai kigansho* 三大祈願所) Daiyūzan Saijōji (*tengu* worship, Kanagawa Prefecture), Toyokawa Inari (also known as Myōgonji; *inari* worship; Aichi Prefecture), and Zenpōji (*ryūjin* worship;

³⁷ On the problems of *danka* succession in contemporary Japan, see Rowe 2011.

Yamagata Prefecture) (Williams 2005: 61).³⁸ Well-established road networks and local infrastructures allowed visitors to these temples to enjoy sightseeing, hot springs, and local specialties. News about exciting travel destinations spread by word-of-mouth advertising, articles in guidebooks, travel accounts, and via maps. Farmers, craftsmen and merchants were among the travelers, many of whom stayed overnight at tourist destinations. Religious and medical purposes provided an important reason for government officials to grant someone the necessary permission to travel, while the pilgrimage itself afforded an opportunity to combine business with ludic activities at tourist hot spots. (Vaporis 1994; Ishimori 1995; Bader 2011: 60).

In his seminal monograph *The Other Side of Zen*, Duncan Williams (2005: 59-85) explores the early-modern history of the Sōtō Zen prayer monastery Daiyūzan Saijōji in Minamiashigara, Kanagawa Prefecture. Daiyūzan Saijōji attracts several hundred thousand pilgrims and tourists a year, many of whom take part in *kitō* prayer rituals conducted by the monks on behalf of temple visitors. These visitors, however, are not necessarily Zen Buddhists themselves, nor are they heading for the main hall to pray in front of the statue of Buddha Shakyamuni. Most visitors come to visit Dōryō, a disciple of temple founder Ryōan Emyō (1337-1411). Legend has it that Dōryō transformed into a powerful *tengu* in the early fifteenth century, shortly after Ryōan had passed away.³⁹

The power of Dōryō is believed to materialize in objects, like talismans offered by Daiyūzan Saijōji, which became popular in eighteenth-century Edo, when tales about the power of *tengu* and woodprints depicting local gods developed into actual travel guides. Early nineteenth-century travel logs furthermore indicate that Daiyūzan transformed into a popular stopover for travelers on their way to and from Mt. Fuji or the hot springs of Hakone. Daiyūzan was conveniently located nearby the well-frequented Tōkaidō highway, which

³⁸ Reader and Tanabe (1998: 9-10), citing Gendai shimbutsu kenkyūkai (1993: 27 and 273), mention Kasuisai as one of ‘three great Sōtō Zen prayer temples’, not Zenpōji, but also explain that occasionally Zenpōji is counted instead of either Myōgonji or Kasuisai. Ōmura (forthcoming: 59), like Williams, counts Zenpōji, not Kasuisai. Williams (2005: 61) points out that the designation *sandai kitō jūin* or *sandai kigansho* became popular in the early Meiji period, which speaks for Zenpōji, considering that Kasuisai became the head-center of Akiha veneration as late as in the 1870s. The different designations and ascriptions of status to specific prayer monasteries demonstrate may have varied over time, and depending on the area and context. Both Zenpōji and Kasuisai are also known to belong to the ‘five great Sōtō Zen prayer temples’ (*godai kitō jūin* 五大祈祷寺院 or *godai kigansho* 五大祈願所), along with Daiyūzan, Myōgonji, and Kashōzan Ryūge’ in Gunma Prefecture.

³⁹ See also Faure 1991: 282.

connected the city of Edo with Kyoto, and intersected with a route that allowed travelers to avoid the Hakone border station via the Ashigara Pass. These and other circumstances enabled for Daiyūzan to become a popular tourist destination. Countless memorial stones, a cedar forest (a group of Daiyūzan supporters had donated 63,000 cedar seedlings to the temple) and over one hundred pairs of *geta* 下駄 clogs (with the largest ones being more than two meters tall) attest to a long history of pilgrimage to Daiyūzan (Williams 2005: 68-70). The act of leaving a pair of *geta* clogs at the temple dedicated to Dōryō has evolved into a unique custom, one that nowadays is said to promise conjugal harmony.

Mt. Fuji support associations (*kō*) were among the first organized groups that visited Daiyūzan regularly, marking the start of *kō* activity at Daiyūzan Saijōji in the eighteenth century. It was also around this time that the first *kaichō* (開帳 literally: ‘lifting the curtain’), or public exhibition of Dōryō in Edo was staged, which attracted many followers. Dōryō belongs to the category of *hibutsu* 秘仏, or ‘hidden Buddhas’ that are usually hidden and presented to the public only on very rare, very special occasions (see Williams 2005: 77-82 and Chapter Two of this dissertation). The culture of secrecy at prayer monasteries contributed to their attractiveness.

Prayer Buddhism Beyond *kitō jūin*

Scholarly focus on the history of Daiyūzan Saijōji as one of the ‘three great prayer temples’ in Sōtō Zen Buddhism has furthered the understanding of pilgrimage to religious sites in early modern Japan (see Williams 2005). The role of *kitō* at regular *danka* temples that were not particularly famous for offering practices for this-worldly benefits, however, has been mostly ignored. Tamamuro Fumio’s distinction between “prayer temples” (*kitōji* 祈禱寺) and “funeral temples” (*sōsaiji* 葬祭寺) has arguably contributed to this desideratum. His scholarship on *kitō* is focused on the activities of charismatic leaders and lay practitioners. By opposing their practices to the *danka* system, or funerals respectively, Tamamuro postulates a shift from *sōsai* to *kitō*. This shift, Tamamuro Fumio (1971: chapter 5 and 1987: 100-103) argues, was caused by the dissatisfaction of the people in Tokugawa Japan, who opposed the formalized *danka* system in favor of lay practices and ritual prayers for this-worldly benefits, which the government aimed to ban:

The government, on the basis of the *danka* system, established funeral temples as the standard for temples and the norm of what an original head priest was supposed to be. The *kitō* beliefs and practices of wandering priests without a temple were accepted in some cases. In principle, however, we can say that the government policies were aimed at eliminating them (Tamamuro 1987: 103).⁴⁰

In this quote, Tamamuro Fumio refers to the *Shoshū jūin hatto* 諸宗寺院法度, or “prohibitions for the temples of all sects” proclaimed by the government in 1665. The contents are similar to preceding declarations by Buddhist sects, notably the *Jōdoshū shohatto* 浄土宗諸法度 (“prohibitions for the denomination of Pure Land Buddhism”) by the Jōdoshū (Pure Land Buddhism) of 1615. The prohibitions banned the performance of priestly duties by lay practitioners and targeted wandering priests without a temple. For example, lay people were not allowed to give their house the appearance of a temple, and they were not allowed to accept donations (Tamamuro 1987: 100-101).

Tamamuro Fumio’s theory of a shift from funerals to *kitō* has been criticized by scholars of modern Buddhism. His understanding of *kitō* as an individualized expression of free will of the people, moreover, is ideologically charged. Tamamuro presupposes the understanding of *kitō* as a desire that emerged within the free-spirited hearts of early-modern commoners in a rather Marxist fashion. In a critique of Tamamuro’s theory of a shift from *sōsai* to *kitō*, Hōzawa Naohide (1998: 474-475) has furthermore shown that structures comparable to *danka* affiliations between ‘funeral temples’ and parish households existed at *kitō* prayer temples of the Shingon and Tendai sects in the Kantō region.

In spite of these conceptual problems, Tamamuro’s work provides important clues for the understanding of sectarian and government responses to the spread of prayer Buddhism within Japanese society. The fact that sectarian leaders and the government were eager to control *kitō* by regulating the status and scope of action of religious specialists, for example, is rarely addressed. This regulation of *kitō* in early modern Japan did not target prayer temples

⁴⁰ 幕府は檀家制度に立脚した葬祭寺院こそが、寺の姿・住職の本来的な姿とした。これにたいして、寺をもたず、一所不住の僧たちによる祈祷的な信仰を限定つきで認める場合もあったが、原則的には排除する政策をとったといえる。 *Bakufu wa danka seido ni rikkyaku shita sōsai jūin koso ga, tera no sugata – jūshoku no honrai-teki na sugata to shita. kore ni taishite, tera wo motazu, issho fujū no sō-tachi ni yoru kitō-teki na shinkō wo gentei tsuki de mitomeru baai mo attaga, gensoku-teki ni haijo suru seisaku wo totta to ieru.*

like Daiyūzan Saijōji, but the activities of lay practitioners and charismatic leaders. It has to be distinguished from modern criticisms of *kitō* that were founded in Western concepts of modernity, rationality, and the natural sciences.

Kitō in Modern Japanese Sōtō Zen Buddhism

Buddhism and the Nation State

The complex interactions between temple Buddhism and the state in modern Japan first of all suggest that careful consideration is needed regarding the social and political developments in the second half of the nineteenth century. Domestic political and social tensions intensified when Japan, after more than two hundred years of isolation, suddenly had to confront the West, as Western powers began forcing the country open to trade. The Meiji oligarchy undertook strenuous efforts to establish a strong and modern nation state, and to revise the unequal treaties in dialogue with the West (see Fuess ed. 1998; Fuess forthcoming 2018). What followed was a period of unprecedented modernization of all aspects of life, beginning with the Meiji Restoration (1853-1868).

The support of Buddhist institutions in government circles eroded in the course of the ‘unity of rite and government’ (*saisei itchi*) policy. In 1868, the Meiji government forced an artificial separation of Buddhism and Shintō (*shinbutsu bunri*) to construct a presumed ‘genuine’ and ‘native’ Shintō, whereas the ‘foreign’ religion of Buddhism was disintegrated and excluded from the public order. Other policies were aimed at undermining the special status ascribed to religious specialists as practitioners of an ascetic lifestyle. Since 1872, Buddhist monks and nuns were officially allowed to marry, to eat meat, and to let their hair grow (Jaffe 2002; Miyaji 2008: 313). Buddhist institutions lost their government aids and privileges, while Shintō was fashioned into a ‘genuine Japanese’ state cult.⁴¹ Besides these

⁴¹ This construction of Shintō is rooted in the considerations of early Japanese nationalists like Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801), the well-known representative of the *Kokugaku*, literally ‘national learning’ school. Aizawa Seishisai (1782-1863) of the Mito School (*Mitogaku*) was another influential scholar involved in this making of Shintō. According to Aizawa’s understanding of the *kokutai*, literally ‘national body’, the Japanese state was special by the fact that it was led by the emperor, a divine leader who embodied an uninterrupted dynasty line. As an empty signifier, *kokutai* could hardly be defined but was filled with new ideas, notably by condemning political enemies as anti-*kokutai* in the course of Japan’s increasing nationalism and militarism until 1945 (see the remarks of Wolfgang Seifert in Maruyama Masao 1990: 100 and Mitchell 1976: 20, note 3;66-67). The special status of the emperor was defined by the Meiji constitution of 1889 and the Imperial Rescript on Education of 1890. The constitution defined *tennō* as divine and beyond the constitution; his dynasty line was said to

policies, violent riots emerged that left visible traces of destruction at Buddhist sites. Anti-Buddhist riots peaked in the 1860s and 1870s and resulted in the destruction of Buddhist temples, statues, and ritual objects across the country. The slogan of the movement was *haibutsu kishaku*, or “abolish Buddhism and destroy Shakyamuni” (see Ketelaar 1990).

Practices for this-worldly benefits were suppressed in favor of the veneration of the Japanese gods and the emperor, who, on behalf of the powerful Meiji oligarchs, was to function as the spiritual axis for the modern Japanese nation state. Buddhist intellectuals and sectarian leaders responded to this shifting social and political landscape by positioning themselves and their denominations as protectors of the state, notably by emphasizing the power of *kitō* to support the state and its agenda. The Sōtōshū, for example, explicitly promoted *kitō* as the force that upholds (*goji* 護持) the *kokutai* 国体 (‘national body’ or presumed essence of the Japanese state; see footnote 41 of this dissertation), as Sōtō scholar Satō Shunkō explains with reference to the *Sōtōshū mondai jissetsu* 曹洞宗問題十説, a proclamatory text authored by Nōnin Hakugan in 1875.⁴²

The Meiji government’s policy was informed by Buddhist intellectuals like the Jōdo Shinshū (True Pure Land Buddhist) priest Shimaji Mokurai (1838–1911). Shimaji was the first Japanese to explore the idea of ‘religion’ in detail in his writings of the 1870s. He was familiar with Western concepts of religion, which he studied in Europe as one of the first Japanese Buddhists in the West. He promoted the modern understanding of Shintō as non-religious and distinguished his idea of religion from practices like *kitō*, which in Shimaji’s opinion should be prohibited (Krämer 2015: 106).

It was also around this time that the Meiji government outlawed supernatural entities with bad or negative connotations in a nationwide campaign against ‘superstition’ (*meishin* 迷信). The goal of the campaign was to convince Western political leaders and international journalists that it had become ‘civilized’ in Western terms by distinguishing ‘religion’ from heretical cults, and by eliminating ‘evil customs’ (*rōshū* 陋習). Possession rituals and fox-summoning were banned in 1873. Beliefs in fox possession (*kitsune tsuki* 狐憑き) and the

go back to the mythical Shintō god Amaterasu Ōmikami. On the relationship of Shintō and the state in late nineteenth and twentieth century Japan, see Hardacre (1989).

⁴² [...] 国体を護持してきた具体的な仏法の力が「祈祷」というのである。[...] *kokutai wo goji shitekita gutaiteki na buppō no chikara ga “kitō” toiu no dearu.* [...] the Buddhist power that upheld the national body was *kitō*.” (Satō 2003: 106).

efficacy of prayer rituals as a cure for became widespread during the Edo period but continued to be relevant during Japan's early modernization, despite government bans and the criticism of psychiatrists who tried to understand possession in medical terms, as a nervous disorder (Hashimoto 2015, 51-53, 63; Josephson 2012: 181-184). In 1874, the Ministry of Doctrine prohibited healing by means of prayer rituals to regulate practices performed at shrines and temples. Ancestral spirits and Buddhas with positive associations that were connected to the established religious institutions, on the other hand, were ignored. The government furthered this distinction between religion and heretical cults by means of education, notably textbooks. Ethical textbooks warned school children about the dangers of 'superstition' and dubious ritual prayers. Ghosts or winged goblins (*tengu*), according to the textbooks, did not exist (Josephson 2012: 167-169, 178-179, 241-244).

The attempts by the government to control beliefs in *tengu* or ghosts were not crowned with lasting success on the ground, nor were the efforts to extract the rituals associated with *tengu* or ghosts fruitful, as will be shown using the example of Kasuisai. *Kitō* prayers for this-worldly benefits boomed in Meiji Japan, regardless of the government efforts to control *kitō* by stigmatizing *tengu* cults and temple-guarding gods. This rather lax control of *kitō* supports the thesis that government officials were not overly interested in disintegrating Buddhism to the point of creating a power vacuum. The legalization of Christianity, which was enforced by the pressure of the Western powers in 1873, encouraged high-ranking government officials to reconsider their anti-Buddhist stance. They feared that Western powers behind the newly-legalized religion would gain significance in the domestic political field in Japan (Bernstein 2006: 57-58;92).

The modernization in Meiji Japan during the 1870s posed challenges for sectarian leaders. As Richard Jaffe (1998: 78) argues, the Sōtō denomination was far from monolithic at the start of the Meiji period. In order to achieve legal recognition by the approval of the Ministry of Doctrine, Sōtō Zen leaders had to find a way to invent and express a coherent sectarian identity that was unique yet compatible with trans-sectarian notions of Buddhist Modernism. Established Buddhist denominations had to reorganize their sectarian structures according to modern principles of bureaucratic administration and Western ideas of religion. Rationalization became a key word in this process of consolidation, centralization and unification. For Sōtō Zen leaders, this meant developing "coherent soteriological theologies, or doctrines of spiritual assurance (*anjin ron* 安心論) derived from the thought of ostensible sectarian founder figures." (Scarangelo 2012: 44. See also *ibid.*: 45;94;99).

The official legal recognition of Sōtō Zen was granted by the government in 1875, after Sōtō Zen had oriented its sectarian outline towards Shakyamuni and the teachings of Dōgen. In doing so, Sōtō leaders complied with the norms imposed by the state, which according to Scarangello (2012: 45;96) was no easy task, since Modern Sōtō's "paradigmatic Buddha embodied an ascetic ideal, and when plumbing the founder's ideas for the enumeration of a coherent lay soteriology early Sōtō leaders found little to work with." (Scarangello 2012: 45. See also *ibid*: 96). As has been shown, this modern self-understanding of the Sōtōshū had little to do with Zen Buddhism as practiced at the majority of Sōtō temples in Japan. *Kitō* could also not be molded to fit this envisioned sectarian framework, regardless of the significance of the 'five great Sōtō Zen prayer temples' for the economy of the Sōtōshū. Not only was *kitō* commonly understood to be an esoteric Buddhist practice, but criticisms of *kitō* in the late nineteenth century frequently and increasingly included pejorative, reductive descriptions of these rituals as 'magic'.

Buddhist Modernism

The introduction of the idea of 'religion' per se into an indigenous setting that lacked the term, and that lacked the kind of discrete categorization and compartmentalization frequently meant by the term in Western contexts, brought with it a variety of interpretive and conceptual problems that still confront scholars and students of 'religion' when dealing with conceptions of 'religion' (see Isomae and Graf 2012). Jason Josephson (2012) describes the modern period as a time when the invention of religion in Japan took place in the midst of manifold trans-cultural transformations and the modernization and Westernization of all aspects of Japanese life. This modernization resulted in trans-cultural flows of knowledge, technology and material culture, along with a massive translation of Western thought. Asian and Western reformers like D.T. Suzuki sought to develop a new Buddhism that was compatible with Western concepts of modernity, rationality, and the natural sciences (Faure 1993; Sharf 1995; McMahan 2008).

D.T. Suzuki played a distinguished role in the introduction and transmission of Zen Buddhism to the West. He was intensely involved in the study of Theosophy and the theories of religion developed by Western scholars of religion like William James, (Faure 1993; Sharf 1993; Prohl 1999). Guided by the attempt to re-evaluate Japanese Buddhism, Suzuki transferred 'Zen' into the sphere of religious experience. 'Zen,' according to Suzuki, was the essence of experience. Therefore, Zen formed the essence behind all authentic religious

teachings. In following this rhetoric, ‘Zen’ advanced into a quality of individual experience beyond the scope of rational negotiation. This not least enabled Suzuki to confront ideas of Western supremacy with his rhetoric of a superior Japanese spirituality. The uniqueness of Japan, according to Suzuki, derived from Zen as a cultural source (Sharf 1993).

Suzuki was no temple priest. He was a lay Buddhist, a twentieth-century intellectual, a translator, and a scholar familiar with and inspired by Western concepts of religion who contributed to a self-orientalization and exoticization of Japan. His understanding of the Zen experience remains unique and inspiring for many, and his contribution to the transmission of Zen to the West can hardly be overstated. Suzuki and his contemporary Zen apologists, however, were concerned neither with rituals and temple management nor with the question of how the Buddhist priesthood should make a living. In their lack of concern for temple rituals, apologists of modern Zen risked alienating the populace, since their lack of concern for ritual meant that they neglected those practices designed to produce this-worldly benefits as well as those designed to honor ancestors. This flew in the face both of Japanese Buddhist tradition and of the practices and rituals to which Japanese Buddhists were accustomed. Scholarly views picked up on this trend, as seen in common assumptions that religious practice at prayer temples is at best described in pejorative terms of ‘magic’. Under the premises of Buddhist Modernism, *kitō* was placed in contradiction to modern and transculturally shaped assumptions about ‘true Zen’, especially the understanding of Zen as a religion centered on personal experience free from rituals and institutions.

***Kitō* and the Rhetoric of ‘Decline’ in Sectarian and Academic Discourses**

While previous chapters provided basic knowledge about *kitō* in Japanese history by presenting perspectives on *kitō* through the lens of the relationship between Buddhism and the state, the interplay of Buddhism and local beliefs, and the impact of Buddhist modernism, this chapter is focused on a rather specific aspect of intellectual discourse. The ‘decline’ narrative on *kitō* outlines normative dispositions in the study of modern Buddhism and the ways that the history of Buddhism has been envisioned by scholars and sectarian elites. *Kitō*, perhaps more so than any other Buddhist practice, is the thread in Sōtō Zen that unravels the rhetorical strategies employed by religious elites to legitimize and define what ‘Zen’ is and what ‘Zen’ is not. The goal of this chapter is therefore not to present an inclusive history of *kitō*, but to outline how *kitō* as a normative construct has been envisioned in the scholarship as a product of decline by sectarian leaders, commentators, Buddhologists, and scholars of religion.

The criticism of Zen and *kitō* is as old as Zen in Japan, although such criticism has been documented in only a few cases. Musō Soseki (1275-1351), a Rinzai Zen monk from Kyoto and contemporary of Keizan provides an early example. He was critical of both the Shingon and the Sōtō sect for having lost their original outlook. In their promotion of *kitō*, Musō lamented, both sects were merely focused on campaigning for the support of the ruling elite. He argued that *kitō* would distract the Sōtō monks from performing *zazen*, and regretted the focus on this-worldly benefits. Musō's critique, however, was not aimed at negating *kitō*. Instead, he emphasized that Zen had the same effects. In his view, esoteric Buddhism was not superior to the recitation of the *Kannon Sutra*, which was a part of everyday Zen practice. In other words, Musō Soseki stressed the point that the merits of Zen were comparable to and no less effective than *mikkyō kitō* 密教祈祷 (Satō 2003: 33;37-38).

Satō Shunkō (2003: 38) points out that there was almost no critique of *kitō* per se (*kitō jitai* 祈祷自体) after Musō Soseki, except for the commentaries of Sōtō scholars like Menzan Zuihō (1683-1769) at a time when sectarian studies became popular, during the Tokugawa period. Menzan acknowledged *kitō* as an important means of disaster prevention and crisis management. This is evident in his foreword to *Shōsai myōkichijō darani kyō jikisetsu* 消災妙吉祥陀羅尼經直說 (*Sermon on the Marvelously Beneficial Disaster Preventing Dharani*) (see Satō 2003: 49;58-59). Sōtō scholar Ishikawa Rikizan (2000: 235), however, argues that Menzan's overall motivation was actually to delegitimize 'occult' rituals and secret initiations in Sōtō Zen. Secret initiations and rituals like yin/yang divination, according to Menzan, were inauthentic and not 'Zen'. This normative stance arguably explains why he suggested that *kirigami* should be burned.

Banjin Dōtan 万仞道坦 (1698-1775), a contemporary of Menzan, is known for his research of Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō* 正法眼藏 (*Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma*). It is less well known that he also authored the *Amagoi kitō sahōsho* 雨乞祈祷作法書 (*Book on the Practice and Etiquette of Rain-Making Prayer Rituals*). Both Menzan and Banjin were influential for later generations of Sōtō intellectuals, and they were both concerned with doctrine (*kyōri*) as well as with research on *kitō*. Satō Shunkō (2008: 168) sums up, that "[...] many other Sōtō Zen representatives of the early modern period contributed to the theory of

kitō from their individual perspectives. However, *kitō* rituals were not understood as contradictory to Sōtō Zen Buddhism, nor were they perceived negatively” (Satō 2008: 168).⁴³

In modern Japan, the question whether *kitō* was ‘Zen’ or not has been discussed by Sōtō intellectuals almost exclusively along the lines of Dōgen as the legitimizing instance. In other words, whether *kitō* was an appropriate Zen practice has been discussed by raising the question whether Dōgen practiced *kitō*. The fact that Dōgen used the term *kitō* and practiced *kitō*, however, has been ignored by the majority of modern Sōtō intellectuals. Sōtō-scholars affiliated with Research Center for Sōtō Zen Buddhism (Sōtōshū sōgō kenkyū sentā 曹洞宗総合研究センター) too highlight the fact that, while the teachings of Dōgen are very well researched, studies on Dōgen’s life and premodern Zen at times bear discontinuities with the socio-cultural contexts of their subject matter (see Takeuchi 2005). This is one of the reasons why the role of *kitō jiin* within the institutionalization of the Sōtōshū is widely unnoted in sectarian studies (personal conversation with Takeuchi Kōdō, October 2009).

Even in contemporary scholarship, the ambivalence concerning the status of prayers for this-worldly benefits in Sōtō Zen Buddhism becomes apparent in polemic or apologetic terms. Satō Shunkō, while pointing out the meaningfulness of *kitō* in his valuable account on the history of prayer Buddhism, for example, does not miss to first of all subordinate *kitō* to Dōgen’s “extremely pure and innocent” (*kiwamete junsui muku* きわめて純粹無垢) Zen in the beginning of his portrayal of the history of *kitō* in Sōtō Zen Buddhism. Beliefs in local gods and esoteric practices in Sōtō Zen, according to Satō (2003: 9), emerged at a later time under Keizan. Yet Satō emphasizes that Dōgen practiced prayers that could be termed *kitō*, and that Dōgen himself used the term *kitō*. This vague differentiation of ‘esoteric’ and ‘non-esoteric’ *kitō*, or ‘good’ and ‘bad’ *kitō*, even among supporters of rituals for this-worldly benefits, is a legacy of modernity. It is not concerned with a discussion of particular ritual components, but rather with negotiating the question if (or to what extent) practices for this-worldly benefits (*genze riyaku*) are acceptable in Sōtō Zen, as well as the nature of those benefits. ‘Altruistic’ *kitō* that benefit society at large are generally favored over individual needs.

⁴³ [...]ほかにも多くの近代を代表する宗門関係者が、各々の立場から祈祷論を展開していますが、祈祷儀礼を宗門の立場にあらずと否定的に扱ったものはありません。[...] *hoka ni mo ooku no kindai wo daihyō suru shūmon kankeisha ga, ono ono no tachiba kara kitō giron wo tenkai shiteimasuga, kitō girei wo shūmon no tachiba ni arazu to hiteiteki ni atsukatta mono wa arimasen.* (Satō 2008: 168).

Meiji Intellectuals' Critique of *kitō* and its Legacy

The discourse on early-modern Buddhist decadence that shaped the modern scholarship on Buddhism is mainly a product of the intellectual and cultural movements of the Meiji period, and therefore a product of modernity. It was directly connected to responses to the *haibutsu kishaku* movement, which extended well into the 1870s, as well as to inter- and intra-sectarian Buddhist criticism in Japan (Klautau 2008). Various movements in modern Japanese Buddhism have arisen aiming to get back to the 'original' teachings of the Buddha or the founders of certain Buddhist sects. These movements tend to view modern Buddhism as a product of decline and degeneration, as a tradition that has lost sight of its 'true' meanings (Klautau 2012). Among the Buddhist intellectuals who held this view was the aforementioned reformer Shimaji Mokurai (see Krämer 2015). His "Critique of the Three Articles of Instruction," written shortly after his return from Germany to Japan in late 1872, illustrates this critical view on prayer Buddhism for straying from the ideal Buddhist path:

"The various gods of esoteric Buddhism later appeared to supplement this simply because of the mixture of old Indian customs with Buddhism. In an enlightened world, such things should be prohibited. Other magical spells, divinations, and customs of no use, which only confuse and harm people's hearts, should equally be swept away once and for all." (Shimaji 1872a: 238, quoted and translated by Krämer 2015: 106).

Aside from invocations and divinations, Shimaji specified *kaichō* (the public exhibition of hidden Buddhas) as incompatible with modernity (Krämer 2015: 106).⁴⁴ This critique, however, was not only aimed at defining what Buddhism was not, but a means of asserting the presumed superiority of True Pure Land Buddhism: "In the other sects, divinations and invocations (*kitō*) are usually permitted. Only in the Shinshū are they prohibited, as they maliciously contribute to idol worship and hypocrisy and treacherously entice people to pursue only their own happiness." (Shimaji 1872b: 194, quoted and translated by Krämer 2015: 110-111).

This critique of *kitō* as a means of distinction from other sects was further elaborated in the twentieth-century by Shinshū intellectuals (Ōmi 2015: 1-6). At the same time,

⁴⁴ *Kaichō* was a common practice at *kitō* monasteries like Daiyūzan Saijōji and Kasuisai. See Chapter Two of this dissertations.

collaboration in trans-sectarian networks gained momentum in the course of the government calls for sectarian consolidation. Ōuchi Seiran (1845–1918), an influential Sōtō intellectual and lay activist in Meiji and Taishō Japan, collaborated with Shimaji Mokurai to achieve a better recognition of Buddhism in government circles. Besides giving public lectures and designing Buddhist observances for the practice at home, Ōuchi Seiran engaged in educational programs for the blind, newspaper publication and the formation of a society for the protection of animals, among other projects that enabled him to strengthen the position of Buddhism in various social and political networks (Snodgrass 2003: 126-127). In 1889, Ōuchi Seiran, Shimaji Mokurai, Inoue Enryō and other reformers co-founded the Great Society for Revering the Emperor and Worshiping the Buddha (Sonnō hōbutsu daidōdan) in the effort to reestablish ties between Buddhism and the state “by excluding Christians from public office and installing Buddhists in positions of influence” in the national parliament and provincial assemblies, down to local schools and business companies (Snodgrass 2003: 132).

Tamamuro Taijō

The rhetoric of decline became a popular theme in the twentieth-century scholarship on Buddhism in Japan, and in postwar scholarship in particular, not only regarding Zen or sectarian research. Historian Tamamuro Taijō (1902-1966) is the most prominent representative of a formalized theory of the decline of Buddhism in early modern Japan (*kinsei Bukkyō darakuron*). He is also known as the father of the term ‘funerary Buddhism’ (*sōshiki Bukkyō*). In his scholarship, Tamamuro Taijō explored the inner-Buddhist reform efforts and movements in modern Japan that aimed to get back to the ‘original’ teachings of the Buddha or the founders of certain Buddhist sects. Along this line, since the 1930s, Tamamuro Taijō criticized the priests’ reliance on funerals, which formed the economic basis of temple Buddhism, as an “unhistorical” (*hi-rekishiteki* 非歴史的) product of decline and degeneration (Klautau 2012: 273-274). His criticism targeted the organizational structures of Buddhist denominations, the priests, and the performance of mortuary practices in particular. In doing so, he did not mean to criticize Buddhism per se, but to oppose his concept of funerary Buddhism with what he envisioned as a “living” (*ikiteiru* 生きている) Buddhism; a Buddhism that corresponded with the “interests of the people” (*minshū no kanshin* 民衆の関心) (Klautau 2012: 277-278).

It would be obvious to assume that Tamamuro Taijō considered *kitō* as a form of “living” Buddhism. But that was not necessarily the case. First of all, Tamamuro argues that Buddhist practices for treatment (*chiryō* 治療) and good fortune (*shōfuku* 招福) had lost their significance since the late medieval times, when Buddhist priests were gradually replaced by other providers of treatment (Klautau 2012: 276). His most overt criticism of *kitō*, however, is reflected in his comments on Sōtō Zen in the October 1964 issue of the magazine *Daihōrin*: “The elements at contemporary Zen temples that are not from the Zen denominations, such as Shintō-style elements [...] *kaji kitō* incantations [...] and so on, are a blemish from the mid-fifteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century.” (Tamamuro 1964. Quoted in Satō Shunkō 2008: 164).⁴⁵

Tamamuro Taijō furthermore expressed his discomfort about the fact that the practice of *kaji kitō* resulted in considerable revenue for low effort, which caused the Zen priests to “fall off” (*tenraku* 転落). Following his argument, mixing Zen’s appeal of strictness and austerity with magical incantations ensured the financial success of Zen Buddhist prayer temples at the expense of the rural population (Satō 2003: 11-12).

Tamamuro Fumio

Tamamuro Taijō’s son Tamamuro Fumio, who wrote numerous introductions to Tokugawa Buddhism and contributed highly to the scholarship, adopted a different attitude towards *kitō*. Orion Klautau points out that the term *kitō jūin*, or prayer temple gained popularity no sooner than the 1950s.⁴⁶ In the 1960s, the term was suddenly used frequently, which can be attributed to Tamamuro Fumio’s work and his influence on the academia at the time.

Chapter five of Tamamuro Fumio’s book *Edo Bakufu no shūkyō tōsei* 江戸幕府の宗教統制 (1971) is titled *Sōsai kara kitō he* 葬祭から祈祷へ (*From Funerals to kitō*). The book chapter is based on an article of the same name from 1968. Within this work, Tamamuro

⁴⁵ 現在禅宗寺院のなかにある非禅宗的なもの、たとえば神道的要素 [...] 加持祈祷 [...] などは、主として十五世紀中葉から十七世紀中頃^しについた汚点^みである。Genzai Zen-shū jūin no naka ni aru hi-zenshū-teki na mono, tatoeba Shintō-teki yōso [...] *kaji kitō* [...] nado wa, omo toshite jūgo seiki chūyō kara jūnana seiki naka goro ni tsuita shimi dearu. (Tamamuro 1964. Quoted in Satō 2008: 164).

⁴⁶ Paper response by Orion Klautau, 30 May 2015 on the occasion of the workshop *Combinatory Religious Practices in Japanese History* at the University of Heidelberg.

distinguishes early modern Buddhism in two parts, funerals and *kitō*, and claims that a shifting “quality of belief” (*shinkō no shitsu* 信仰の質) took place between the two phases. The first phase, according to Tamamuro, marked the formalization of the *danka* system from 1596 bis 1643. Within this first phase, funerals became important. During the following second phase, new relationships between temples (*jiin* 寺院) and the rural population (*nōmin* 農民) emerged. The desire for *kitō* and this-worldly benefits by the rural population represents a shift of the heart (*kokoro* 心) of the people, who turned away from funerary temples (*sōsai jiin*), as they turned towards temples that offered *genze riyaku*. The unbreakable will of the rural population, according to Tamamuro Fumio, had made *kitō* the focal point of Buddhist practice by the mid or late Edo period (Klautau 2012: 282-283).

Tamamuro Fumio’s exploration of *kitō* in Tokugawa Japan expresses a rather essentializing and simplistic idea of religion.⁴⁷ In his focus on state control and his lack of concern for the social reality of prayer temples, he furthermore neglects the point that prayer Buddhism too underwent a process of formalization. Tamamuro argues that the rural population turned away from *kitō jiin* that changed their beliefs and practices under the influence of government control (Hōzawa 1998: 474-475). The *kitō* temples that Tamamuro presents within his framework of “from funerals to *kitō*,” however, are the same temples that Hōzawa Naohide (1998: 499) presents in his Shingon and Tendai case studies. Hōzawa concludes: “[...] the relationship between lay people and these temples that I discussed are similar to the systematized relationship of the *danka* system. It is within the context of these temples that we can see that Tamamuro’s scheme “from funerals to *kitō*” does not apply.” (Hōzawa 1998: 499).⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Theories of decadence that presume a process of decline in terms of a widening gap away from an assumed original state of religion as the desired state of religion, are a recurring theme in academic discourses that are aimed at legitimizing a certain religion or historiography. Theories of decline and decadence are commonly used to support an apologetic or polemic set of beliefs and norms, as seen in the works historian Charles de Brosses (1709-1777), ethnologist Andrew Lang (1844-1912) or Wilhelm Schmidt (1868-1954) and his *Urmonotheismus-Theorie*, or theory of primitive monotheism, for example. Scholar of Buddhism Hayashi Makoto argues that Tamamuro Fumio later distanced himself from his thesis about a presumed shift from funerals to *kitō* among the rural population in Tokugawa Japan. As Orion Klautau (2012: 283-284) points out, however, the notion of a shifting belief within the rural population did not disappear in Tamamuro Fumio’s work later work (see also Tamamuro 1987: 101).

⁴⁸ [...] 圭屋氏が「葬祭から祈祷へ」というシーマの下でイメージする「祈祷寺」は、本稿の実例でみられた、真言宗や天台宗の、宗制寺檀関係に類似する祈祷寺檀

Kasuisai and the Separation of *kami* and Buddhas at Mt. Akiha

The Cult of Akiha Sanjakubō Daigongen

The Akiha cult begins with the legend of Akiha, a *tengu* noted for protecting sentient beings from fire. As with Dōryō 道了, the monk-turned-*tengu* at Daiyūzan Saijōji, Akiha is typically portrayed in the anthropomorphic shape of a long-nosed goblin in texts, scrolls, statues and masks, or as a bird-like *karasu tengu* 烏天狗 (crow *tengu*) with wings and a beak. He is worshipped at thousands of Buddhist temples and Shintō shrines across Japan, with main centers at Kasuisai and Mt. Akiha.

While the historical origins of Akiha veneration are unclear, tales of origin refer to an ascetic practitioner (*gyōja* 行者) named Sanjakubō from north-central Japan. He may have lived in the Nara or Heian period.⁴⁹ According to the legend, Sanjakubō was conceived by his mother upon an encounter with Kannon (Avalokiteśvara), the Bodhisattva of mercy, who appeared to her in a dream in the shape of a Garuḍa, a bird-like creature known as one of the thirty-three forms of Kannon. Sanjakubō became a religious practitioner at the age of seven (Tamura 2014: 56). He was said to be involved in Mantrayāna practices. At the age of twenty-six or twenty-seven, Sanjakubō attained spiritual awakening upon encountering Garuḍa (Shikami 1999: 101). Different variations of the Akiha legend describe an encounter with Fudō Myōō 不動明王, and that Fudō Myōō appeared to Sanjakubō during an austere fire offering practice in the form of a *tengu* (Scarangelo 2012: 56). In any case, the different versions of his legend have in common that Sanjakubō unified with the god while he made a number of vows in its presence, notably the promise to protect sentient beings from fire.

関係に結ばれた寺院と同じものである。そして、少なくともこの宗制寺檀関係に類似した祈祷寺檀関係に関しては、「葬祭から祈祷へ」というシーマは当てはまらない様に思われる。[...] *Tamamuro-shi ga "sōsai kara kitō he" toiu shīma no shita de imeiji suru "kitōji" ha, honkō no jitsurei de mirareta, Shingonshū ya Tandaihū no, shūsei jidan kankei ni ruiji suru kitō jidan kankei ni musubareta jiin to onaji mono dearu. Soshite, sukunakutomo kono shūsei jidan kankei ni ruiji shita kitō jidan kankei ni kannshite wa, "sōsai kara kitō he" toiu shīma wa atehamaranai yō ni omowareru.* (Hōzawa 1998: 499).

⁴⁹ Versions of the tale of origin states that Sanjakubō was from Togakushi, which was a village in today's Nagano Prefecture, or from the Echigo province (in today's Niigata Prefecture), among other places, but it is not clear when and where he lived, or if he was an existing historical figure at all. For a comparison of the various tales of origin about Akiha Sanjakubō, see Tamura Sadao 2014: 55-60.

Regardless of the variations of the Akiha legend or the question whether Sanjakubō was a historical person, two characteristics of his story stand out for the formation of the Akiha cult: First, Sanjakubō's transformation into a *tengu* by the association with Kannon. His title *daigongen* 大権現 refers to Akiha's status as a great avatar, or manifestation of Buddha.⁵⁰ And second, his ability and willingness to provide protection from fire, besides offering other this-worldly benefits to those who believe in his powers. This feature is characteristic of early modern *tengu* tales in particular. While *tengu* beliefs were certainly known before the Heian and Kamakura periods, *tengu* in medieval Japan were primarily considered to be manifestations of evil, as Wakabayashi Haruko (2012) has shown. It was only during the Muromachi period (1338-1573), if not later during the Edo period, that images of *tengu* as protective avatars and providers of this-worldly benefits became popular.⁵¹

It was also around this time that Mt. Akiha became a well-frequented pilgrimage destination, following the unification of Japan and the arrival of peace after a period of military conflicts in the early seventeenth century. As with Daiyūzan Saijōji and the rise of the Dōryō cult in Tokugawa Japan, the central location of Mt. Akiha nearby Mt. Fuji and along the Tōkaidō route between Edo and Kyōto contributed to its increasing popularity as a pilgrimage site. This boom extended into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Moreover, the fact that women were allowed to access the peak distinguished Mt. Akiha from most other sacred mountains, where women were forbidden to enter due to concerns about ritual pollution (Scarangelo 2012: 53).

Until the early 1870s, three groups of religious practitioners were active at Mt. Akiha: Mountain ascetics, Sōtō Zen monks, and Shintō priests. Since 1625, the Zen monks were in charge of administrative matters at the mountain, which included a monastic training center. The abbot of the Zen monastery acted as the overall administrator of Mt. Akiha and essentially had the powers of a feudal lord, since Mt. Akiha was legally independent of the surrounding Kakegawa Feudal Domain, as Dominick Scarangelo (2012: 57-58) points out. The Zen monks thus formed the strongest group on Mt. Akiha, whereas the influence of the mountain ascetics seems to have declined during the Edo period. The third group, the Shintō

⁵⁰ Akiha Daigongen is also identified as Izuna Daigongen 飯縄大権現 (Tamura 2014: 55). Tamura Sadao here uses the term *dōtai* 同体, meaning that both gods have the "same body." On *gongen* in Zen, see also Faure 1991: 272-273.

⁵¹ Personal conversation with Wakabayashi Haruko, 10 July 2012.

priests, participated in blessings and sacred dances during festivals, but they usually stayed at other, unrelated shrines, besides working in agriculture or forestry (Scarangelo 2012: 59-60).

How Akiha Came to Kasuisai: Restructuring of the Akiha Cult in the Wake of *shinbutsu bunri*

The reorganization of the Akiha cult at multiple sites in Western Shizuoka was an immediate result of the disassociation orders by the Meiji government. Early seventeenth-century court battles indicate that competition among different religious groups over the supremacy at Mt. Akiha had a long history in Japan (Scarangelo 2012: 57). The competition in the wake of *shinbutsu bunri*, however, was of a different quality. The disruption of the religious compound at Mt. Akiha enabled creative reinventions, notably the transfer of Akiha to Kasuisai, and the integration of Akiha within the modern sectarian structures of Sōtō Zen Buddhism. Kawaguchi Kōfū (1998: 104) chronicles the implementation of disassociation at Mt. Akiha as follows:

At Mt. Akiha, the government policies were not implemented until the early 1870s. Following the proclamation by the Bureau of Divinities (*jingi jimukyoku* 神祇事務局) of 17 March 1868 to separate Buddhas and *kami*, the Council of State (*dajōkan* 太政官) ordered the removal of anthropomorphic *tengu* from Shintō shrines on 28 March, but a lack of interest and general disagreement about the procedures at Mt. Akiha caused delays. Government officials had to plan the disassociation implementation from scratch, beginning with the question whether Akiha was a Buddha or a Shintō *kami*. The group of Shugendō practitioners at Mt. Akiha made use of this uncertainty. In a strategic move aimed at asserting ritual authority, they turned to the Department of Divinities (*jingikan* 神祇官) in September 1869 to apply for becoming Shintō priests. The *shinbutsu bunri* policy gave them reason to believe that they could outmaneuver the Zen monks at the mountain's monastery, Shūyōji. On 3 October 1870, the bureaucrats of Shizuoka-*han* forwarded the proposal to Tokyo with a request for advice on how to implement the disassociation orders at Mt. Akiha. Once Shūyōji fell under the authority of Hamamatsu Prefecture in the course of the abolition of the feudal domains (*han* 藩) in favor of prefectures (*ken* 県) in 1871, the Ministry of Divinities (*jingishō*) finally judged that Akiha was a *kami*, not a Buddha. The decision was legitimized

with an entry of records of December 1867, which specified that Akiha belonged to Shintō (Kawaguchi 1998: 104-105).⁵²

The government orders stipulated that Akiha had to be cleared from Buddhist influences and enshrined at a Shintō shrine. The decision was supported by the local media. The newspaper *Hamamatsu Shinpō*, for example, dismissed belief in Akiha Sanjakubō as superstition (*meishin*) in at least two issues of 1873.⁵³ Shūyōji, however, could not easily be turned into a Shintō shrine, and the resisting Zen monks were still in dispute with the mountain ascetics. The impasse was overcome only after Shōhō Shunzui, the abbot of Shūyōji died. In a decisive moment, and in complete disregard of Shūyōji's large network of supporters or the fact that the election of a successor of Shōhō Shunzui was under way, the Council of State ordered the Hamamatsu government to abolish Shūyōji in 1873 on the basis of the argumentation that Shūyōji had no head priest and no parishioners. The temple was closed on February 2, and the uncooperative Zen monks were evicted soon after (Kawaguchi 1998: 105-106). The 'Buddhist' icon of Akiha Sanjakubō Daigongen was brought to Kasuisai in the latter half of March, along with its ritual accoutrements, while Mt. Akiha was remodeled into Akiha Shintō Shrine (Akiha jinja) (Tamura 2014: 317-318; 322-324).

On the Rivalry between Kasuisai and Shūyōji

Kasuisai identifies itself as the 'head-center of Akiha worship' (*Akiha sōhonden* 秋葉総本殿) since the late 1870s or 1880s. Permission by the government to build the *goshinden* 御真殿, a special worship hall for Akiha Sanjakubō at Kasuisai was granted in 1876. Its construction was completed in 1879 (Scarangelo 2012: 100;144). In 1886, Kasuisai's status as the head-center of Akiha worship was asserted by Prince Arisugawa Takehito (1862-1913), who presented Kasuisai with an imperial scroll that distinguished Kasuisai as *Akiha sōhonden*, along with the bestowal of an imperial Chrysanthemum crest. Kasuisai was now in possession

⁵² See also Tamura Sadao (2014: 330-334) for a table of the chronology of shinbutsu bunri at Mt. Akiha.

⁵³ It should be noted that the *Hamamatsu Shinpō* was influenced by the government of Hamamatsu in its understanding of *tengu* as superstition. Tamura Sadao mentions two articles in the *Yomiuri Shimbun* of 25 May 1875 and 25 December 1875 to show that negative, pejorative articles about *tengu* and the beliefs and practices associated with local gods like Akiha Sanjakubō were not necessarily the norm. The latter *Yomiuri Shimbun* article reports about a Mr. Yoshizumi, who triumphantly valued the power of an amulet (*omamori*) of Akiha Sanjakubō that survived a heavy fire at his house intact (Tamura 2014: 324).

of the original icon (*hontai* 本体) of Akiha Sanjakubō, whereas the great majority of Akiha temples and shrines nationwide were merely in possession of ‘shares of the spirit’ (*bunrei*) (Shikami 1999: 101). At least that was how Kasuisai saw it.

The desire for control over the original body of Akiha Sanjakubō and its copies, or ‘shares of the spirit’, became a driving force in the making of the modern Akiha cult in Western Japan, and in Western Shizuoka in particular, where Kasuisai would soon compete with Akiha Shintō Shrine and Shūyōji for authority over the ‘real’ Akiha Sanjakubō (Kawaguchi 1998: 105-109). The efficacy ascribed to *kitō* rituals and material objects for fire protection obtained at these sites was reflected in and shaped by the association (or disassociation) with the different bodies of Akiha at different religious sites. Interaction with a particular deity or sacred site, as Scarangelo (2012: 137) argues, was the basis of community formation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Akiha thereby formed an “orienting body;” one that was built to shape communities of temple and shrine supporters.

It didn’t take long before Kasuisai’s monopoly on the ‘original’ Akiha Sanjakubō was challenged. A request to reopen Shūyōji at Mt. Akiha reached the government in September 1873, along with a petition signed by more than thirty-thousand supporters. In recognition of the application, the Ministry of the Interior (*naimushō* 内務省) gave the go-ahead for the reconstruction of Shūyōji on 9 September 1878 (Kawaguchi 1998: 107), although the actual permission, according to Tamura Sadao (2014: 325), was granted about two years later, on 18 November 1880. Fund-raising activities for Shūyōji were initiated around the same time. Kasuisai, which had functioned as Shūyōji’s head temple before its abolition, supported the endeavor and – although suspicious of Shūyōji – was now involved in its reconstruction on the slopes of the mountain.

Nishiari Bokusan (1821-1910), the head priest of Kasuisai and an influential Sōtō leader,⁵⁴ emphasized that Kasuisai was willing to donate a statue of Kannon to Shūyōji, among other icons and memorial tablets (*ihai* 位牌). Yet he stressed that Shūyōji would only receive a ‘part of the body’ (*buntai* 分体) of Akiha, while Kasuisai remained in possession of Akiha’s original body. This message was not least aimed at appeasing the members of Kasuisai’s temple support associations (*kō*), who would not tolerate assumptions about their

⁵⁴ Nishiari Bokusan was a leading Dōgen scholar and the head priest of Sōjiji, one of the two head temples of the Sōtōshū, from 1901 to 1905. He is known as “one of the fathers of modern Sōtō” (Scarangelo 2012: 143).

associations being devoted to a replica of Akiha (Kawaguchi 1998: 106-109). An agreement that was assumedly made in March 1880 between Kasuisai and Shūyōji clarified that Akiha Sanjakubō would remain at Kasuisai forever, and that Shūyōji would receive an Akiha body from Chūōji in Edogawa-ku, Tokyo. In other words, Shūyōji agreed that Kasuisai would remain in possession of the original Akiha, whereas Shūyōji would receive a replica (Kawaguchi 1998: 107).

All this did not hinder Shūyōji monks to challenge the power of Kasuisai. In February of 1884, Ezaki Sekkō (1838-1907), one of the monks in office (*yakusō* 役僧) at Shūyōji and a student of Hakuchō Teizan (1805-1892),⁵⁵ slandered Kasuisai during a sermon held at a temple in Okazaki, Mikawa province. He furthermore proclaimed that Shūyōji was in possession of Akiha's original body, whereas Kasuisai was in possession of a replica (*bunshin* 分身; a synonym of *buntai*; literally: 'part of the body') of a statue from Kyoto. This caused Fukazawa Sennō and other monks in office at Kasuisai to protest along with members of Kasuisai's Itoku 威徳 support association and other *kō* groups. Charges against monks at Shūyōji were pressed at the Okazaki police department on the ninth of the month (Kawaguchi 1998: 107-109).

The charges against monks at Shūyōji were dismissed the next day. The priests and the members of support associations of both temples, however, continued their mutual accusations and claims of authority over Akiha Sanjakubō in a rather public mudslinging, including defaming articles in the local newspapers (Kawaguchi 1998: 107). This rivalry between Kasuisai and Shūyōji was not least rooted in the competition for revenue drawn from ritual prayers for this-worldly benefits and the financial support of *kō* groups. It was certainly not merely an expression of clashing religious persuasions.

The Invention of Akiha Shintō Shrine and Kasuisai's Response to the Shintō Secular

Meanwhile, the situation at the new-found Akiha Shintō Shrine remained uncertain for months. An 'Invocation of Conversion' prayer that marked the purification of the shrine of Buddhist icons was performed at the end of March 1873 by Oguni Shigemoto, who oversaw the shrine reform of Hamamatsu. The decision as to how Akiha had to be embodied at Akiha

⁵⁵ Hakuchō Teizan supervised the reconstruction of Shūyōji. He was the founding monk of the newly-reconstructed Sōtō Zen temple at Mt. Akiha.

Shintō Shrine, however, was not in the hands of religious professionals like Oguni. It was a matter of the state. It took the Ministry of Doctrine until June 27 to decide on sacred paper wands (*hei* 幣) for the embodiment of Akiha, instead of jewels or mirrors, which were also often used as Shintō icons. According to Scarangelo, this arguably reflected the difficult financial situation at the new-found shrine atop of Mt. Akiha (Scarangelo 2012: 16-17;62).

At Akiha Shintō Shrine, Akiha was reinvented as the *kami* Ho-no-Kagutsuchi, a Shintō fire god and the youngest child of Izanami and Izanagi, the mythological parents of the Japanese archipelago. This association was in line with the understanding of Shintō as a state cult for the benefit of the emperor and the national family. As Jason Josephson has shown, the rendering of Shintō as a semi-autonomous system within government control “worked to separate state ideology from the jurisdiction of the Buddhist institution, but also took the Shinto secular from the control of shrine priests. This also fundamentally shifted the meaning of Shinto discourse, making it point to the nation-state.” (Josephson 2012: 134). Shrines like Akiha Shintō Shrine, however, retained some sort of hybridity, as Dominick Scarangelo remarks: “On the one hand their rites were the spectacle of the state, but they were also guardians and propagators of a particular deity cult that offered numenal benefits to devotees” (Scarangelo 2012: 79).⁵⁶ In offering this-worldly benefits, Akiha Shintō Shrine competed fiercely with the Zen temple Shūyōji, and battles between both institutions extended in court trials over land and water rights at the mountain (Scarangelo 2012: 6;79).

As Shintō was turned into a state cult, Buddhists actively engaged in trans-sectarian efforts to reestablish their ties with the government. The initiatives of Ōuchi Seiran and other reformers’ intent to organize in networks like the Great Society for Revering the Emperor and Worshipping the Buddha (Sonnō hōbutsu daidōdan 尊皇奉仏大同団) illustrate this point. But the competition with State Shintō also materialized at Buddhist temples on the ground. Japan’s growing imperialism in the twentieth century gave rise to an increasing trend of Buddhist memorials for the war dead. At Kasuisai, the competition with State Shintō ‘concretized’ in a memorial for the war dead named *gokokutō* 護国塔, literally ‘nation-protecting stupa’ (Jaffe 2006: 276-278). Construction of the stupa was completed 1911. It was designed by famous architect Itō Chūta, who called it a “Gandhara” stupa, since its style reflected Indian-Gandharan Buddhist architecture. To Itō, the stupa was transnational and

⁵⁶ For a description of the integration of imperial cosmology within the ritual context at Akiha Shintō Shrine, see Scarangelo (2012: 287-289).

trans-sectarian in nature, and closer to the Indian roots of Buddhism than the three- or five-story pagodas that were widespread in Japan. More importantly, however, its design “[...] elided Japan’s indebtedness to the Buddhisms of Korea and China,” as Richard Jaffe (2006: 278) has shown. The memorial embodies a Buddhist contribution to national self-assertion and reveals the temple’s understanding of Japan’s role in Asia at the time.

The ‘nation-protecting stupa’ at Kasuisai was mostly funded by families with connections to the military, the diet, and the bureaucracy. However, it should be noted that Kasuisai profited highly from the financial support of Akiha support associations at that time. And while the “nation-protecting stupa” project may not have been linked to Akiha devotion on a theological level, its funding was certainly supported by Akiha devotees as well, in one way or the other, by the involvement of Hioki Mokusen, the head priest of Kasuisai who initiated the “nation-protecting stupa” and oversaw its construction.

The Integration of Akiha in Modern Japanese Sōtō Zen Buddhism

Teaching Assemblies (*kyōkai*)

In order to conform to the legal standards established by the Meiji government, traditional pilgrimage confraternities and the support associations (*kō*) of Buddhist institutions had to be registered as licensed teaching assemblies (*kyōkai* 教会). The Ministry of Doctrine authorized recognized Buddhist denominations to organize teaching assemblies in 1873 as a legal means of organizing outreach. The decision-making process for the establishment of these assemblies developed in the course of the Great Promulgation Campaign, a nationalistic government-sponsored education movement that reverberated the modernist, rational understanding of sectarian identity described earlier in this chapter (see also Scarangelo 2012: 75;138;152). Teaching assemblies were designed to reinforce this modernist understanding of Buddhism. They “mediated between the clergy and laity and fostered a debate on sectarian identity with eloquent responses to the growing hegemony of head temples,” as Ikeda Eishun (1998: 11) argues.

In the case of Sōtō Zen, this mediation between priests and lay people involved lay ordinations, lectures, and Zen meditation sessions, as outlined in the *Ordinances of the Sōtō Sect Teaching Assembly* (*Sōtōshū kyōkai jōrei* 曹洞宗教会条例) of 1876. The intended function of these and other activities was to foster morality and discipline among the participants. It is questionable, however, if the modern and trans-culturally shaped image of

‘Zen’ reflected in these ordinances had any significance for the practice at Buddhist temples on the ground. The term *kyōkai*, or teaching assembly was (and remains) unfamiliar to Japanese Buddhists. It evokes the image of a Christian church. The term *kyōkai* was used by the Ministry of Doctrine in the *General guidelines for teaching assemblies (Kyōkai taii 教会大意)* of 1873, along with the term *kessha* 結社 (lay society). Whereas *kyōkai* seemed artificial to most Japanese, *kessha* “was intuitively understood,” as Ikeda Eishun (1998: 12) remarks: “[*kessha*] resembles *kōsha* 講社, the term associated with lay groups sharing the same popular beliefs, which have existed in Japan since ancient times.” The new teaching assemblies were practically indifferent from traditional temple support associations (*kō*) in their emphasis on regular pilgrimage by representatives of the *kō* association to prayer temples for *kitō* rituals and protective amulets, regardless of their modern appearance (Scarangelo 2012: 139-141;150;160).

At Kasuisai, the formation of lay associations was furthered by Nishiari Bokusan who, as has been shown, was an active supporter of Akiha devotion at Kasuisai. Not only did the construction of the special worship hall (*goshinden*) for Akiha at Kasuisai begin within weeks after Nishiari Bokusan’s tenure as the temple’s head priest in 1877, but the worship hall was completed about six months after the establishment of the first Sanjakubō association at Kasuisai in 1879. The Sanjakubō association was also initiated by Bokusan, who furthermore functioned as the overseer of the Sōtō Teaching Assembly in western Shizuoka prefecture; a position of significant power (Scarangelo 2012: 144-145).

Dominick Scarangelo relates the Sanjakubō association at Kasuisai to the Sōtō Teaching Assembly (2012: 144) by its name: “The association’s full name, the “Society of Sanshaku-bō Confraternities of the Sōtō Teaching Assembly” (Sōtō Kyōkai Sanshaku-bō Kō Kessha 曹洞教會三尺坊講結社), is indicative of its establishment under *Ordinances [of the Sōtō Sect Teaching Assembly]* as a component of the sect’s teaching assembly organization.” This English translation of *kessha* (lay association) as “teaching assembly” (*kyōkai*) helps to underline the connection between the Sanjakubō association and the Sōtō Teaching Assembly, but it suspends the aforementioned distinction of *kessha* and *kyōkai* (see Ikeda 1998: 11). In the end, the *Ordinances of the Sōtō Sect Teaching Assembly* even encouraged the inclusion of previous pilgrimage fraternities and support association, given that certain requirements were met. This step involved mention as to why the respective association’s beliefs and practices were for the benefit of the emperor and the nation. Members of the Sanjakubō association were furthermore required to belief in Sanjakubō, and to conduct

yearly pilgrimage to Kasuisai, which supports the claim that teaching assemblies were hardly different from traditional temple support associations (Scarangelo 2012: 139-141;146;148;152;160). There is no indication that practitioners and members of temple support associations at Kasuisai changed their intentions or motives of practice in the course of the reorganization of lay associations within the formation of modern sectarian structures.

The Sanjakubō association was not the only ‘modern’ temple support association organized by Kasuisai’s Nishiari Bokusan under the *Ordinances of the Sōtō Sect Teaching Assembly*. In 1881, Nishiari Bokusan formed the *kōshōkai* 敲唱会, a type of teaching assembly that was primarily directed to clergy. Kōshōkai members had to practice celibacy and adhere to the rules of the Sōtō sect, among other things. The goal of the Kōshōkai was to fight the understanding of Buddhism as a religion based on funerals and ancestor veneration, and to educate lay practitioners in Zen doctrine. The same goals were furthered at Kasuisai by the Manshū School, an educational institution for priests and lay practitioners established by the Kōshōkai. Again, the funding for the Manshū School (and its promotion of modern Zen) derived from Akiha pilgrims and the gathering of donations during a public showing (*kaichō*) of Akiha in 1881. The revenue derived from Akiha veneration had boosted Kasuisai’s influence so much that in 1881, sectarian leaders appointed the monastery the rank of direct branch temple of Sōjiji, which together with Eiheiji functioned as one of the Sōtō sect’s two head-temples (Scarangelo 2012: 141-143;156-158). In other words, modern Sōtō Zen Buddhism and the modern research on Dōgen by Nishiari Bokusan and others was, to a substantial extent, sponsored by prayers for this-worldly benefits to the fire god Akiha Sanjakubō.

Negotiating a Modern Doctrinal Foundation without Local Gods

‘Spiritual Assurance’ (*anjin*) for Lay Practitioners

It was comparably difficult for modern Sōtō leaders to formulate a set of beliefs and practices for lay practitioners in a simple, understandable way without compromising the unique features of the modern sect’s identity. First, Sōtō’s convoluted institutional structures and the rivalry between the two head monasteries Eiheiji and Sōjiji complicated the process of negotiation. Another reason was the soteriological reliance on asceticism, which proved to be inflexible. Other denominations could more readily rely on their founders and their founders’ practices in the negotiation of spiritual assurance. The Pure Land Buddhist teachings of

Hōnen and Shinran, for example, were considered to be accessible and fully revealed. Dōgen’s writings and the practice of ritual sitting (*zazen*), on the other hand, were seen as impractical for non-monastics (Scarangelo 2012: 270;297;305).

On the sectarian level, the veneration of local gods was insignificant for spiritual assurance in Sōtō Zen. Local gods like Akiha played no role, and they were not mentioned. The Shingon sect based its teachings for lay associations on Kūkai and the fire offering rituals to the god Fudō Myōō (Scarangelo 2012: 154), but ‘esoteric’ *kitō* prayers could not shape a ‘genuine’ Sōtō identity, regardless of the historical significance of these rituals for Sōtō temples on the ground. Sōtō leaders like Tsuji Kenkō instead built a theory of spiritual assurance based on the legend of Buddha Shakyamuni. Not only was the focus on the embodiment of Buddha’s power through *zazen* reflected in Shakyamuni’s attainment of enlightenment in a sitting posture (while sitting under a *Ficus religiosa*, or Bodhi tree), but the various stages of his life as an ascetic were compatible with Sōtō Zen’s concepts of genealogy and transmission.

In the late 1870s, ‘Shakyamuni *nenbutsu*’, the recitation of Shakyamuni’s name, became the foundational practice of an official Sōtō teaching guide for lay outreach entitled *Aims and Instructions for Sermons at the Sōtō Teaching Assembly* (*Sōtō kyōkai sekkyō tai narabi ni shinan* 曹洞教會説教大意並指南). The practice of ‘Shakyamuni *nenbutsu*’ was believed to ensure a safe rebirth in a Buddhist paradise. It included chants of the *Heart Sutra* (*Hannya shingyō* 般若心經) and ten or hundred recitations of the name of Shakyamuni Buddha over the beat of a wooden drum (*mokugyō* 木魚). However, this pattern resembled the recitation of Buddha Amida’s name in Pure Land Buddhism so much that the project eventually failed. Neither the performance of *nenbutsu* 念仏 nor the interactions with Buddha Shakyamuni were unique to Sōtō Zen. ‘Shakyamuni *nenbutsu*’ was therefore rejected as a marker of sectarian identity by the late 1880s (Scarangelo 2012: 297-301).

A sustainable reorganization of lay outreach was achieved in 1888 with a text called *Shushōgi* 修証義 (*Meaning of Practice and Verification*) by Ōuchi Seiran. The *Shushōgi* provided an important doctrinal foundation that was much more complex and nuanced than previous formulations of sectarian identity, and strongly focused on precepts (Scarangelo 2012: 308). It consists of parts from Dōgen’s writings, organized in five sections and thirty-one paragraphs. Instead of promoting *zazen* or the practice of *nenbutsu* for lay practitioners, Ōuchi picked up on the concept of *zenkai ichinyō* 禪戒一如, emphasizing that “meditation

and the precepts are identical.” (Reader 1983: 105-111; Rowe 2006: 240; Nagai Masashi 2008: 98-99).

By editing the *Shushōgi* to focus on precepts and morality, Ōuchi Seiran hoped to increase the popularity of Sōtō Zen in society. Shakamuni *nenbutsu* was no longer the practice of choice for the purpose of lay outreach. Buddha Shakamuni, however, retained its importance as the original Buddha of Sōtō Zen that was introduced by the earlier *Aims and Instructions for Sermons at the Sōtō Teaching Assembly*. Another topic that remained unchanged was the issue of local gods and *tengu* like Akiha, which were not mentioned at all in the *Shushōgi*. Other modern formulations of doctrinal foundation in Sōtō Zen Buddhism followed a similar pattern. Nishiari Bokusan, for example, neither touched upon Akiha in his numerous writings, in spite of his support of the Sanjakubō association at Kasuisai or the fact that his approach to spiritual assurance involved chanting the name of a Bodhisattva of choice, or even a specific dharani (Scarangelo 2012: 309;315-316). “The most systematic elucidation of Bokusan’s teachings with regard to soteriology,” Dominick Scarangelo argues, “is *Anjin ketsu* 安心訣, his own distinct lay-focused treatise of spiritual assurance written and published just after the proclamation of the *Shushōgi*. [...] *Anjin ketsu* broke with the *Shushōgi*’s sole and exclusive prioritization of the three refuges for the attainment of spiritual assurance and opened up room for Bodhisattva or deity cults” (Scarangelo 2012: 315).

It is therefore important to distinguish between the discourse on local gods and the lack of discussion about them within sectarian elite circles on the one hand, and the practice at temples like Kasuisai on the other. Influential agents like Nishiari Bokusan performed different roles in different contexts. To Western scholars, he is mostly known as an eminent scholar of Dōgen, while his practical efforts to promote Akiha veneration at Kasuisai have been all but ignored. Dominick Scarangelo’s research closes this gap by exploring the life and practice of Bokusan and other eminent Sōtō leaders in Meiji Japan beyond their academic achievements as sectarian scholars. Following up on this method, further research on the activities of ‘regular’, lay practitioners would be welcome to assess the meaning and complexity of ‘spiritual assurance’ (*anjin* 安心) more fully in practice, although it is beyond question that such data is hard to obtain. This approach could encompass assessing the lives of non-eminent monks, for example, or the biographies of members of Akiha *kō* groups within a local historical context.

Conclusion

Ritual prayers for the protection of the state comprised an integral part of Japanese Buddhism for most of its history. The reciprocity of the relationship between Buddhism and the Japanese state is evident in responses to natural disasters, famines, and epidemic plagues that threatened the stability of the institutions of the state and its subjects, especially in the premodern context. Dōgen, the founder of Japanese Sōtō Zen Buddhism, criticized the overwhelming reliance on *kaji kitō* incantations for state protection, but he neither rejected *kitō* per se, nor did he question the established relationship between Buddhism and the state, as this chapter has shown. This graduation of prayer purposes and ritual components is characteristic of broad spectrum of *kitō*, the legitimacy of which has been subject to negotiation within different social, local, and sectarian settings, especially in the modern period. The following chapters will elucidate this process of negotiation in the training of monks, in the practice of *kitō* at prayer monasteries, and in public and sectarian discourses.

As this chapter has shown, we may envision the spread of medieval Japanese Buddhism as the result of a pluralization of access to Buddhist material objects, rituals, and texts beyond elitist circles. Dōgen's successors were able to establish Sōtō Zen in the Japanese countryside by combining Buddhist beliefs and practices with local customs and legendary tales (*engi*) about temple-guarding gods noted to promise protection, health or wealth. *Kitō* diversified in adaptation to the expectations and needs of the communities that Sōtō Zen temples belonged to. This in return has shaped the demand for this-worldly benefits, the diversification of *kitō* and *kuyō*, or ancestor veneration rituals, the systematization of *kitō* in formal prayer categories, and the professionalization of particular religious sites in offering and advertising *genze riyaku* for specific purposes, like fire protection. As the early-modern boom in pilgrimage to prayer monasteries has shown, the study of *kitō* is particularly revealing for the understanding of the ways in which societal, political, and infrastructural changes have influenced religious and cultural trends in the lives of ordinary Japanese.

The rationalization, consolidation, centralization and unification of the modern Sōtō Zen sect did not mark the end of *kitō*, as some Buddhist scholars and apologists of modern Zen Buddhism have suggested, nor did government bans of possession rituals and beliefs in *tengu*, among other 'evil customs', put an end to *kitō* and other 'premodern' folk practices. The fulminant success of *kitō jiin*, as the making of the modern Akiha cult at Kasuisai has shown, is founded in the cultural, social, political, and economic conditions of modernity. It would therefore be more correct to say that *kitō* as practiced at *kitō jiin* enabled modern

sectarian restructuring, by generating the financial means for the survival of the Sōtō Zen sect against the backdrop of the loss of support by the state, and by keeping different local and global brand images of Zen Buddhism alive. The premise of religious freedom, as guaranteed by the Meiji constitution, intensified competition among religious providers of this-worldly benefits. It is within this context that prayer monasteries may well be described as pioneers of professional religious marketing in Japan (see also Chapter Two).

The ‘otherness’ of Zen, as indicated by the title of Williams’ seminal volume *The Other Side of Zen* (Williams 2005), is apparent in comparisons of *kitō* and associated beliefs in mountain ghosts or dragons with modern and transculturally shaped understandings of Zen as an experience free from this-worldly desires and bonds, free from ‘superstition’, and free from rituals. The lack of sectarian variety in the discussion of *kitō* in this chapter may be considered as problematic for the same reasons: it generates an exoticizing ‘otherness’ of Zen. Readers may find the focus on Zen superficial, considering that many aspects discussed under the premises of ‘Zen’ in this chapter are not unique to Zen Buddhism. The sense of ‘otherness’ of *kitō* furthermore disappears, the more we look at *kitō* as comprising a part of the field of *genze riyaku*, or this-worldly benefits, which Ian Reader and George Tanabe (1998) describe as the common field of religion in Japan. It is owed to the limited capacity of this dissertation that not all aspects of *kitō* in Japanese temple Buddhism could be addressed.⁵⁷

For its weaknesses, a limited focus on Sōtō Zen Buddhism also has its benefits. As this chapter has shown, it allows for a detailed exploration of the interplay of practice and discourse pertaining to *kitō* within a sectarian context. It enables a multi-angled study of ‘Zen’ and *kitō* through the lens of sectarian and academic elite discourses on the one hand, and the practice of *kitō* at local temples on the other. Both ends of this spectrum need to be addressed, in order to grasp the various intersecting social realities and functions of Buddhist prayer monasteries as sites of sectarian training, local deity cults, and religious marketing in contemporary Japan, as explored in the following chapters. The case of Kasuisai furthermore shows that prayer monasteries and their networks generate action beyond sectarian frameworks and boundaries within a local context. This not least allows for an analysis of global transcultural flows on the ground.

⁵⁷ Chapter Five of this dissertation will show that temples of all major Buddhist sects in Japan are known to perform prayer rituals – or comparable practices – for this-worldly benefits, regardless of what sectarian constitutions and regulations may stipulate.

Chapter Two: Everyday Life at Kasuisai – Branding and Marketing *kitō*

Introduction

This chapter explores the various ways in which Kasuisai performs, promotes, and advertises *kitō* and its associated beliefs and practices in Japan today. *Kitō* matters for the sectarian economy, and in the individual lives of practitioners. At Kasuisai, the practice of *kitō* involves prayers to the fire god Akiha Sanjakubō, notably for fire protection. Akiha devotion functions as a ‘faith brand’ (Einstein 2007) that enables practitioners to establish an immediate connection with the prayer monastery and its status as a provider of this-worldly benefits.⁵⁸ It is within this context that Akiha devotion plays an important role in the marketing and promotion of Sōtō Zen Buddhism. Twelve million dollars in donations were mobilized to fund a public exhibition (*kaichō*) of local god Akiha at Kasuisai. Hundreds of Thousands of Dollars are spent on *kitō* and protective amulets each year by temple support associations and individual visitors. The branding and marketing of *kitō* will be explored through the lens of the monastery’s setting and ritual circuits of worship. The practice of *kitō*, as shall be shown, is deeply embedded in Kasuisai’s material Buddhist culture and environment. The chapter asks how the interplay of spatial and ritual components plays out in the marketing of *kitō* in different contexts, and for different groups of practitioners and temple visitors.

Four sub-sections present perspectives on the branding and marketing of *kitō* at Kasuisai in everyday, quotidian terms. The first part introduces Kasuisai’s setting, and questions this setting’s roles in enabling Kasuisai’s identities as a prayer monastery, Zen temple, ‘power spot’, and tourist site of interactions with Tokugawa history. Questions pertaining to the accessibility of prayer monasteries in Japan’s aging society are also addressed, with punctual reference to other prayer monasteries and sites of Akiha devotion for comparison. The second part examines Kasuisai’s ritual circuits of worship. The analysis in this section focuses on questions of religious aesthetics, particularly the ways in which religious practitioners experience Kasuisai’s festivals and *kitō* prayer rituals in sensual dimensions. The specific ways in which prayer rituals address the body and the senses, as shall be shown, play an important role for the success of *kitō* at prayer monasteries. The

⁵⁸ Mara Einstein (2007: 92-93) defines faith brands as “spiritual products that have been given popular meaning and awareness through marketing. They have a readily recognizable name and logo though there may or may not be a tagline.” Einstein develops the idea of faith brands based on her research on the marketing of religion in the USA, using case studies like Megachurches. This chapter applies the concept of faith brands to the context of prayer monasteries in contemporary Japan as a means of clarifying the relationship between religious practice and the marketing of local deity cults in Sōtō Zen Buddhism.

second part builds up on the discussion of Kasuisai's setting, by further elucidating the interplay of Kasuisai's ritual circuits of worship and the setting in the process of religious branding. Part three examines the branding and marketing of *kitō* through the lens of special public exhibitions of Akiha Sanjakubō and Dōryō, a local god worshipped at the prayer monastery Daiyūzan Saijōji. Part four discusses the relationship between *kitō* and ritual sitting (*zazen*) as two interactive and complementary ritual complexes, as well as demonstrates how contesting views of *zazen* in the course of Zen's global spread in the twentieth century has influenced the interplay of prayer rituals and ritual sitting at Kasuisai.

The Setting

Keeping a 'Mountain Ghost' Without a Mountain

Kasuisai is said to be founded around 600 years ago by Jochū Tengin (Faure 2000: 82). The structures that enabled Kasuisai's rise to fame as a prayer monastery, however, are modern extensions. The *goshinden*, or special worship hall for Akiha Sanjakubō, where monks perform prayer rituals for this-worldly benefits, was built only after the disassociation of Buddhas and *kami* at Mt. Akiha in the late nineteenth century.⁵⁹ The same is true of the 'inner temple' (*oku no in* 奥の院) at Kasuisai, where the feeding of the *tengu* takes place during the annual fire festival in December. As the term *oku no in* indicates, this building is located deeper inside (*oku*) the temple grounds, behind and above of the main hall (*hondō* 本堂, or *hattō* 法堂 (dharma hall), as the monks at Kasuisai use to call their main hall). This layout resembles that of a sacred mountain. Daiyūzan Saijōji in Minamiashigara and other Sōtō Zen prayer monasteries show similar characteristics. Mountain slopes allow for temples and shrines to relate their buildings vertically to each other. Special buildings dedicated to powerful local gods are typically standing higher up and deeper inside the mountain. What distinguishes Kasuisai from Daiyūzan Saijōji is the fact that the latter is perfectly designed to accommodate a mountain ghost—in this case Dōryō, a monk-turned-*tengu*—whereas Kasuisai became the center of a 'mountain cult' without being able to offer Akiha a 'mountain' to speak of.

A comparison of Kasuisai and Daiyūzan Saijōji reveals some of the implications of differences in setting and layout for tourism to both sites. Daiyūzan Saijōji is located deep

⁵⁹ See Chapter One about the rivalry between Kasuisai and Shūyōji.

inside a mountainous cedar forest, away from the city. It takes a three-to-four-kilometer bus ride or hike up the scenic slopes to reach the monastery, whereas Kasuisai stands on a forested hill. The *sanmon* 山門 (mountain gate) at Kasuisai, which marks the entrance to the main building complex, is only forty-four-steps above the corridor that extends from the bottom of the stairs to the main gate (*sōmon* 総門) facing the streets of Fukuroi. The corridor between the main gate and the stairs is only eighty meters, and most of the main buildings on the higher-level plateau behind the mountain gate are standing in close proximity to each other. These buildings are embraced by a line of trees that grow into a forest on a slope behind the main building complex. The forested hill obscures the view of surrounding residential areas that border on Kasuisai's precincts within a mere two-to-three-hundred meters to the North and to the West. This setting and layout create the illusion of Kasuisai as a secluded sacred space to visitors approaching Kasuisai from the front, where the only main entrance is located. The notion of seclusion is insofar an illusion as the monastery's location is by no means remote, compared to Daiyūzan. The main gate and the *jizōdō* 地藏堂 hall for the Bodhisattva Jizō face a regular street on the foot of the hill, with shops and houses standing between the *jizōdō* and the main gate. The *jizōdō* and the parking lots for cars and tourist buses blend seamlessly with the townscape.

As a result of its central location, Kasuisai remains highly accessible to visitors. But it lacks the structural depth and appeal of Daiyūzan, where the buildings align seamlessly with the mountainous terrain of Minamiashigara, and where the vertical arrangement of temple buildings impedes a clear assessment of the actual size of the temple premises. In order to access the inner temple of Daiyūzan Saijōji, visitors have to climb no less than 350 additional steps; an effort that is generally understood as a virtuous practice of ritual purification by those who undertake it. There is not nearly as much effort involved in accessing these special buildings at Kasuisai.

While Kasuisai's location and arrangement of buildings evoke the image of a miniature mountain, it should be noted that I never met a monk who suggested that Kasuisai was designed to look like Mt. Akiha. Kasuisai tries to keep distance from Mt. Akiha as a site of religious authority over Akiha, not least by deemphasizing the understanding of Akiha as a 'mountain cult'. Akiha devotion at Kasuisai is typically portrayed as 'folk belief' (*minkan shinkō* 民間信仰). Following this interpretation, monks and lay supporters at Kasuisai understand themselves as protectors of Akiha devotion by providing by the ritual and material

care for Akiha Sanjakubō's body, or main icon (*goshintai* 御真体; literally 'true body'). In order to provide this care, Kasuisai had to build a special worship hall, and an inner temple. This may have contributed to the image of a sacred mountain, but Kasuisai underlines its legitimacy by stressing that Mt. Akiha was irrelevant for the Akiha cult, and implying that Shūyōji at Mt. Akiha had 'failed' to care for Akiha, whereas Kasuisai took its responsibilities as the main center of Akiha worship (*Akiha sōhonden*) seriously.⁶⁰

Kasuisai frequently points out that Akiha veneration has a history of 1,300 years in Japan.⁶¹ The temple's promotional pamphlets, and reports about Kasuisai in sectarian media, however, rarely address the events that have led to Kasuisai's rise as a *kitō jin*, except for the point that Shūyōji was abolished in the late nineteenth century for having no head priest and no affiliated parishioner households (see Sōtōshū shūmuchō 2011: 53). This rather selective representation of the historical events and conditions has shaped Kasuisai's brand image as an institution that made the right choices for its own benefit, the benefit of fire god Akiha, and the benefit of its affiliated temple support associations.

A Miniature Pilgrimage

A free map available for visitors at Kasuisai's reception invites those who "search for encounters with Buddhas and "power spot" cultural properties"⁶² to "experience" (*kanjiru* 感じる) the monastery through pilgrimage. An imagined real lack of effort needed to access Akiha's special worship hall and the inner temple is compensated by expanding visit to

⁶⁰ Contemporary understandings of Akiha's move to Kasuisai as an event that has rendered Mt. Akiha irrelevant have their roots in the late nineteenth century. Dominick Scarangelo (2012: 248;259-264) examined pamphlets used by Kasuisai to re-narrate the legend of Akiha upon receiving and enshrining the main icon of the fire god in the 1870s. Kasuisai's abbot Mokusen achieved this shift by slightly modifying Akiha's chronicle of origin. Mokusen's version of the legend implied that Akiha, after extensive travels across Japan, had settled not at Mt. Akiha, as previous chronicles would suggest, but at a "temple" on Mt. Akiha. "A seemingly insignificant difference," Scarangelo argues, but one that "[...] nevertheless erases the mountain from the text of Akiha mythology, deemphasizing it as the locus of divinity" (Scarangelo 2012: 248).

⁶¹ This is evident in the sign leading the way to the special worship hall (*goshinden*) for Akiha Sanjakubō at Kasuisai, for example. See photo 09 September 2011 CIMG7182.

⁶² "Mihotoke to no deai, "pawā supotto" bunkazai to no deai wo motomete... み仏との出会い、"パワースポット"文化財との出会いを求めて..."

Kasuisai into a micro pilgrimage that covers thirty-three spots.⁶³ Visitors who prove completion of the pilgrimage by collecting stamps at all thirty-three pilgrimage spots on the map, receive a souvenir (*kinenhin* 記念品), and may expect a wish to come true, according to the map. As a text on the map explains: “By walking and walking, and praying and praying, wishes and healing (*iyashi* 癒し) become true for you too!”⁶⁴

Understanding the process of branding here encompasses assessing the map’s use of key words like ‘power spot’ (*pawā supotto* パワースポット) and ‘healing’ (*iyashi*), which are both popular terms derived from the new spirituality movement and culture in Japan (discussed in Chapter Three).⁶⁵ The map demonstrates Kasuisai’s intention to establish a connection with the understanding of ‘power spots’ as sacred spaces, where supernatural powers, local gods, or the Buddha dharma culminate in ways that allow for visitors to experience healing and relaxation, among other this-worldly benefits, notably household protection, road safety, and fire prevention. Collecting stamps, memories, and merits is promoted as an adventurous, joyful, and safe way of spending free time in an extraordinary environment. No matter if participants complete the pilgrimage or not, they may still take the map home as a souvenir.

In order to further explore the role of prayer monasteries as institutions that are distinguished by setting and layout, and to give a detailed description of a prayer monastery, this chapter introduces Kasuisai’s pilgrimage spots as introduced on the map. The pilgrimage starts at the *jizōdo*, outside the main gate. Station number two is the main gate (*sōmon*), followed by eight more stations outside the lower and upper plateaus: the Sakazuka Kannon 酒塚観音 statue; the *bentenden* 弁天殿 hall for the god of fortune Benten 弁天; the hall for Hakusan Myōri Daigongen 白山妙理大権現, a god noted to guard the earth and temple precincts; the statues of two guardians at the mountain gate; a statue of Osasuri Daikoku おさすり大黒; the *rinzō* 輪蔵, or prayer wheel, a statue of Jibo Kannon 慈母観音, and a statue of

⁶³ The number thirty-three derives from the thirty-three forms of Bodhisattva Kannon, and is common for Kannon pilgrimages.

⁶⁴ “*Aruite aruite ogande ogande meguru oinori iyashi no jōgyō ni anata mo dōzo!* 歩いて歩いて拝んで拝んで巡る お祈り癒しの浄行にあなたもどうぞ!”

⁶⁵ Sectarian media pick up on the description of Kasuisai as a power spot, see Sōtōshū shūmuchō 2011: 54. On *iyashi* in contemporary Japan, see Gebhardt 2004.

Monju bosatsu 文殊菩薩. Bodhisattva Monju has to be worshipped from outside the *zazendō* 坐禪堂, where monks perform *zazen*.

Power spots eleven to twenty are located inside the main temple buildings. For a fee of 500 Yen, visitors may find the statue of Idate 韋馱天 inside the *daisho'in* 大書院 building. Destination number twelve is the main object of worship (*honzon* 本尊) inside the main hall (*hondō*), a statue of Shō Kanzeon 聖觀世音, followed by Akiha Sanjakubō in his special worship hall. Number fourteen on the list of attractions is the *kaisandō* 開山堂, a building behind the main hall, where temple founder Jochū Tengin is venerated, along with sectarian founders Dōgen and Keizan. Kasuisai's other patriarchs are also venerated inside the *kaisandō*, which houses their special memorial tablets. Number fifteen on the list is the *kōsobyō* 高祖廟, a shrine inside the *daisho'in*, which is said to house the bones of Dōgen as a relic. Number sixteen on the list is the *daitei'en* 大庭園, an inner garden. Guests have a good view on the *daitei'en* garden from the *saidō* 齋堂, which is a large dining room for guests.

Perhaps surprisingly, one of Kasuisai's main attractions – number eighteen on the list of pilgrimage spots – is a toilet. It was built in 1937, and is being promoted by Kasuisai with banners and signs as “the number one king size monastery toilet in Japan” (*Nippon-ichi no daitōsu* 日本一の大東司). The toilet is guarded by a large statue of Ususama Myōō 烏芻沙摩明王, which stands next to a large fountain in the center of the lavatory, surrounded by urinals and toilet cabins. Number nineteen are the elaborate peony paintings on the sliding doors (*fusumae* 襖絵) of the *zuiryūkaku* 瑞龍閣 chamber. Kasuisai is popular for its flowers, and peonies in particular. The temple counts about 5,000 peonies of 150 different types in its peony garden. The final pilgrimage stop inside the buildings is the *hōmotsukan* 宝物館, literally treasure room, which functions as small a museum.

The final part of Kasuisai's pilgrimage continues outdoors, and covers several smaller temple buildings and statues of gods and Bodhisattvas on Kasuisai's grounds, beginning with Shusse Daikokuten 出世大黒天, one of the so-called seven gods of fortune (*shichi fukujin* 七福神), who is noted to promise career success, besides protecting the Buddha dharma, followed by the *ihaidō* 位牌堂, which houses the memorial tablets of Kasuisai's parish members. Number twenty-three is the *karasu tengu* 烏天狗, or crow *tengu* statue outside Akiha's special worship hall. Other attractions include a statue of Shōgun Jizō 勝軍地藏 (a

Bodhisattva noted for waging battles); a sword; a cave; the inner temple, which houses the god Fudō Myōō; and the *inaridō* 稻荷堂, a shrine for a popular fox-shaped god called Inari, who is noted for promising bountiful rice and fertility. Number twenty-nine on the list of pilgrimage spots marks a stupa for Daruma, the legendary transmitter of Zen Buddhism to Japan. Number thirty is the bell tower on top of a hill at the Western outskirts of Kasuisai's grounds. The large bell is beaten on special occasions, such as New Year's Eve. It stands nearby the *gokokutō*, or 'nation-protecting stupa' (number thirty-one on the list). The last two pilgrimage stops are two statues of Kannon: Gyoran Kannon 魚籃觀音, a bodhisattva venerated in ancestor veneration rituals for the fish, which stands in the middle of a lake; and Heiwa Kannon 平和觀音, a Kannon for peace.

Apart from the merits derived from daily sutra chanting services conducted in the main hall, all these gods receive monthly ritual services in front of their various dedicated temples and shrine buildings across Kasuisai's precincts. Idaten, for example, is worshipped with a special sutra recitation service (*Idaten fugin* 韋駄天諷經) on the 5th day of every month; Dōgen and Keizan are worshipped on the 29th. The special services for the founders of Japanese Sōtō Zen Buddhism includes offerings of decoction, sweets, and tea (*tōkasa* 湯菓茶). Daikoku and Benten are worshiped on the 3rd; Inari on the 21st; Jizō on the 24th day. Monthly rituals at the inner temple are performed on the 28th of every month (unpublished monthly ritual schedule for priests at Kasuisai, October 2009). Following the first morning service of the New Year, performed after midnight on January 1st, monks can be seen performing a miniature pilgrimage that connects these different spots. While most people gathered around Akiha's special worship hall to witness the first prayer ritual of the New Year, and to pray for this-worldly benefits, seven monks, equipped with lanterns, moved out to greet the gods. After paying respect to gods inside the main temple buildings with commemorative rituals, gods Benten and Bishamon were visited near the lower-level plateau behind the main gate and on the hill slope. From there, the priests turned towards the lake to greet Gyoran Kannon. The monks then circled the lake and moved on to the Inari shrine in the Northern forested area.⁶⁶

In holding out the prospect of religious healing and wish-fulfilling, Kasuisai's pilgrimage map itself becomes a religious marketing tool that shapes what visitors expect to do, see, and feel at Kasuisai. The selection of pilgrimage attractions downplays Kasuisai's

⁶⁶ Field notes 01 January 2012 WS451225; WS451226; WS451227; WS451229

role as a *danka* parish temple and Buddhist grave provider. Kasuisai's graveyard is not a part of the pilgrimage. As the map demonstrates, Kasuisai understands its pilgrimage as a joyful, authentic, yet predictable and family-friendly experience. This experience is intrinsically tied to Kasuisai's material setting and the gods it houses in designated buildings. It is within this material setting that Kasuisai distinguishes itself from a regular parish temple, yet without overtly emphasizing its role as a prayer monastery for fire protection.⁶⁷ Kasuisai rose to fame by promising fire protection, but the map does not emphasize this benefit in any particular way, nor does it emphasize Kasuisai's status as the head-center of Akiha veneration. Instead of reproducing the legend of Akiha, Kasuisai keeps its pilgrimage map vague and semantically open, by allowing visitors to tailor their miniature pilgrimage according to their individual expectations and needs.

Accessibility in an Aging Society

While Kasuisai orients its marketing towards people of all ages, the great majority of visitors are elderly tourists and Akiha devotees in their sixties to eighties. To elderly supporters, preference in visiting either Kasuisai, Shūyōji, or Akiha Shintō Shrine is often based on the question of which site they can access. Accessibility outweighs matters of sectarian affiliation or personal preference.⁶⁸ For example, visitors occasionally express their dissatisfaction about Kasuisai's lack of seclusion, but still visit Kasuisai, instead of making the trip to Mt. Akiha. "They used to go to Akiha Shintō Shrine," explains Ms. Ishii, who has been looking after guests at Kasuisai for more than a decade as a receptionist, "but Kasuisai is closer, and more

⁶⁷ While Kasuisai stands out in its own terms as a prayer monastery and tourist destination, other temples follow a similar pattern in marketing their attractions as religious experience with 'themepark' character. Yusanji 油山寺, a Shingon Buddhist temple located about three kilometers Northeast of Kasuisai, for example, specialized on haptic sensations and the feet. Yusanji also offers *kitō* prayer rituals, and is also said to house a *tengu*. The temple offers attractions that appeal to the feet in particular. Legend has it that Yusanji is protected by Gunzenbō Daigongen 軍善坊大権現, a *tengu* noted to help cure people's feet and legs. The *tengu* is said to house in a cedar (*tengu sugi* 天狗杉) on the temple grounds in the shape of a canopied tree stump, which is one of Yusanji's main attractions. Rubbing the tree stump and placing coins inside was said to bring health and wellbeing. The healing powers of Gunzenbō Daigongen may furthermore be experienced by walking a path paved with bamboo branches that were cut in half. A wooden board at the entrance of the path requests visitors to take off their shoes and walk the path barefoot. Field notes 01 January 2012 WS451252; WS451274; WS451259; 02 January 2012 WS451286; 03 January 2012 WS451316; WS451317.

⁶⁸ Interview Ms. Ishii, 23 September 2011 WS450998.

convenient, so more people are coming here to Kasuisai.”⁶⁹ These visitors do not make their choice in favor of Kasuisai because of its affiliation with the Sōtō Zen sect, nor because of Kasuisai’s self-proclaimed status as the head-center of Akiha veneration. Shūyōji at Mt. Akiha would present a Sōtō Zen alternative for Akiha devotees, and also considers itself as an original site of Akiha devotion. They choose Kasuisai for pragmatic reasons and convenience, because they lack the time and the physical fitness that is needed to make it up to the mountain.

Mt. Akiha is located a mere twenty kilometers away from Kasuisai in linear distance, but accessing the mountain is a comparably time-consuming and exhausting endeavor, especially in winter, which is the most important season for *kitō* prayers for this-worldly benefits. As with Kasuisai, the annual fire festivals at Shūyōji and Akiha Shintō Shrine are being held in mid-December, followed by the New Year’s celebrations. The trip to the mountaintop by public transport involves a slow twenty-two to twenty-four-kilometer bus ride from Nishi-Kajima Station. Kasuisai, on the other hand, is easily accessible by car or by highway-bus via the Tōmei Expressway (five minutes from the Fukuroi Interchange), or by taking the bullet train to Kakegawa and a local train to Fukuroi Station, which only takes about six minutes. From there it takes about ten minutes to reach Kasuisai by bus or taxi.

What Ms. Ishii refers to as “convenient” (*benri* 便利) above, concerns not only access to a temple or shrine per se, but access to the sites of *kitō* in particular. Since special worship halls, such as the *goshinden* for Akiha Sanjakubō at Kasuisai, are located on higher grounds, attending a *kitō* ritual typically involves the effort of walking up and down some stairs. This poses problems for physically challenged *kitō* practitioners at Daiyūzan Saijōji, where the special worship hall for Dōryō is situated on considerably higher grounds than the reception. Daiyūzan Saijōji has therefore installed a ropeway for elderly or physically challenged *kitō* practitioners and monks. Kasuisai opted for a similar solution. The monastery installed an indoor escalator that connects Kasuisai’s main hall with Akiha’s special worship hall. Construction of the escalator was enabled by donations gathered in the run-up to the 1998 *kaichō* exhibition of Akiha Sanjakubō (see below in this chapter). The Banshōzan building

⁶⁹ 秋葉神社行ってただけど、ここの可睡齋の方が近くて、便利ということで、こちらへ来る人も多くなってきたんですよ。 *Akiha jinja ittetandakedo, koko no Kasuisai no hō ga chikakute, benri toiu koto de, kochira he kuru hito mo ookunattekitandesuyo*. Quote Ms. Ishii, 23 September 2011 WS450998.

was also redesigned on this occasion. It now features automatic glass doors for an easy access to the main reception area (Shikami 1999: 10;102).

Understanding Kasuisai's Marketing of Tokugawa History as a Redistribution of Spiritual Capital

Representations of Kasuisai in sectarian media for Japanese and international audiences almost always convey a message of historical significance that implicitly or explicitly legitimizes the monastery's function as one of the most popular centers of "faith and spiritual support for the local people."⁷⁰ The same can be said about descriptions of many other venerable Sōtō Zen temples. In the case of Kasuisai, however, a focus on Tokugawa history is already suggested by Tokugawa Ieyasu's renaming of the monastery from Tōyōken to Kasuisai, or 'temple where one can sleep'. The legend of Kasuisai's role in protecting Tokugawa Ieyasu, as shall be argued, has retroactively worked to legitimize Kasuisai's status as a prayer monastery, and has stabilized Kasuisai's brand image as a place of protective powers. Kasuisai's role in Tokugawa history, and the ways in which Kasuisai markets Tokugawa history to establish this brand image are overlooked aspects in the study of modern Akiha devotion, which widely ignores aspects of religious marketing at Kasuisai that have no apparent connection with Akiha, but which nonetheless support Kasuisai's status as a prayer monastery for this-worldly benefits.

The act of saving the life of the juvenile Tokugawa Ieyasu elevated Senrin Tōzen's status from a 'regular' abbot of Kasuisai to that of a guardian of Tokugawa Ieyasu; and in that capacity to a guardian of Japan's progression to early modernity. This understanding is reflected in representations of Kasuisai's tales of origin, and in discussions about Kasuisai's legitimacy as a prayer temple, which increased with Ieyasu's political success as the virtual ruler of Japan. It was not only the bestowal of the status of 'supervisory temple' (*sōrokuji*) on Kasuisai by the Tokugawa that contributed to this increase in legitimacy, but also the fact that Kasuisai had 'predicted' Ieyasu's significance well before his rise to power. The risk that Senrin Tōzen took in guarding the future founder of the Tokugawa Bakufu legitimizes ascriptions to Kasuisai as an institution with prophetic authority, where Buddhist priests made

⁷⁰ Quote Sotozen-Net <http://global.sotozen-net.or.jp/eng/temples/jp/kasuisai.html>, accessed 12 September 2016. See also Sōtōshū shūmuchō (2011).

the right decisions at the right moments of time to ensure the future success and safety of their temple and its patrons and supporters.

Visitors to Kasuisai are invited to follow in Ieyasu's footsteps by praying for their own good fortune and protection. Just as Tokugawa Ieyasu – with the help of Kasuisai – gained control over Japan, the underlying message is that visitors may now gain control over the regime of their selves. In other words, Kasuisai, in its capacity as a source of cultural identity, becomes a place that facilitates a process of self-assertion among temple visitors. Kasuisai in its capacity as a prayer monastery for this-worldly benefits is almost always discussed through the lens of its status and function as head-center of Akiha veneration, and Akiha Sanjakubō is indeed the most popular god that *kitō* practitioners turn to at Kasuisai. The embeddedness of Akiha at Kasuisai, however, materializes within the context of Tokugawa history, regardless of the fact that Akiha was brought to Kasuisai only after the Edo period. This fact must not be ignored in the study of Buddhist prayer monasteries (on the subject of embeddedness, see Levine 2005 about the visual cultures of the Rinzai Zen monastery Daitokuji 大徳寺).

While Kasuisai received the icon of Akiha Sanjakubō only after the Meiji restoration, this is not something that visitors or the priests give much attention to. Historical facts are not the motivating factor for religious practice. Kasuisai, as mentioned before, advertises Akiha veneration as a 'folk belief' with a history of 1,300 years in Japan, not as a modern "invented tradition" (see Hobsbawm and Ranger eds. 1983), and tends to downplay the historical events that led to the disassociation of Buddhas and *kami* at Mt. Akiha in Meiji Japan. The historical backgrounds of Kasuisai in the Edo period, on the other hand, are part of tour guide pamphlets and everyday generic introductions of the monastery's history to temple visitors. The description of Kasuisai on the official sectarian website Sotozen-Net, moreover, does not miss to point out that Ieyasu was a fierce believer in Daikoku, a god noted to promise wealth and worldly success.⁷¹ Kasuisai has dedicated a shrine building to Daikoku on its temple grounds, as one of the photographs on Sotozen-Net illustrates.

By presenting its Tokugawa history in a way that legitimizes ascriptions to Kasuisai as a *kitō jūin* with prophetic authority, and by deemphasizing the role of Akiha devotion for Kasuisai's status as a successful prayer monastery, representations of Kasuisai in sectarian

⁷¹ See Sotozen-Net <http://global.sotozen-net.or.jp/eng/temples/jp/kasuisai.html>, accessed 12 September 2016. For a study of Daikoku and his role as one of the Seven Lucky Gods (*shichifukujin* 七福神) in Japan, see Schönemann (2011).

channels like Sotozen-Net implicitly attribute Kasuisai's success to the superiority of Sōtō Zen Buddhism. Akiha devotion is entirely ignored in the representation of Kasuisai on Sotozen-Net. No mention of the fire god is made on the website. Kasuisai also refrains from giving details about Akiha on its own official internet portal. Brief mention of Akiha is only made twice: in a side note about Kasuisai's objects of worship, and as part of an explanation of the prices for *kitō*.⁷² This absence of information on the fire god indicates that different channels are used in the marketing and advertising of Akiha devotion (see Chapter Three of this dissertation), and shows that sectarian information platforms and even prayer monasteries are wary about integrating and localizing local deity cults within institutionalized Sōtō Zen Buddhism, especially when it comes to attracting younger generations of Japanese.

By granting access to and providing the material and religious care of a variety of special objects on Kasuisai's grounds, visitors get to experience Tokugawa history in material, tangible ways. The most widespread association with the Tokugawa is found in casts and imprints of the Tokugawa family crest. The Tokugawa crest displays three Hollyhock leaves in a circle. It is found on countless roof tiles at Kasuisai, on plates that grace the walls inside the temple buildings, and on garments that frame the sides of the altars.⁷³ The special bond with the Tokugawa furthermore materializes in a massive memorial tablet (*ihai*) for Tokugawa Ieyasu, which is exhibited in the monastery's museum. Other special objects include a palanquin that was used by generations of monks, who reported demographic changes of the Suruga, Tōtōmi, Mikawa, and Izu provinces to the military government in Edo. The cave where the young Tokugawa Ieyasu found shelter is periodically opened for visitors as an attraction for good fortune (*kaiun* 開運).⁷⁴ It resembles the shape of a snail shell, with the lowest section of the inner curve deep inside the cave being guarded by an illuminated Buddha statue. The cave is a popular hideout for cicadas during summer, and its entrance is embraced by a tree that is estimated to be 200 to 400 years old, which suggests that it was

⁷² See <http://www.kasuisai.or.jp/about/index.html> and <http://www.kasuisai.or.jp/facilities/price.html>, accessed 12 September 2016.

⁷³ See photos 21 September 2011 CIMG9344 and 13 September 2011 CIMG7657.

⁷⁴ The caves name is *shusse roku no ji no ana* 出世「六の字穴」. *Shusse* means career and here signifies that this cave marked the start of Tokugawa Ieyasu's remarkable career. *Roku no ji no ana* can be understood literally as "cave in the shape of a figure six." It is also known as *hora roku* ほら六 or "cave [in the shape of a] six." A sign nearby the cave explains that the term *roku ni ji* derives from the six forms of Kannon. See also Sōtōshū shūmuchō (2011: 53). Kasuisai furthermore promotes the cave as *kaiun roku no ji ana* 開運六の字穴 ("cave in the shape of a figure six for good fortune") on a map for visitors that introduces thirty-three attractions of Kasuisai in the form of a power spot temple-pilgrimage.

likely planted during the Tokugawa period.⁷⁵ Here, Tokugawa history blends with the spectacle of nature and an otherworldly realm of Buddha's power, as marked by the statue in front of the cave's innermost section, which is off-limits to visitors. A clear distinction between 'sacred' and 'profane' spaces, or 'historical' and 'sacred' spaces is neither intended, nor do temple visitors perceive or expect distinctions.

The marketing of Kasuisai as a site of interaction with the Tokugawa is being reinforced on an international scale, thanks to a "Tokugawa boom" (*Tokugawa būmu* 徳川ブーム)⁷⁶ in other Asian areas, notably Taiwan. The *Yomiuri Shimbun* of 09 September 2011 reports about this trend with reference to a poll conducted by the Shizuoka Research Institute in summer 2011:

In Shizuoka Prefecture, 'hot springs' and 'Mt. Fuji' are not the only tourist attractions in demand. 'Tokugawa Ieyasu' also ranks high [third in Taipei; fifth in Seoul; seventh in Shanghai], as has been shown by a poll that asked the views of residents of Shanghai, Seoul, and Taipei. All respondents had visited Japan before. The Shizuoka Research Institute (SRI) reported these findings on the fifth [of September 2011]. Subject of the poll were 1,500 residents of the aforementioned three cities who had visited Japan before. The survey was conducted from 20 July to 09 August 2011 on the internet. [...] The SRI emphasizes that "spreading information about famous sites with a connection to the life of Tokugawa Ieyasu, such as the Kunō Tōshōgū, is an important means of attracting tourism."⁷⁷

Clergy at Kasuisai, among them Ishida Ryōshō, argue that this interest in tourism to sites of the Tokugawa is rooted in television dramas, particularly *Mito Kōmon*.⁷⁸ During my fieldwork

⁷⁵ Interview Ishida Ryōshō, 09 August 2011 WS450120

⁷⁶ This expression was used by monks at Kasuisai.

⁷⁷ *Shizuoka-ken ni kitai sareru kankō shigen wa 'onsen' 'Fuji-san' dake denaku, 'Tokugawa Ieyasu' mo jōi ni agerareta koto ga, Shanhai, Souru, Taipei no mittsu no toshi ni sumu rainichi keikensha wo taishō to shita ankēto chōsa de wakatta. Shizuoka Sōgō Kenkyū Kikō ga itsuka, happyō shita. Chōsa wa kotoshi shichigatsu nijūkunichi kara hachigatsu kokonoka [ni kakete], mittsu no toshi no rainichi keikensha-kei issengohyaku nin wo taishō ni intānetto wo tsūjite okonawareta. [...] Dō-kikō de wa, Kunō Tōshōgū nado no Tokugawa Ieyasu yukari no meisho wo soto ni mukatte hasshin shiteiku koto ga, kankō yūchi wo suru ue de jūyō" to shiteiru.* 静岡県に期待される観光資源は「温泉」「富士山」だけでなく、「徳川家康」も上位に挙げられたことが、上海、ソウル、台北の3都市に住む来日経験者を対象としたアンケート調査でわかった。静岡総合研究機構が5日、発表した。調査は今年7月29日～8月9日、3都市の来日経験者計1500人を対象にインターネットを通じて行われた。[...] 同機構では「久能山東照宮などの徳川家康ゆかりの名所を外に向かって発信していくことが、観光誘致をする上で重要」としている。(Yomiuri Shimbun, 09 September 2011).

⁷⁸ Interview Andō Ryōsuke, 16 September 2011 WS450540 and interview Ishida Ryōshō, 16 September 2011 WS450545. The television series, which consists of 1,227 episodes, is the

at Kasuisai, visitors have frequently pointed out the presence of the Tokugawa crest at Kasuisai without my prompting in any way, especially in cases where the interviewees tried to convey the significance of Kasuisai's prestigious association with the Tokugawa to me. The priests were proud of this connection, and of their role in keeping Tokugawa history at Kasuisai alive.⁷⁹ During my fieldwork at Kasuisai, a Taiwanese television team was scheduled to visit Kasuisai to record footage for a program on Kasuisai's Tokugawa history. Two other groups of visitors from Taiwan have arrived shortly after my fieldwork: A group of school teachers from Taiwan was scheduled to arrive at Kasuisai on the 4th of October to explore Kasuisai's affiliation with the Tokugawa and the possibility of a stay with Taiwanese students. The other group, consisting of ten agents of the China Airlines office in Taiwan, was scheduled to arrive on September 27th to experience Kasuisai's vegetarian cloister cuisine.⁸⁰ Here, international outreach focused on Kasuisai's affiliation with the Tokugawa facilitated the marketing of other products, notably Kasuisai's role as a monastery for overnight stays, where guests may experience a variety of Zen-style practices and goods.

Whereas interest in Tokugawa history continues to attract visitors at Kasuisai, and even international tourists, modernity does not seem to have the same appeal. Material representations of Meiji Buddhism at Kasuisai, notably the 'nation-protecting stupa' (*gokokutō*), are not nearly as popular.⁸¹ The ways in which Kasuisai and sectarian media make

longest-running historical period drama (*jidaigeki* 時代劇) in Japan. It was first released in 1969; production ended in December 2011. The drama's lead character is based on the historic Tokugawa Mitsukuni, who was the son of Tokugawa Yorifusa and one of Tokugawa Ieyasu's grandsons. Mitsukuni travels around Japan with his entourage of samurai, yet he does so incognito, by acting in the guise of the retired merchant Mitsuemon. The cases of corruption and injustice that Mitsukuni encounters during his travels are typically solved by his vigorous sense of justice. The investigation culminates in a violent brawl that comes to a sudden end when one of the protagonists reveals Mitsukuni's true identity by flashing the Tokugawa crest.

⁷⁹ Interview Ishida Ryōshō, 7 September 2011 WS450148.

⁸⁰ Interview Andō Ryōsuke, 16 September 2011 WS450540 and interview Ishida Ryōshō, 16 September 2011 WS450545.

⁸¹ See field note 14 September 2011 WS450381 and interview Mr. Miyazaki, 26 September 2011 WS451107. This is not to say that clergy and locals are not working on making the *gokokutō* known. Part of my fieldwork at Kasuisai took place in the midst of preparations for the celebration of the one-hundredth anniversary of the stupa in 2011. My informants (among them a retired superintendent of education (*kyōikuchō* 教育長) and other local temple supporters) expressed a desire to establish the *gokokutō* as an equivalent to the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo. Their goal was for the *gokokutō* to represent for Western Japan what Yasukuni Shrine represented for Eastern Japan: a place for the commemoration of Japan's war dead, where religious professionals, in this case Zen Buddhist priests, conduct rituals at the intersection of religion and politics. However, as local supporters of this endeavor pointed

Kasuisai's Tokugawa history explicit – through descriptions of material Buddhist culture and in the marketing of the monastery – stand out from other periods. Modern Akiha devotion, the premodern history of the Akiha cult in Japan, and the importance of the Akiha cult for Kasuisai's success as a prayer monastery, by contrast, are downplayed in the monastery's self-representations on the internet and on site. This alone suggests that Tokugawa history is an important source for spiritual capital at Kasuisai; one that intersects seamlessly with Akiha devotion and the veneration of other local gods, like Daikoku, for this-worldly benefits. The unique narrative of Kasuisai emerges within this ever-shifting constellation of historical representations through tangible material objects and icons, and their mediation.

Ritual Circuits of Worship

Performing Urgency: *Kitō* as a Staged Moment of Crisis

Kitō is a practice for crisis management and disaster prevention. This facet of *kitō* is obvious in cases where clients request *kitō* to alleviate their suffering. During my fieldwork at Kasuisai, I met people who were barely able to walk to or sit through the prayers they had requested, due to pain or emotional stress. On September 17 September 2011, a man in his mid-thirties entered Kasuisai with a splint on his hand. His left forearm and his chest were covered in bandages. I requested an interview, as I joined staff in walking him out. Upon asking him for his reasons to visit Kasuisai, he explained:

[...] A *kitō* prayer ritual had been performed on my behalf [about two to three years ago], and it really put an end to my misfortune. It really worked. I had sustained many injuries until then, besides suffering from other calamities. After the *kitō*, nothing bad happened for two to three years! And so I completely forgot about it, until recently I hurt myself again here and there [...], so I came back to pray.⁸²

out, the *gokokutō* and its purpose are hardly known in Japan, even among residents of Fukuroi city.

⁸² Interview Mr. Nakamura, 17 September 2011 WS450653: [...] *ikkai kitō shite moratte, sōshitara, ano, sainan ga nakunattandesuyo, hontō ni. Sore made chotto kega suru no mo ookute, ano, wazawai mo attandesukedo, koko de ikkai kitō shitemoratte, un, sō desune, nisan-nen mō nani mo nakute! nnde, sukkari wasurete, de, saikin made chotto, iroiro kega shiteiru toka [...] mata kotchi ni kite, onegai shiyō to omottekitandesuyo.* 一回祈禱してもらって、そうしたら、あの、災難がなくなったんですよ、本当に。それまでちょっとケガするのも多くて、あの、災いもあったんですけど、ここで一回祈禱してもらって、うん、そうですね、2~3年もうなにもなくて！んで、すっかり忘れて、で、最

The man left Akiha's special worship hall with a smile of relief on that day, carrying in his uninjured arm the largest wooden *ofuda* お札 amulet available.

Ishida Ryōshō, a monk in office at Kasuisai, explains the demand for *kitō* with the desire to remove *yaku* 厄; literally “something bad,” or negative. Referring to people who are suffering pain, or emotional stress, he explained: “They practice *kitō*, because they want these bad things purified, taken off, and removed from them.”⁸³ *Kitō* thereby functions a means of curing specific ailments. It is a practice aimed to alleviate suffering. This understanding of *kitō* as a response to emergency situations is reflected in theological reflections of the practice by Sōtō Zen scholars. Nakano Tōzen (2003b: 1) claims that “genuine suffering” (*shintei kara no kunō* 心底からの苦悩) has to be the central motivation for *kitō*, or else Kannon (the Bodhisattva of mercy) would not even listen to the prayer request. Nakano explicitly rejects the idea of “half-conceived, ‘egoistic’ prayers” (*chūtō hanpa na ‘jiko chūshin’ no inori* 中東半端の「自己中心」の祈り) as pointless, for in his opinion they will “remain unanswered by the Buddhas” (*hotoke to no kyōmei wa okorienai* 仏との共鳴は起こり得ない). This powerful restriction of *kitō*, published in the foreword to the standard work *Sōtōshū kitō taikai dai-ni kan* 曹洞宗祈祷大系第2巻 (*Overview of the kitō Prayer Rituals of the Sōtō Zen Sect – Volume Two*), is characteristic of the various warnings and attempts by Sōtō Zen priests and sectarian intellectuals to define *kitō* as a practice that should only be practiced when justified by special needs, in times of crisis.

As concerns over the spread of *kitō* indicate, and as the many attempts to restrict the functions of *kitō* may already suggest,⁸⁴ the social reality of prayers for this-worldly benefits at Sōtō Zen Buddhist temples is somewhat different to what Nakano and other sectarian intellectuals wish for. In the majority of cases at Kasuisai, *kitō* is practiced as part of regular circuits of ritual worship, and not in response to “genuine suffering.” Nearly all of the prayer

近までちょっと、色々ケガしているとか [...] またこっちに来て、お願いしようと思ってきたんですよ。

⁸³ Interview Ishida Ryōshō, 17 September 2011 WS450649: *Sore wo haratte moraitai, totte moraitai, nozoite moraitai. Sōiu tame ni gokitō suru.* それを払ってもらいたい、取ってもらいたい、除いてもらいたい。そういうために御祈祷する。

⁸⁴ See also the discussion of the so-called spiritual intellectuals in Chapter Three for an examination of attempts to discursively distinguish *kitō* from ‘occult’ practices. Nakano (2003b: 1-2) furthermore restricts *kitō* by stating that the primary principle of *kitō* was enlightenment. Salvation and this-worldly benefits, including world peace, according to Nakano, are only secondary principles.

requests made by groups are part of annual temple visits; more than half of the prayer requests by individual temple visitors are made around the New Year, as part of annual or irregular visits to prayer monasteries.⁸⁵ The practice of *kitō*, in other words, does not in and of itself signify a crisis or emergency in the lives of practitioners, but may even signify the absence of risks or problems, considering that prayer monasteries prospered during Japan's post-war economic growth (see Chapter Three).

In order to find out what attracts and draws *kitō* practitioners to prayer monasteries, it is helpful to take a closer look at the performance of *kitō*, as it relates to 'crisis'. All *kitō* performances have in common that the practice 'generates' a sense of crisis. The ritual performance is designed to make the crisis that prayers for crisis management mean to respond manageable, and to allow for the experience of urgency and chaos within the stable ritual framework. The experience of *kitō* as a staged moment of crisis allows participants to actualize past crisis moments, and to prepare for future hardship mentally. Other common purposes ascribed to *kitō* are recreation; *kitō* as an expression of earnest religious commitment; *kitō* as a means of paying respect to the Buddhas and local temple-guarding gods; and to charge material Buddhist objects with supernatural powers. *Kitō* as a staged moment of crisis furthermore enables moments of spiritual care before and after the ritual. The benefit of spiritual care has been widely ignored in studies of prayer Buddhism and this-worldly benefits that introduce particular temples by referring to their most popular prayer category, such as fire protection in the case of Kasuisai.

Kasuisai is best-known for promising fire protection, but *kitō* performances for wealth and good fortune are just as dramatic. From the viewpoint of the ritual performance (see Bell 1998), all prayer rituals at Kasuisai are practically identical, regardless of their promised this-worldly benefit.⁸⁶ This absence of distinguishing markers in prayer rituals for different benefits is reflected in the overall disregard of normative prayer categories, like fire

⁸⁵ There are three different types of *kitō* at Kasuisai: (1) *kitō* performed as part of an annual ritual calendar. The morning *kitō* is performed every morning, regardless of individual prayer requests. (2) *kitō* performed annually on behalf of temple support associations (*daisan kō* 代参講). These groups commonly choose all *kitō* options available, to avert any type of disaster or misfortune, and to pray for good fortune for their communities generally. (3) *kitō* for individual temple visitors and their particular needs. The majority of annual *kitō* requests by individual temple visitors are made around the month of January, to pray for a good start into the New Year.

⁸⁶ The same can be said about the prayer rituals at other *kitō jūin*. For edited footage of a prayer ritual performed by monks at Daiyūzan Saijōji, see Graf 2012.

prevention, or household protection. About 90 percent of all forms used for groups to sign up for *kitō* at Kasuisai have either written *ono ono* 各々 written across all prayer categories with pen or brush, or the field was entirely left blank, meaning that all of the following options were selected:

Household protection	家内安全	<i>kanai anzen</i>
Fire extinction (prevention)	火災消除	<i>kasai shōjo</i>
Elimination of various problems and crisis	諸難消滅	<i>shonan shōmetsu</i>
Prosperous business	生業繁栄	<i>seigyō han'ei</i>
Fulfillment of a wish made by heart	心願成就	<i>shingan jōju</i>
Good fortune	如意吉祥	<i>nyoi kisshō</i>

Not few first-time visitors to Kasuisai look surprised, or even worried when they notice how their prayer requests put an end to the sense of solemnity and monastic silence. As soon as the ritual is paid for, staff at the reception press a button, and the sound of a cuckoo shatters the air. For the monks, this means action. Trainees suddenly interrupt their cleaning chores, or whatever it was that they were doing at the moment. Those who cleaned the yard bring back their brooms. Others hush through the hallways inside, bowing hastily in front of visitors and the Buddhas whenever they pass them. Larger groups of visitors use to announce their visits. Individual prayer requests, however, are to be expected at any moment of the day. If no other ritual takes place, Kasuisai responds to individual prayer requests on the spot. The monks rush to their quarters, and dress up for the prayer ritual, which would typically begin fifteen to twenty minutes later. The urgency with which monks and staff respond to prayer requests at Kasuisai resembles the standby service of firefighters, who take immediate action upon an emergency call. It is within this performance of urgency before the ritual starts that clients feel appreciated and well looked after. Their concerns are taken seriously; the legitimacy of their prayer requests is at no point questioned or belittled. The need for prayer is confirmed by the array of monks taking action.

The sense of urgency, as observed in the handling of prayer requests at Kasuisai, is prolonged into the prayer ritual. Every movement of the monks inside Akiha's special worship hall has been meticulously rehearsed. Seemingly chaotic episodes during a *kitō* prayer ritual are intentional. Access to the ritual stage is only granted to monks who accomplished the necessary monastic training (see Chapter Four of this dissertation). The hall itself is dimly lit, and impossible to oversee for observing ritual participants, due to the

elevated positions of the stage and the altar. This is particularly true for *kitō* at Daiyūzan, where the prayer hall resembles a tunnel that is deeper than Akiha's worship hall. Only about a third of the space in Akiha's special worship hall is designated for observing ritual participants, who sit facing the altar, and the back of the ceremonial leader or officiant (*dōshi* 導師), who is responsible for mediating the wishes to the gods. *Tengu* masks and scripture rolls on the walls add to a sense of dramatic otherness that distinguish these special worship halls as centers of worship. This setting is exclusive to the practice of *kitō*; no other rituals are performed inside the special worship hall. Most other religious services at Kasuisai take place at the monasterie's main hall, which lacks these material attributes of secrecy, darkness, drama and danger. Special worship halls are typically small enough to amplify the base of the *taiko* 太鼓 drums so that practitioners feel the beat in their midribs. The arrangement of the hall resembles as a subwoofer. The ceremonial leader's position furthermore allows observing ritual participants to get a glimpse of his secretive hand movements, but makes it impossible to observe in detail what he is doing with his hands and the special ritual objects that are brought to him by a monk who wears a white face mask and a screaming green robe – a sight rather unusual for 'regular' Buddhist temples in Japan that do not accommodate a powerful, potentially harmful mountain ghost.

A peak moment of crisis is marked by the peak of musical suspense. The music stops for the incantation of fire god Akiha, the Buddhas, and patriarchs of Ch'an, followed recitations of the wishes of the practitioners who requested these prayers. Another climax is reached with *tendoku* 転読, the accordion-style reading by throwing, or "revolving reading" (Foult 2010b: 314) of all 600 fascicles of the *Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra* for the purpose of generating merit. Considered as a practice at the heart of *kitō* by Sōtō scholar Sakurai Hideo (1989: 66-67), *tendoku* allows the monks to 'access' the sutra for this-worldly benefits without actually having to read it.⁸⁷ In a *kitō* ritual, the *Heart of the Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra* (*Maka hannya haramitta shingyō* 摩訶般若波羅蜜多心經) is recited, along

⁸⁷ While *tendoku* is rarely discussed in the context of *kitō*, due to the overall lack of concern for prayer ritual for this-worldly benefits, it is still a part of the revolving reading of the *Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra* (*tendoku daihannya* 転読大般若) performed on the occasion of the New Year's assembly (*shushō'e* 修正会). As such, it is performed at all training monasteries, if only rarely. As Griffith Foult remarks: "Even people who wish to deny the centrality of merit production and dedication in Zen practice would have a hard time rationalizing this rite, for it cannot be explained away as an educational or meditative exercise" (Foult 2010b: 41).

with dharani. The ‘quintessential words of truth’ (*shingon* 真言) of specific gods are repeated three times.⁸⁸ Accordingly, while adhering to a fixed ritual pattern, different prayer temples may perform varieties of *kitō* using different *shingon* for different gods. The rhythms of the *taiko* drum may also vary. Toyokawa Inari, Daiyūzan Saijōji, and Kasuisai, three of the largest Sōtō Zen prayer monasteries, each developed unique *kitō* drum rhythms as markers of habitual distinction (see Chapter Four). All *kitō jin* have in common that they rely on the power of monks in training, who chant and play the drum as loud as they can.

This specific relationship between the practitioners and their environment exemplifies what Birgit Meyer calls a “sensational form.” Sensational forms, according to Meyer, are “relatively fixed authorized modes of invoking and organizing access to the transcendental” (Meyer 2008: 707; quoted in Prohl 2015: 12. See also Meyer 2006). This definition entails that sensational forms generate religious sensations in a process that makes presumed supernatural forces or concepts tangible through sensuous perception. Access to these forces or concepts is often restricted, and subject to the authority of religious elites. The sensational form of *kitō* as practiced at Kasuisai and other prayer monasteries elucidates how the ability of monks to evoke a religious sensation is deeply embedded in the set and setting of the special worship hall.

Sectarian scholar Matsumoto Kōichi (1989: 40;53-54) follows a similar understanding in his assessment of the materiality of Sōtō Zen prayer rituals. Matsumoto describes *kitō* as an art form that requires fusing the ritual space with sentiments of those who requested the prayer (*kigansha* 祈願者). Participation in the prayer ritual is described by Matsumoto as an “ascetic practice” (*gyō* 行) that involves the body (Matsumoto 1989: 54). Following this interpretation, ritual participants are not merely observers or the recipients of merits, but active agents. The theological conclusion that Matsumoto draws from his observation of this the specific relationship between the practitioners and their environment indicates that Sōtō Zen scholars are concerned with the particular ways in which this interplay may enable or delegitimize the role of *kitō* as a means of sectarian edification (*kyōka* 教化). The formal, fixed, and normative aspects of *kitō* on the one hand, and the subjective wishes and individual desires of those who request these rituals on the other, Matsumoto argues, need to be harmonized. He compares these two aspects of “prayer” (*inori*) with two wheels that move in

⁸⁸ Akiha Sanjakubō’s *shingon* reads *on pira pira ken pira ken nō sowa ka* 奄昆羅昆羅乾昆羅乾能娑婆訶.

the same direction as part of the same vehicle. Conversely, Matsumoto criticizes prayer rituals that lack this alignment: “The amazing merit of *kitō* becomes the demerit of edification, when priests practice one *kitō* after another like a ritual machine, insensibly and without listening to the voices of those who sit behind them, and their wishes and prayers” (Matsumoto 1989: 51).⁸⁹

As this critique of “mindless” *kitō* may suggest, images of *kitō jin* as sites where monks perform rituals like robots, without paying attention to the individual wishes and needs of practitioners, are widespread. This image is partly due to the fact that monks at prayer monasteries do not have time to attend to the individual needs of temple visitors, at least not around January, when thousands of temple visitors join in on the custom of praying for a good start into the New Year. The experience of *kitō* as a staged moment of crisis on any average day over the rest of the year, however, is different from what images of *kitō* in early January may suggest. On a regular day, monks and temple staff do find the time to engage in conversations with prayer ritual applicants. The man who entered Kasuisai with a splint on his hand, for example, spent about one hour at Kasuisai, but the ritual itself lasts only for about 40 minutes. *Kitō* applicants may spend up to half an hour talking about their troubles and worries.

The interpersonal connections with staff and monks form an integral part of the benefit of *kitō*. As paying customers, *kitō* participants receive considerably more attention by staff and monks than other guests. The differentiation starts with the parking: A parking lot exclusively for *kitō* participants is located at the foot of the stairs to the ‘mountain gate’ closer to the main building complex than any other guest parking lot. Those who sign up for a prayer ritual are invited to have a look at the attractions inside, should the waiting take longer, whereas visitors who miss to introduce themselves at the reception are sometimes treated with suspicion, especially if they attempt to cross the reception area. *Kitō* practitioners engage in conversations with staff and monks who guide them on their way in and out of the monastery. At Kasuisai, at least one monk – typically a senior monk experienced in guest management – is assigned to guide the *kitō* participants throughout the ritual, by sitting with them in the audience section of the special worship hall, preparing them for the ritual, and telling them

⁸⁹ *Kitōsha ga haigo no “negai” no koe ni mimi wo kasanaide, tada kitō wo mukandō ni hanpaku suru gishiki mashin ni natte shimatta toki, kitō no motsu subarashii merito ga, sono mama kyōka no demeritto da toiu koto [...]. 祈禱者が背後の「ねがい」の声に耳をかさないで、ただ祈禱を無感動に反復する儀式マシンになってしまったとき、祈禱のもつ素晴らしいメリットが、そのまま教化のデメリットだということ[...].*

when to bow and how to offer incense. The monks, while maintaining a formal attitude, share the experience of *kitō* with the guests, and normally allow them to ask questions and talk about their needs and problems, once the ritual has come to an end.⁹⁰ Conversations continue on the way out to the reception, where staff and monks sell tea and snacks, souvenirs, and protective amulets.⁹¹ Female temple staff in particular function as mediators: they pitch information between the monks and the guests, and serve as what could be termed counselors by listening to the needs of *kitō* practitioners, and by sharing advice over tea.⁹² It is within this context of practical benefits that we may understand why some ninety percent of all prayer rituals for individual guests at Kasuisai are being performed in the presence of those who requested them.⁹³ This aspect of emotional care is arguably also what Matsumoto (1989: 52) suggests in his call for a critical understanding of *kitō* as a Mahayana practice for the salvation of others, beyond stereotypical ascriptions to formal ritual aspects and normative prayer categories.

A Festival for Fire Protection

Every year in December, Kasuisai, Akiha Shintō Shrine, Shūyōji, and other temples and shrines in Japan hold festivals for fire protection (*kabō* 火坊) in veneration of fire god Akiha. These community events are organized by clergy, temple support associations, affiliated parish households, and local fire departments.⁹⁴ The focus of ritual practice at Kasuisai and

⁹⁰ Prayer rituals are followed by short sermons that have an educational as well as promotional component, but the ceremonial leader who gives these sermons typically leaves the stage without opening the floor for discussion.

⁹¹ Popular foods sold at Kasuisai are *nureokaki* ぬれおかき (baked rice crackers with soy sauce taste) and Kasuisai-branded “prayer tea” (*kigancha* 祈願茶). Packs with 70g of green tea are sold in two different blends for 1,050 Yen (about 10 USD). Purchasing these items as gifts for loved ones is a practical way of supporting the temple and its affiliated communities. A security camera in Akiha’s special worship hall shows staff at the reception when to expect customers. Field note 26 September 2011 WS451106.

⁹² Field note 17 September 2011 WS450651

⁹³ This number excludes temple support associations. Interview Ishida Ryōshō, 17 September 2011 WS450649. Ishida Ryōshō had spent more than four years at Kasuisai at the time of our interview, and was deeply involved in guiding *kitō* practitioners, among other groups of visitors.

⁹⁴ According to a nationwide Sōtō Zen survey on Akiha devotion, annual fire festivals were held by nearly 60 percent of all responding Akiha temples (see Sugawara 1998: 268-269). The survey, which was conducted between 1 May and 31 August 1997, addressed 357 Shintō shrines, 1,563 Buddhist temple, and 1,613 local municipalities (*jichitai* 自治体). 43 shrines (12.1 percent), 247 temples (15.8 percent), and 677 municipalities (42 percent) responded.

fire festivals at other temples is on *kitō* prayer rituals for this-worldly benefits, recitation of the *Heart Sutra*, and the distribution of protective *ofuda* amulets.

Historical perspectives as presented by Yoshida Shun'ei (1998: 223-225) elucidate how the rivalry between competing institutions in Shizuoka and Aichi Prefectures has elicited the transformation of local fire festivals into spectacular events that involve dance performances, fire walks (*hi watari* 火渡り), and processions with portable shrines (*mikoshi* 神輿 or 御輿). Shūyōji, for example, began to introduce its fire walks only around the year of 1935. It is likely that the members of temple support associations (*kō*) urged Shūyōji to organize a fire walk as part of the fire festival at Shūyōji in response to Kasuisai, where festival attendants were invited to walk over logs placed on glowing coals, as a means of generating or receiving this-worldly benefits. Likewise, Kasuisai is said to have started using a portable shrine in response to the use of a portable shrine at Akiha Shintō Shrine and Shūyōji. When Kasuisai's inner temple was replaced with a temporary structure in 1913, after a fire had destroyed Kasuisai's inner temple in 1912, a Kasuisai-affiliated temple support association donated a portable shrine for the purpose of carrying Akiha from its special worship hall to the inner temple. The portable shrine allowed the monks to introduce what nowadays marks the climax of the annual fire festival: the feeding of Akiha and other *tengu* at the inner temple at midnight.

At Kasuisai, the fire festival starts in the morning of December 15. The celebration culminates in the feeding of the fire god at midnight, and continues until the morning of December 16. For the clergy, however, ritual preparations for the fire festival begin much earlier, on the first of December. Participating monks undergo a series of austere practices for ritual purification, beginning with a *sesshin* 接心, a phase characterized by intense periods of ritual sitting. The *sesshin* closes on 8 December with the beginning of the *jōdō'e* 成道会, a ceremony in commemoration of Buddha Shakyamuni's great awakening, also commonly known as Bodhi Day. Rituals in commemoration of Buddha Shakyamuni continue until December 10, when preparations for the fire festival intensify. Between December 10 and December 16, monks at Kasuisai purify themselves their bodies and minds with ice cold water in a practice called *suigyō* 水行. The monks shower themselves naked outside in the winter's

The returns were considered high, since many shrines and temples were expected to be unattended by clergy. An average of 47.3 agents were involved in organizing a local fire festival. Most festivals were held in winter.

cold three times a day, to purify their bodies and minds (*shinshin wo kiyomeru* 心身を浄め
る). During that week, a select group of monks who handle Akiha's body during the fire
festival are living in secluded from the outside world for ritual purification, and to avoid
pollution (*shōjin kessai* 精進潔齋).⁹⁵

I was given the opportunity to conduct participant observation at Kasuisai's fire
festivals in 2010 and in 2011. The reception for *kitō* for this-worldly benefits opened at 08:00
a.m. on 15 December. The first prayer ritual started one hour later, and was followed by many
more prayers throughout the day. A charity bazar opened at 10:00 a.m. A large-scale prayer
ritual on the occasion of the festival (*taisai daikitō* 大祭大祈祷) was held at 03:00 p.m. Thirty
minutes later, Akiha Sanjakubō was transferred to the inner temple building in his portable
shrine (*omikoshi togyo* 御輿渡御). A dinner for guests was offered at 05:00 p.m. in the *saidō*
hall, followed by artistic fire dances and other outdoor activities that start after dark, at 06:30
p.m.⁹⁶

The main ritual events began with a procession that started around 07:20 p.m.
Continuous chants of a passage from the Heart Sutra known as Akiha's quintessential words
of truth (*shingon*) filled the air over the steady rhythm of a *taiko* drum. The participants
carried instruments like conch horns and gongs, lanterns, burning pine tree logs, and torches.
The procession then moved from the parking lot outside Kasuisai's main gate all the way up
to the yard at the main building complex, where a special *kitō* prayer ritual was performed
outdoors surrounding a fire (see Graf 2012). It involved the burning of *goma* 護摩, or wooden
plaques for both this-worldly benefits as well as the veneration of ancestral souls. The
procession preceding the ritual was led by leading parishioners (*sōdai* 総代), followed by
high-ranking leaders of temple support associations and other members of Kasuisai, as well as
local fire fighters. Some of the men wore ceremonial garments and accoutrements of
mountain ascetics, others were dressed with robes, wands and *tengu* masks. Fireworks lit the
sky surrounding the fire, while visitors lined up for the fire walk, one of the festival's
highlights. The fire walk was scheduled to start at 08:30 p.m. in front of Akiha Sanjakubō's
special worship hall. Accepting the challenge of walking over fire is said to bring good
fortune in the coming year. Those who walked over the coals received a talisman for fire
protection. Visiting priests from outside areas, who had trained at Kasuisai before, supported

⁹⁵ Undated handout Nr. 1. Received by Kasuisai on the occasion of the fire festival 2010.

⁹⁶ For audiovisual impressions of the fire festival at Kasuisai, see Graf 2012.

the local monks with sutra chants. Throughout the day, the sound of prayer rituals performed inside the *goshinden* was broadcasted with speakers for everyone to hear outside, but the outdoor prayer ritual was by far the loudest and most intense *kitō* performance of all. It was also slower and lasted much longer than the regular *kitō* prayers performed inside the special worship hall, which contributed to an atmosphere of solemn gravity. The soundscape created by the continuous chants over the blistering fire and cracking fireworks were extraordinary, and so were the shadows cast by the fire, which gave participants with *tengu* masks and robes the appearance of actual mountain ghosts.

By combining ritual components with seemingly ‘mundane’ ludic activities, this characteristic interplay of visual, auditory, and olfactory dimensions is designed to create a religious sensation of danger, adventure, and serious religious commitment. The preparation of the fire walk, for example, involved elaborate sword dances for the purpose of a ritual purification of the fireplace by the members of a Kasuisai-affiliated support association. These dances were announced as sacred incantations (*shuhō* 修法). The “fire dance dedications” (*hi no odori maihōnō* 火の舞奉納) by ‘secular’ artists, who were not part of Kasuisai’s network of temple support associations, by contrast, were simply categorized as *yagai ibento*, or outdoor event, regardless of the fact that these performers handled their swords and torches in ways that looked by far more dangerous and complicated than the “sacred incantations.” Both performances complemented each other in style and function, as many visitors simply came to see the show, while others stayed the night to pray. Some even went to Mt. Akiha, where Shūyōji held a fire festival on that same day.

For registered guests at Kasuisai, who made a reservation in advance, the fire festival continued until the early morning of 16 December. Most of these visitors were in their 70s and older, and spent the night in groups. Ritual specialists performed a ritual cleansing of the ‘mountain’ (*yamabarai* 山払い) at 10:00 p.m. in preparation of the feeding of Akiha Sanjakubō at 11:30 p.m. Seventy-five *tengu* were said to gather for this annual “secret feeding ceremony with seventy-five plates” (*hihō nana-jū-go sen gokūshiki* 秘法七十五膳御供式), which required all lay attendants and monks who had not received special training in preparation of this event to stay inside Akiha’s special worship hall. All lay visitors were crouching together in the dim-lit worship hall. I felt locked in; wondering what was going on outside in the dark. The fact that no regular visitor ever gets to see or witness the *tengu* feeding, though, is part of the appeal of this ritual, and a means of generating intimacy and trust. Only monks who undertook the daunting task of spending the past week secluded from

the outside world were allowed to approach and serve the gods. Material objects that were used to identify them and their pure status included white robes, and special white facial masks made of white paper. The intention here was to intimidate by showing that even religious professionals have to undertake special training and care in approaching Akiha. The robes and masks function as protective suits; as a marker that distinguishes them from regular festival visitors and monks; and as a means of shielding Akiha from the impurity of human breath.

The *tengu* feeding at the inner temple was followed by a sermon and a *kitō* prayer ritual inside Akiha's special worship hall upon the return of the monks who conducted the feedings. The ritual, which started around 01:15 a.m., included the distribution of special paper amulets for fire protection, which were thrown in the room as part of a dramatic performance. Each attending guest received a ritual plate with special Doburoku sake that had been offered to the gods. The monks had made it for this specific purpose. The communal drinking of sacred alcohol underlined the fire festival's community character, and was perceived as a peak moment of the ritual.⁹⁷ The program continued at 06:00 a.m. of 16 December with a *kitō* prayer ritual inside the inner temple, where Akiha had spent the night in his portable shrine, before some sixteen men carried the portable shrine back to the special worship hall. It is within this context that Kasuisai challenges, even forces different groups to collaborate, by virtually locking them inside Akiha's special worship hall during the feeding of the *tengu*, and by turning the transport of Akiha up and down the hill into a communal effort.

The fire festival is embedded in Kasuisai's distinct setting and layout. The implementation of ritual events that comprise part of the fire festival requires special buildings like the inner temple, the use of special objects like portable shrines, and entire sections of the areal to be temporarily cut off from the public for the staging of events like the *tengu* feeding. Smaller temples may not simply simulate or substitute the material conditions as found at Kasuisai. In other words, one may not simply transplant a festival of this scale and make it function in a different locale. It is within this unique setting and the ways in which it is activated within the festival's sequence of rituals that we may learn how Kasuisai's various buildings and structures 'make sense' to ritual participants and observers, by mediating a

⁹⁷ This part of the ritual was introduced as *daigomi* 醍醐味, which means "most exquisite taste." The term *daigomi* may also refer to a concept of blissfulness in the *Daihatsune Hanyō*, or Mahayana Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra.

message in sensual, tangible ways. This message suggests that Kasuisai is designed to make Akiha feel at home. His special worship hall and other special temple buildings and various super-sized tools, including a pair of super-sized *geta* clogs and a shovel that stands as tall as building, are meant to make Akiha visible, as if he was just around the corner, hiding in the covert. The monks are trained in providing ritual and material care for the fire god, and are trained to feed him along with other mountain ghosts, in return for his supernatural powers to evoke this-worldly benefits, notably fire protection. The fire walk, the fire dances, the burning of *goma*, and the fireworks on the temple grounds demonstrate that Kasuisai, as a result of its practices in devotion of Akiha Sanjakubō, is able to control fire, and entitled to distribute protective powers through prayer rituals and amulets.

The Crowds and the Senses: New Year as *kitō* Peak Season

New Year marks the busiest season at Buddhist prayer monasteries across Japan. It is a time of formal invitations of lay pay patrons (*gakyaku settai* 賀客接待), special tea services (*sōdō dokui cha* 僧堂特爲茶), and formal salutations (Foulk 2010b: 41), but also a time of organized chaos. Thousands of people visit Kasuisai on one of the first three days of January alone, with monks performing up to fifteen *kitō* prayer rituals per day.⁹⁸ In addition to individual visitors, Kasuisai counts an average of 305 visits of temple support associations (*kō*) in the month of January.⁹⁹ For many Japanese, New Year is the only time of the year when they purchase protective *ofuda* amulets and rituals for worldly success, health, and wellbeing at temples or shrines. Special powers to evoke this-worldly benefits are attributed to the first *kitō* of the year. New Year is also the time when the average age of visitors at Kasuisai reaches an annual low, as families bring their children to pray for a good start into the New Year, and to have fun exploring the monastery's attractions. Children use Kasuisai as a playground, where they can throw coins into boxes, run up and down the stairs, or play Hide and Seek. Crow *tengu* toy masks are sold for 1,500 Yen (about 14 USD); goblin-style *tengu*

⁹⁸ For logistic reasons, temple staff bundle the prayer requests at the reception, to allow for the prayers of dozens of temple visitors and their families and communities to be addressed in one ritual. During the first three to seven days of the New Year, prayer ritual are performed nonstop from morning to around 4 p.m. Field note 05 January 2012, WS451393.

⁹⁹ Kasuisai counts about 900 visits of *kō* group representatives per year. 283 visits were counted in January 2011; 294 visits in January 2010; 310 visits in January 2009; 313 visits in 2008; 326 visits in January 2006. Whereas most individual visitors request prayer rituals and *ofuda* within the first few days of the New Year, the visits by *daisan kō* take place throughout January.

masks for 1,700 Yen (about 16 USD). In playing at Kasuisai, kids acquire basic skills and knowledge about Buddhist customs from their parents and grandparents, who are just as eager to play and explore their environment, including the monastery's New Year's bazaar.¹⁰⁰ Observing Kasuisai on the occasion of New Year thus leaves an impression that is very different from what Kasuisai has to offer off-season; and very different from what visitors looking for Zen monastic tranquility would expect to find.

While no particular marketing is needed to attract visitors on the occasion of the New Year – shrine or temple visits are so popular in Japan that travel agencies offer special New Year's tours to institutions like Kasuisai (*hatsumōde tsuā* 初詣ツアー) – handling thousands of incoming prayer requests and guiding the crowds in and out of specific buildings and sections of the temple requires careful planning. Preparations for the New Year celebrations at Kasuisai intensify in mid-December, after the fire festival. By December 2011, boxes of wooden *ema* plaques with Chinese zodiac-themed dragon imprints were in stock for the coming year. The designs of the plaques had been chosen by Kasuisai's monks in September 2011, based on ten different design proposals made by an *ema* plaque maker.¹⁰¹ By the end of the year, dozens of part-time helpers were mobilized to sell these items in the first few days of the New Year. Monks in charge of Kasuisai's gardens had chopped bamboo to fabricate the traditional New Year's decoration (*kadomatsu* 門松) that graced the main gate, while tents and food stands were raised on the lower-level yard, in front of the stairs to the so-called mountain gate.¹⁰² Japanese New Year's temple visitors expect to try and taste what a festival has to offer. Trying various foods, buying souvenirs, practicing rituals, and playing games is what has come to define the New Year's temple experience.

Kasuisai makes use of this seasonal surge in visitors to boost the marketing of overnight temple stays. In 2011, an audio recording with New Year's greetings and an advertisement for Kasuisai's famous vegetarian cloister cuisine (*shōjin ryōri* 精進料理) was periodically broadcasted through the outdoor speakers.¹⁰³ Nearby the reception, a TV program

¹⁰⁰ Every year in May and January, Kasuisai holds a bazaar in the *saidō* hall, where registered vendors display and sell antiques, including *tengu* masks, pottery, Meiji period tea kettles, historic postcards, bells and other objects formerly used at Buddhist temples, as well as wartime paraphernalia. Field notes 01 January 2012 WS41232; WS451233; WS451239; WS451240; 05 January 2012 WS451395.

¹⁰¹ Field note 08 September 2011 WS450166.

¹⁰² Field note 30 December 2011, WS451154.

¹⁰³ The price for the vegetarian menu was announced as 1,500 Yen (about 13 USD) per person. Field note 01 January 2012, WS451239.

produced by BS Japan introduced overnight temple stays at Kasuisai for the experience of *shōjin ryōri*, *zazen* and monastic etiquette (*igi*; *sahō*). The program was playing in an infinite loop on an LCD screen for promotional purposes.¹⁰⁴ Specific mention of Kasuisai's recent media appearance was furthermore made by head priest Sase Dōjun in a free New Year's sermon on January 2nd at Kasuisai, where he introduced the aforementioned BS Japan television program, a full-page newspaper article about Kasuisai in the *Chūnichī Shinbun*, a six pages article in the Sōtō magazine *Zen no kaze* (see Sōtōshū shūmuchō 2011), and an article about Kasuisai for a magazine that is exclusive to the Japanese bullet train Shinkansen.

The mood was calm on New Year's Eve until about 11 p.m., when crowds of visitors lined up at Kasuisai's bell tower on top of a hill to the West of the main hall, to draw numbers were drawn in exchange for a monetary donation and the offering of incense. Each number represented one hit on the bell, and functioned as a lottery ticket for a fortune that was written on a folded piece of paper.¹⁰⁵ After initiating the annual bell-ringing with a chant of the *Heart Sutra* at 11:40 p.m., head priest Sase Dōjun was brought back to the main hall, where the first morning service of the New Year was scheduled to start on point at midnight. As usual, the recitations in the main hall were followed by a *kitō* prayer ritual in Akiha's special worship hall, which functioned as the first *kitō* of the New Year (*shinnen hatsu kitō* 新年発祈祷). The sound of the prayer ritual blended with the repetitive ringing of the temple bell in twenty-second intervals. This blending of instruments played by clergy and temple visitors at different sites resulted in an atmosphere of mutual participation, and gave a striking impression of the size of Kasuisai's precincts. Visitors were invited to observe the first part of the first morning from inside the large main hall, where monks distributed sutra books for visitors to chant along. Others gathered outside the special worship hall for the second part of the morning service. One could hear people recite Akiha's *shingon*, or 'quintessential words of truth' that were written on large banners in front of Akiha's special worship hall. Reciting

¹⁰⁴ Field notes 13 September 2011 WS450343; 01 January 2012 WS451267.

¹⁰⁵ It is customary in Japan to hit the temple bell for 108 times on New Year's Eve, as a means of erasing 108 Buddhist worldly desires and sins (*bonnō* 煩惱). In practice, however, the bell is often hit for many more times; and not to erase sins, but to make a wish for the coming year. Kasuisai's monks used a stop watch to ensure the bell would sound in twenty-second intervals. The final hit was performed at around 01:20 a.m., which allowed for about three-hundred strokes. Depending on the region, temple bells may not be hit for more than 108 times, due to noise disturbance regulations. Field note 31 December 2011, WS451208; WS451210.

the *shingon* was promoted as a practice for wish-fulfillment (*kanarazu shingan jōju* 必ず心願成就).

Occasional responses in the audience expressed excitement about the first *kitō* of the New Year, but also confusion. Comments ranged from “this is exciting!” (*omoshiroi* 面白い) to careful hesitation about the ritual being suspiciously “religious” (*shinkyō mitai* 信教みたい).¹⁰⁶ As these comments reveal, participation in the ritual was not necessarily considered to be a religious practice, nor did people necessarily know about Akiha the fire god. Many learned about Akiha in the process of engaging in Akiha veneration practices, by reading notes about the fire god upon reciting his ‘quintessential words of truth’ for wish-fulfillment. This playful engagement with Akiha devotion started with the first *kitō* of the year, and lasted for about one week; for as long as crowds of people gathered around Akiha’s special worship hall to witness the prayer rituals performed inside. It was technically impossible to avoid overhearing conversations about Akiha in the crowd.¹⁰⁷

Kasuisai adjusted its setting in specific ways to allow for this playful engagement with Akiha devotion to unfold among thousands of visitors. An additional donation box was placed right in front of the special worship hall; additional *omikuji* lottery fortune boxes were

¹⁰⁶ Field notes 31 December 2011 WS451207; 01 January 2012 WS451213; WS451214; WS451215; WS451222; WS451223; WS451224.

¹⁰⁷ While circumstances did not allow for quantitative research to be conducted on the motivations of New Year’s visitors at Kasuisai, conversations with randomly chosen temple visitors and fifteen short interviews conducted on the first of January, 2012, suggest that about half of the visitors chose to come to Kasuisai to pay their respect to the fire god Akiha Sanjakubō in particular. Ms. Shiokawa, for example, who traveled from their home town Shizuoka to Kasuisai every year in January with her daughters, explained that she came to Kasuisai “because a fire god resides here” (*koko wa ne, hi no kamisama dakara* [...] ここはね、日の神様だから [...]). Her New Year’s visit for protection from fire included participation in a *kitō* in 2011, whereas in 2012, she only purchased an *ofuda* for her kitchen. She also came to give back last year’s *ofuda*, as is common practice at Japanese temples. Protection from fire was her only reason to visit Kasuisai once a year: “I came to pray for protection from fire for the coming year. And then I received an *ofuda*, which we will hang in the kitchen, for fire prevention” (*ichinenkan kaji ga denai yōni omairi ni kimashita. Soshite ofuda wo moratte, daidokoro ni hatte, kaji ni naranai yō ni* 一年間火事が出ないようにお参りにきました。そしてお札をもらって、台所にはって、火事にならないように). Other festivals didn’t interest her, nor was she concerned with Kasuisai’s history or sectarian affiliation. Her household belonged to Nichiren sect. Field note and interview 01 January 2012 WS451244; WS451275.

positioned nearby.¹⁰⁸ Throwing a coin into the box is said to bring good fortune for the coming year, and a way of paying respect to the Buddhas and the temple. Considering the alignment and sizes of boxes, it was arguably no coincidence that the additional donation box placed in front of Akiha's special worship hall was the one that first spilled over. Monks had to empty the box at the end of the first day of the New Year. It should also not surprise that the most popular additional *omikuji* box was also the one positioned closest to the special worship hall. Equipping Akiha's special worship hall with an additional donation box and *omikuji* box signified the hall's status as the main attraction, and drew people closer. Most visitors, including those who were unaware of Kasuisai's function as a site of Akiha devotion, headed straight for the special worship hall for interactions with the gods, without second-guessing their choice. The special worship hall is considerably smaller than the main hall, but it was also much louder and wilder. Its small size made the large donation box in front of the special worship hall appear even bigger. By looking for the biggest box around, donation boxes became a means of orientation for first-time visitors to Kasuisai, who were not familiar with the terrain. Smaller donation boxes were ignored. Food being placed on the donation box in front of Akiha's special worship made the box stand out even stronger, and extended the idea of 'donation' to also encompass other forms of material and practical care for Akiha, the Buddhas, and the ancestors. By engaging in religious practices in front of the main hall, visitors effectively turned the donation box into an altar, to the effect that the altar inside the special worship hall became an inner altar, and the inner altar an 'innermost' altar. The sensation of Akiha devotion as a mass phenomenon was enabled within this specific interplay of spatial rearrangements, the crowds, the arrangement of material objects outside the special worship hall, the *kitō* performance, and the setting.¹⁰⁹

Kasuisai's New Year's celebrations are designed as a mass event. The ritual and material components that these celebrations comprise of are designed to appeal to the senses in ways that presuppose the crowds. Without crowds of people attending, Kasuisai's New Year's celebrations would not feel the same, nor would the various attractions have the intended effect. For example, hitting the massive temple bell at night presumed that masses of people were celebrating the New Year in the same way, and were not disturbed by the noise. As for *kitō*, Kasuisai's system of indoor and outdoor speakers, which is normally used for

¹⁰⁸ *Omikuji* fortunes were available for 300 Yen, and high in demand. It is common practice to read the fortunes on the spot, and to knot the folded paper on trees or ropes on the temple grounds, to allow for the wind to blow away bad luck.

¹⁰⁹ Field notes 01 January 2012 WS451252; WS451249; WS451266; WS451269; WS451270.

communication purposes, and to signalize an incoming *kitō* prayer request, was now used to alter the soundscape by amplifying and transmitting audio of the prayer rituals across the hallways and outdoors, beyond the monastery's precincts. This amplification was proportionate to the number visitors during the first week of the New Year. Without the sight of crowds, and without the ground noise on site, like steps on gravel, creaking floors, conversations, laughter, and coins dropping into donation boxes – sounds that defined the New Year experience – broadcasting prayer rituals would not have had the intended effect of enhancing the religious sensation of *kitō*. The audio transmission furthermore worked to make the prayers public, and thus altered the sense of privacy and community at Kasuisai and beyond. Everyone could hear when the ceremonial leader (*dōshi*) recited the names of *kitō* applicants and their requested types of desired this-worldly benefits. Making the prayers public motivated some of those around still hesitating to sign up for a prayer ritual. By far not all temple visitors signed up for a prayer ritual, but those who did request a *kitō*, allowed others outside the special worship hall to be involved as part of an imagined real community.

Olfactory sensations contributed to this altered sense of community at Kasuisai during the New Year's celebrations, both among clergy and temple visitors, but especially among monks who had experienced Kasuisai off-season before. The morale was high, despite the extraordinary work load facing monks during the first week of the New Year. The scent of incense filled the air, as crowds of visitors lit bundles of incense sticks in front of the main hall. Visitors, among them elderly who were hardly able to walk, gathered around the large incense holder on the yard, fanning the smoke to their faces and hips to bath and purify themselves in smoke, to treat their ailments, and to commemorate their family ancestors and loved ones. Being able to listen to the prayer rituals while offering incense outdoors created a festival-like atmosphere. As with the prayer rituals, offering incense gave temple visitors an opportunity to do something that others could enjoy and benefit from, just as they themselves were exposed to the incense lit by others. Connections between otherwise unrelated ritual practices and practitioners were established through the blending of interactive and complementary auditory and olfactory sensations caused by these very actions of monks and visitors. Burning incense furthermore had the effect of supporting Kasuisai financially, and to express gratitude. The more people attended the prayers, and the more incense was offered,

the more energetic and intense the *kitō* performances became, as if it was the spectacle itself that brought Akiha to life.¹¹⁰

The only critique of Kasuisai's New Year's celebrations that I observed during my fieldwork in January 2012 was that to some visitors, this was still not enough. The Tamura family from Tokyo, for example, who had booked a New Year's bus travel to Kasuisai, expected way more people, stressing that this was "somehow not enough" (*nanka chotto mono tarinai* 何かちょっと物足りない). The family of three would have preferred to visit a smaller temple with larger crowds instead. They were less concerned with Kasuisai and its historical significance as a prayer temple, than with the proportion between the size of the temple and the number of visitors. This widespread view implies that the size of the crowds signifies the efficacy of a prayer temple to evoke this-worldly benefits.¹¹¹

Marketing Akiha Devotion: Perspectives on a Once-Every-Sixty-Years Fire God Exhibition

1998 was a year of special celebrations at Kasuisai. The public exhibition of the statue of Akiha Sanjakubō, an event staged at Kasuisai only once in every sixty years, took place from April 15th to June 15th.¹¹² Thousands of pilgrims and tourists, and the members of some 600 groups visited Kasuisai during the *kaichō* exhibition.¹¹³ The celebrations were combined with a special memorial on the occasion of the 600th anniversary of Kasuisai's foundation

¹¹⁰ Field notes 01 January 2012 WS451262; WS451270.

¹¹¹ Interview Tamura family, January 2012 WS451271. Judging by attendance, Kasuisai was not the most popular temple for New Year's celebrations in the larger Fukuroi area. Some 150,000 people were expected within the first three days of January at Hattasan 法多山, a Shingon temple located about ten kilometers Southeast of Kasuisai. While the crowd at Hattasan was considerably larger than at Kasuisai, the temple was also much bigger in size. Portable toilets were placed along the road to Hattasan for visitors stuck in traffic, as traffic jams extended for more than a kilometer from Iwata, Asaba und aus Kakegawa directions. The pedestrian walkway to the temple's entrance was lined with festival tents and portable eateries. Thousands of people crowded the temple, with hundreds of people waiting in line to purchase *omikuji* fortunes, and to pray in front of the main hall. Prayer rituals were also offered, and many people in the crowd carried *ofuda*. Field notes 31 December 2011 WS451196; 03 January 2012 WS451324; WS451325; WS451326; WS451327; WS451331; WS451333; WS451334; WS451335.

¹¹² The doors of Akiha Sanjakubō's shrine (*kyūden* 宮殿) were opened on this special occasion.

¹¹³ Shikami Hōkō (1999: 73-81) lists 613 visiting groups (*dantai sanpaisha* 団体参拝者). Some of these groups were listed twice for staying for two consecutive days at Kasuisai, and thus were counted twice. An average of about 50 members per group visited the exhibition.

(*Kasuisai kaisō roppyaku nen daihōyō* 可睡齋開創第六百年大法要), and a memorial on the occasion of the 750th anniversary of Dōgen's death (*kōso Jōyō-daishi nanahyaku gojū kai daionki yoshu hōyō* 高祖承陽大師七百五十回大遠忌予修法要). As this combination of large-scale sub-events suggests, *kaichō* exhibitions are the result of concerted efforts to mobilize and acquire new temple members and supporters. They furthermore provide important opportunities to establish and rekindle connections between religious institutions, public officials, and private businesses, to exchange gifts and monetary donations, and to display and negotiate power and authority.

Nearly three years of marketing and fund-raising preceded the public exhibition of Akiha. Kasuisai reached out to former monks in training in the effort to mobilize support. This exchange of obligations strengthened community ties and sectarian ties, although participation in the *kaichō* exhibition placed financial and logistic burdens on participating priests, parishioners, and supporters. A substantial part of the donations by parishioners and supporters of Kasuisai was used to fund reconstruction work at Kasuisai in preparation of the festivities: The reception area had been refurbished, and the hallway to the Akiha's special worship hall had been redesigned and equipped with an escalator. The 'nation-protecting stupa' had been repaired; reconstruction work had been done to other temple buildings and the private quarters of Kasuisai's head priest; two new *tengu* statues were placed in front of Akiha's special worship hall; improvements were made to the pathway to the inner temple building; and a new stone garden, called the *ichidō no niwa* 一道の庭, or 'garden of the way of the Buddha' was installed (Shikami 1999: 10). This reconstruction enhanced Kasuisai's accessibility, aesthetics, functionality, and was even taken as an indicator of the efficacy of *kitō*, besides indicating the strength of Kasuisai's various local and nationwide support networks.

Kitō prayer rituals framed the beginning and the end of the public exhibition of Akiha. The exhibition of Akiha Sanjakubō in 1998 opened with a special prayer ritual for the opening of the doors of Akiha Sanjakubō's box shrine (*kyūden* 宮殿) on April 15, 1998. The closing of the shrine on the final day of the *kaichō* was also performed as part of a prayer ritual (Shikami 1999: 25). Other ceremonies that were held while the exhibition lasted include an inauguration of the various buildings that had been reconstructed and refurbished (*Shodō rakkei hōyō* 諸堂落慶法要) (15 April); the inauguration of Kasuisai's 55th head priest (*shinzanshiki* 晋山式) (19 April); a memorial marking the second anniversary of Kasuisai's

54th head priest's death (*sankaiki* 三回忌) (19 April 1998); a memorial for the war dead (19 April); and a memorial for Dōgen Kigen (29 May). Other memorials and prayer rituals for this-worldly benefits were held throughout the public exhibition of Akiha Sanjakubō (Shikami 1999: 26). This interplay of commemorative rituals and rituals for this-worldly benefits, combined with ludic events and recreational festivities, is characteristic of temple festivals. What distinguished the exhibition from annual festivals was not only the exhibition of an icon that is otherwise kept hidden, but the collaborative effort invested in staging the *kaichō*, the large scale in participation among clergy and lay associates, and the duration of the festivities. These factors combined were important aspects in marketing the event, in creating posters and announcements for the exhibition, and in the *kaichō* aftermath, when clergy retroactively promoted the *kaichō* prayer rituals as having revealed a “mysterious and miraculous power” (*maka fushigi na reiken* 魔訶不思議な靈驗) that furthered “positive karmic bonds” (*kōin'en* 好因縁) (Shikami 1999: 6).¹¹⁴

Numbers express the scale the 1998 public exhibition of Akiha at Kasuisai. Within two years and nine months preceding the *kaichō*, Kasuisai mobilized the staggering sum of 1,272,093,819 Yen (more than 12 Million USD) in donations. 200,000,000 Yen (about 1,933,000 USD) were mobilized by Kasuisai, 582,091,400 Yen (about 5,625,000 USD) by parishioners (735 households), 76,884,075 Yen (about 743,000 USD) were donated by temple support associations, or *kō* groups (13,146 donors), and 280,000,000 Yen (2,706,000 USD) were borrowed. The largest donation by a temple was 1,000,000 Yen (about 9,600 USD); the largest donation by a temple support association was made by the Bishū takahane *kō* (see Chapter Three), which reached the staggering sum of 10,425,000 Yen (about 100,700 USD).

After all expenses for the *kaichō*, a plus of 5,271,740 Yen (about 51,000 USD) was reported. 2,996,151 Yen (about 29,000 USD) were spent on temple support associations; listed as *kōchū taisaku hi* 講中対策費, or “money for measures for temple support associations,” which included “recommendations” (*susume* 勧募), and propagation, or sectarian edification (*kyōka* 教化). 28,990,033 Yen (about 280,000 USD) were used on advertising and public relations (*kōhō senden* 広報宣伝), including pamphlets, posters, and flyers (*chirashi* 散らし). The reconstruction work and refurbishing of buildings was particularly expensive, with costs adding up to 829,972,155 Yen (about 8,020,000 USD).

¹¹⁴ For posters and ephemera used to promote the *kaichō*, photos of the exhibition, and newspaper articles about it, see Shikami Hōkō 1999: 10-24;52-58).

69,113,556 Yen (about 668,000 USD) were spent on festivities (*saiten* 祭典) and rituals (*hōyō* 法要), including souvenirs, keepsakes (*kinenhin* 記念品), gifts and honorariums (*shagi* 謝礼) to express gratitude. 44,684,312 Yen (about 432,000 USD) went into office work, and 27,482,587 Yen (about 266,000 USD) into other work and expenses, including fees for performing artists and special guests. 263,583,285 Yen (about 2,547,000 USD) were returned to the lenders (Shikami 1999: 61). Lists of expenses and donations giving the names of donors (see *ibid.*: 82-98) reflect the social relations between different Buddhist temples, or individual temples and their members and supporters, as much as they work to generate, confirm, and contest local and sectarian ties. In other words, they function as benchmarks for religious commitment and religious civic engagement.¹¹⁵

***Kitō* on Dry Ice, on DVD: Daiyūzan Saijōji and the 2010 Public Exhibition of Dōryō in Tokyo**

While Kasuisai's public exhibition of Akiha Sanjakubō was held locally, on Kasuisai's temple grounds in Fukuroi city, not all prayer monasteries choose to hold *kaichō* events in the same way. Daiyūzan Saijōji held its 2010 public exhibition of Dōryō in Tokyo, about 90 kilometers away from his residence at Daiyūzan. The 2010 public exhibition of Dōryō was the monastery's first *kaichō* in eighty years. The procession to Tokyo and back to the Minamiashigara lasted from 30 October 2010 to 07 November 2010. It culminated in a celebration at the Ryōgoku Kokugikan 両国国技館, a venue for sumo wrestling tournaments in Tokyo's Sumida district, where some 5,000 guests gathered to observe an evening with Daiyūzan's monks, mountain ghost Dōryō, and invited special guests. The celebrations were opened with a large-scale *kitō* prayer ritual, followed by speeches and a concert by singer Kayama Yūzō, who performed live on stage with his band for eighty minutes, in front of the Dōryō's portable shrine. All stages of the *kaichō* were filmed for a later distribution on DVD (see Daiyūzan Saijōji daionki jimukyoku 2011). The public exhibition of Dōryō and its mediation raise several questions: What are the consequences of distributing video of a rare public exhibition of an otherwise hidden god on DVD? How have modern technological inventions changed the ritual components? And how has modern societal change altered the ways in which a procession of this kind is organized and implemented?

¹¹⁵ Kasuisai publishes the names of donors regularly in its monthly Gazette *Dōkō*.

The practice of staging a *kaichō* exhibition in the capital became popular in the Edo period, when it was customary to carry Dōryō in his portable shrine on foot.¹¹⁶ Ludic gatherings and carousals were an integral part of the long walk, and even brawls erupted on these occasions (see Williams 2005), until modern traffic rendered *kaichō* processions virtually impossible.¹¹⁷ Attendants themselves also began to resort to modern means of transportation. The Daiyūzan Line, which enabled pilgrimage to Daiyūzan Saijōji by train since 1925, provided a special festival wagon for the *kaichō* procession in 2010 to Odawara Station, where the Odakyū Romance Car awaited the procession for a scenic ride to Shinjuku Station in Tokyo, which ranks as the world's busiest station with an average of 3.64 million passengers per day.¹¹⁸ In order to fit into the trains, Dōryō's large portable shrine, which was carried by some twenty men, had to be exchanged for a small palanquin. Once Dōryō was carried 700 meters to a Gohonzan Tenryūji nearby Shinjuku Station, the procession dispersed, until it regrouped in its original formation at the Ryōgoku Kokugikan on day five of the *kaichō*, after a tour stops at a branch temple of Daiyūzan Saijōji in Tōkyō Betsuin on day four. This focused the procession sharply on its beginning and its end, whereas the middle parts were reduced to brief stops for prayer rituals.¹¹⁹

Day five of the *kaichō* marked the peak of the celebrations at the Ryōgoku Kokugikan. All 5,000 guests received souvenir bags at the entrance, where the traveling *kaichō* participants regrouped for the official arrival of the procession in its original elaborate form. Inside, the festival stage had been turned into an altar, the wall behind of which was lit in blue. Live video of the stage was projected on two screens left and right to the stage. The stage was covered in red carpet, comparable to how a Buddhist temple would be decorated on the occasion of a special celebration. The DVD shows head priest Suzuki Shūkō getting

¹¹⁶ Processions with priests and supporters of the temple took place in 1784 and in 1819 (see Williams 2005: 59-85).

¹¹⁷ The same circumstances made funeral processions impossible. Large processions had disappeared from the streets of Tokyo by the late Taishō period, due to traffic, and due to the fact that attendants themselves resorted to modern means of transportation (see Inoue 1984: 108-109; 114-116; 120-121; 137-138; Murakami 2000: 337; 340-342)

¹¹⁸ Shinjuku Station holds a Guinness World Record as the busiest station in the world, see <http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/busiest-station>, accessed 19 June 2016.

¹¹⁹ The exact sequence of *kaichō* travel stops was as follows Day one (30 October 2010): Daiyūzan Saijōji to Daiyūzan Station. Day two: Odawara Station to sweets-maker Uirō Inc. Day three: Shinjuku Station to Gohonzan Tenryūji. Day four: Daiyūzan Saijōji Tōkyō Betsuin. Day five: Ryōgoku Kokugikan. Day six: Daiyūzan Saijōji Tōkyō Betsuin. Day seven: Daiyūzan Saijōji Tōkyō Betsuin. Day eight: Daiyūzan Saijōji Hakone Betsuin to Sōunzan Station (Hakone ropeway). Day nine: Daiyūzan Station to Daiyūzan Saijōji. Kitō prayer rituals were performed at all stations of the *kaichō*.

dressed in ceremonial robes backstage. The room light was dimmed, and the hall and the stage were covered in darkness, except for the wall in blue behind the altar, the pillars of the hall shining red, and two burning candles on the altar. *Taiko* drum beats shattered the darkness, as spotlights zoomed in on the drummers to the left and to the right side of the altar on stage. A glistening light cracked through an open door on the side of the hall, where the monks entered the venue along a red carpet to the sound of drum rolls and conch horn trumpets. The guests were standing at this point. Dry ice covered the stage, as the monks went in formation for the “big *kitō*” (*dai-kitō* 大祈祷).

The technical options available at the Ryōgoku Kokugikan included projection screens and room lighting, which allowed for (or perhaps even enforced) a performative reinterpretation of the *dai-kitō*. Dry ice effects are never used for prayer rituals performed at Daiyūzan Saijōji, but the change of the setting for the main celebrations of Dōryō’s public exhibition in Tokyo facilitated a temporal transformation of the ritual performance. This should not come as a surprise. Providers of weddings and funerals, especially in Japan’s urban centers, have long since made use of the latest event technology on the market.¹²⁰ Mark Rowe (2000: 363-364;373-374) describes a stunning ritual invention reminiscent of the funeral procession, which have all but disappeared from the streets of Japan’s urban centers. The indoor funeral procession by the funeral company Gyokusen’in in Neyagawa in Osaka is chosen by some 70 percent of all customers. The ritual invented by the funeral company which involves music, dry ice, special light effects, and a motored hearse that transports the deceased from one end to the hall to the other, where the hearse disappears in a tunnel of light and dry ice special effects at the peak of the three-minute show. Pamphlets position the ritual within the history of the funeral procession. Establishing a discursive link with ‘tradition’ is an important means of marketing ritual inventions, as anthropologist Suzuki Hikaru points out (Suzuki 2000: 192-195; Suzuki 2003: 660). In the context of the *kaichō* exhibition, it should not be forgotten that, while the event is promoted as a rare and traditional practice, there has never been a fixed way of conducting and staging an event of this scale. The use of new means of transportation and technical means of transforming Buddhist rituals should therefore not surprise. *Kaichō* exhibitions express earnest religious commitment, as much as they

¹²⁰ For a study on the performative and sensational aspects of religion in the context of Modern Religious Organizations in Japan, see Prohl 2006. For a study on the contemporary US evangelical context, see Emling and Rakow 2014.

provide playful opportunities to challenge existing norms and boundaries, precisely because there is no fixed way of performing them.

Interactions between public officials, private business leaders, and religious professionals were characteristic of the various stages of the *kaichō* procession to and from Tokyo. After stopping at Odawara Station, for example, the procession made a stopover at Odawara-based sweets maker Uirō Inc. (Kabushikigaisha Uirō 株式会社ういろう) to perform a “special prayer ritual on the occasion of the public exhibition of Dōryō” (*gokaichō tokubetsu kitō* 御開帳特別祈祷) in front of a massive wooden *ofuda* for the safety and prosperity of Odawara city. The mayor of Odawara expressed his gratitude for the prayers, and stressed the importance of world peace as one of the main missions of this special exhibition. Uirō Takeshi, the head of Uirō, also expressed his gratitude. Other speakers included Suzuki Chieko, head of the General Corporate Judicial Person Odawara-shi Tourist Association (Odawara-shi Kankō Kyōkai 小田原市観光協会). The *kaichō* exhibition, as this example demonstrates, opened up temporal spaces for interactions between different local religious and secular marketing spheres brought together through various affiliations with Daiyūzan Saijōji and Dōryō.¹²¹ It is within this context that the public exhibition of Dōryō opened up new opportunities for Daiyūzan to express gratitude towards donors and supporters of the monastery, as much as it provided a space for supporters to market themselves and their products.

Dōryō was not the only star of the show at the Ryōgoku Kokugikan. It was also singer Kayama Yūzō who attracted fans.¹²² Kayama, a supporter of Daiyūzan Saijōji, starred in popular postwar Japanese cinema productions, including *Red Beard* (*Akihige* 赤ひげ) by

¹²¹ Among the invited guests at the Ryōgoku Kokugikan were the vice head priests (*kan'in* 監院) of Sōtō Zen head monasteries Eiheiji and Sōjiji (the latter of whom explicitly confirmed the power of Dōryō), a leading member of the “New religion” Risshō Kōseikai 立正佼成会, as well as Kawakami Kenji, a member of the Kanagawa Prefecture Kō Group Association (Kanagawaken kōkai 神奈川県講会), who also held a speech. Matsuda Bun'yū, the head priest of Sōtō Zen head-monastery Sōjiji, and a renowned researcher of Daiyūzan Saijōji was also introduced, along with company leaders, among them Itō Shin'ichi, a board member (*rijichō* 理事長) of the Daiyūkai 大雄会 General Hospital in Aichi Prefecture. The *kaichō* DVD shows the names, ranks, and job affiliations of these and other special guests with subtitles.

¹²² For a blog entry by a *kaichō* attendant, who came to see Kayama Yūzō in the first place, and who had little idea about the religious aspects of the public exhibition of Dōryō, see: <http://dendentym.3zoku.com/kym/sonota/2010/daiyuzancons.html>, accessed 04 September 2016.

Kurosawa Akira (1965). Many *kaichō* attendants were of the same age as Kayama, and had witnessed his success as a bestselling musician in the 1960s, including Daiyūzan Saijōji head priest Suzuki Shūkō. The musician and the priest were both born in 1937 (age 73 at the time of the *kaichō*), as they informed the audience, while affirming each other's youthfulness. Jokes about age were well received, and so was Kayama Yūzō's music, although it appears that Kayama Yūzō's music had to be excluded from Daiyūzan's *kaichō* DVD, due to license agreements.¹²³

While the concert is not shown, the documentary film does zoom in on the icon of Dōryō, who is normally kept in a closed box shrine beneath the altar in his special worship hall, hidden from the public. Taking photos of prayer rituals and the main icons of the local gods involved in these rituals, is forbidden under normal circumstances.¹²⁴ But while Kasuisai's magazine commemorating the 1998 *kaichō* of Akiha Sanjakubō (see Shikami 1999) includes no image of the Akiha's main icon, Daiyūzan Saijōji opened up new venues for its 2010 *kaichō* by allowing photos to be taken for the duration of Dōryō's public exhibition, and by engaging a professional film team for the recording of video of Dōryō, the prayer rituals, and the procession for a later distribution on DVD. We can understand this DVD as a response to shifting social norms and expectations, an adaptation to new trends and technical possibilities regarding digital photography and smartphone-use, and as an extension of the *kaichō* concept into the digital realm. The DVD, a commodity that also functions as a marketing tool, shapes the ways in which *kaichō* supporters remember the event, as well as how future exhibitions are planned and implemented, documented, and researched. In responding to societal and technological transformations, and by challenging religious norms and social boundaries, religious institutions are exploring new ways of mediating their message in the effort to mobilize support. The practice of *kaichō* exhibitions in history and practice illustrates how this message – and the way in which this message materializes in cognitive and sensual dimensions – is subject to constant renegotiations, as the media themselves are changing.

¹²³ Kayama jokingly said “he’s so young, isn’t he?” (*wakai desune* 若いですね), when he found out that he was one month older than Daiyūzan Saijōji head priest Suzuki Shūkō. “Still young!” (*wakai desuyo* 若いですよ), Suzuki confirmed. “Thanks to the venerable Dōryō,” (*Dōryōson no okage degozaimasu* 道了尊のお陰でございます) the singer concluded, much to the appreciation of the audience.

¹²⁴ Most recently, Daiyūzan Saijōji installed a sign notifying visitors that drones are forbidden on temple grounds.

Zazen and kitō

Zazen is an integral part of Sōtō Zen Buddhist practice. Dōgen, who is said to have first encountered *zazen* in Chinese Ch’an monasteries, emphasized an embodiment of Buddha’s enlightenment through the practice of ritual sitting (see Bielefeldt 1988). Dōgen’s emphasis on ‘just sitting’ (*shikantaza*) distinguished his orthodoxy from the teachings and practices of the Amida and Nichiren sects of Buddhism, the founders of which competed for the support of state patrons and military leaders.¹²⁵ The practice of *zazen* furthermore embodied the transmission of the Sōtō Zen genealogy. Down to the present day, generations of monks follow Dōgen’s call for ‘just sitting’ and ‘non-thinking’ (*hishiryō* 非思量), an orthodoxy that aims to terminate individual reflection by the practitioners. As an expression of self-control and monastic strictness, *zazen* enables monks to distinguish themselves from lay practitioners (see Prohl 2003c: 6. On the performative functions of *zazen*, see Faure 1991 and Sharf 1998). *Zazen* furthermore allows clergy to envisioning an immediate connection between themselves and Buddha Shakyamuni, who is believed to have found enlightenment while sitting under the Bodhi tree, as monks at Kasuisai point out frequently in conversations with temple visitors. This rhetoric works to legitimize Sōtō Zen Buddhism by establishing an extended genealogy that reaches far beyond the institutional history of Zen.

Kasuisai is among the few places in Japan where ritual sitting is practiced on a daily basis, as an integral part of priestly training.¹²⁶ Less than thirty Sōtō Zen monasteries function as sectarian training centers. The same monks who practice *zazen* at Kasuisai as part of their training, practice *kitō* prayer rituals for this-worldly benefits. Judging by the ritual

¹²⁵ In China, *zazen* was considered to be fundamental for all Buddhist monks, meaning that ritual sitting was not exclusive to the Ch’an lineage. In Japan, by contrast, communal *zazen* had been largely neglected since the late Heian period, according to Griffith Foulk (2010b: 14-15). Accordingly, while *zazen* did not function as a distinguishing marker in China, it functioned to distinguish Zen in Japan, considering that *zazen* was not as frequently performed in other sects of Japanese Buddhism.

¹²⁶ A typical day at Kasuisai starts at 5 a.m. with *zazen*. *Zazen* is practiced on a daily basis at Kasuisai, except for the ‘four’ and ‘nine’ days of the month (the 4th, 9th, 14th, 19th, 24th, 29th). These special days, where no *zazen* takes place in the morning, are called *hōsanbi* 放参日 in Japanese. Ritual sitting furthermore takes place in the evening, around 7 or 8 p.m.; a practice called *yaza* 夜坐 in Japanese. Intense periods of ritual sitting take place during one-week long *sesshin* meditation sessions, where monks sit in *zazen* for forty minutes, five to six times a day. Field note 18 September 2011, WS450677. For audiovisual impressions of the practice of *zazen* at Kasuisai, see Graf 2012. On the role of *zazen* in monastic training, see Chapter Four of this dissertation.

performance, *zazen* and *kitō* are interactive and complementary aspects of ritualized worship. The ‘meditative powers’ (*zenjōriki*; translation by Bodiford (1993)) gained through *zazen* charge Kasuisai with the power needed to mediate the power of the potentially dangerous fire god Akiha for the purpose of this-worldly benefits. Conversely, revenue derived from *kitō* prayer rituals and protective amulets enables prayer monasteries to provide for their monastic communities, and to maintain their unique settings. Not all temple visitors share this view, nor do all temple visitors believe in the efficacy of *kitō*, but the overall image of monastic austerity that Kasuisai maintains through *zazen*, among other monastic practices, has contributed to the understanding of *kitō jiin* as particularly powerful sites for this-worldly benefits, especially among those who seek to acquire this-worldly benefits, as well as those who offer and practice *kitō* (see also Reader and Tanabe 1998: 8-10).

The understanding of *zazen* and *kitō* as mutually dependent monastic practices is rarely addressed in the scholarship, regardless of the fact that the interplay of *kitō* and *zazen* has ensured the training and licensing of generations of Zen Buddhist monks. Sōtō scholar Satō Shunkō addresses this point by questioning the widespread assumption among sectarian elites about the presumed incompatibility of *zazen* and *kitō*. By tracing the relationship between *zazen* and *kitō* through the lens of historical discourse, Satō is able to show that the critique of *kitō* is primarily founded in the modern scholarship about Dōgen and Menzan. The Edo period intellectual Menzan, for example, is highly respected among Sōtō researchers for his contributions to the study of Dōgen. Menzan’s discussion of sutras and ritual texts that are relevant for the practice and study of *kitō*, however, have been widely ignored (see Satō 2008: 166-169. See also Chapter One of this dissertation).¹²⁷ Satō resumes: “The stance that *kitō* opposes Dōgen’s view of *zazen* has become a tradition that succeeded in the history of Sōtō Zen until in recent years. I think that the way of thinking about *zazen* and *kitō* as incompatible and conflicting is new.”¹²⁸

¹²⁷ This concerns the *Dai hannya kyō chikukankeisan* 大般若經逐卷係贊; the *Dai hannya kōshiki* 大般若講式; and the *Shōsai myōkichijō darani kyō jikisetsu* 消災妙吉祥陀羅尼經直說. See Satō (2008: 167).

¹²⁸ *Dōgen-zenji ni tai suru tachiba wo fumaeta ue de kitō girei ni nozomou to suru shisei wa, shūmon no rekishijō, jitsu wa kinnen ni itaru made dentōteki ni keishō saretekita mono deshita. Zazen to kitō to ga aihan suru mono toshite toraeru yō na kangaekata wa, atarashii hōkō dewanaika to hissha wa kangaeteimasu.* 道元禪師の坐禪に対する立場を踏まえた上で祈禱儀礼に臨もうとする姿勢は、宗門の歴史上、じつは近年に至るまで伝統的に継承されてきたものでした。坐禪と祈禱とが相反するものとして捉えるような考え方は、新しい方向ではないかと筆者は考えています。(Satō 2008: 166).

More specifically, Satō suggests that the critique of *kitō* as incompatible with *zazen* is rooted in the spread of scientific rationalism in postwar Japan, and in the social changes that occurred in the course of Japan's postwar economic growth, although he misses to explain as to how these changes may have affected interpretations of the relationship between *zazen* and *kitō* in concrete ways. The postwar era saw an unprecedented spread of Zen Buddhism in the West. *Zazen* became popular in North America and Europe around the 1950s, due to influential Zen teachers like Suzuki Shunryū and Taisen Deshimaru.¹²⁹ This boom of *zazen* practice in the West was preceded by decades of literary reception, notably the reception of the writings by the lay Zen intellectual D.T. Suzuki (see the discussion of Buddhist Modernism in Chapter One). The move of *zazen* into the West resulted in major modifications to its semantic, pragmatic, and functional dimensions. In the West, *zazen* is often used for stress-reduction, or for taking a journey into the self and the unknown (see Prohl 2004a). *Zazen* is nowadays practiced worldwide as meditation, for stress-reduction, and consciousness-alteration at Zen centers, universities, and in private homes. But while *zazen* became the best-known Zen practice in the modern world, not all of its associated beliefs and practices have translated accordingly. *Kitō* prayer rituals for this-worldly benefits, for example, are hardly ever observed in the West.

Transculturally modified understandings of Zen Buddhist beliefs and practices have since been reimported to Japan, where they have influenced the expectations of of Zen interest and mostly younger temple visitors. During my fieldwork at Kasuisai, I interviewed lay Zen practitioners who tried *zazen* just for fun; for stress-reduction; as meditation; in the search of cultural identity; to cope with trauma; and for other reasons. Transcultural Zen has become an integral part of the discourse on spirituality in Japan (see Borup 2015), and is prominently represented in popular culture formats (see Porcu 2015). Popular Japanese lifestyle magazines illustrate the transformation of *zazen* from the monastic practice of ritual sitting into a method of mindfulness and self-improvement. *Zen: A way of Sitting that Beautifies Your Body and Spirit: The Zen Style for a Beautiful Life* (Ikeda 2005), for example, introduces *zazen* as a path to happiness and beauty. Other publications, such as the magazine *Conscious*, give detailed instructions as to how perform *zazen*, describing the practice as a means of “resetting” (*risetto* リセット) the body and spirit (Kitazawa 2005: 53). Here, particular attention is given to the bodily sensations that may occur while sitting in *zazen*, and the relationship between body,

¹²⁹ See Fields 1992. On the history of Zen in the West, see also Prohl 2010. On Zen in Brazil, see Rocha 2006

mind, and setting. But there is no mention of *kitō* in these descriptions of *zazen*, let alone the idea of monks mediating the power of mountain ghosts for this-worldly benefits. As with *zazen*, *kitō* is defined by the relationship between the practitioners and their environment. But while *kitō* require specific settings, instruments, and monks trained in performing prayer rituals, *zazen* has become portable. As a practice for success, stress-reduction and health, *zazen* has even taken over some of the benefits that have been previously ascribed to *kitō*.

Lay Voices from the Monks' Hall

Every move, every step, and every bow in the monks' hall (*sōdō* 僧堂, also known as *zazen* hall (*zazendō* 坐禪堂 or *zendō* 禪堂), is strictly regulated. Monks have to enter the hall with their left foot. Their hands are folded in front of their chest, with every finger resting in a specific position. Even as they sit and breathe in front of a wall in the lotus posture with their eyes half-closed, they follow a meticulous set of rules (see Foulk 2010a: 497-500).¹³⁰ It is within this context of bodily control and synchronicity of movements that *zazen* may reassure lay supporters and temple visitors that clergy at prayer monasteries have the ability to guide the souls of the dead to Buddha Amida's Pure Land, or to mediate the power of local gods and Buddhas for this-worldly benefits. To observers, this concerted effort demonstrates the monks' control over their bodies and worldly desires.

Every Saturday, Kasuisai offers lay practitioners to sit like a monk. The free Saturday Zen Class (*Doyō sanzen kyōshitsu* 土曜参禅教室) is open to beginners and advanced *zazen* practitioners.¹³¹ As with Daiyūzan Saijōji, *zazen* at Kasuisai is performed behind closed doors, which contributes to the overall culture of secrecy at prayer temples.¹³² Participation in the course provides temple visitors with the opportunity to explore areas of Kasuisai that are

¹³⁰ For a discussion of Zen monastic rules, see also Foulk 1993; Heine 2006; Heine 2008.

¹³¹ Most attendants try *zazen* once, as part of an overnight temple stay at the monastery, but they never return (see the discussion of *shukubō*, or overnight temple stays in Chapter Three). At Kasuisai, only about five attendants are regulars of the Saturday Zen Class. On an average Saturday, 10 to 15 people come together to sit in *zazen*. On 17 September 2011, for example, 14 people joined in sitting in *zazen*. However, only 5 of them were regulars of the Saturday Zen Class. The other 9 participants tried *zazen* as part of an overnight temple stay. The group was mixed in age and gender. Field notes 17 September 2011 WS450628; WS450629.

¹³² Daiyūzan Saijōji offers a special room for *zazen* for lay practitioners, who do not practice where the monks normally practice *zazen*, but each *zazen* session for lay practitioners is guided by one or more monks. On the culture of secrecy in Japanese Buddhism, see Scheid and Teeuwen 2006; Chilson 2014).

otherwise off-limits. An hour of ritual sitting is interrupted by ritual walking (*kinhin* 経行) and a five-minute break.¹³³ Monks who undertake monastic training at Kasuisai assist lay participants who are unfamiliar with the manners in the monks' hall by correcting their seating positions, and by distributing occasional slaps on their shoulders with the *kyōsaku* 警策 stick.¹³⁴ Once the bell rings twice to signify that *zazen* has come to an end, participants of the Saturday Zen Class are invited to attend a sermon, which typically revolves around the teachings of Dōgen. Matters of everyday life, notably health, wellbeing, and aging are also addressed.¹³⁵

These topics reflect visitor expectations about the intended effects of *zazen* as a method that keeps practitioners healthy, dynamic, and young at heart, as well as mindful and attuned to their surroundings. Mr. Tamura,¹³⁶ for example, explained: “I came here to find balance, to rearrange myself, and to refresh my spirit; I don’t mean the physical body but my spirit.”¹³⁷ Mr. Tamura had previously tried Yoga, but now he wanted to try *zazen* for the first time. Both Yoga and *zazen* practices were “meditation” (*meisō* 瞑想) to him: “Meditation, right? I took it as meditation. It was relatively simple to get started, but what really struck me was that spending time doing nothing [while sitting in *zazen*] felt incredibly long! Half an hour went by so slowly.”¹³⁸ As with most other lay *zazen* practitioners at Kasuisai, Mr.

¹³³ The lay practitioners would often turn the break into a Q&A session. Common questions concerned the proper body posture, what they should think while sitting in *zazen*, or details about the *zendō* and its architecture. Other, more experienced lay practitioners ignored the break after the *kinhin* walking meditation entirely, and went right back to sitting in silence.

¹³⁴ 17 September 2011 WS450630; WS450631; WS450632. Physically challenged participants may practice *zazen* on a chair.

¹³⁵ Field notes 10 September 2011 WS450273; WS450275; WS450281; STE-033; 17 September 2011 WS450629; WS450633; WS450636; WS450637; WS450639.

¹³⁶ Mr. Tamura was in his mid-thirties and from Fujieda in Shizuoka Prefecture. He had traveled one hour to sit in *zazen* on the occasion of the Saturday Zen Class of 10 September 2011. He had no particular interest in Japanese temple Buddhism, and had learned about Kasuisai’s sectarian affiliation only after his arrival at the temple. This was his first visit.

¹³⁷ Interview Mr. Tamura, 10 September 2011 WS450277: *Yahari, kokoro no baransu wo, kō totonoetai to. Ma, karada to wa chigau kokoro no bubun wo kō rifuresshu shitai toiu imi de kitandesu.* やはり、心のバランスを、こう整えたいと。ま、体とは違う心の部分をこうリフレッシュしたいという意味で来たんです。

¹³⁸ Interview Mr. Tamura, 10 September 2011 WS450277: *Meisō desuyone. Sonna katachi de toraetetande. Hikakuteki kantan ni hairu koto ga dekitandesukedo, tada sugoku – nanimoshiteinai jikan, fudan sanjuppun toiu no ga, sugoku sukasuka shitetande, sugoku nagai na! toiu no wa kanjimashita.* 瞑想ですね。そんな形でとらえてたんで。比較的簡単に入ることができたんですけど、ただすごく一何もしていない時間、普段30分というのが、すごくスカスカしてたんで、すごく長いな！というのを感じました。

Tamura's opinion about *zazen* was only partly formed at Kasuisai. He came to Kasuisai with a specific expectation of *zazen* as meditation.¹³⁹

Theories of material religion are useful when it comes to analyzing what meditation hereby encompasses. A defining characteristic of religion, according to advocates of material religion, is that religion materializes a presumed inaccessible power or religious 'other' in cognitive and sensual ways. Religious practitioners, however, do not perceive the media that enable the process of materialization as media that establish a connection with the supernatural. The media that enable religious experiences, in other words, are consequently denied in the process of mediation, and so is the process of mediation itself (see Meyer 2006; Meyer 2008; Graf and Prohl 2013). In practicing *zazen* at Kasuisai, the body becomes the medium that aligns with the setting, as practitioners feel their body in newfound ways. *Zazen*-induced experiences of pain, relief, or consciousness alteration may be reason enough for practitioners to interpret their *zazen* experience as a contact with the inner self, with a supernatural power, or the power of Buddhism.

The monks at prayer monasteries like Kasuisai and Daiyūzan Saijōji are generally accepting of different views of *zazen*, although they stress that they do not practice *zazen* for the purpose of this-worldly benefits. As one Sōtō Zen monk at Daiyūzan Saijōji explained during an interview for the documentary *Souls of Zen*: "We never practice Zazen in search of a good idea. We don't ask or search for something. Sitting itself is the goal. It's not about the benefit; it's just about the sitting. Sitting in and of itself is not beneficial."¹⁴⁰ This understanding of *zazen* reflects the common stance in the modern scholarship on Dōgen, as described Satō Shunkō (see quote above; Satō 2008: 166-169). At the same time, however, monks at prayer monasteries usually don't deny that sitting silently in front of a wall may have psychic and cognitive side effects. This vagueness about *zazen* and the purpose of 'just sitting' as an embodiment of Buddha's enlightenment adds to the overall atmosphere of mystery and monastic otherness. Refraining from advertising the intended or unintended

¹³⁹ On the history of Yoga, see Singleton 2010; Okropiridze 2015. Regular *zazen* lay practitioners at Daiyūzan Saijōji were not familiar with religious studies and the recent scholarship of transcultural Zen or other body practices. They were, however, familiar with the works of modern Zen apologists like D.T. Suzuki, and with the works of Eugen Herrigel and his views on Zen and Archery (see Yamada 2009). They also studied Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō*. Clergy gave explanations of *zazen* as part of sermons, and sometimes while *zazen* was in progress, but they did so in a top-down manner, based on interpretations of Dōgen's *Shōbōgenzō*. Field notes 7 September 2011 WS450147; 12 June 2011 WS450100.

¹⁴⁰ See Graf 2012.

effects of *zazen* not least allows clergy to distinguish their practice from general trends in meditation and spirituality, and allows them to position themselves within the discourse on transcultural Zen. Uncoupling *zazen*-induced effects like stress relief or consciousness alteration from the idea of ‘just sitting’, moreover, renders theological justifications unnecessary, besides allowing monks to downplay the role of religious media in enabling these effects.¹⁴¹

The semantic openness of *zazen* and its intended or unintended side effects attract people with different backgrounds and expectations. These expectation may alter how practitioners experience *zazen*. Mr. Ōta, for example, participated in Kasuisai’s Saturday Zen Class with intentions to deepen his connection with Zen. He practiced *zazen* on a daily basis at his home for the purpose of coping with issues in life. He explained: “Until now I experienced quite some hardship. I felt lost, and no matter where I looked, I couldn’t seem to find an answer. I could not seem to find a method to cope with my problem. I spent a lot of time thinking of solutions, and *zazen* fit best to me, from what I tried.”¹⁴² This understanding of *zazen* as a way of coping with contingency is a result of Zen’s global spread in the twentieth century, particularly the modifications of *zazen* in therapeutic and health care contexts (see for example Brazier 1995). *Zazen* may function as a means of stabilizing the rhythms of everyday life for individuals troubled by an orientation crisis and the need to make their own career choices in late-modern societies. These challenges are different from the challenges confronting Dōgen and his followers in medieval Japan.

Some of the most outspoken critics of *kitō* can be found among the regular members of lay *zazen* classes.¹⁴³ This causes problems for monasteries like Kasuisai, since *zazen* alone

¹⁴¹ For a theological discussion about *zazen*, and the challenges that Sōtō Zen priests are facing in giving simple answers to lay practitioners’ questions as to why they should practice *zazen*, see See Morita 2008.

¹⁴² Interview Mr. Ōta, 18 September 2011 WS450663: *Ima made taihen na koto ga attandesukedo, mayottari nani ka shite, jibun de chanto kotae ga mitsukerarenai tte, nanika ii hōhō wa nai kara. Takusan kangaetandesukedo, keiken shita naka de, zazen wa ichiban jibun ni atteta to omotte. ato, ie ga zen-shū nanode, sōitta tokoro mo atte.* 今まで大変なことがあったんですけど、迷ったり何かして、自分でちゃんと答えが見つけれないって、何かいい方法はないから。たくさん考えたんですけど、経験した中で、坐禅が一番自分に合ってたと思って。

¹⁴³ Mr. Tabata, to give an example, made it very clear that he rejected prayers for this-worldly benefits. He had visited Kasuisai four or five times before our interview. His response to my question if he ever practiced *kitō* was: “No, never. Not once in my life. To be frank, personally, I reject things like that as a matter of principle.” *Zazen*, on the other hand, was an appealing to Mr. Tabata, who regarded *zazen* as a means of expressing gratitude and

may not generate the financial stability needed to keep the monastery running. In other cases, practitioners are not critical of *kitō* per se, but the practice of sitting becomes the means of acquiring this-worldly benefits. Mr. Tanaka, for example, informed me that his son was practicing *zazen* by the initiative of one of his school teachers, along with all 29 members of his high school Baseball team. Our interview took place while Mr. Tanaka was waiting for his son to complete *zazen* on 4 January 2012. The boys practiced *zazen* at Kasuisai to “pray for success in the coming year” (*ichinen no gan wo kakeru* 一年の願をかける), as Mr. Tanaka explained.¹⁴⁴ Upon asking him if he or his son’s team requested a *kitō* prayer ritual, he responded: “[...] After sitting in *zazen*, the kids will be listening to a sermon by a monk for about an hour. I think this is part of what *kitō* is about.”¹⁴⁵ What stands out in this case is not only the understanding of *zazen* as a prayer practice for success, but the fact that the boys were practicing *zazen* wearing their Baseball team’s uniform, so as to invoke a higher sense of team spirit.

One could argue that the robes of Buddhist monks are comparable to the uniforms of the Baseball team, insofar as both types of dresses function within socially constructed codes of meaning. Monks distinguish themselves from lay practitioners via their status as religious professionals, as expressed in the specific ways they dress and shave their heads. If temple visitors ‘borrow’ the *zazen* halls of prayer monasteries to practice *zazen* wearing their own uniforms, for the same this-worldly benefits that are traditionally covered by *kitō*, however, then careful consideration is needed regarding both the differentiation of borders between *zazen* and *kitō*, and between clergy and lay practitioners. This is not to say that *zazen* replaces *kitō* in a traditional sense. Lay practitioners at Kasuisai never practice *zazen* for the purpose of fire protection, for example, regardless of Kasuisai’s status as the head-center of Akiha veneration. It is clear, therefore, that *zazen* may not adopt all functions or benefits ascribed to *kitō*. But whereas Kasuisai markets *kitō* prayer rituals and associated material objects for this-worldly benefits as a product with fixed prices, *zazen* is offered for free. This is not to say that

promoting world peace across generations. His understanding of *zazen* was that of a global practice accessible to the old and the young. Mr. Tabata used the words “*sekai wo heiwa ni naru to omoimasuyo* 世界を平和になると思いますよ” in the context of *zazen*, meaning that *zazen*, in his view, had the potential to bring world peace. Interview Mr. Tabata, 18 September 2011 WS450664.

¹⁴⁴ Interview Mr. Tanaka, 4 January 2012 WS451346; WS451347; WS451355.

¹⁴⁵ Interview Mr. Tanaka, 4 January 2012 WS451346: [...] *ima kodomo-tachi wa, zazen wo kunda ato, koko no obōsan no – sekkyō shite – ohanashi wo ichi-jikan gurai kiku. Sore ga kitō ni hairu to omoundesukedo.* [...] 今子供たちは、坐禪を組んだ後、ここのお坊さんの一説教して—お話しを一時間ぐらい聞く。それが祈祷に入ると思うんですけど。

Kasuisai does not benefit from lay *zazen* classes, but *zazen* has no immediate, calculable financial gain.

The modern reception of theological interpretations of *zazen* as ‘just sitting’ imposes restrictions on the ways in which leading sectarian institutions like Kasuisai market *zazen* for lay practitioners. This arguably explains why the monks offer *zazen* for free, and why they do not pick up on interpretations of *zazen* as a practice for financial success in their marketing. The following chapter explores how Kasuisai aims to overcome some of these limitations by renegotiating the relationship between *zazen* and *kitō* in the marketing of overnight temple stays (*shukubō*), which have become an important source of income against the backdrop of declining temple support networks.

Conclusion

This chapter introduced *kitō* as an embedded practice. The religious sensation of *kitō* at Sōtō Zen prayer monasteries is ingrained in specific settings, layouts, and circuits of worship. Environmental characteristics, the spatial arrangements of buildings and material objects, and the interplay of *kitō* and *zazen*, among other Zen monastic practices at Sōtō Zen prayer monasteries may explain why prayer rituals for this-worldly benefits ‘work’ for Kasuisai, but not necessarily for ‘regular’ Sōtō Zen temples that lack these features. ‘Regular’ Sōtō Zen *danka* temples may perform *kitō* by request, as a means of providing ritual and emotional care.¹⁴⁶ But they are mostly not in a position to turn *kitō* into a main source of income, nor are they known for marketing or advertising *kitō* prayer rituals. The great majority of the nearly 15,000 Sōtō Zen temples in Japan today do not have access to hundreds of temple support associations, they do not meet the spatial and logistic requirements to hold large-scale festivals like Kasuisai, and they do not possess the manpower needed to turn *kitō* into a staged

¹⁴⁶ Sōtō Zen temples of all sizes are known to offer prayer rituals for this-worldly benefits, especially in areas like Tōhoku, where ‘folk practices’ are common, and where Sōtō Zen temples are widespread. 1,254 Sōtō Zen temples are located in the Fukushima, Miyagi, and Iwate prefectures (Sōtōshū shūmuchō ed. 1998, ii). Sugimoto Shunryū (1901-1982) became known for collecting materials on the role of *kaji kitō* incantations and *kitō* generic in the everyday lives of Japanese Sōtō Zen priests, and the related studies that priests conducted in the privacy of their homes (*okunai jūshokugaku* 屋内住職学) (see Sugimoto 2000). His sources are relevant for the study of *kitō* in historical and contemporary contexts, although Satō Shunkō (2003: 148-149) mentions that Sugimoto’s contemporaries criticized his work for not being objective. These criticisms were arguably fueled by the overall distaste for his interest in ‘unorthodox’ beliefs and practices.

moment of crisis. It is technically possible for a skilled priest to perform a *kitō* prayer ritual on his or her own, without the assistance of other priests. The performance, however, would never compare to that of a prayer ritual at Kasuisai or Daiyūzan, where some fifteen or more monks chant and perform together in special worship halls that were specifically designed for this purpose. It is within this context that *kitō* may be understood as a religious sensation. *Zazen*, as practiced at Kasuisai, but not at ‘regular’ *danka* temples, furthermore contributes to the sensation of *kitō*. Using theories of material religion, the chapter introduced both monastic practices as interactive and complementary components of what could be defined as ‘prayer Buddhism’.

Kasuisai developed and sustained its brand image as a popular prayer monastery for more than 130 years since the transfer of fire god Akiha Sanjakubō’s icon from Mt. Akiha to Kasuisai in the late nineteenth century. This success has been enabled by cultural conditions, modern policies pertaining to the disassociation of Buddhas and *kami* in the late nineteenth century, and by the initiatives of monks and lay supporters aimed at adapting Kasuisai to the needs of accommodating a fire god and his followers. The popular understanding of Buddhist icons as living images (see Sharf and Sharf eds. 2002; Horton 2007) that require special ritual and material care by trained religious professionals is one cultural condition that should be further explored in the context of contemporary Japanese temple Buddhism, especially concerning the transcultural flow of material Buddhist objects and their exhibition in museums.¹⁴⁷ More specifically, Kasuisai’s branding is founded in the collaborative efforts of clergy and lay supporters, who allowed for Kasuisai to adopt the material characteristics of a semi-secluded mountain cloister. The sense of danger and curiosity surrounding Akiha devotion reverberates the immediacy of *kitō* prayer rituals as staged moments of crisis, especially during annual festivals, when monks and temple supporters engage in elaborate processions, fire walks, and *tengu* feedings. Finally, Kasuisai’s success as a prayer monastery

¹⁴⁷ While the icon of Akiha Sanjakubō is hidden from the public, *tengu* statues such as those in front of Akiha Sanjakubō’s special worship hall are widely believed to be objects of power that visitors may touch and rub with their hands. Certain body parts like the beacons of crow *tengu* stone statues do often look and feel polished as a result of years of touching and rubbing. Touching these statues is often considered as a healing practice. The icon of Monju bosatsu inside the *zazen* hall at prayer monasteries even has his own attendant, who provides him with ritual care, tea, and rice. Griffith Foulk explains: “However dismissive D.T. Suzuki may have been about “all those images of various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and Devas and other beings that one comes across in Zen temples,” even he could not claim that Monju Bosatsu found his way into the training monasteries as an “excrescence added from the outside” or as any kind of concession to “popular” religiosity” (Foulk 2010b: 36).

is rooted in vigorous marketing initiatives and advertising, as discussed in the context of public *kaichō* exhibitions of Akiha Sanjakubō and Dōryō. Interactions with public officials, business leaders, tourist associations, and publishers of guidebooks, maps, DVDs and other sources are everyday occurrences at prayer monasteries, and important steps in the marketing of *kitō jin* as tourist hot spots and pilgrimage destinations.¹⁴⁸

Kasuisai's location, layout, and circuits of ritualized worship are designed to bring the legend of Akiha Sanjakubō to life. The intentionality of the setting and circuits of ritualized worship are particularly evident during the annual fire festival. Akiha devotion, however, is not Kasuisai's only main source of legitimacy and status. The monastery's Tokugawa history, as the chapter has shown, is equally important in the marketing of this-worldly benefits throughout the year. Rather than focusing only on Kasuisai's capacity as the 'head-center of Akiha veneration', this chapter pointed to the complexity of lived religious practice at Kasuisai and its co-existing, at times conflicting identities as a prayer monastery for fire protection, Zen temple, 'power spot', and meditation center, in order to show how seemingly unrelated aspects of religious practice may be equally important factors that play together in maintaining Kasuisai's status as a *kitō jin*. It is within this context that *kitō* can be explored as a practice that comprises ludic, recreational components as well as moments of spiritual care, as observed in interactions before and after the ritual.

¹⁴⁸ For a guidebook about 88 pilgrimage destinations for this-worldly benefits in the Enshū area that introduces Kasuisai as the head-center for Akiha veneration, see Kamiya 1997: 138-139. For a discussion of Kasuisai's history in a guide about temples in the Fukuroi area, see Tanaka 1995: 88-93. For a guidebook on the cultural assets of Shizuoka Prefecture introducing Kasuisai's 'nation-protecting stupa' (*gokokutō*), see Shizuoka shinbunsha 2001: 102. Kasuisai's peony garden is recommended in the following four guides: Tenryū Hamanako tetsudō kabushikigaisha 1992: 56; Shizuoka shinbunsha 2006: 44; Shizuoka-ken seikatsu, bunka bu kankō rekuriēshon shitsu 1999: 16; Hyōjitō kabushikigaisha 1991: 88. For a brief introduction of Kasuisai's vegetarian cloister cuisine in a Tōkaidō gourmet guide, see Shizuoka shinbunsha 1992: 103. Kasuisai is also often introduced along with Hattasan and Yusanji in guidebooks and magazines about the Tōkaidō route, see for example Kōgi Satoshi (1992: 149-152). Suzuki Taizan, in his chronicle of temple Buddhism in the Fukuroi area, writes that Kasuisai, Hattasan and Yusanji – the “three mountains of Fukuroi” (*Fukuroi-shi sanzān* 袋井市三山) – were locally renowned for giving Fukuroi the appearance and status of a “little Kyoto” (*ko-Kyōto* 小京都) (Suzuki 1982: 13).

Chapter Three: From Civic Engagement to Emptiness – Akiha *kō* Groups and the Marketing of Responses to Their Decline

Introduction

Kasuisai is affiliated with some 900 temple support associations (*kō* 講).¹⁴⁹ The largest groups represent more than eight thousand member households; the smallest ones ten households or less. Most *kō* groups are formed along the organizational structures of local neighborhood associations (*chōnaikai* 町内会) of 100 to 300 member households, meaning that members of the neighborhood association are also members of the *kō* group, and vice versa. *Kō* group leadership often falls into the hands of the leaders of the neighborhood association, or a local temple (see also Yoshida 1998: 220-221). It is therefore important to first of all understand *kō* group activity within the institutional framework of neighborhood associations, which have shaped Japan's civil society over the past one hundred years (Pekkanen 2006).¹⁵⁰ Other types of *kō* groups represent businesses, local industries, or professional federations, particularly those concerned with fire and fire prevention, due to Akihas status as a patron for firefighters. Among Kasuisai's *kō* groups are mutual-aid associations for firefighters, fireworks makers, disaster insurance groups, and the gastronomy sector.¹⁵¹ Fire prevention is also commonly practiced by neighborhood associations.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ This calculation is based on temple records provided by Kasuisai for the purpose of this research.

¹⁵⁰ Robert Pekkanen does not examine the affiliations between neighborhood associations and Buddhist temples in any way, but he gives detailed examples of membership activity and participation rates (see Pekkanen 2006: 88-89;92-93). Nowadays in Japan, nearly all households are affiliated with one of the nearly 300,000 neighborhood associations nationwide. The average group comprises 100 to 300 member households of a locally delimited neighborhood. Membership requires the payment of dues. Activities of neighborhood associations range from the organization of local festivals to the cleaning of local parks, excursions for kids, neighborhood watch, and fire prevention (Pekkanen 2006: 10;87).

¹⁵¹ Among the mutual-aid associations in support of Kasuisai are: The National Federation of Fire Insurance (Zen-Nihon Kasai Kyōsai Kyōdo Kumiai Rengōkai 全日本火災共済協同組合連合会); the Tōkyō-to Shitei Shokudō Kyōdō Kumiai Kyōsaikai 東京都指定食堂協同組合共済会), which is a mutual aid association for designated cafeterias in Tokyo; and the Tōkyō-to Kasai Kyōsai Kyōdo Kumiai 東京都火災共済協同組合, a mutual aid association of fire insurance in Tokyo focused on small and midsize companies.

¹⁵² Fire prevention was a defining activity of the earliest medieval neighborhood associations in Kyoto, according to Ueda Korekazu (1985; see also Pekkanen 2006: 102). In contemporary Japan, fire prevention is practiced by the great majority of neighborhood associations, and by far not only by those groups that turn to fire god Akiha for divine protection from fire. According to Yasui Kōji's study of neighborhood associations in Ueda City, Nagano

With the exemption of Karen Smyers' *Shared and Private Meanings in Contemporary Japanese Inari Worship* (Smyers 1999) and Anne Bouchy's *Les oracles de Shirataka* (Bouchy 2005), the few in Western language studies addressing local deity cults are focused on the emergence of Edo period pilgrimage and pilgrimage confraternities (Ambros 2008; Williams 2005). The studies by Smyers and Bouchy deal with the Inari cult at two major temples but do not go into depth about the history of prayer monasteries. Smyers (1999: 51-99) briefly introduces Inari *kō* groups at Fushimi Inari, a Shintō shrine, and at prayer monastery Toyokawa Inari. She presents valuable information on the organizational structures of *kō* groups, and compares the characteristics of temple-affiliated groups with shrine-affiliated groups, but the focus is on lay associations led by 'shamans', whose religious authority ascribed by lay supporters may actually rival the authority of priests. Charismatic *kō* group leaders do exist at Kasuisai, but they are not representative of its affiliated support associations, nor does Kasuisai train lay associates in becoming certified Akiha lay authorities, as observed by Smyers at Fushimi Inari shrine.

Scarangelo's study on the making of the modern Akiha cult in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (2012) shows how the foundation of Akiha *kō* groups was founded in the rivalry between different sites of Akiha devotion. While his case studies present important perspectives on the ways in which different icons or material bodies of Akiha facilitated the formation of communities, they are also hardly representative of Kasuisai's temple support associations in Japan today. The social and political realities of the Meiji period were most defining for the making of the modern Akiha cult, as the historical background to this dissertation has shown. When it comes to the study of temple support associations, however, it must not be ignored that some of these groups in support of Kasuisai were founded as late as after the Second World War (see Shikami 1999: 136-137), or even during the war (see Sumida ed. 1982: 45). Neighborhood associations spread widely in Japan during the 1920s, following the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923.¹⁵³

Prefecture, for example, 84.7 percent of all neighborhood associations in Ueda performed fire prevention (listed along with crime prevention; see Yasui 1985. Quoted in Pekkanen 2006: 93).

¹⁵³ Modern sanitary associations functioned as templates for the rise of neighborhood associations, see Pekkanen (2006: 102;106). Pekkanen points out that the state in the 1920s was crucial in the spread of neighborhood associations. On the implications of the 1923 Great Kantō Earthquake on Japanese temple Buddhism, including the transformations of Buddhist mortuary practices, and the relocation of temple graveyards, see Bernstein 2006.

Akiha devotion is said to have boomed around that same time. Tokyo's Akihabara district was mostly spared by the earthquake and subsequent fires; a fact that local people attributed to the power of the fire god, who was worshipped at a local shrine in Akihabara. The association of fire god Akiha with Bodhisattva Kannon and the survival of Sensōji temple in nearby Asakusa contributed to this legend, and inspired beliefs in divine protection. As Jennifer Weisenfeld points out in her social history of the 1923 Great Kantō Earthquake: "Modernity did not chase magic or myths from the world" (Weisenfeld 2012: 102). Her book shows a lithograph that pictures the tale of Bodhisattva Kannon "miraculously appearing over the deity's tutelary temple Sensōji in Asakusa and warding off the firestorm caused by the earthquake, sparing Sensōji's main icon hall (*hondō*), its iconic five-story pagoda, and all the refugees crowded inside" (ibid.: 103). It is within this context that the Great Kantō Earthquake and other natural and human-made disasters involving fire elicited support for Kasuisai in its capacity as the head-center for Akiha veneration, along with the propagation of neighborhood associations by the state. Kasuisai became popular for offering to protect these groups by supernatural means, and by providing them with incentives for social engagement, religious practice, and recreational activities, including pilgrimage and participation in festivals.

This chapter explores the various ways in which Akiha devotion is promoted and practiced as a form of religious civic engagement. The first part shows how *kō* groups are organized, and examines *kō* group activity through the lens of interactions between Kasuisai and its affiliated temple support associations. The second part discusses the decrease in *kō* group activity in a Japan struggling with rural depopulation, changing family structures, urbanization, and other challenges. The single most pressing issue for Kasuisai and its affiliated *kō* groups, as shall be shown, are the various social changes resulting in the discontinuity of these groups. The decline of these networks parallels the decline of the *danka* system of affiliations between Buddhist family temples and affiliated parish households. Ian Reader (2011, 236) goes as far as arguing that "[...] Buddhism as an institutionalized form of religion centred around sectarian structures and around the relationship between local temples and a household-based clientele may be in its death throes."¹⁵⁴ As rural communities continue

¹⁵⁴ In his recent monograph, scholar and Buddhist Shinshū priest Ukai Hidenori (2015: 240-241) shows that 62,971 or 35.7 percent of temples and shrines in Japan are located in cities that are at risk of disappearing. So far, relatively little has been introduced about on-the-ground responses to these changes from the perspective of Buddhist temples (see Daniel Friedrich's forthcoming dissertation on Japanese temple Buddhism and the problem of depopulation in rural Hokkaidō).

to disappear, problems associated with depopulation, such as aging, unemployment, and individual feelings of isolation have become overarching and defining themes in interactions between Kasuisai and its affiliated temple support associations. It is therefore important to address how practitioners at Kasuisai perceive and make sense of the recent rapid changes that affect their communities and lives.

In providing the broader context for the understanding of these issues, the chapter expands the scope of research to also encompass assessing the role of so-called New Religions in offering this-worldly benefits as well as volunteer opportunities, and their overall contribution to the redistribution of religious knowledge in the context of urbanization. The agency of the so-called spiritual intellectuals over discourse on traditional religious beliefs and practices is also addressed. Whereas the decline of the agrarian sector and resulting changes in employment patterns are sometimes taken as an indicator for a presumed ‘decline’ in traditional religion, this chapter argues that traditional religious beliefs and practices continue to matter in different contexts, albeit not only in ways that Buddhist priests appreciate. The market for this-worldly benefits in Japan has become increasingly competitive and diversified. The brand image of ‘Zen’ moreover, has long since found its way into the corporate world. Established Buddhist institutions have little influence over the products that are currently being sold under the label of ‘Zen’, nor can they influence the overall pluralization of discourse on ‘Zen’ and its defining characteristics as a global brand. The final part of this chapter examines how Kasuisai responds to decreasing *kō* group activity by drawing on different global and local brand images of ‘Zen’ in its promotion of overnight temple stays (*shukubō*). The case of *shukubō* illustrates how monks adjust their marketing in adaptation to shifting social norms and needs, by bundling religious experiences that comprise of a variety of practices for families and individuals. The chapter will also address some of the financial and soteriological challenges that monks are facing in their effort to establish lasting meaningful and mutually profitable connections with new generations of temple visitors.

Kō Groups at Kasuisai

We have a group in our neighborhood in veneration of Akiha-san here at Kasuisai. We do this on a regular basis. Every year, people from ten different households in our area take turns in visiting Kasuisai on behalf of our community. Back in the days, the members of our group had to travel on foot, and the distance made it very difficult for

them to visit Kasuisai. That's why we still collect a so-called 'sandal fee' from all member households [to reimburse the travelers, and for a donation to the temple].¹⁵⁵

The above quote was part of a conversation with a group of twelve women and men in their seventies and eighties, who had visited Kasuisai on 18 September 2011 as the representatives of their temple support association, called *kō* in Japanese, from Aichi Prefecture. Their predecessors had started pilgrimage to Kasuisai more than one hundred years ago, in the early twentieth century. Back then, it was customary to cover the 120 kilometers to Kasuisai on foot. Traveling by bus has shortened the pilgrimage to a mere two-hour ride, but the members keep calling their travel expenses 'sandal fee'; and keep visiting Kasuisai in smaller groups of representatives – “so that our houses stay unharmed by fire” (*uchi ga moenai yō ni* 家が燃えないように), as one of the members explained. Our conversation took place right after a *kitō* prayer ritual for fire prevention was performed on behalf of the group's 150 member households, and before a ludic gathering for the representatives over lunch at the monastery. Such gatherings are common at Kasuisai, and could go on for days. Hayama Michio, one of 200 members of a *kō* group in Koga city, Ibaraki Prefecture, described his group's visits to Kasuisai in 1982 as “30 percent religion, 70 percent leisure.”¹⁵⁶ Hayama, who was 67 years old at the time, would sometimes spend two at Kasuisai with his fellow group members. The *kō* group representatives from Aichi Prefecture, on the other hand, returned home on that same day in 2011, taking with them 150 *ofuda* amulets for fire protection from Kasuisai for all member households.

Every year, the representatives of some 900 temple support associations visit Kasuisai to purchase *ofuda* amulets on behalf of their communities, homes, and businesses.¹⁵⁷ *Kitō*

¹⁵⁵ Interview Aichi Prefecture *kō* group, 18 September 2011 WS450677: *Chōnai no naka ni, koko no Akiha-san wo shinkō shiyō toiu fū ni kotei mono ga aru, guruupu ga arimasu. Nnde, soko no buraku no hitotachi ga kōtai de ichinen ni jūnin-zutsu, jikken zutsu kōtai de omairi suru. Sono tame ni, mukashi wa tooi mon de, nakanaka kuru koto ga dekinai mon de, kaku katei kara shūzu-dai, ne [...] waraji-dai wo itten zutsu atsumeru wake de.* 町内の中に、この秋葉さんを信仰しようという風に固定ものがある、グループがあります。んで、そこの部落の人たちが固定で1年に10人ずつ、10件ずつ交代でお参りする。そのために、昔は遠いもんで、なかなかすることができないもんで、各家庭からシューズ代[...]草鞋代を一点ずつ集めるわけで。

¹⁵⁶ *Kasuisai he no sanpai wa shinkō san-pun, rejā nana-hun* 可睡齋への参拝は信仰3分・レジャー7分; literally: “three minutes of belief, seven minutes of leisure.” The group conducted annual visits to Kasuisai in spring and in December for the annual fire festival. (Sumida ed. 1982: 45).

¹⁵⁷ 844 representatives visited Kasuisai in the fiscal year 2010-2011; 928 representatives in the fiscal year 2009-2010; 880 representatives in the fiscal year 2008-2009; 921

prayer rituals are performed in about half of all *kō* group visits. *Kō* group activity typically includes communal temple visits, participation in *kitō* prayer rituals, the collection and distribution of protective amulets among all affiliated *kō* group member households, and participation in local festivals at Kasuisai and at home. Participation in Kasuisai's annual events, notably the fire festival, allows community leaders to display and accumulate religious authority, by negotiating permissions to access festival stages and restricted areas that are off-limits to regular visitors, by taking over important tasks, such as the transport of Akiha's portable shrine, or by leading religious processions with special instruments, costumes, and accoutrements. It is within this exchange of obligations, and within the interplay of ludic activity and the expression of earnest religious commitment that community ties and the bonds between Kasuisai and its temple support associations have strengthened over generations.

In order to situate *kō* group activity at Kasuisai within the broader context of religious volunteerism, it is furthermore important to clarify the relationship between temple support associations and other civil society groups, notably neighborhood associations and public institutions. Paola Cavaliere's research on the role of women's faith-based volunteering shows in details how know-how and social capital are being transferred, and how private issues are being turned into public concerns through volunteer activity. Cavaliere's research is concerned with the role of women's faith-based volunteering in associations sponsored by Risshō Kōseikai and Shinnyoen – two new New Religions in Japan, and by the Roman Catholic Church. Her research is not concerned with Japanese temple Buddhism, nor are temple support associations funded by religious organizations, but the point is to look at the ways in which volunteers operate on the ground, and how they share different social, local, and professional networks and skills. The closer we look at how faith-based volunteers operate on the ground, the better we may understand how religious volunteer activity is not only concerned with the particular religious beliefs or practices of the organizations that sponsor such activity or benefit from it. Cavaliere, for example, observed that women volunteers “tended to use their religious identity strategically by sourcing purposely from the organization's spiritual and practical resources as and when needed” (Cavaliere 2015: 223). This statement can be applied to the context of *kō* group activity at Kasuisai. By focusing only on the activities of *kō* groups that are concerned with requests for divine protection, in the

representatives in the fiscal year 2007-2008; and 973 representatives visited Kasuisai in the fiscal year 2005-2006.

narrower sense of the word, we neglect how *kō* group activity is deeply rooted in the effort to strengthen community bonds by establishing and sustaining interpersonal connections with civil society groups, tourist associations, and local businesses.¹⁵⁸

Perspectives on the Proliferation of Temple Support Associations and their Organizational Structures

While Akiha devotion has a long-standing history in Japan, it is safe to say that the rapid spread of Akiha *kō* groups occurred against the backdrop of the social, political, and economic changes that have shaped the modern nation state (see Chapter One of this dissertation). A recent survey on Akiha devotion conducted by Sōtō Zen scholar Sugawara Toshikiyo supports this claim by showing that only about 20 percent of the Akiha *kō* groups in Japan today were founded in the Edo period (Sugawara 1998: 269).¹⁵⁹ Yoshida Shun'ei (1998: 230) clarifies that “it would be correct to say that Akiha devotion proliferated in the Meiji and early Shōwa periods, more so than in the Edo period,” in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹⁶⁰ Prayer monasteries furthermore profited from the postwar economic growth that also gave rise to the proliferation of New Religions like Sōka Gakkai.¹⁶¹ *Kō* group

¹⁵⁸ See also Chapter Two on the subject of *kaichō* exhibitions.

¹⁵⁹ 50 percent of the 677 local municipalities that responded to the survey stated that there was a local mediator (*sewanin* 世話人) for an Akiha Shintō shrine in the community; 20 percent of the responding 677 local municipalities stated that there was a local mediator (*sewanin*) for a Buddhist Akiha temple. Nearly 30 percent of all local municipalities stated that there were Akiha *kō* groups within the municipality (Sugawara 1998: 242-244;254;269). Nakano Tōzen (1998: 236) furthermore mentions that Kasuisai claimed some thirty *kō* groups in Meiji Japan, according to reports that the temple made to the local government in Hamamatsu at the time.

¹⁶⁰ *Meiji kara Shōwa shoki ni kakete wa, mushiro Edo jidai yori sakan ni natta to miru no wo tadashii dearō*. 明治から昭和初期にかけては、むしろ江戸時代より盛んになったと見るのを正しいであろう。Quote Yoshida Shun'ei (1998: 230).

¹⁶¹ The Buddhist New Religion Sōka Gakkai (Value Creating Society) was founded in 1930 by Toda Jōsei (1900-1958) and Makiguchi Tsunesaburō (1871-1944). After the Second World War, membership rose to 750,000 member households by 1958 under Toda, who was followed by Ikeda Daisaku is the president. Ikeda was the undisputed leader of the organization. Sōka Gakkai was affiliated with the temple Buddhist Nichiren shōshū sect until the early 1990s. Sōka Gakkai is internationally active, and claims to have more than 8.21 million member households in Japan alone. While these numbers may not be accounted for, it is safe to say that Sōka Gakkai is the largest modern religious organization in Japan today. Recitation of *namu myōhō renga kyō* 南無妙法蓮華經 (“praise the law of the Lotus Sutra”), the title (*daimoku* 題目) of the Lotus Sutra (*Hokke-kyō* 法華經) is the organization's central religious practice. Sōka Gakkai is hierarchically organized and influential in the political sphere (see McLaughlin 2009).

activity at Zenpōji, a Sōtō Zen Buddhist prayer monastery noted for the veneration of dragon gods in Tsuruoka, Yamagata Prefecture, is said to have peaked in the 1960 in Japan.¹⁶² *Kō* activity at Toyokawa Inari (Myōgonji) is said to have peaked around the same time, from 1955 to 1970 (see Smyers 1999: 57).

The rivalry between different sites of Akiha veneration facilitated the spread of the modern Akiha cult and its integration into Sōtō Zen Buddhism. According to Yoshida Shun'ei (1998: 230), “[...] it seems that Akiha Shintō Shrine, Shūyōji, and Kasuisai each established their own side shrines and temples with shares of the spirit of Akiha, they all encouraged the formation of new *kō* groups in support of their institution, and they all actively engaged in religious propagation.”¹⁶³ Before the late 1990s, scholars discussed the conflicts carried out between different sites of Akiha veneration in the wake of the disassociation of Buddhas and *kami* as a “tragedy of conflict” (*sōkoku no higeki* 相克の悲劇).¹⁶⁴ The understanding of a “tragedy of conflict” is problematic insofar as it presumes that a premodern ‘genuine’ or ‘real’ Akiha cult ever existed. More recently, Dominick Scarangelo (2012) eschews pretense of an ‘original’ or pure Akiha cult in showing that the making of modern Akiha devotion in the late nineteenth century was a creative, innovative process. His claim that the problem of competition between different Akiha temples “has been all but ignored in previous scholarship” (Scarangelo 2012: 37) ignores that Yoshida suggested that same argument in 1998, but Scarangelo is the one who presents a detailed account on how this rivalry played out within certain *kō* groups.

The point that Akiha *kō* groups support specific religious institutions might suggest that different *kō* groups in support of the same temple or shrine are interconnected, or hierarchically organized. Kasuisai indeed defines and administers *kō* groups by its own standards. Kasuisai's *kō* groups are represented by delegates *sōdai* 総代 and mediators

¹⁶² On Zenpōji, see Abe 2007; Abe 2009. See also Satō Noriaki 1989.

¹⁶³ [...] *Akiha jinja, Shūyōji, Kasuisai sorezore ga bunshi wo fuyashitari, Akiha-kō no kessei no susume, sanpai wo yobikakeru nado, sekkyoku-teki ni kyōsen katsudō wo okonattayō dearu.* [...] 秋葉神社・秋葉寺・可睡齋それぞれが分祀を増やしたり、秋葉講の結成の薦め、参拝を呼びかけるなど、積極的に教宣活動を行ったようである。On the rivalry between different sites of Akiha devotion, see also Yoshida 1998: 217: “Since then, down to the present day, these three parties continue to rival with each other.” *Sore ikō, korera sansha wa kisoiau katachi de konnichi ni itatteiru.* それ以降、これら三者は競い合う形で今日に至っている。

¹⁶⁴ This expression goes back to Takei Shōgu (see Takei 1978. Quoted in Yoshida Shun'ei 1998: 230). The rhetoric of a “tragedy of conflict” implicates that the competition between different sites of Akiha veneration had a disruptive effect on the Akiha cult in modern Japan.

(*sewanin* 世話人). The interests of *danka* parish households are also represented by delegates. Apart from these leadership positions, however, there is no real established structure of Akiha “believers” to speak of. Meetings of *kō* group leaders (*kōmoto* 講元) are being held annually in Aichi Prefecture, as well as in the Kantō area, but only about 20 of the largest and most influential temple support associations participate in leadership meetings regularly (see also Yoshida Shun’ei 1998: 224). This loose form of organization may explain why sometimes only the larger support associations are counted as ‘*kō* groups’ by Kasuisai’s monks and sectarian researchers, despite the fact that some 900 different support associations visit Kasuisai every year. Kasuisai organizes these groups as *daisan kō*; a term used for temple support associations that follow the pattern of annual visits to Kasuisai by one or more representatives of that group.

Shikami Hōkō (1999: 129-130) lists only 112 larger groups as *kō*. Most of these groups, as the list below illustrates, are located in the Tōkai area. Akiha *kō* groups affiliated Akiha Shintō Shrine, Shūyōji, and Entsūji in Nagoya are also particularly widespread in Shizuoka, Aichi, and Gifu Prefectures.¹⁶⁵ The same area can accommodate *kō* groups in support of different temples or shrines, or groups in two or more religious institutions. For example, a *kō* group in support of Kasuisai may also support Akiha Shintō Shrine. In contemporary Japan, logistic reasons and issues pertaining to accessibility may furthermore encourage Akiha supporters to change their institution of choice (see also Chapter Two of this dissertation).

Kasuisai’s temple support associations by local distribution:

Aichi Prefecture:	42 <i>kō</i> groups
Shizuoka Prefecture:	14 <i>kō</i> groups
Tokyo Prefecture:	12 <i>kō</i> groups
Gifu Prefecture:	6 <i>kō</i> groups
Kanagawa Prefecture:	6 <i>kō</i> groups
Chiba Prefecture:	5 <i>kō</i> groups

¹⁶⁵ It should be noted that only about twenty percent of all Akiha temples in contemporary Japan are supported by *kō* groups, according to the survey by Sōtō Zen researcher Sugawara Toshikiyo mentioned above. Temples that are supported by *kō* groups are affiliated with an average of 12.4 *kō* groups. The average size of these groups is 53.9 households. Most Akiha temples with *kō* groups belong to the Sōtō Zen sect (Sugawara 1998: 269).

Hyōgo Prefecture:	4 <i>kō</i> groups
Ibaraki Prefecture:	3 <i>kō</i> groups
Mie Prefecture:	3 <i>kō</i> groups
Fukushima Prefecture:	2 <i>kō</i> groups
Miyagi Prefecture:	2 <i>kō</i> group
Fukui Prefecture:	1 <i>kō</i> group
Fukuoka Prefecture:	1 <i>kō</i> group
Gifu Prefecture:	1 <i>kō</i> group
Hyōgo Prefecture:	1 <i>kō</i> group
Iwate Prefecture:	1 <i>kō</i> group
Nagano Prefecture:	1 <i>kō</i> group
Osaka Prefecture:	1 <i>kō</i> group
Saitama Prefecture:	1 <i>kō</i> group
Shiga Prefecture:	1 <i>kō</i> group
Tottori Prefecture:	1 <i>kō</i> group
Wakayama Prefecture:	1 <i>kō</i> group
Yamagata Prefecture:	1 <i>kō</i> group
Yamanashi Prefecture:	1 <i>kō</i> group
Nationwide in Japan:	112 <i>kō</i> group

(Shikami 1999: 129-130).

Kasuisai's largest support association is the Bishū takahane *kō* (尾州鷹羽講) in Aichi Prefecture. The group, founded around 1865 or 1869, counts 8,700 member households. 125 members function as mediators; among them are 51 elected *kō* leaders and 9 secretaries, who represent different districts. A portable altar is passed on by a *kō* group leader to a member household, which then functions as the altar's temporary home (*yado* 宿) for one year, before the altar is returned to a *kō* leader, who passes it on to a different member household. The group's local object of worship is a scroll. Once a year, every second Sunday of December, one of Kasuisai's monks visits the *kō* group, which typically takes place in a community center nearby the home of the member household that accommodated the altar. The monk performs a *kitō* prayer ritual and gives a sermon, and participates in a celebration over food

and drinks. In a procession with conch horns and twenty banners, the altar is carried to the next neighbor household. A local fire festival including a fire walk is organized by the Bishū takahane kō every ten years (Nakano 1998: 235;237-238). A blog run by the group gives further details about some of their volunteer activities, including summer festivals, communal cleaning of roads and public spaces, and fire prevention exercises.¹⁶⁶ As such, the group functions as an important provider of civil religious engagement and community-based volunteerism.

The diversity of *kō* groups must not be ignored. Some *kō* groups have specialized in performing special tasks. The Ehima kō (江比間講) group in Aichi Prefecture's Atsuminokōri district, Tahara-chō, for example, is assigned to carry Akiha's portable shrine (*mikoshi*) on the occasion of the annual fire festival at Kasuisai. The Hanabi kō (花火講) group is in charge of the festival's fireworks. Scholarship on Akiha *kō* groups is mostly focused on examples like these, perhaps because the activities of these groups are definable as 'religious', in the narrower sense of the word. The widespread use of the term 'pilgrimage confraternity' for *kō* also neglects that temple support associations differ greatly in size and organizational structure. 'Confraternity' might suggest that *kō* groups are brotherhoods or sisterhoods with specific religious persuasions, while to many *kō* group members, membership is simply defined by local neighborhood ties, or by affiliation with a mutual-aid association. Membership in an Akiha *kō* group may not only be religiously motivated, but may be considered as a custom, or as a consequence of being a member in a *chōnaikai* neighborhood association for the purpose of other benefits.

Kasuisai supports active membership in temple support associations beyond annual visits for the purpose of purchasing *ofuda*. The distribution of *bunrei*, or 'shares of the spirit' of Akiha Sanjakubō that materialize the bond with Kasuisai, illustrates the effort to maintain continuous bonds between the temple and its support associations. *Kō* groups that visit Kasuisai more than once per year are furthermore entitled to special scrolls (*daisan jiku* 代参軸) designed to register the dates of *kō* group visits and *ofuda* amulet sales. These special

¹⁶⁶ See Bishū takahane kō blog: <http://humansokennantei.seesaa.net/category/14652762-1.html> <http://humansokennantei.seesaa.net/category/14676863-1.html> and <http://humansokennantei.seesaa.net/category/20188222-1.html>, accessed 11 June 2016. These activities can be considered as typical for larger *kō* groups. Other practices of Akiha *kō* groups may involve monthly gatherings in expectation of the sunrise *ohimachi* お日待ち, as practiced by members of Shūyōji's Aki matsuri kō group (Autumn Festival group) on the Chita Peninsula in Aichi Prefecture (Yoshida 1998: 222;229).

items do not merely reflect but shape religious identities, local community ties, and the bonds between these communities and Kasuisai. As with *ofuda* amulets, these objects embody religious commitment and status. Kasuisai's monks furthermore visit *kō* groups that show their high levels of commitment through religious participation and financial support. These visits, although a dying custom, involve participation of Kasuisai's monks in local rituals, festivals, and ludic gatherings aimed at motivating *kō* group activity.¹⁶⁷

On the Distribution of Money and Status

Kasuisai promotes *kō* group activity as the binding force that keeps local communities together and functioning.¹⁶⁸ The annual fire festival and other events at Kasuisai are the product of *kō* group activity, as much as they are incentives for future commitment to civic engagement. Social events like festivals furthermore mirror how *kō* groups relate to each other. They provide important opportunities for the making of interpersonal connections among members of different support associations, and thereby shape the future of Kasuisai and Akiha veneration at large. Lists with the names of donors and donation-totals were published in the aftermath of the public exhibition of Akiha Sanjakubō in 1998 (see Shikami 1999). These lists function as displays of power and status, as well as benchmarks for social cohesion that enable temple support associations in different areas to compare their commitment to Kasuisai. They orient different lay associations and temples towards Kasuisai, and thereby provide the means for social distinction. Names of donors and also published monthly in Kasuisai's temple gazette *Dōkō*.

Membership in a *kō* group typically requires annual payment of about 1,000 Yen. Dues are collected locally, and may be paid in a lump sum, to cover five or six years at once. Some *kō* group members meet regularly at a local shrine temple, or at a *kō* group member's home, where the payments are collected. In other cases, donations are made on the occasion of neighborhood association meetings, or by visits to each member household. Associations of firefighters and local disaster control associations may also be involved in the process of mobilizing financial support for the prayer monastery (see also Nakano 1998: 233-234). The *kō* group leaders or other representatives then travel to Kasuisai to purchase *ofuda* amulets for

¹⁶⁷ On visits to *kō* groups by Kasuisai's monks, see also Nakano Tōzen 1998: 237.

¹⁶⁸ For other examples that suggest a broader working definition of Akiha devotion as social commitment, see Chapters Five and Three of this dissertation.

fire protection for all participating *kō* member households. If members of a temple support association are unsure as to how many *ofuda* amulets they should purchase, staff at Kasuisai – upon checking their books – would often suggest ordering as many *ofuda* as were ordered in previous years. *Kitō* prayer ritual are requested in about half of the visits. Larger wooden *ofuda*, which Kasuisai sells about thirty times a year, are typically placed in a community center or public place that is accessible to all members of the temple support association, whereas paper *ofuda* for individual households, which are sold at Kasuisai by the thousands, are typically placed in the kitchen. Between April 2006 and March 2007, for example, Kasuisai sold nearly 76,000 paper *ofuda* amulets for fire protection to the representatives of its temple support associations. The price of one paper *ofuda* for fire protection is about 150 Yen (about 1.3 USD), but prices may vary depending on the quantity purchased. Not included in this figure are other forms of monetary donation by temple support associations that weren't made accessible for the purpose of this research. Donations are also made on special occasions, to fund special projects, such as the public exhibition of Akiha Sanjakubō in 1998 (discussed in Chapter Two), or the reconstruction of the inner temple building in 2006-2007 after a fire (discussed in Chapter Five).

At Kasuisai, visits of one or two representatives per temple support association are common. Larger groups of representatives would often stay for lunch or dinner. The largest group of visiting representatives in 2006-2007, for example, comprised of 65 representatives of a federation (*rengōkai* 連合会) from Nagoya. More visiting representatives, however, do not indicate higher sales of *ofuda*, or bigger donations. The 65 representatives from Nagoya, for example, purchased a *kitō* prayer for 20,000 Yen (about 190 USD), along with 67 *ofuda* amulets for a lump sum of about 10,000 Yen (about 100 USD). The group may or may not have enjoyed Kasuisai's vegetarian cloister cuisine for a fee, but a representative who visited the monastery on his own around the same time purchased 766 paper *ofuda* amulets on behalf of his community, resulting in ten times more profit derived from amulets, and less work for the monks involved in catering.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ The numbers of *ofuda* purchased speak for the size of the support association. Akiha *daisan kō* groups at Kasuisai spend anything from 1,000 Yen (about 10 USD) to 150,000 Yen (about 1,450 USD) or more on *ofuda* paper amulets for fire protection, depending on the size of the groups they represent. One of Kasuisai's largest *daisan kō* group requested 7,700 *ofuda* for a lump sum of 388,500 Yen (about 3,750 USD). An additional prayer ritual for that group addressed thousands of people, but the ritual still cost only 10,000 Yen (about 100 USD).

Akiha Temple Support Associations under Depopulation

Monks experienced in bartending, catering, and cooking may find life at a prayer monastery that much easier. Not only do trainees have to balance trays with special objects during prayer rituals, but Kasuisai is indeed comparable to a restaurant, or hotel. The 2011 annual *kō* group leader summit at Kasuisai was attended by 56 leaders, who came together to discuss the future of Akiha veneration on two consecutive days in September. “These are special guests, and we need to treat them with special care,” a monk in training explained, as if to excuse that he had to ignore my research questions. Monks and part-time staff were all busy with preparations for the arrival of the *kō* group leaders, and with making sure that everyone understood what he or she had to do by communicating the rules and regulations for the day.¹⁷⁰ The walking distance to the reception had to be minimized by letting the *kō* group leaders’ shuttle bus park next to the lower-level souvenir shop. As special guests, they were permitted to smoke inside their living quarters, which was forbidden under normal circumstances. The lights inside the temple, which had to be turned off 9 p.m. on a regular day, stayed on all night long, allowing for the *kō* leaders to roam around the temple freely. The dinner for the group was opulent, and more refined than regular *shōjin ryōri* meals for guests. Special care was taken to ensure that the soup was hot, and that all meals were distributed on point at 6 p.m. Crates of beer were pulled into the dining room, and more monks were assigned to care for a lower number of guests than usually was the case, to allow for a maximum of service by responding to the guests and their wishes with undivided attention.¹⁷¹

This dinner furthered the exchange between Kasuisai’s leaders and the support associations’ representatives, while the mutual trust and collaboration needed to organize and run this ludic gathering brought monks of different ends of the monastic hierarchy closer together. The guests made the monks in training feel accepted and appreciated in their position as servants. The monks acted as a team, and as with the members of an orchestra who perform on stage after countless rehearsals, they expressed their joy and tension, while maintaining a high level of self-control as part of the monastic etiquette at all times. As ludic and joyful as the 2011 Kasuisai *kō* group leader summit appeared, however, the main topic of discussion that day gave no reason to rejoice. The main topic of the evening was the

¹⁷⁰ Interview Uchida Akira (Kasuisai monk in training), 10 September 2011 WS450278: *Daiji ni shinakkyaikenai okyakusan, special guest* 大事にしなっきゃいけないお客さん、スペシャルゲスト。

¹⁷¹ Field notes 10 September 2011 WS450282; WS450283; WS450293; WS450295; WS450297.

shrinking and aging of *kō* groups. The *kō* leader summit was held in full awareness that the continuity of such intimate gatherings over drinks, food, and rituals, might no longer be feasible in years to come, due to a lack of successors willing to engage in *kō* group activity.

As *kō* groups disappear, fundamental changes for Kasuisai are bound to occur, with financial consequences for the Sōtō sect at large.¹⁷² As one of the monks in office explained to the invited guests: “People are coming to visit us, but attendance has indeed decreased. This is the current situation.”¹⁷³ As is common for senior clergy at prayer monasteries, monks experienced in multi-generational exchanges between prayer monasteries and their temple support associations function as mediators, teachers, and religious civic engagement advisors. In this particular case, the monk in office at Kasuisai urged the *kō* group leaders to strengthen the foundations of Akiha Devotion within their local communities. Belief in Akiha Sanjakubō must not be taken for granted, the monk argued, but has to be developed through local community participation, by “sharing the spirit of belief, and by giving each other this amazing power” (*shinkōshin wo dashite, otagai subarashii chikara wo dashiau* 信仰心を出して、お互い素晴らしい力を出し合う). The “spirit of belief,” as described in this context, equals local community participation, as much as the local community equals the *kō* group. Yoshida Shun’ei (1998: 231) documented comparable understandings of *kō* group activity as civic engagement in his interviews with Akiha *kō* group members in the 1980s: One *kō* group leader described his engagement explicitly as “volunteer activity” (*borantiateki na kōi* ボランティア的な行為) “for the protection of all” (*minna no anzen* 皆の安全) and “for their joy of all” (*minna no yorokobi* 皆の喜び).

Questioning how voluntarily people engage in neighborhood association, Robert Pekkanen (2006: 90-91) resumes that many Japanese “may feel that having to clean the park is bothersome and do so only out of social obligation, but many others feel pride in working together and keeping their local park pristine.” The same can be said about engagement in *kō* groups. Traveling to Kasuisai, and having to collect ‘sandal fees’, as the *kō* group representatives from Aichi Prefecture described the custom of collecting money for donations, travel reimbursements, and the purchase of prayer rituals and protective amulets, may be considered as a time-consuming and bothersome, yet ultimately rewarding endeavor. Larger

¹⁷² Field notes 10 September 2011 WS450284; WS450289; WS450298.

¹⁷³ Speech Ōtsuka Makoto (Kasuisai monk in office), 10 September 2011 WS450289: *Hito wa omairi ni kitemoraimasukedo, yahari sukunakunari, toiu no wa genjō ni narimasu* 人はお参りに来てもらいますけど、やはり少なくなり、というのは現状になります。

groups of elderly *kō* group visitors in particular can often be heard before they can be seen around Kasuisai's precincts. I was often able to identify larger groups of *kō* group representatives by their jokes and loud laughter, well before asking them about their stay, or answering questions about my fieldwork. Regular 'regular' tourists, by contrast, were often intimidated by Kasuisai's otherworldly setting and the strictness of the monks, who adhere to the rules of Zen monastic etiquette. Generally speaking, the larger the group of visiting *kō* group representatives is, the more likely uninhibited expressions of joy become, and the more light-hearted the overall mood at Kasuisai becomes. Groups of more than five representatives, however, have become uncommon occurrences. Out of 928 *daisan kō* groups that visited Kasuisai between April 2010 and March 2011, only about 100 groups comprised of five or more representatives.

Kō groups are affected by the same social changes that cause the decline of the system of affiliations between Buddhist temples and affiliated households (*danka seido*). Affiliations between Buddhist temples and parishioner households developed rapidly in the Edo period, when affiliation with a Buddhist temple was mandatory. The freedom of religion guaranteed by Japan's Meiji and postwar constitutions did not cause any major disruption in this system of affiliations between traditional Buddhist temples and parishioners. Urbanization, the depopulation of the countryside, changing family structures, and shifting social norms and needs, however, may indicate that the future of Japanese Temple Buddhism is at risk. Nowadays in Japan, more than half of the Japanese population lives in urban areas, while about 70 percent of *Sōtō* temples are located in the countryside. Communities in these rural areas are both shrinking and aging (Sugawara 2004: 32-33).¹⁷⁴ This demographic change is reflected in the contemporary situation of Japanese Temple Buddhism (see Hidenori 2015). One out of four Japanese *Sōtō* temples is located in a depopulated area, and the trend of depopulation is growing.¹⁷⁵

Sōtō Zen scholars have since explored the ways in which social changes affect Buddhist temples on the ground, by looking at Japanese Buddhism through the lens of the

¹⁷⁴ *Sōtō* Zen temples are particularly widespread in the Kantō area (2,807 temples); the Tōkai area (2,825 temples); and the Tōhoku area (2,442 temples). For an overview of the local distribution of *Sōtō* Zen temples, see *Sōtōshū shūmuchō* ed. 2008: 12-13;194).

¹⁷⁵ A survey conducted by the *Sōtō* Zen sect in 2005 lists 3,597 of 14,637 *Sōtō* temples (24.6 percent) as *kaso jiin* 過疎寺院 (literally: "depopulated temples"). A survey conducted by the *Sōtō* Zen sect in 1995 lists 2,873 of 14,718 *Sōtō* temples (19.5 percent) as *kaso jiin*, which indicates an increase of depopulated temples by some 5.1 percent (*Sōtōshū shūmuchō* ed. 2008: 187).

“funeral problem” (*sōsai mondai* 葬祭問題) and the grave crisis (see Nara ed. 2003; Sugawara 2004). The bonds between most Buddhist temples and affiliated households materialize in the family grave as a site of interactions with ancestral souls (see Rowe 2011). A Sōtō Zen survey explains the problems facing Buddhist temples in maintaining these bonds between the living and their ancestors with two recent trends: the “hollowing out of the local society” (*kūdōka suru chiiki shakai* 空洞化する地域社会), and the dwindling consciousness for Japan’s traditional religious culture (see Sugawara 2004).¹⁷⁶ But whereas difficulties in maintaining family graves have elicited innovation like “eternal memorial graves” (*eitai kuyō bo*; *eitai kuyō baka* 永代供養墓) and “burial societies” (see Rowe 2004; Rowe 2011), no such innovation has been found to maintain Akiha devotion. A ‘share of the spirit’ (*bunrei*) of Akiha Sanjakubō as the material bond between local communities, Akiha, and Kasuisai may no longer motivate younger generations of Japanese to return to their homes of their parents to engage in local Akiha festivals or pilgrimage to Kasuisai.

Yoshida Shun’ei’s fieldwork, conducted 1986-87, suggests that the decline of Akiha worship is not as recent a phenomenon as one might think. Yoshida, who interviewed clergy at Shūyōji, Entsūji and Akiha Shintō Shrine, explains that “the succession of Akiha *kō* groups as we know it has become difficult” (*ima made no yō na keitai de no Akiha kō wa sonzoku shi kataku natte kita* 今までのような形態での秋葉講は存続し難くなってきた), due to changes of the structure of society (*shakai kōzō no henka* 社会構造の変化) that affect local communities (Yoshida 1998: 230). Akiha Shintō Shrine has a history of facing similar challenges. In prewar Japan, staff at the shrine comprised of 80 people. In the 1980s, only 24 people were employed. Participation in *kō* groups has also decreased. Distributing *ofuda* amulets among the neighborhood associations was still considered important in the 1980s, and people continued to make donations for these objects, but they no longer expressed an interest in visiting the shrine. Active engagement in Akiha veneration through local meetings, rituals, and festivals or shrine pilgrimage could no longer attract the masses. Shūyōji, too, had to downsize. In the early twentieth century, 13 priests were working at the temple, whereas in

¹⁷⁶ The survey addressed 2 Sōtō Zen temples out of the sect’s 786 districts (*kyōku* 教区), as well as 2 *danka* households per district. 1,572 head priests and 1,572 parishioners were polled; the participation rate was 71 percent. The answers of 1,122 head priests and 1,125 parishioners were evaluated by Sugawara Toshikiyo and other Sōtō Zen researchers (see Sugawara 2004: 28;31). See also Awaya Ryōdō 2008: 41. Awaya is using the data to evaluate the parishioners’ opinions about the priests beyond the scope of the study of the ‘funeral problem’.

1986 the temple was only run by the head priest and a vice head priest, who stayed at their branch temple Senkōji 千光寺 for most of the time. Only few guests made use of the opportunity to spend the night at Shūyōji, compared to previous decades. Shūyōji lived off the income derived from *kitō* and donations by *kō* groups, but had no formal organization of Akiha lay devotees to speak of, and also had no *danka* households. Lay affairs at Shūyōji were administered by a lay Buddhist board member (*sekinin yaku'in* 責任役員) of Senkōji (Yoshida 1998: 217-218;222;230).

A plan to revivify *kō* group activity had already been established in the 1980s at Kasuisai, but has never come into effect, due to a lack of time and funds (Shikami 1999: 136-137). The monks who prepared the public exhibition of Akiha Sanjakubō at Kasuisai in 1998 lamented that Akiha temples should have been educated about Kasuisai's self-understanding as 'fire prevention head monastery' (*hibuse sōhonzan* 火防総本山), indicating that Akiha temples were unaware of (or not interested in) mobilizing support for the *kaichō* exhibition. This explains why the monks' assessment of the 1998 *kaichō* was rather somber: "[...] We cannot say that the process of organizing *kō* groups was sufficient, nor was the missionary work and doctrinal education addressing these groups sufficient."¹⁷⁷

The lack of *kō* group participation caused by rural depopulation in Japan's aging society and changing family structures has made the organization of annual festivals increasingly difficult. Kasuisai's Bishū shusse *kō* (尾州出世講), for example, was traditionally in charge of carrying Akiha's portable shrine on the occasion of the fire festival, until a decrease in *kō* membership required the Ehima *kō* to take over its functions (Yoshida 1998: 225). In recent years, that group has been shrinking too. A lack of young men who are physically fit enough to carry Akiha's portable shrine to and from the inner temple has made it increasingly difficult for organizers to run the fire festival, as a *kō* group member informed me in December 2011. As Shikami Hōkō observed in 1999, "[...] the organizational structures and activities of Akiha *kō* groups could no longer be adapted in response to shifting social needs and expectations. Akiha *kō* groups as a whole are in a process of decline."¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ [...] *kōchū ni taisuru soshikika, oyobi fukyō, kyōka wa jūbun ni nasaretekita to wa iemasen.* [...] 講中に対する組織化、及び布教、教化は充分になされてきたとは言えません。(Shikami Hōkō 1999: 137).

¹⁷⁸ [...] *Akiha kō no soshiki, katsudō wa jidai no henka ni tekiō shikirenakattari, shakaiteki yōsei ni ōjikirenakattari shite zentai toshite wa, suitaika keikō ni arimasu.* [...] 秋葉講の組織、活動は時代の変化に適応しきれなかったり、社会的要請に応じきれなかったりして全体としては、衰退化傾向にあります。

Shikami (1999: 136) furthermore points out that Kasuisai has lost contact with many of the 1,500 Sōtō Zen Akiha temples in Japan. Some of these sites are no longer being maintained by clergy and lay associations, and all *kō* group activities have stalled there. Shikami argues that “[...] attempts to revive the villages and the ties between Buddhist temples and their local communities are fruitless.”¹⁷⁹ Nakano Tōzen’s assessment of the situation at Kasuisai is just as fatalistic, when he states that “the search for means of edification remains fruitless in these times of profound societal changes and pluralization of religion.”¹⁸⁰ Investing in the marketing for *kō* groups may not facilitate a *kō* group revival in areas struggling under the effects of depopulation, no matter how refined or specific the marketing strategy in addressing its target group may be.

Signs of Depopulation outside the Main Gate

Conversations with clergy at Kasuisai, neighbors, and temple supporters indicate that Kasuisai and many of its affiliated local communities in Shizuoka and Aichi Prefectures, where Akiha *kō* groups are widespread, are struggling under the effects of depopulation, although Fukuroi city, where Kasuisai is located, is not per definition ‘depopulated’.¹⁸¹ In Eastern Aichi prefecture, parts of Shinshiro and Toyota city; Shitarachō; Tōeichō; Toyonemura qualify as depopulated areas. In Shizuoka Prefecture, parts of Hamamatsu, Izu, Shimada, and Nemazu; Kawane honcho; Matsuzakichō; Nishiizuchō; and Minamiizuchō can be classified as

¹⁷⁹ [...] *Jiin to chiiki to ittai to natte no mura okoshi ni fukkatsu shitakutemo dekinai toiu no ga jitsujō to omowaremasu.* [...] 寺院と地域と一体となつての村興しに復活したくても出来ないというのが実状と思われまふ[...]。(Shikami 1999: 136).

¹⁸⁰ *Shakai kiban no hendō to, shūkyō tagenka jidai ni taiō suru kyōkateki hatarakikake no hōhō ga mosaku saretsutsu, ketteiteki yūkōsaku ga uchidasenaideiru no ga genjō dearu to ieyō.* 社会基盤の変動と、宗教の多元化時代に対応する教化的働きかけの方法が模索されつつ、決定的有効策が打ち出せないでいるのが現状であるといえよう。(Nakano 1998: 237).

¹⁸¹ The Depopulated Areas Revitalization Law (*kaso chiiki kasseika tokubetsu sochi hō* 過疎地域活性化特別措置法) of 1990 classifies a municipality as “depopulated” if two of the following criteria apply: 1) a 25 percent decrease in population between 1965 and 1990; 2) a 20 percent decrease in population within the same time period, with at least 16 percent of the population being over 65 years of age; 3) a 20 percent decrease in population within the same time period, with than 16 percent of the population being between 15 and 30 years of age; 4) an index of financial potential below 0.44 percent. The laws pertaining to depopulation have since been adapted. See Friedrich, Daniel (2015): “Resistance and Resignation: Depopulation at Ganjōji.” Paper presentation, Association for Asian Studies Annual Conference, 29 March 2015.

depopulated areas.¹⁸² It should be noted, however, that the overall impact of depopulation in Shizuoka and Aichi is by far not as critical as in Shimane and Tottori Prefectures, let alone Hokkaidō. According to a survey conducted by the Sōtō Zen sect, only 66 temples (or 5.8 percent) of the 1,147 Sōtō Zen temples in Shizuoka Prefecture are located in depopulated areas. In Aichi Prefecture, the number of temples in depopulated areas adds up to 69 temples (or 5.7 percent) of the 1,204 temples, which is low compared to the overall nationwide rate of 24.6 percent. Depopulation is much more of a pressing issue in Hokkaidō, where 59.7 percent of the 481 Sōtō Zen temples are considered as “depopulated temples;” or Akita Prefecture, where the 69.8 percent of the 243 Sōtō Zen temples are located in depopulated areas, but where the density of Sōtō Zen temples is also much lower (Sōtōshū shūmuchō ed. 2008: 188).

Kasuisai, along with nearby Buddhist temples Hattasan and Yusanji, is one of Fukuroi’s main attractions, but most of the shops surrounding Kasuisai are barely frequented by customers. Nine small shops lined the road towards Kasuisai’s main gate in 2011. Two of the shops were abandoned. The remaining shops were run by elderly locals, who sold ‘famous products of the Enshū area’ (*Enshū meibutsu* 遠州名物; especially green tea), along with home décor, canes, and other products catering to an elderly clientele. Dried viper (*mamushi* マムシ) and turtle (*suppon* スッポン) were available for 2,450 Yen (about 24 USD) a piece. With the exemption of fresh ice-cream, no fresh foods were available, whereas not far from Kasuisai, convenience stores and Service Areas along the Tōmei highway offered fresh snacks and local delicacies in attractive packages 24 hours a day.¹⁸³ The shops outside the main gate, on the other hand, adapted their opening hours to visitor activity at Kasuisai, which ceased at around 4:30 p.m., even on weekends. Most visitors to Kasuisai ignored them anyway. Even in January, when thousands of visitors passed by the shops on their way to the parking lot, the shops outside Kasuisai’s precincts received minimal attention by potential customers.

¹⁸² For a map showing the estimated depopulation of Shizuoka Prefecture, see <http://www.kaso-net.or.jp/map/shizuoka.htm>, accessed 08 July 2016. For a map showing the estimated depopulation of Aichi Prefecture, see <http://www.kaso-net.or.jp/map/aichi.htm>, accessed 08 July 2016. For a depopulation map of Shimane Prefecture, see <http://www.kaso-net.or.jp/map/shimane.htm>, accessed 08 July 2016. The websites draws on various legal definitions of depopulation, see <http://www.kaso-net.or.jp/kaso-about.htm>, accessed 08 July 2016.

¹⁸³ Field notes 14 September 2011 WS450405; 15 September 2011 WS450439; 16 September 2011 WS450542; 16 September 2011 WS450544; 19 September 2011 WS450766; 26 September 2011 WS451103; 03 January 2012 WS451318.

During my fieldwork, I would often overhear local shop sellers telling each other that business was not going well. Sellers at Kasuisai's New Year's bazaar also emphasized that their sales had declined over the past fifteen years. Selling their products at Kasuisai had once raised the value of their products, as one seller explained, but interest in his products had dwindled. Admission to sell antiques at Kasuisai was granted to some twelve vendors. About half of them were owners of actual antique shops in the wider Shizuoka area. The bazaar started some twenty years ago by the initiative of Kasuisai's head priest at the time. New sellers were only admitted by invitation, and vendors who joined the club fifteen years ago were still considered as 'newcomers'. As the sellers themselves were aging, however, participation in the bazaar has since become impossible to some of them, who were no longer physically fit enough to move their antiques to Kasuisai. The growing age of vendors, and their reliance on a system of family succession, made running the bazaar an increasingly complicated endeavor.¹⁸⁴

One local shop that stood out from this melancholy was Jerāto Genki right outside Kasuisai's main gate, where Mr. Miyazaki and two of his employees sold self-made *shōjin* ice, a "mysterious" (*fushigi* 不思議) ice-cream creation reminiscent of *shōjin ryōri*, Kasuisai's vegetarian cloister cuisine. Mr. Miyazaki, who founded Jerāto Genki ten years ago, was not a monk, nor a parish member of Kasuisai. He was however friends with three generations of monks in charge of Kasuisai's famous cloister kitchen (*tenzo* 典座). What distinguished Jerāto Genki from other ice-cream makers is his attention to the needs of people with lactose intolerance. He refrained from using milk and egg products. As with the shop owner selling powdered snake and turtle, Jerāto Genki marketed his product as healthy, using slogans to describe his ice cream as "wholesome," or "easy on your body" (*karada ni yasashii* 体に優しい), even "useful" (*yaku ni tatsu* 役に立つ). "Some of our customers are visitors to Kasuisai, or people who have business there," Mr. Miyazaki explained, "and they visit our shop on the way. But many others come for us, and not for the temple."¹⁸⁵

An inviting atmosphere and clean, well-lit spaces inside and outside the shop responded well to the expectations of families with children. Black boards and posters in Japanese and English signed by famous Japanese entertainers (*tarento* タレント; literally:

¹⁸⁴ Field notes 01 January 2012 WS451242; WS451243; 02 January 2012 WS451289.

¹⁸⁵ Interview Mr. Miyazaki, 26 September 2011 WS451107: *Kasuisai ni yōji ga atta hito mo kuru kedo, Kasui ni yōji nai, uchi dake yōji aru hito kekkō ōku iru ne.* 可睡齋に用事があつた人も来るけど、可睡に用事ない、ウチだけ用事ある人けっこう多くいるね。

talents) like comedian and Buddhist priest Pōru Maki ポール牧 worked to generate legitimacy by indicating Jerāto Genki's uniqueness. Nowadays, Mr. Miyazaki explained, his shop was mostly known for its role in producing ice cream for children with food allergies. The growing awareness of lactose intolerance, and the recent rapid trend towards use of agricultural products free from pesticides in combination with a desire to 'rediscover' healthy food in Japanese culture, inspired and benefited Jerāto Genki's association with the Zen-style cloister cuisine, as the success of his *shōjin* ice-cream indicates.¹⁸⁶ By adapting his marketing to the understanding of monastic life as a 'pure' and 'simple', Mr. Miyazaki adapted to the social norms and needs of younger visitors to Kasuisai, who were not visiting the monastery for Akiha Sanjakubō, and who were no longer engage in Akiha temple support associations, but who strived to experience monastic cloister cuisine and the Zen etiquette (see the discussion of *shukubō*, or overnight temple stays below in this chapter).

Jerāto Genki's informal association with Kasuisai extends into representations of Kasuisai in the media, as observed in an article about Kasuisai that characterizes Mr. Miyazaki at Jerāto Genki as an engaged member of the local community, besides bestowing on him the status of a "*tenzo* outside the main gate" (*monzen ni tenzo ari* 門前に典座あり, literally: "there is a *tenzo* outside the main gate") (Sōtōshū shūmuchō 2011: 55). This informal yet intimate relationship between Kasuisai and Mr. Genki as a representative of the local community is of mutual benefit both for the temple and the ice-cream maker, considering for example the promotion of vegetarian cloister cuisine and Zen-style cooking. However, the success of this relationship remains exceptional. As Mr. Genki explained during an interview in September 2011, Fukuroi city and surrounding rural communities in Shizuoka Prefecture suffer from a drain of creative and inventive thinkers, and of younger people in general:

We experience a brain drain to the big cities, like Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya. Those who stay are few in number. The intelligent people all go to the cities, though I cannot really understand why. We live in the province here, but this is a great town. Yet the awareness of this great town is vanishing. People think there is nothing out here in the sticks; nothing to be proud of. But they don't know what they are missing. They just go and leave this town to live in a big city, without knowing what they leave behind. They all become Tokyoites, or people of Nagoya, but they know nothing about their

¹⁸⁶ Mr. Miyazaki stated that he formerly worked in a shop affiliated with a consumer cooperative that promoted agricultural products that were not treated with pesticides, which inspired him to follow this trend in his production of ice cream. He was also frequently asked by parents about lactose free ice cream. Interview Mr. Miyazaki, 26 September 2011
WS451107

birth place; nothing. It's such a waste. [...] Living here is great fun! There are many interesting people, and you can make friends. You can even talk to Buddhist monks. This is so great, and nearly impossible in Tokyo, where so many people live. It is difficult to make tight-knit relations in Tokyo. [...] But here we even have fights. We fight, and we drink. People here are much stronger, and we take pride in this in our great town. There are many good people, and magnificent buildings, like Kasuisai, Hattasan, and Yusanji.¹⁸⁷

Mr. Miyazaki grew up with the smell of fresh tea. He spent his holidays working on the tea plantation for a pocket money, and his father worked in tea cultivation in Fukuroi, which Miyazaki remembered as a “town of tea” (*ocha no machi* お茶の町). Over the past twenty years, Miyazaki explained with a sad voice, the town had changed. Tea production was no longer profitable, as more and more Japanese became accustomed to cheap tea in PET bottles, regardless of that tea's lesser quality. This only strengthened Mr. Miyazaki determination to produce his ice-cream and tea on a small scale, but on his own terms, using only ingredients that match his high quality standards. The town itself, however, has changed. Forests and rice

¹⁸⁷ Interview Mr. Miyazaki, 26 September 2011 WS451107: *Atama no ii hitotachi, minna tokai ni ichatta. Minna Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya. nde, ima nokotteiru no wa, unn, sukunai ne. atama no ii hitotachi minna tokai ni itteshimau. Nante tokai ni itte shimau kanaa. koko inaka dakeredo, totemo ii machi. Demo nakanaka sono ii machi, ki ga tsukawanai. Ki ga tsukenai. Inaka no machi, nani mo nai, jiman ni naru mono nani mo nai, minna shiranai. Minna shiranai. Shiranaide, sono mama tokai ni itte – sono mama ni natchau. Minna Tōkyō no hito ni natteshimau. Minna Nagoya no hito ni natteshimau. Demo, umareta basho – nani mo shiranai. Mottai nai ne. [...] Koko ni sundeiru to tanoshii! Ironna omoshiroi hito ga atte, tomodachi ni mo nareru. Obōsan tomo ohanashi ga dekiru. Totemo suteki, Tokyo ni ittara nakanaka dekinai ne, takusan no hito ga ite, koi – missetsu na kankei ni narinikui. [...] Demo koko wa kenka mo suru. Kenka mo suru shi, nomu mo suru. Motto tsuyoi ne, minna. Sono toki ni yahari, koko, jiman – koko no machi, ii machi yo! ii hito takusan iru shi. Rippa na tatemono mo aru shi. Kasuisai, Hattasan, Yusanji. 頭のいい人たち、みんな都会にいちゃった。みんな東京、大阪、名古屋。んで、今残っているのは、うん、少ないね。頭のいい人たちみんな都会に行ってしまう。なんて都会に行ってしまうかな。ここ田舎だけれど、とてもいい街。でもなかなかそのいい街、気が使わない。気が付けない。田舎の町、なにもない、自慢になるも物なにもない、みんな知らない。みんな知らない。知らないで、そのまま都会に行つて—そのままになっちゃう。みんな東京の人になってしまう。みんな名古屋の人になってしまう。でも、生まれた場所—なにも知らない。もったいないね。[...]ここに住んでいると楽しい！いろいろな面白い人があって、友達にもなれる。お坊さんともお話しができる。とても素敵、東京に行ったらなかなかできないね、たくさんの人がいて、濃い、密接な関係になりやすい。[...]でもここは喧嘩もする。喧嘩もするし、飲むもする。もっと強いね、みんな。そのときにやはり、ここ、自慢—この町、いい街よ！いい人たくさんいるし。立派な建物もあるし。可睡齋、法多山、油山寺。*

fields had to give way to factories and apartment buildings, while traditional high quality tea cultivation has decreased.¹⁸⁸

Changing Family Structures and the Redistribution of Religious Knowledge

A factor that exacerbates and otherwise alters the ongoing decrease in *kō* group activity in rural Japan lies within the contemporary redistribution of religious knowledge. Previous generations of *kō* group members had passed down the legend of Akiha, as well as the knowledge necessary to initiate and organize a local fire festivals to their successors. Most families in Japan are no longer living in multigenerational households, where the grandparents transmitted their knowledge about Buddhism, ancestor veneration and local deity cults to their children and grandchildren.¹⁸⁹ Many younger people do no longer know where their Buddhist family temple is located, or which denomination they belong to. Respective inquiries are often only made in preparation of a Buddhist funeral for a close relative (see Reader 1991; Rowe 2006: 4).

A multitude of guidebooks aimed at filling this information gap are available on the market online and in bookstores, mostly concerning funerals. Book titles like *Everything About the Funeral – A Complete Guide for Buddhist Mortuary Rituals in the Ishikawa Area*¹⁹⁰ or *Example Speeches for Funerals and Mortuary Services*¹⁹¹ show that both local-specific and content-specific subjects are covered. The volume *New Funerals and the Buddhist Mortuary Rituals – Procedures and Manners*,¹⁹² for example, illustrates how much money one should donate on the occasion of a funeral depending on the degree of relationship

¹⁸⁸ Interview Jerāto Genki 26 September 2011 WS451107; field notes 25 September 2011 WS451061; 25 September 2011 WS451061; 26 September 2011 WS451105; 26 September 2011 WS451108.

¹⁸⁹ The number of families living together in three generations in one place has decreased drastically. The average household in Japan in the year 2000 consisted of 2.76 family members. An increasing number of people are living on their own or with a partner. 26.4 percent of all households in Japan in the year 2000 were single-households. The average age of Japanese men at the time of their first marriage was 28.8 years; the average age of women was 27 years. The birth-rate in the year 2000 was as low as 1.35; the divorce rate rises. Many Japanese marry again after a divorce. All numbers derived from Kawano 2003: 128-129.

¹⁹⁰ *Osōshiki no subete – Ishikawa no butsuji kanzen gaido* お葬式の全て—石川の仏事完全ガイド (Yonenaga 2000).

¹⁹¹ *Sōgi – hōyō no aisatsu jitsurei shū* 葬儀—法要の挨拶実例集 (Shufu to seikatsu sha ed. 1994).

¹⁹² *Atarashii sōgi to hōyō. Susumekata to manā* 新しい葬儀と法要—進め方とマナー (Shufu no tomo sha ed. 2005).

with the family of the bereaved, how to divide the banknotes, and how to wrap them. The book also shows how to perform rituals for the family ancestors in front of a Buddhist household altar. However, no such guidebook exists for beliefs and practices pertaining to Akiha worship, or the activities of Kasuisai's support associations.

Transformations of ascriptions to religious beliefs and practices in contemporary Japan are also addressed by the aforementioned Sōtō Zen survey (Sugawara 2003; Sugawara 2004). According to Sugawara, the dwindling consciousness of Japan's traditional religious culture, including local deity cults, threatens the legitimacy of Buddhism and Buddhist soteriology. 54.1 percent of the responding parishioners confirmed that dead enter the realm of the Buddhas (*hotoke no sekai* 仏の世界); 60.5 percent responded that the dead become *hotoke*, or Buddha; and 61.2 percent confirmed that the dead "join the ancestors" (*senzo no nakama iri* 先祖の仲間入り) (Sugawara 2003: 402). Accordingly, pro-Buddhist concepts of postmortality were still strongly represented in the survey. But only about 20 percent of the responding parishioners confirmed the existence of *kami* in rivers, mountains, rice fields and plants, to the concern of the Sōtō Zen researchers (Sugawara 2004: 35). Sugawara explains this fluctuation of religious beliefs with postwar societal change, notably the living conditions in urban areas, the mechanization of farming, and the overall decline of agricultural and fishery industries, which resulted in a decline of traditional beliefs in nature and local gods. He resumes: "The people who move away from local communities to become city dwellers are concerned with the secondary and tertiary economic sectors. It seems that their sense for the animistic spirits and the ancestors that the culture of rice cultivation had produced for a long period of time, has weakened."¹⁹³ Sugawara goes as far as to claim that "the sources of the hitherto existing simple virtues" (*jūrai no soboku na dōtoku no gensen* 従来の素朴な道德の源泉), are disappearing into the fog of history, due to the loss of traditional religious culture (Sugawara 2004: 36).

The lack of organizational structure of *kō* groups explored above marks a striking contrast to the hierarchic organizational structures of the so-called New Religions. Some of

¹⁹³ *mata, chiiki shakai kara hanarete toshi jūmin to natta hitobito wa dai-niji, dai-sanji sangyō ni jūji suru koto to nari, nagaku inasaku bunka ga hagukunde kita animisutikku na reikon ya senzo nado ni taisuru kankaku ga usuragu koto ni natta no dewanaika to omowaremasu.* また、地域社会から離れて都市住民となった人々は第二次、第三次産業に従事することとなり、長く稲作文化が育ててきたアニミスティックな靈魂や先祖などに対する感覚が薄らぐことになったのではないかと思います。(Sugawara 2004: 35-36).

the New Religions claim authority over traditional ‘folk beliefs’, and offer wish-fulfilling rituals comparable to those practiced at *kitō jiin*.¹⁹⁴ Religious organizations that emerged as part of the first wave of New Religions in postwar Japan were flexible in adapting to Japan’s postwar urbanization and the changes in family structures, whereas temple Buddhist sects were unable to respond to these challenges and the shifting needs and expectations of religious practitioners who were looking for religion in the cities (see Covell 2005: 39-40). A common reason for joining a New Religion lies within the strife for (communal) identity, social benefits and voluntary work, as well as activities in coping with contingency, and for this-worldly benefits (*genze riyaku*) (see Prohl 2006).

Scholars of religion estimate that 10 to 20 percent of all Japanese are members of a modern religious organization, or New Religion (Prohl 2012: 241).¹⁹⁵ New Religions are known to draw on the common field of religions in Japan (see Reader and Tanabe 1998) to express their ideas of salvation and this-worldly benefits. Their programs and teachings and practices, in other words, are not as ‘new’ as the term New Religion suggests (Prohl 2003a: 6-7).¹⁹⁶ Careful consideration is therefore needed regarding Sugawara’s assessment regarding a declining consciousness of traditional religion in Japan. A national survey conducted by the *Yomiuri Shimbun* since 1979 showed that even after the Aum Shinrikyō incident of 1995, some sixty to seventy percent claimed that they had some belief in *kami*, Buddhas, spirits, supernatural phenomena, or karmic retribution (Dorman 2012: 514).¹⁹⁷ It would be more correct to say that temple Buddhist institutions lost control over the discourse on presumed ‘traditional’ religious beliefs and practices.

Traditional religious beliefs and practices are also well-represented in Japan’s new spirituality culture, which encompasses discourse on spirits; souls; consciousness-

¹⁹⁴ For a study on the role of this-worldly benefits in the context of the New Religions Agonshū and World Mate, see Prohl 2004b; Prohl 2006. Members of the New Religion Sōka Gakkai, interviewed by Inken Prohl (see Prohl 2000b: 213) remarked that the practice of chanting *namu myōhō renga* (“praise the law of the Lotus Sutra”), the title (*daimoku*) of the Lotus Sutra, made it possible for them to have their material wishes fulfilled, mentioning that even a high-end sports car could be obtained through chanting.

¹⁹⁵ It is difficult to determine the distribution of New Religions in Japan, considering that the standards as to what level of organization qualifies a New Religion vary. The membership number provided by modern religious organizations are often higher than the data provided by other sources suggests (see Prohl 2003a: 9).

¹⁹⁶ For this reason, Inken Prohl has suggested the term Modern Religious Organization for the description of the so-called New Religions, see Prohl 2003a.

¹⁹⁷ On the problems of surveys and quantitative research on religions in Japan, see Roemer 2012.

transformation; awareness experience; therapy; deep ecology; animism; ancient Shintō (*koshintō* 古神道); and contact with spirits of nature (see Shimazono and Graf 2012: 459-460).¹⁹⁸ Presumed ‘traditional’ ideas of *kami* and Buddhas are widely publicized by the so-called spiritual intellectuals, like Umehara Takeshi (see Umehara 1991) and Nakazawa Shin’ichi (see Nakazawa 1992), and Yamaori Tetsuo. These authors reach a wide audience by supplying a demand for cultural identity, orientation, and nostalgia. They are well-represented in the media and in popular culture, win academic book awards, and thus shape the forming of opinion within contemporary Japanese society.¹⁹⁹ The construction of a specific Japanese spirituality or mystic and animistic Japaneseness by the spiritual intellectuals puts most of their writings into the controversial category of *Nihonjin-ron* 日本人論, literally “theories about the Japanese” (see Prohl 2003b: 195-218). Contrary to the reductive descriptions of Western missionaries, who described the ‘mystic’ religion of Japan in pejorative terms, Japan’s spiritual intellectuals use concepts like ‘mystic’ or ‘animistic’ in affirmative ways, and for the purpose of self-assertion.²⁰⁰ Yamaori Tetsuo, in his essay on “The Japanese and *kitō*” (*Nihonjin to kitō* 日本人と祈祷), for example, defends *kitō* as being at the heart of Japanese religiosity, along with *kuyō*, or ancestor veneration rituals. He relativizes pejorative and reductive descriptions of *kitō* for this-worldly benefits by pointing out that *nenbutsu* invocations of Buddha Amida – a practice that was mostly spared by the criticisms of Buddhist modernists – was also practiced for this-worldly benefits (Yamaori 1998: 24-25; 34-35).

The dilemma that Sōtō intellectuals are facing is expressed in their enduring struggle to distinguish *kitō* from related practices. Sectarian scholars invested in researching prayer rituals for this-worldly benefits, like Satō Shunkō and Sakurai Hideo, consistently justify *kitō* as a socially relevant practice that is founded in Sōtō Zen scripture. At the same time, both scholars take pains to differentiate between *kitō* and the beliefs and practices of the New Religions. Satō Shunkō already warned of exorcisms, fortune-telling, incantations and magic elixirs in the 1960s in Japan (see Satō 2003: 139). In 1989, Sakurai Hideo distinguished *kitō*

¹⁹⁸ All of these subjects were already known as components of the ‘spiritual world’ (*seishin sekai* 精神世界) by the 1980s in Japan (see Shimazono 1996a; Shimazono 2004; Shimazono 2007).

¹⁹⁹ On the spiritual intellectuals in Japan, see Prohl 2000a; Prohl 2003a: 275-276.

²⁰⁰ It should be noted that the Japanese educational system, based on the constitutional separation of religion and state, does not provide for religious education or basic knowledge about religion. On the situation of religion at public and private schools in postwar Japan, see Inoue 2000: 49-56.

from the “occult boom” (*okaruto būmu* オカルト・ブーム) and “magical practices” (*jujutsu kōi* 呪術行為) like fortune-telling, but already pointed to the fact that practitioners may not share this understanding. Practitioners interested in *kitō* and practitioners interested in fortune-telling (*bokusen* 卜占) may share the same mindset (*seishin kōzō* 精神構造), according to Sakurai insofar as both are concerned about the future (see Sakurai 1989: 57). In 2003, Satō remarked that *kaji kitō* incantations have still not become extinct, so as to emphasize that the demand for *kitō* is real: “The growth of society did not result in the elimination of *kaji kitō* incantations as a premodern phenomenon.” (Satō 2003: 139).²⁰¹ The Aum Shinrikyō incident of 1995 has made it particularly difficult for Sōtō Zen sectarian intellectuals to argue in favor of *kitō*. Satō remarks: “As the Aum Shinrikyō incident has quite bluntly shown, New Religions draped heavily in mystery and magic have not come out of fashion, but continue to be founded in contemporary society” (Satō 2003: 139).²⁰² Representations of Buddhism in Japanese media after the Aum incident were generally suspicious of religion.²⁰³ Satō (2003: 152) consequently stresses the need to stay in touch with the expectations of ordinary Japanese, and to shape the practice of *kitō* in adaptation to social needs, yet without ignoring the scriptural foundations of *kitō*, which are subject to interpretation. This-worldly benefits, according to Sakurai Hideo, may not simply be brought about by the power of the *Heart Sutra* (see Satō 2003: 151; Sakurai 1989: 72-74). In discussing Sakurai’s understanding of *kitō*, Satō explains, “[...] the true meaning of *kitō* is the altruistic vow [...]” (Satō 2003: 151).²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ *Shakai no seichō wa, kaji kitō wo zenkindaiteki na mono toshite haijo shite wa konakatta no dearu.* 社会の成長は、加持祈禱を前近代的なものとして排除してはこなかったのである。

²⁰² *Oumu Shinrikyō jiken ni tanteki na yō ni, shinpiteki, jujutsuteki yosooi wo korashita shinshūkyō wa, gendai shakai de mo sutareru koto naku umaretsuzuketeiru shi [...].* オウム真理教事件に端的なように、神秘てき、呪術的装いをこらした新宗教は現代社会でも廃れることなく生まれ続けているし [...].

²⁰³ On Aum Shinrikyō, see Chapter Five, particularly the references in footnote 377 of this dissertation.

²⁰⁴ [...] *rita no seigan, sore ga kitō no shingi dearu [...].* [...] 利他の誓願、それが祈禱の真義である [...]. Satō further explores this view through the study of Dogen’s *Eihei Kōroku* (Vol. 5). Chapter Five of this dissertation will pick up on this thread in a discussion of the renegotiation of *kitō* in the wake of the 2011 disasters in Japan, particularly the ways in which collaborations of religious professionals and scholars in new spiritual care initiatives have elicited notably favorable media coverage of believes in ghost, incantations, and ‘folk practices’.

Innovations in Response to Declining *kō* Group Activity

Talk about the need to usher in a “revival of *kō* groups” (*kōchū saiseika* 講中再生化) exceeds concrete responses to the decrease of temple support associations at Kasuisai. This imbalance is partly due to the inevitability of social changes that render any religious innovation insignificant, compared to the financial stability derived from Akiha devotion. A surge in visitors to Kasuisai does not necessarily generate income for the monastery and the Sōtō Zen sect, if said visitors just come to have a look without investing in prayer rituals and material objects, and without building lasting connections with the monastery. Likewise, the rhetoric of decline in support for Kasuisai has to be distinguished from the decrease of temple support associations and its associated problems. While the decrease in *kō* activity has intensified in recent years, due to rural depopulation and changing family structures in Japan's aging society, the rhetoric of *kō* group decline as such has a history of about thirty years. This chapter examines this rhetoric of decline, and the ways in which clergy employ this rhetoric as a means of mobilizing support, followed by a discussion of the ways in which Kasuisai established a new brand pillar in response to decreasing *kō* group activity, by marketing overnight temple stays (*shukubō*) as a recreational ‘Zen’ experience for younger urban Japanese.

Public *kaichō* exhibitions of local gods are designed to elicit support for the religious institutions that claim authority over these gods. They also function as a means of asserting control over the presumed power of local gods for this-worldly benefits. These intended effects are no longer guaranteed in an aging Japan struggling with rural depopulation and other challenges, as younger generations sever local community ties. At Kasuisai, clergy followed up on the 1998 public exhibition of Akiha Sanjakubō by calling for immediate countermeasures against the “natural decrease” (*shizen shōgen* 自然消滅) of temple support associations by making eight suggestions:

- Structuring and systematically organizing *kō* groups (*soshikika* 組織化).
- Encouraging *kō* groups to employ a principle of regular rotation of leadership position annually or seasonally.
- Sending invitations and advertising to *kō* groups in the name of Kasuisai.
- Encouraging the founding of new *kō* groups.
- Missionary work and doctrinal education to prevent *kō* groups from shrinking and loosening their ties with Kasuisai (*genkō no kaihō, shōgen no bōshi no tame no fukyō, kyōka jissshi* 現講の解放、消滅の防止の為の布教、教化実施).

- Creating address books with the contacts of *kō* groups.
- Holding a general *kō* group assembly on a regular basis (*teiki sōkai no kaisai* 定期総会の開催).
- Missionary work and doctrinal education for *kō* group members and other temple visitors for the purpose of maintaining and broadening people's relationship with Kasuisai (*keizoku, kakudai no tame no kōin, tozansha he no fukyō, kyōka no jisshi* 継続、拡大の為の講員、登山者への布教、教化の実施).
(Shikami 1999: 135).

While the social challenges explored in above in Chapter Three render Kasuisai's countermeasures against the decrease of temple support associations ineffective, looking at the ways that Buddhists bring up and discuss these suggestions reveals a range of structural problems confronting Buddhist institutions in Japan today. The coordination and organization of a *kaichō* exhibition at a prayer monastery like Kasuisai requires networking skills and knowledge about the regional situation of Akiha temples nationwide. Kasuisai established associations for the promotion of Akiha veneration and Sōtō doctrine, called *hōsankai* 奉讃会. Members of these associations included all temples in possession of a 'share of the spirit' of Akiha Sanjakubō (*bunrei jiin* 分霊自院) and other Akiha temples, as well as local Sōtō temples, sectarian leaders, parishioners at Kasuisai, Akiha *kō* groups, local fire departments, companies that collaborate with Kasuisai on a regular basis, local community associations, historians, and scholars of religion. In practice, however, much of the knowledge needed to organize the event circled within smaller committees (*iinkai soshiki* 委員会組織), which mostly consisted of engaged leading parishioners (*danshinto sōdai* 檀信徒総代). These committees lacked the means or skills to distribute and allocate knowledge, funds, and labor among all participating groups. This caused problems for the monks at Kasuisai, who ended up taking on a lot more tasks than initially planned, due to their know-how, and because the committees only met on certain days. As a result of this problematic division of labor and logistic challenges, only the Enshū area was targeted in outreach initiatives in preparation of the *kaichō* exhibition. The response to this problem was to edit a guidebook for monks (*shokuisho* 職意書) with basic knowledge (*kihonteki chishiki* 基本的知識), along with plans of action and timelines for particular marketing goals (Shikami 1999: 138-139). Another challenge in preparing the public exhibition was the fact that positions at Kasuisai keep alternating: "All monks in office had left, and by the time when the now-headpriest of

Kasuisai took position, when the planning for the major celebrations began, it was already too late to organize the *hōsankai* associations in support of preparing these major events” (Shikami 1999: 139).²⁰⁵

The problem of alternating positions is rarely addressed in the scholarship. Self-representations of prayer temples like Kasuisai downplay the monks’ individual biographies, and instead emphasize their position within the monastic hierarchy. This focus on ranks contributes to the understanding of a seemingly ahistorical monastic continuity, as much as it works to promote a monastic identity that allows clergy to present themselves as a unified group. But it overshadows the consequences of the fact that most monks in training (*shugyōsō* 修行僧; or *unsui* 雲水) do not stay at Kasuisai for more than six months. In other words, they leave Kasuisai before they gain a deeper understanding of administrative procedures and monastic management. Most monks in office spend more time at Kasuisai than *unsui*, but return to their home temples within one to three years. Except for the head priest and vice head priest, positions change frequently. On the one hand, monks bring their social networks and professional skills with along them to Kasuisai, for the benefit of the monastic community. On the other hand, knowledge about administrative procedures and exchanges with public officials and private enterprises gets frequently lost.²⁰⁶ This poses problems, considering that any type of response to the decrease in *kō* groups and *kō* group activity requires profound knowledge of internal matters at the monastery, trends in religious tourism, and public relations.

Overnight Temple Stays (*shukubō*)

In the early twenty-first century, Kasuisai began to adjust its marketing against the backdrop of declining *kō* activity by targeting younger urban Japanese a broad interest in health, Japanese culture, and Zen monastic etiquette, and by offering them an imagined community independently from temple support associations. Staying overnight at a Buddhist temple

²⁰⁵ *Soshite zen-yakuryōshū ga sō-taijin sare, gen-saishu rōshi ga shūnin sarete tokubetsu taisai ni chakushu saretai jiten de wa, hōsankai wo soshiki suru ni wa amari ni mo ososugimashita.* そして前役寮衆が総退陣され、現齋主老師が就任されて特別大祭に着手された時点では、奉讃会を組織するにはあまりにも遅すぎました。

²⁰⁶ This frequent loss of knowledge about Kasuisai may explain why monks frequently rediscover their temple and its material Buddhist culture, including a statue of Meiji Tennō and rare books. See <http://www.kasuisai.or.jp/news/category/media/page/2>, accessed 06 September 2016.

became popular among commoners during the spread of pilgrimage to religious sites in Tokugawa Japan (see Chapter One of this dissertation). What distinguishes today's *shukubō* from its earlier precedents is that younger visitors, singles, couples, and families do not request nor are they encouraged by the monks to spend a night at Kasuisai for collective drinking or ludic gatherings, as would be typical for *kō* groups. They do not consider Kasuisai as a venue to hold meetings, arrange business deals, prepare festivals, or discuss local politics, as *kō* group leaders would do. They show no long-term commitment in supporting Kasuisai. They come to Kasuisai with expectations to experience a Zen monastic lifestyle by participating actively in everyday monastic tasks, such as cleaning chores, sutra recitation, sutra copying, and ritual sitting (*zazen*). Similar activities were already offered at Kasuisai in the course of the re-import of transculturally shaped understandings of *zazen* that became popular in the West during the second half of the twentieth century, but they were not marketed and advertised as observed in the context of *shukubō* as a more recent phenomenon. An introduction to Kasuisai in the December 1982 issue of the magazine *Shūkyō to Gendai* (Sumida ed. 1982: 24-51) for example, shows one photo of school children sitting in *zazen*, but the article itself is almost entirely focused on Akiha devotion, whereas more recent media representations of Kasuisai are indicative of the monastery's efforts to establish *shukubō* as an independent pillar aimed at stabilizing and complementing Kasuisai's overall brand image and outreach efforts (see for example Sōtōshū shūmuchō 2011).²⁰⁷ This third main pillar is

²⁰⁷ This is typical for older publications on Kasuisai and Akiha devotion that include advertising. Kasuisai kyōkabu 1985, for example, a guide published by Kasuisai, is focused on introducing *zazen* as a monastic practice. The pamphlet presents perspectives on the everyday life at Kasuisai, and gives detailed instructions on how to perform ritual sitting, as well as includes a compilation of Zen manners. The pamphlet also briefly introduces the history of Kasuisai and some of its attractions, using photos. An application guide for readers interested in an overnight stay at Kasuisai as part of a Zen training (*sanzen kenshū* 参禅研修) is included, but the proposed program is different from the program designed for *shukubō* participants at Kasuisai today. The program published in the mid-1980s, for example, does not include sutra copying, nor does it promote vegetarian cloister cuisine. No real effort has been made at the time to make *shukubō* accessible to potential customers, as also the lack of price transparency demonstrates. Moreover, the program is primarily targeted at groups, not at individuals, as it presents schedules for the Zen training for business companies (*kaisha sanzen kenshū* 会社参禅研修), and for the Zen training for schools (*gakkō sanzen kenshū* 学校参禅研修), without addressing families and individuals directly (see Kasuisai kyōkabu 1985: 44-45).

distinguished in its outreach to younger urban Japanese, yet still relies on Kasuisai's functions as a *kitō* prayer monastery and sectarian training center.²⁰⁸

What do visitors to Kasuisai expect of *shukubō*, and what are their reasons for wanting to eat, sleep, and work like a monk for a day? *Shukubō* participants are mostly families with kids, and small groups of two to three friends or family members in their twenties to fifties, who choose to spend the night at Kasuisai for their personal wellbeing, and to learn about the “manners” at a Buddhist temple (*otera no shikitari* お寺のしきたり; *sahō*). Nostalgia is also a motivating factor. Younger participants in their twenties and thirties considered an overnight stay at Kasuisai as a means of getting in touch with Japanese virtues and their cultural roots. Many parents that I interviewed had fond memories of overnight stays at Buddhist temples with their school classmates and teachers, and they found it important to share this experience with their children.²⁰⁹ Others traveled alone to practice self-reflexivity in coping with a crisis, or in anticipation of a turning point in their lives, for example a wedding or change of career. All participants had in common that the practices they performed as part of their stay, and the food they received at Kasuisai, were considered as healthy.²¹⁰ Reactions to the program were overwhelmingly positive. Recurring expressions used by *shukubō* participants to describe

²⁰⁸ This section of the chapter draws on ethnographic fieldwork and interviews with Ishida Ryōshō, who had spent five years at Kasuisai by the time of our interviews in 2011. Ishida was one of four monks at Kasuisai without a monastic background in his family. Having no family temple of his own to run, Ishida directed his attention to public relations and the implementation of religious innovations at Kasuisai. Conversation Ishida Ryōshō, 24 September 2011 WS451037.

²⁰⁹ *Shukubō* at Kasuisai does not address the needs of children in any particular way, but Daiyūzan Saijōji offers annual Kids Zen Days (*kodomo zen no tsudoī* 子ども禅のつどい). This program caters to the needs of children by offering games, along with playful versions of monastic cleaning and *zazen*. For an audiovisual documentation of the Kids Zen Days at Daiyūzan, see Graf 2012. It should also be noted that school classes at prayer monasteries don't come with intentions to eat *shōjin ryōri*. The food typically served for groups of children is instant Curry Rice, which is also the meal of choice that the monks cook for themselves during major festivals, as preparing Curry Rice does not require much time and effort.

²¹⁰ During my fieldwork at Kasuisai in 2011, I met two lay practitioners who spent five days with the monks. One practitioner was committed to stay at Kasuisai in preparation of his service in the Japan Self-Defense Forces (*jieitai* 自衛隊), the other wanted to “experience the life of a monk” (*obōsan no seikatsu wo taiken sasete itadakimasu* お坊さんの生活を体験させていただきます). Quote Mr. Satō, 19 September 2011 WS450775. A monk who had absolved four months of his monastic training at the time confirmed that these were the first cases of guests to spend more than one night at Kasuisai that he had encountered during his training. Ishida Ryōshō also stressed that guests generally stay for one night only, but special agreements can be made to extend the stay. Field note 21 September 2011 WS450866.

their experience are “fresh” (*shinsen* 新鮮) and “extraordinary” (*hi-nichijōteki* 非日常的), as well as “demanding” or “hard” (*taihen* 大変).²¹¹

Kasuisai faces challenges in making *shukubō* known. Some participants learn about Kasuisai through their parish temples, or via introduction by the Sōtō Zen head monastery Sōjiji,²¹² but Kasuisai may not rely on sectarian channels alone in making its *shukubō* known. The program relies on word-of-mouth advertising, print ads, and marketing via internet. Participants read about *shukubō* in newspapers, magazines, and blogs. The *Nippon Keizai Shinbun* (09 July 2011) ranked Kasuisai as the fifth-best *shukubō* temple nationwide. Recent interest in *shukubō*, according to monks in office, was partly the result of a BS Japan television program that featured Kasuisai and other *tabiji* 旅寺, “travel temples” that offer overnight stays, among them Kōyasan in Wakayama Prefecture. The program, which first aired on 28 March 2011, approaches *shukubō* as a booming social phenomenon (*shakai genshō* 社会現象), and claims that “more and more people are searching for healing-spaces (*iyashi no kūkan* 癒しの空間), where they can forget about the worldliness and the stress that is a part of contemporary society.”²¹³ The program description suggests that these healing-spaces may be found at Buddhist monasteries that offer a range of monastic practices and vegetarian cloister cuisine in distinct environmental settings featuring gardens, cultural treasures, and in some cases even hot springs (*onsen* 温泉). Kasuisai frequently plays video of the BS Japan program on a television screen near the reception, which underlines the temple’s self-understanding as a *tabiji*. Kasuisai furthermore maintains relationships with travel agencies and public institutions for promotional purposes. Also in 2011, an article by Abe Takashi on Kasuisai’s vegetarian cloister cuisine appeared in the journal *Niponica* (No. 3, p. 22). This publication organ is sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. It reaches a wide audience in seven languages online. The article under the title “Delicious Vegetarian Cuisine Inspired by Buddhist Discipline” introduces *shōjin ryōri* as a specialty for samurai and members of the aristocracy. Cooking and eating are described as integral parts of

²¹¹ Field note 9 September 2011 WS450206; Interviews with *shukubō* guests, 14 September 2011 WS450373; 19 September 2011 WS450759; WS450761; 25 September 2011 WS451044.

²¹² Field note 08 September 2011 WS450178.

²¹³ Quote BS Japan *Tabiji: Gendai shakai no zatsunen ya sutoresu wo wasuresaru tame ni, iyashi no kūkan wo motomeru hito ga fueteiru no desu* 現代社会の雑念やストレスを忘れ去るために、癒しの空間を求める人が増えているのです。See <http://www.bs-j.co.jp/tabiji/>, accessed 16 August 2016.

Zen monastic discipline.²¹⁴ Reference to media articles and television programs about Kasuisai's vegetarian cloister cuisine is also made on Kasuisai's website, which furthermore encourages website visitors to participate in Kasuisai's *shōjin ryōri* cooking class. The four-hour cooking class is held twice a month in the monastery's kitchen, for a fee of 3.000 Yen (about USD 29).²¹⁵

Overnight Temple Stays as Community-Forming Events

Kasuisai advertises overnight stays at the monastery as a way of becoming part of the Moon Spirit Society (Gesshin'e 月心会). *Shukubō* participants do not necessarily understand themselves as members of a Kasuisai-based community, as most of them are first-time visitors who never return to Kasuisai to take part in *shukubō* or other types of lay activity. What attracts most visitors is the experience of a monastic ideal, and the opportunity to observe a community of monks in practice. The monks cater to this need by encouraging active participation in monastic cleaning and *zazen*, among other practices, and by urging participants to adhere to the monastic rules for the time of the *shukubō* stay. But they are not required to show their commitment by supporting Kasuisai continuously or through donations. This distinguishes the Moon Spirit Society from a temple support association, where membership comes with obligations to make donations and undertake pilgrimage.

Encounters (*deai* 出会い), according to Kasuisai, are integral parts of human life. The 'society' in Moon Spirit Society stands for the importance sharing sadness and joy in interpersonal relationships with others. The 'moon' in Moon Spirit Society signifies the importance of inner calmness (*odayaka na kimochi* 穏やかな気持ち). The spirit, heart, or mind (*kokoro* 心) comes to a rest on full-moon night, according to Kasuisai's internet presence, and thus relates to the lunar phases. "The spirit," the website explains, "defines us. It is what we are as humans. In controlling this spirit through *zazen*, and in staring at our own spirit, our hearts and our expressions become more beautiful."²¹⁶ Here, *zazen* is introduced as a method to control and improve the self.

²¹⁴ Conversation Ishida Ryōshō, 24 September 2011 WS451037.

²¹⁵ See http://www.kasuisai.or.jp/information/vegetarian_cooking.html, accessed 17 August 2016.

²¹⁶ Quote <http://www.kasuisai.or.jp/zen/>: *Ningen ni totte kokoro ga subete aru, kono kokoro no kontorōru wo suru tame ni zazen wo shinagara jiko no kokoro wo mitsumeru koto de*

Discursive interpretations of ‘Zen’ as presented in sermons to the members of the Moon Spirit Association are similar to the sermons for *kō* group members, or those given on the occasion of the annual fire festival. Aging, illness, and healing are recurring themes in both cases. What distinguishes sermons for the Moon Spirit Association is their striking lack of reference to Akiha devotion. This seemingly minor adjustment reflects assumptions that visitors with a broad interest in ‘Zen,’ culture, and wellbeing are alienated by *kitō* prayers for this-worldly benefits. In adjusting their sermons for *shukubō* guests, Kasuisai draws on the works of successful Zen Buddhist authors and their self-help books and spiritual guides about healing and coping with aging and illness. Kasuisai head priest Sase Dōjun positions this initiative to start a lecture series in the lineage of his predecessor and Meiji Buddhist reformer Nishiari Bokusan, who worked to make Buddhism accessible to the general public through the foundation of *kōenkai*, or lecture groups (see Chapter One of this dissertation). In addition to strengthening Akiha devotion, the bonds with parishioners, and Kasuisai’s role as a monastic training center, Sase Dōjun sees his vocation as head priest in making Kasuisai accessible for the local community, for example by offering open lecture series, and in promoting Kasuisai as a tourist attraction.²¹⁷

The selection of annual guest speakers – most of them are Sōtō Zen intellectuals – furthermore demonstrates Kasuisai’s interest in establishing connections with accomplished intellectuals and authors of books about aging and healing, among other topics related to the everyday lives of temple visitors, and the elderly in particular. Sermons presented by Kasuisai’s monks pick up on these themes. The sermon for the Moon Spirit Association of 17 September 2011, for example, revolved around the contents of a lecture by Aoyama Shundō (born in 1933), an internationally acclaimed author of popular Zen Buddhist books, and head of the Sōtō Zen Aichi nunnery (Aichi Senmon Nisōdō), who gave a talk at Kasuisai four days earlier.²¹⁸ Her presentation “Opening our eyes to the preciousness of life” (*inochi no tōtosa ni mezamete* 命の尊さに目覚めて) marked the beginning of a new annual culture lecture series (*bunka kōenkai* 文化講演会). Aoyama’s speech opened with a discussion of Dōgen and his views of the cloister chef, followed by interpretations of the roles of mothers, before she

kokoro mo hyōjō mo utsukushikunaru koto wo imi suru. [人間にとって心が全てある、] この心のコントロールをするために坐禅をしながら自己の心を見つめる事で心も表情も美しくなる事を意味する。

²¹⁷ Field note 02 January 2012 WS451287.

²¹⁸ Field note 17 September 2011 WS450641.

turned to a talk about cancer, the death of one's mother and suffering generally.²¹⁹ As with the sermons presented by Kasuisai's monks to *shukubō* guests, Aoyama Shundō's lecture did not address Akiha devotion or *kitō* prayers for this-worldly benefits in any way.²²⁰ And as with *shukubō*, Aoyama's lecture was offered and marketed in combination with *shōjin ryōri*.²²¹

Having Aoyama Shundō over for a talk was presented as a success by Kasuisai, and gave proof the monastery's skill in attracting speakers with an international profile for the benefit of the local community.²²² As head priest Sase Dōjun pointed out to members of the Moon Spirit Society, Aoyama's talk had to be planned more than a year in advance. In pointing out Aoyama's activities for the proliferation of Zen Buddhism in Europe, India, and America, Kasuisai participated in the promotion of Zen as a global brand. A survey conducted by the monks after the nun's presentation furthermore enabled the monks to evaluate how the audience perceived the new lecture series and the content of the lecture by Aoyama. Similar contents were then presented by the monks for *shukubō* practitioners. Yet while the culture lecture series comprised of only one speech, *shukubō* comprises a variety of activities. To the *shukubō* participants, the sermon provided a first opportunity to rest after the *shōjin ryōri* lunch (12:30 to 13:30) and *zazen* (starting at 13:30 to 15:00). It was also the first opportunity for the practitioners to sit on a comfortable chair in front a table, which might explain why the majority of listeners fell asleep during the talk.

The study of overnight temple reveals how Kasuisai adjusts its marketing and religious practices for lay associates in response to the decrease of temple support associations. For a fee of 8.000 Yen (about 77 USD), *shukubō* participants may spend the night at Kasuisai and indulge in a variety of monastic activities, including *zazen*, sutra copying, sermons, and participation in monastic cleaning. These aspects work together in forming a somewhat idealized image of monastic life. The monks, for example, do not receive the vegetarian

²¹⁹ Field note 13 September 2011 WS450350. The 2012 annual culture lecture at Kasuisai was given by Sakai Daigaku 洒井大岳 (born in 1935) with a presentation titled "Opening the heart for a fresh breeze" (*seifū ni kokoro wo hiraku* 青風に心を開く). The fifth and most recent lecture was presented on 12 September 2015 by Nakano Tōzen 中野東禪 (born in 1939) with a talk on "Looking at the "afterlife" with ease" ("*anoyo*" *ni yasuragi wo miyō* 「あの世」に安らぎをみよう).

²²⁰ Field note 13 September 2011 WS450350.

²²¹ Past annual culture lectures were attended by some 300 guests. Meal tickets were sold for 1.500 Yen; the talks themselves were free and open to the public.

²²² Field note 17 September 2011 WS450641.

cloister cuisine that the guests receive. *Shukubō* participants are required to participate in monastic cleaning, such as collecting leaves, but they would never be asked to clean the outside toilets near the lower-level parking lot. *Kitō* prayer rituals for this-worldly benefits addressing fire god Akiha are not explicitly a part of the *shukubō* program, even though *kitō* comprises an essential part of the lived realities of monks at Kasuisai.

Kasuisai presents the itinerary for guests who spend the night at the monastery as follows:²²³

Day one (Saturday)

- 11:00 reception
- 11:10 introduction and explanation of temple stay
- 12:30 lunch (vegetarian cloister cuisine)
- 13:30 *zazen*
- 15:00 sermon
- 16:00 sightseeing on temple grounds
- 17:00 dinner
- 18:00 *shakyō* – copying of the *Enmei Jikku Kannonkyō* 延命十句觀音經 (*Kannon Sutra in Ten Verses for a Long Life*)
- 19:00 bathing
- 20:00 break
- 21:00 bedtime

Day two (Sunday)

- 05:00 wakeup call
- 05:15 making bed
- 06:00 morning service
- 07:00 breakfast
- 08:00 monastic cleaning
- 09:30 break

²²³ Individual adaptations to allow for *shukubō* on workdays are possible, if participants express a need to change the schedule. According to the official plan, one-day participants may furthermore choose to practice *shakyō* right after the sermon ends at 4 p.m. instead of sightseeing. In doing so, they may experience *zazen*, vegetarian cloister cuisine, and *shakyō* on the same day, without having to spend the night at the monastery.

10:00 *kinhin* (walking meditation)

10:10 break

11:00 free discussion

12:00 lunch

13:00 end of program

Spending the night at Kasuisai, the ‘temple where one can sleep’, and waking up early for the morning service with the monks are important aspects of the monastic experience. Ishida Ryōshō, the monk concerned with finding solutions to the decrease in visitors at Kasuisai, used the expression “*chanto suru* ちゃんとする” to stress the need for participants to “do things thoroughly” under the guidance of the monks. He made it very clear that Kasuisai was not a hotel. Physical pain and exhaustion caused by monastic work and ritual sitting (*zazen*) are counterbalanced in brief moments of relaxation.²²⁴ Food becomes a reward earned through practices that may or may not be understood as religious by the participants, but which are certainly considered as exhausting, even painful. For example, the two-day *shukubō* program demands about 9.5 hours of sitting, with only one hour spent on a chair. The rest of the time is spent on tatami mats, in a position called *seiza* 正座 (literally ‘proper sitting’) with the knees on the floor, and in the lotus position. *Zazen* makes for one hour of the program; or two hours, depending on availability, and if participants choose to practice *zazen* twice. Younger Japanese are often no longer used to spending that much time sitting on the floor. After sitting on the floor for hours, even cleaning chores outdoors become a refreshing experience. Participants in the *shukubō* program frequently point out how refreshed they feel, as the pain leaves their body. Pain was also what Mr. Hashimoto, a 24-years old *shukubō* practitioner from Chiba addressed, when I asked him how the actual experience of *shukubō* at Kasuisai was different from what he had imagined, when he said: “To be honest, my legs hurt so much more than I expected”²²⁵ He laughed in relief, as he expressed his fascination with his body’s response to the practice of sitting. Mr. Kobayashi, another *shukubō* practitioner, described the interplay of exhaustion and relaxation was a painful yet ultimately educational experience:

We had to sit properly in *seiza* a lot, so my legs really hurt. But we also had opportunities to relax after that. I found a lot of time to think about my troubles. There was also time to listen to a sermon, and the sermon provided for such a great learning

²²⁴ Conversation Ishida Ryōshō, 24 September 2011 WS451037.

²²⁵ Interview Mr. Hashimoto, 25 September 2011 WS451043: *jissai wa ne, ijō, sō ijō ni, ashi ga itai* 実際はね、以上、そう以上に、足が痛い。

opportunity. My worries disappeared. I'm coming to think that this here is a lot about releasing pain and bringing an end to my suffering.²²⁶

During our brief interview, Mr. Kobayashi explained his hesitation to come to Kasuisai in the first place: "I was against coming here at first. I felt biased, but spending the night here offers many valuable learning experiences."²²⁷ His suspicion of things 'religious' made him reject the idea of purchasing a prayer ritual as a means of curing his ails. Yet he was open to the idea of visiting Kasuisai to have a look, and to practice *zazen* as part of a weekend trip. His participation was not merely a passive "attendance" of a ritual, but a physically challenging exercise; one that made him realize his control over his own body.

Kasuisai addresses visitors' expectations and needs for bodily experiences in its marketing. Vegetarian cloister cuisine, for example, is also promoted in ways that respond to the desire of doing something good for the body. Representations in the media establish and strengthen an association between *shōjin ryōri*, or Zen style vegetarian cloister cuisine, and 'meditation' practices, notably *zazen*. Ms. Shimaoka, a *shukubō* participant in her thirties told me that her reason for coming to Kasuisai was to eat *shōjin ryōri*. She had read an article about *shōjin ryōri* in a Yoga magazine that featured an article on Sōjiji, one of Sōtō Zen's twin-head temples. She then searched for *shōjin ryōri* at a Zen temple nearby her home and chose Kasuisai. Kasuisai encouraged her to combine the experience of *shōjin ryōri* with an overnight stay at the monastery. "I was recommended by the people here to spend the night at the temple if I come [for *shōjin ryōri*]."²²⁸ Encouraging the experience of *shōjin ryōri* in

²²⁶ Interview Mr. Kobayashi, 14 September 2011 WS450370: *Seiza toka ga ooi no de, yappari, ashi ga kitsui desune. Ato demo mata yukkuri shiterunde, yuttari shiteirunde, yappari kangae, jibun no nayami toka, sore wa kekkō kangaetari toka suru jikan ga dekiru node. Ato wa hōwa toka kiku jikan aru node, hōwa de kekkō benkyō ni nattari toka, nayami mo yappari, kanau koto bakari janainoka, toiu... kekkō nanka nayami ga kaishō sareru toiuka, sōdesune, nakanaka wa.* 正座とかが多いので、やっぱり足がきついですね。後でもまたゆっくりしてるんで、ゆったりしてるんで、やっぱり考え、自分の悩みとか、それは結構考えたりとかする時間ができるので。後は法話とか聞く時間あるので、法話で結構勉強になったりとか、悩みもやっぱり、叶うことばかりじゃないのか、という... 結構何か悩みが解消されるというか、そうですね、なかなかは。This statement was a reply to my question about his experience at Kasuisai so far. I did not prompt a conversation about 'proper sitting' or painful experiences.

²²⁷ Interview *shukubō* guest, 14 September 2011 WS450370: *Kuru mae wa kekkō iiya na kanji ga shita kedo, tomeru to, benkyō ni naru tokoro ga ōi.* 来る前は結構いいやな感じがしたけど、泊めると、勉強になるところが多い。

²²⁸ Interview Ms. Shimaoka, 14 September 2011 WS450373: *Koko ni kitara chōdo shukubō ni tomareba ii toiu fū ni, ano, koko no kata ni susumerareta.* ここに来たらちょうど宿坊に泊まればいいという風に、あの、この方に勧められた。

combination with practices like *zazen*, as part of an overnight stay at the monastery, implies the understanding that, in order to be able to understand and value *shōjin ryōri*, and to allow for *shōjin ryōri* to become a part of the self, the food has to be earned through work on the self, and by contributing to the monastic community through physical labor.

Depending on individual dispositions, practitioners may relate their understanding of the relationship between food and the body to other corporeal entities, such as the concept of nation. To Ms. Fujita, a 26 years old woman from a town near Kamakura in Kanagawa Prefecture, spending the night at Kasuisai to experience the vegetarian cloister cuisine was a means of getting in touch with her cultural roots as a Japanese. “I am Japanese,” Ms. Fujita explained, “but my knowledge of this country called Japan was limited.”²²⁹ Her desire to return to what she envisioned as a simple yet pure traditional food culture emerged in the backdrop of the Fukushima nuclear crisis. In staying at Kasuisai, she established a connection with what she perceived as the inner temple of her heart (*kokoro no naka no jiin* 心の中の寺院). She was fascinated by the idea of improving her life by following the suggestions of Buddhist temple author Koike Ryūnosuke. Food and food consciousness were topics of great concern to her, since in her view, “eating means living” (*taberu koto wa ikiru koto nanode* 食べることは生きることなので).²³⁰ Eating slowly to her meant living her life her life consciously. It should therefore not surprise that she took her time to embrace her *okayu* rice porridge for breakfast. What she arguably did not know was that, the more time she took to finish her meal, the shorter the break for the monks became, down to the point where cleaning up after breakfast was immediately followed by cleaning outdoors. Sixteen hours out of every day are strictly regulated, and breaks are rare for monks in training. Here, the actions of one individual guest inadvertently resulted in a significant loss of quality time for fifteen monks.²³¹

²²⁹ Interview Ms. Fujita, 18 September 2011 WS450666: *Watashi wa Nihonjin deinagara, Nihon toiu kuni ni tsuite wakatteinakatta*. 私は日本人だいながら、日本という国についてわかっていなかった。This was a recurring theme among younger shukubō participants in their twenties and thirties. See also interview Ms. Nakajima (age 30), 19 September 2011 WS450759.

²³⁰ Interview Ms. Fujita, 18 September 2011 WS450666.

²³¹ Visitors are also sometimes late before a meal starts, see field note 08 September 2011 WS450182. Latecomers get lost frequently before *zazen* starts, since the zendō is connected with the main hall via a subterranean tunnel. Slow eating guests, and the need to instruct guests before, during, and after meals, may extend a meal by up to 45 minutes. Field notes 18 September 2011 WS450673; 23 September 2011 WS450968.

Kasuisai has always been a venue for ludic gatherings of lay supporters, at least in modern history. It was common for *kō* groups to spend the night at Kasuisai until the 1980s, when day trips became more popular than overnight stays (Yoshida 1998: 224). The difference between *kō* group gatherings and overnight stays in the context of *shukubō* is that both types of visiting groups have different understandings of what Kasuisai represents. For the *kō* groups, Kasuisai is first of all a *kitō* prayer monastery, and an institution that provides a space for their local community to celebrate and drink together, whereas *shukubō* participants envision Kasuisai as a place of tranquility and self-reflection. For the *kō* groups, the monks are ritual specialists who mediate the power of local gods and the Buddha dharma, as much as they are waiters. For the *shukubō* practitioners, the monks are ascetics with a high level of self-control. The same can be said about the interpretation of monks by the *kō* group members, but the *kō* group members do not strive to live like a monk, nor do they aim to adhere to the monastic rules. The *shukubō* practitioners, on the other hand, try to experience the life of a monk for a weekend. The experience of recreation in Kasuisai's distinct environmental is a goal for both, the *kō* group members and *shukubō* practitioners, but it comes in different ways to both types of visitors. *Shukubō* practitioners are searching for recreation through monastic practice. Here, practicing religion becomes a means of generating meaning in response to a crisis, or to establish a connections with one's body, past, or cultural roots.

Kō groups visit and support Kasuisai on a regular basis, whereas most of the *shukubō* guests are first-time visitors, who will not support Kasuisai continuously. *Kō* groups furthermore arrange their visits according to previous group visits. In doing so, they adhere to a set of unwritten rules, which the monks and staff are familiar with. *Shukubō* practitioners, on the other hand, require more individual attention, guidance, and they do not hesitate to ask for explanations as to why monks practice this or that ritual in this or that way. *Shukubō* practitioners make for a powerful workforce assisting the monks in training with monastic cleaning chores. As the case of Ms. Fujita has shown, however, visitors seeking to take part in monastic life may also easily disturb the monastic routine, especially during meals, since *shukubō* guests have all their meals except for one *shōjin ryōri* lunch together with the monks. This involves explanation of the use of *ōryōki* 応量器 sets of bowls wrapped in cloth, the handling of chopsticks, and other details pertaining to monastic table manners.²³²

²³² Field note 18 September 2011 WS450673.

Marketing *shukubō* as a bodily experience of an imagined ideal monastic life is Kasuisai's choice of preparing for an uncertain future. Kasuisai takes up the task of catering to the individual needs of visitors regardless of the workload involved, as *kō* groups continue to shrink and disappear. Other prayer monasteries continue to rely on the support of *kō* groups without investing in the marketing and branding of *kitō jiin* for individual guests. Requests for opportunities to spend a night at the monastery repeatedly fail, for researchers of Buddhism as well as for lay practitioners who are not affiliated with a group (*dantai* 団体). Groups are almost exclusively preferred by prayer monasteries, whereas individual guests are rejected for not belonging to a group. The case of Mr. Hashimoto illustrates this point. Upon my question why the 24-years old chose Kasuisai for his desired experience of an overnight stay at a Zen temple, he replied that he had tried to contact other temples nearby, but he kept being rejected. Coming from Chiba Prefecture in Eastern Japan, he had contacted Zen temples in Tokyo, Chiba Prefecture, Saitama Prefecture, and Kanagawa Prefecture first. All prayer monasteries he contacted claimed they were “fully booked” (*minna ippai nachatte* 皆いっぱいなちゃつて), which is a common excuse made in cases where potential guests are expected to cause more work than they bring benefit.²³³ Kasuisai rejected this idea of rejection, by addressing the individual needs of guests, and by taking their requests seriously. By investing the time and effort needed to make Kasuisai attractive and accessible to a younger audience, Kasuisai has effectively begun to re-brand its image from that of a *kitō jiin* to that of a *tabiji*, or *shukubō* monastery. Otherwise Kasuisai “would not survive” (*ikinokotte ikanai* 生き残っていかない), as Ishida Ryōshō resumes. “We are monks,” Ishida explains, “and this is a temple. But running it sometimes compares to running a company.”²³⁴

Sutra Copying (*shakyō*) as a Bridge to *kitō*

Sutra copying (*shakyō* 写経) has a long-standing history in Japan. The practice is noted for generating merits (see Levering 1989), and is offered by Kasuisai as part of the *shukubō* experience. *Shakyō* takes place in the *oku nikai* 奥二階, a chamber in a prestigious section on the second floor of the *daisho'in* building, where members of the royal family are said to have

²³³ Interview Mr. Hashimoto, 25 September 2011 WS451044

²³⁴ Conversation Ishida Ryōshō, 24 September 2011 WS451037: *Totemo obōsan nandakeredomo, futsū no kaisha ni, futsū ni yatteta kanji mo atte ne* とともお坊さんなんだけれども、普通の会社に、普通にやっていた感じもあってね。

been accommodated by Kasuisai in the Meiji period. The room looks simple. The prestige ascribed to the *oku nikai* derives from its location. As with the *oku no in*, or ‘inner temple’ that stands beneath and above the main hall, the *oku nikai* is located beneath and above the living quarters of the the *daisho'in*. Both structures are off limits to regular visitors under normal circumstances. The ‘inner temple’ is where the feeding of the *tengu* takes place during the annual fire festival; the *oku nikai* is where the sutras are copied by *shukubō* participants. The practice of sutra copying for *shukubō* guests starts at 6 p.m. in the evening, when the surrounding twilight (or darkness, during the winter months) enfolds participants in an atmosphere of intimacy.²³⁵ Larger *shukubō* groups are split, to maintain this sense of intimacy, by making one group practice *zazen* in the monks’ hall, while the other group copies sutras.²³⁶

In the age of computers and smartphones, grinding ink and writing by hand are practices that have mostly disappeared from the everyday lives of ordinary Japanese. Copying sutras reminded many *shukubō* practitioners of their schooldays, and it has been equally long since they last held a brush in their hands. It is within this playful context of nostalgic pleasure that the instructing monk invites the *shukubō* practitioners to make a wish, and to write that wish down on the sheet with the sutra copy, along with their names. In doing so, he establishes a connection between *shakyō* and *kitō*, causing nervousness among the participants. What the instructor asks for is no less than a private expression of worldly desires, and a hand-written copy of a ‘sacred’ text that reveals the individual participant’s skill and level of self-control. A common reaction to this request is that people ask themselves if their writing, desires, and individual character are ‘good enough’ to be presented to Akiha. The introduction of Akiha Sanjakubō within this context may be challenging for participants that do not identify themselves as believers in potentially dangerous *tengu*. The monks therefore never enforce *shukubō* participants to write their names and express their wishes on the sutra copy, especially since writing down names and wishes concerns the individual privacy of *shukubō* practitioners.

In preparing the morning service for the next day, and with the consent of *shukubō* participants, clergy use the hand-written sutra copies as individual prayer application sheets. Every morning service at Kasuisai includes a prayer ritual, or “every morning *kitō*” (*mai asa*

²³⁵ *Shakyō* takes place in the evening, but may not be held in the dark during the summer months of June and July, when the sun shines longer in Fukuroi.

²³⁶ Field note 24 September 2011 WS451036.

kitō 毎朝祈祷). The “every morning *kitō*” is not different from any other ‘regular’ prayer ritual conducted by the monks on behalf of temple visitors and their communities, except for the fact that no names, addresses, and individual prayer requests are proclaimed during the morning ritual. The robes of the ceremonial leader are also different. Willingly or unwillingly, *shukubō* practitioners get to witness a *kitō* performance as part of their overnight stay, when they attend the morning service as requested by the monks. They get to feel the rhythmic beat of the *taiko* drum, hear sutra chants, and the invocations of the Zen patriarchs and Akiha Sanjakubō. When *shukubō* participants, previously copied sutras the night before attend the service, Kasuisai’s monks individualize the “every morning *kitō*” for *shukubō* practitioners by reading their wishes out loud during the ceremony in Akiha’s special worship hall, and by placing the copies of the *Enmei Jikku Kannonkyō* sutra on the altar for the fire god, as is common practice with *ofuda* amulets. In other words: *shukubō* includes *kitō*, if only implicitly. This tentative and free-of-charge promotion of *kitō* for *shukubō* practitioners is entirely different from the marketing of *kitō* for traditional temple support associations.

Kō groups receive sermons about Akiha. To *kō* group members, making wishes on behalf of themselves and their community is a formalized, routinized process. *Shukubō* practitioners, on the other hand, are not coming to Kasuisai in its function as a *kitō* monastery, nor can they be defined as a group of believers in Akiha. This does not stop the monks from making private wishes of *shukubō* practitioners public by reading them out loud, and accessible to the gods in a *kitō* prayer ritual as part of the morning service that involves the offering of hand-made sutra copies and individual wishes. Sleeping on the wishes that *shukubō* practitioners formulated in the intimacy of practicing *shakyō* in a private chamber at Kasuisai, the ‘temple where one can sleep’, and letting the monks negotiate these wishes as part of the morning service in Akiha’s special worship hall, in other words, may facilitate newfound connections between Akiha Sanjakubō and lay associates that are otherwise unaffiliated with the local god.²³⁷

While the marketing for ‘regular’ *kitō* participants is different from the marketing for *shukubō* participants, both groups get to experience a *kitō* prayer ritual as part of their stay at Kasuisai. While the ritual may convey different meanings to different agents, it is important to note that the material setting and ritual performance remains the same, except for the robes of the ceremonial leader and the point that *kitō* for *shukubō* participants involves the offering

²³⁷ Field note 25 September 2011 WS451083.

of sutra copies for Akiha as part of the ritual. The material setting and performance aspects of the ritual are important in branding the experience of Kasuisai, which relates to the discussion of *kitō* as a sensational form in Chapter Two of this dissertation. It is within this context that *shakyō* at Kasuisai is distinguished from sutra copying at other Buddhist institutions. The Sōtō Zen temple Tōchōji 東長寺 in downtown Tokyo, for example, offers *shakyō* along with *zazen* and monastic cleaning in preparation for the bestowal of the Buddhist precepts for members of Tōchōji's Society of Bonds, or En no kai 縁の会, or (Rowe 2006: 134-135).

Connectedness, as promoted by the temple, is not limited exclusively to blood ties or local bonds. All members of En no kai receive a space in Tōchōji's 'eternal memorial grave', and individualized ancestral rituals for the traditional thirty-three year period following their deaths. Yet what captivates most members is not simply the prospect of ancestor veneration, but the fact that they may find opportunities to establish social contacts in what Mark Rowe calls "burial societies" (see Rowe 2004; Rowe 2011). These societies, a booming trend in Japan today, cater to the needs of their members while they are still alive.

Kasuisai establishes a connection between sutra copying and *kitō* in its *shukubō* program, whereas Tōchōji does not establish such connection. Members of En no Kai are expected to practice *shakyō* and *zazen* for the purpose of lay ordination, and as part of becoming a member of the En no kai society. Overnight stays at Kasuisai do not result in the bestowal of the Buddhist precepts. One could argue, however, that Kasuisai takes up on this trend by establishing its Moon Spirit Society. It will therefore be interesting to see how Kasuisai envisions the future of this associated imagined real communities. My fieldwork suggests that *shukubō* practitioners may well understand their overnight stay as a form of initiation, if only in terms of gaining a deepened understanding of themselves, their individual strengths, and their personal limitations. But this does not equate to the bestowal of the Buddhist precepts, nor does membership in the Moon Spirit Society involve the practical benefits that come with membership in Tōchōji's Society of Bonds. *Shukubō* at Kasuisai is promoted and sold independently from the purchase of a grave lots.

Conclusion

John Nelson (2011: 1) points out five social forces that impact religious institutions in Japan today: a "crisis of orientation;" corporate and bureaucratic restructuring; consumer culture; individualization within a "risk" society; and experimental approaches to spirituality.

Kasuisai, too, has to search for ways of coping with these forces. Monks research trends in order to compete on the marketplace, and they actively advertise their products by targeting different audiences in different ways, as the ethnographic cases presented in this chapter have shown. Temple support associations stand out from other groups of visitors and the ways in which Kasuisai addresses them in its marketing, insofar as temple support associations administer themselves in following a relatively fixed pattern of annual visits for the purpose of Akiha devotion, whereas experimental approaches are needed in the search for ways of establishing connections with families, young couples, and ‘regular’ tourists. A crucial element of Kasuisai’s marketing for these groups seems to be the packaging of specific religious experiences in bundles, and the idea of attracting visitors with free lectures and exhibitions. Akiha-related beliefs and practices play a neglectable role in achieving this goal. Kasuisai markets Akiha devotion as religious civic engagement to temple support associations, but refrains from doing so in interactions with Zen interests and spiritual seekers. The latter may understand their stay at Kasuisai as a contribution to world peace, as a means of practicing ecological sustainability and environmental awareness, or as a way of educating their children about Japanese culture. They may even be interested in *kitō* prayers for this-worldly benefits, but they do not establish the same modes of regular interactions with Kasuisai that define the activities of temple support associations, nor do they perceive Kasuisai as a hub for civil society groups. They do not invite monks to their homes to perform *kitō*, nor are they necessarily interested in Akiha and the cult surrounding his promise to protect sentient beings from fire.

Material religion as an investigation of interactions between human bodies and physical objects explores how such interactions “orient, and sometimes disorient, communities and individuals [...] toward the formal strictures and structures of religious tradition” (Plate 2015: 4). Kasuisai rose to power by following this defining logic of the ways in which material religion plays out on the ground: by asserting the authority to distribute, bestow, or lend prestigious physical objects, namely ‘shares of the spirit’ of Akiha Sanjakubō in the effort to establish lasting connections with pilgrimage confraternities and neighborhood associations. Annual sales of protective amulets made of paper works to strengthen these bonds between the monastery and its affiliated *kō* groups. But while Kasuisai continues to sell tens of thousands of protective amulets each year, ‘shares of the spirit’ of Akiha Sanjakubō

are only distributed on very rare and special occasions, once or twice a year.²³⁸ As the chapter has shown, previous attempts to revivify *kō* group activity and establish new *kō* groups since the 1980s have gone unnoticed, and can be described as fruitless against the backdrop of *kō* group decline. The future of Akiha devotion as practiced at Kasuisai is therefore uncertain. Estimates based on the data presented in this chapter suggest that the majority of *kō* groups will die out within the next few decades, due to rural depopulation, changing family structures, and shifting interests in religious participation.

This decrease is hardly visible to outside observers. Busloads of tourists continue to visit Kasuisai on regular weekends for most of the year, who come to enjoy the material Buddhist culture of Kasuisai and its gardens. The main problem that Kasuisai and other *kitō jūin* are facing is that these ‘regular’ groups of tourists do not support the monastery on a continuous basis. They favor convenience and entertainment without the guarantee of a long-lasting commitment, just as Kasuisai’s advertising of overnight temple stays suggests. “Interactions with advertising,” as Mara Einstein (2007: 7) remarks, “have led us to expect certain things from marketers, specifically convenience and entertainment.” This is not to say that entertainment and advertising are new to Japanese temple Buddhism, but to stress the fact that Kasuisai has to operate within this framework of expectations, considering that temple visitors may be exposed to thousands of marketing messages per day.²³⁹ The individual dispositions of temple visitors are furthermore subject to external factors. The location-based augmented reality game Pokémon Go, for example, has since classified Kasuisai’s main gate as a “gym,” where players of different teams may let their pocket monsters fight against each other, via smartphone, on the temple grounds.²⁴⁰ It is within this context of changing social

²³⁸ In 2010, Kasuisai sold one such icon for 200,000 Yen (1,930 USD), but Kasuisai no longer sells *bunrei* to new *kō* groups on a regular basis, as was the case in Meiji Japan.

²³⁹ For the US context, Mara Einstein (2007: 10) remarks: “People, on average, will see close to 200 advertisements a day, but may see upwards of 3,000 marketing messages in the same time period through branded products, T-shirts, and product placements; that’s almost 11 million branded messages per year.” These numbers have arguably since increased, considering the the popularity of smartphones and social media.

²⁴⁰ Some Japanese temples and shrines have banned visitors from playing Pokémon Go soon after its release by software developer Niantic and The Pokémon Company in 2016, see *Asahi Shimbun Digital* (28 July 2016), <http://www.asahi.com/articles/ASJ7V42FSJ7VPLZB00J.html>, accessed 03 December 2016. It should be noted, however, that the game has in fact attracted mostly younger Japanese to temples and shrines, many of whom would never have visited temples like Kasuisai for *kitō* or encounters with fire god Akiha. Perhaps ironically, Kasuisai has reportedly been chosen as the residence of Boober, a flame-scorching Pokémon that is said to be born in active volcano. Apart from augmented reality games, an increase in drones used by hobby drone pilotes has

norms and expectations, as the chapter has shown, that Kasuisai's monks have begun to adjust their marketing to individual tourists and families in recent years, by promoting modern and transculturally shaped understandings of 'Zen' in products that cater to the expectations and needs of practitioners who express an interest in spirituality and culture without a long-term financial commitment. Kasuisai bundles practices that are compatible with modern and transculturally shaped understandings of 'Zen' in religious sensations that allow for individualized experiences of religion, Japanese culture, 'Zen', and the self in an extraordinary environment.

Some scholars have criticized the global spread of transcultural Zen. What amounts to transcultural Zen in the West has been criticized as “means of colonizing and commodifying Asian wisdom traditions” (Carrette and King 2005: 87), especially in cases where 'Zen' has been used to sell MP3-players or cereals. This critique is founded in concerns over a “silent takeover” (ibid.: 2) of religion by neo-liberal capitalist ideologies. The case of Kasuisai, however, suggests that careful consideration is needed in the scholarship regarding definitions of 'real Zen' and the ascriptions to what 'Zen' is not. Normative understandings of Zen are not suitable as analytical categories for the understanding of the transfer and transformation of Zen practice, nor for the understanding of the implications that the various academic and popular discourses on 'Zen' may have for the future of institutionalized Sōtō Zen Buddhism.²⁴¹ The idea of Zen as a “wisdom tradition,” which is in itself reflective of Protestant understandings of religion as 'belief', may not explain the complex social realities of lived religious practice at traditional Sōtō Zen institutions in Japan, and ignores the fact that Buddhist temples in Japan have to assert their position on the so-called market of religions by adapting their beliefs and practices to a variety of brand images and customer expectations. Kasuisai has the capacity to adjust its marketing and practice. Its manpower, environmental setting and material culture are important means in keeping different images of Zen alive. The priests at regular family temples in Japan may also be interested in offering free *zazen* classes for lay practitioners, but they often find no time to offer such classes, and

since urged temples and shrines to ban drones. The prayer monastery Daiyūzan Saijōji, for example, has installed a sign prohibiting drones at the entrance of the road that leads to the monastery's parking lot and entrance.

²⁴¹ A similar critique has been formulated for the Western context. Jørn Borup for example, follows a similar argumentation in his study of Buddhism in Denmark, when he points out that he analyzes the popularization, entertainmentization and mediatization of Buddhism not as “deviant misunderstandings in a neo-liberal consumer market, but as cultural phenomena with their own rationale in a broader perspective” (Borup 2016: 42). For the Japanese context, see also Irizarry 2015.

thus rely on organizing tours to “venerable Zen temples” and prayer monasteries for their parish community. Without monasteries like Kasuisai, much of what defines the global brand image of Zen would no longer be tangible.²⁴²

This chapter presented perspectives on the redefinition, reimport, and reinvention of global Zen Buddhism by focusing on the marketing and practice of overnight temple stays (*shukubō*), and the motivations of practitioners to spend a night at Kasuisai, as expressed in the desire to explore the self and the unknown, or to find orientation and individual approaches to the broad spectrum of cultural identity and social engagement that Japanese temple Buddhism has to offer. The package deal that Kasuisai offers in terms of overnight stays at the monastery goes beyond *zazen*, and beyond *kitō*, yet keeps the promise of this-worldly benefits in its recontextualization of both ritual complexes, while blending them with other practices, like sutra copying and garden work. What stands out is the degree of active participation, and the variety of bodily practices that the *shukubō* participants get to perform as part of their stay. It is important to consider how this arrangement of practices as offered in *shukubō* affects the practitioners’ senses. For example, a *zazen* practitioners may interpret the relief of pain after sitting in *zazen* or the *seiza* posture for an extended period of time as a religious experience, without necessarily considering the specific ways in which the setting and the body contribute to facilitating this sensation. The perceived benefit of the practice remains the same in most of the ethnographic cases, no matter if practitioners consider the relationship of the setting and the senses in generating this benefit, and regardless of the interpretations of the experience as possibly religious: What matters is the sensation of pain, the relief of stress, the certainty of having faced a challenge in life, a perceived gain of self-control, and possibly the feeling of having established a meaningful connection with the perceived roots of Japanese culture. But while the question of the relationship between religion and the setting seems rather unimportant and abstract to most *shukubō* participants, it certainly matters for the analysis of their actions from the viewpoint of material religion, as this chapter has shown. It is within this context that the study of local religion at Kasuisai enhances our understanding of the transfer and transformation of global Zen Buddhism.

²⁴² *Zazen* for lay practitioners, for example, was offered at 3,655 of 14,637 Sōtō temples in 2005, according to a sectarian survey. 693 of the 3,655 temples offered *zazen* between 11 to 20 times in 2015. 439 of the 3,655 temples offered *zazen* only 6 to 10 times. The majority of temples (1,934 temples) offered *zazen* only 1 to 5 times per year (see Sōtōshū shūmuchō ed. 2008: 57-56). These numbers are not indicative of overnight temple stays.

Chapter Four: Monastic Training at *kitō jūin* – *Kitō* and Authority

Introduction

Popular images of monastic training are often reflective of the public displays of austerity that each temple Buddhist sect maintains (see Covell 2005: 22;41-42;78). The Tendai sect's *kaihōgyō* 回峰行, for example, requires monks to run through the forests of Mt. Hiei as part of a seven-year retreat. The Nichiren sect is renowned for its *daiaragyō* 大荒行, a 100-day ascetic practice conducted annually in winter by male priests exclusively. The Hossō sect's *mizutori* 水取り involves ascetic practices in preparation of a festival in spring, and the Zen sects hold winter retreats with intense periods of ritual sitting (see the discussion of Kasuisai's fire festival in Chapter Two). All of these practices are in some way related to the training and licensing of Buddhist priests, and require certain training goals to be met before a monk becomes eligible to perform them. The Japanese Sōtō Zen sect requires all of its priests to perform a minimum of six months of monastic training in order to become eligible for the position of head priest (*jūshoku* 住職). The Tendai sect prescribes that all Tendai priests conduct a rigorous two-month retreat at its head monastery at Mt. Heiei (Covell 2005: 7), and the Nichiren sect asks for a mandatory thirtyfive-day retreat for all of its priests. In order to be allowed to become a *kitō* practitioner (*kitōshi* 祈祷師) in the Nichiren sect, however, additional training is needed. The practice of *reidan* 靈斷, a divination practice for this-worldly benefits, for example, demands that a priest undergoes the grueling task of completing the 100-day *aragyō* first. As *aragyō* is an ascetic practice exclusive to male priests, women are barred from becoming *reidan* professionals.

As this overview shows, the path to religious authority is defined in different ways by different sects. Each sect follows different approaches in licensing priests and certain practices. But they still draw on popular understanding of asceticism, training, and this-worldly benefits as somehow being interrelated.²⁴³ Compared to the fairly standardized path to *kitō* authority in the Nichiren sect Nichiren sect, *kitō* in contemporary Japanese Sōtō Zen Buddhism remains subject to local rules and customs, due to persisting modern views of *kitō* as lacking a scriptural foundation in Sōtō Zen Buddhism, and the dominant branding of *kitō* as a practice of the esoteric schools of Buddhism. Considering that all of the Sōtō sect's larger

²⁴³ The Jōdo Shinshū sect (True Pure Land Buddhism) may reject this view in rejecting both practices for this-worldly benefits and asceticism. Local Shinshū temples, however, as Chapter Five will show, are nonetheless working with the idea of this-worldly benefits, regardless of how they are trained.

kitō prayer monasteries also function as training centers, however, new questions arise: What kind of role does *kitō* play in the training of Sōtō Zen priests? How is *kitō* embedded in the standard training regimens? How is the training at *kitō jiin* different from the training at head monastery Eiheiiji? What constellations of conditions are needed for the authority to perform *kitō*, and for priestly authority more generally? How, where, and by whom is this authority currently being negotiated, mediated and contested in the training of Japanese Buddhist priests?

Based on ethnographic fieldwork at Kasuisai, and by bringing together the perspectives of Zen teachers, monks in training, and temple visitors, this chapter introduces the Sōtō Zen training regimens in theory and practice. The first part describes the basic training of Sōtō Zen monks, outlines the steps to ordination, and situates *kitō* within the training regimens at Kasuisai. In presenting comparative perspectives on the training at head monastery Eiheiiji, and by assessing the relationship between *kitō* and standard sutra-chanting services, this section is particularly concerned with the various ways in which *kitō* legitimizes the monastic training and vice versa. Based on the premise that acquiring knowledge of Sōtō Zen Buddhism is a physical, bodily process for trainees, more so than an intellectual and cognitive endeavor, the second part of this chapter demonstrates how monks at monastic training centers engage with Buddhist teachings in corporeal forms, and how access to embodied knowledge is regulated by senior clergy. In doing so, the chapter shows how *kitō jiin* generate and distribute religious authority. Part three picks up on this thread in discussing how monks distinguish themselves and their practice from lay associates and temple visitors in visible ways. The chapter explores habitus and distinction through the lens of monastic robes, discusses the rules specific to donning them, and shows how the interplay of material Buddhist culture and the practice of special procedures and etiquette has become an asset for Buddhist institutions in the effort to assert authority in competition with other providers of ritual services. The fourth and final part examines the ideal of renunciation in practice. This section outlines the process of integrating a new arrival at Kasuisai, and asks how asceticism plays out in the individual lives of trainees at *kitō jiin* in particular. The relationship of renunciation and the local community at Kasuisai is also addressed, followed by a discussion of asceticism through the lens of self-regulation. This system of rules and incentives stabilizes the continuation of monasticism, but is incessantly reliant on an understanding of worldliness and renunciation as interactive and complementary components of monastic life, not as mutually exclusive characteristics of a priestly ideal type. The fourth part closes with a

discussion of the problems that may arise when younger visiting guests in particular spend a night at Kasuisai based on different premises and understandings of monastic life.

Training-Steps and Licensing

Monastic training at *kitō jūin* is a largely formalized affair. All Sōtō Zen training monasteries follow the same cycles of ritualized worship derived from Song (960-1279) and Yuan (1280-1368) China. Minor variations aside, the daily, monthly, and annual observances conducted by novice monks under the guidance of senior teachers are practically identical. *Sōtōshū gyōji kihan* 曹洞宗 行持軌範 (*Standard Observances of the Soto Zen School*), the official manual for ritual observances authored and published by the administrative headquarters of the Sōtō Zen sect, gives detailed instructions on how to perform most of the specific rituals and tasks that trainees are required to learn in order to become fully-ordained priests.²⁴⁴ Ethnographic research on monastic training, on the other hand, shows that the practical application of ritual prescripts, and the ways in which trainees make sense of their training, are often different from what standard training manuals and handbooks suggest. Monks in training at prayer monasteries practice *kitō* prayer rituals for several hours every day, but prayer rituals as practiced at Kasuisai are not addressed in the *Standard Observances of the Soto Zen School*. Priests at regular *danka* temples may practice *kitō* on occasion, but mortuary rituals and ancestor veneration are by far more common. “They don’t know about it” (*shiranai desu* 知らないです), as the leading monk in training at Kasuisai mentioned in response to my question if priests knew about *kitō* before they started their training at Kasuisai.²⁴⁵

Most future head priests are sons groomed to take over their father’s temples, but they must be able to conduct monastic training before they can succeed to the position of head priest. Once they enter the monastery, monks are permitted to leave it again only for a few hours on very specific, limited occasions. Monks must pass tests, master ritual exercises, and adapt to a plethora of rules within the monastery’s hierarchy. For these reasons alone, monks may aim to keep their stays at training monasteries as short as possible. Monastic training can be minimized to six months, if the novice attended a Buddhist university, which explains why many Sōtō Zen priests attend higher education facilities like Komazawa University, a private

²⁴⁴ See Foulk 2010a for the first complete English translation of the *Sōtōshū gyōji kihan*.

²⁴⁵ Interview Katō Tarō, 18 September 2011 WS450698.

Sōtō Zen Buddhism-affiliated university.²⁴⁶ Monks with no clerical family background and no college education may have to spend years at a monastery to obtain the same qualification (*shikaku* 資格). Others extend their training period willingly. Spending one, two, or even three years or more in monastic training centers enhances the status of a monk within the Sōtō Zen community.

Monastic training marks the second of five steps in the making of a fully-ordained monk. The first step to priesthood is taken in a ceremony that entails receiving the Bodhisattva precepts and the tonsure (*tokudo shiki* 得度式). The novice priest then ‘ascends the seat’ (*jōza* 上座; literally: ‘top seat’), as he begins his monastic training. Sōtō Zen monks in training are called *shugyōsō*, or *unsui*. Following the monastic training, priests will have to undergo three more initiations. As Joshua Irizarry (2011: 139-140) remarks, these steps are usually taken in rapid succession, with only a few months in-between each initiatory ritual. Once the requirements for the monastic training are met, priests are licensed to undertake the dharma combat ceremony (*hossen shiki* 法戰式), which includes an exchange of ‘questions and answers’ (*mondō* 問答) between the trainee and a Zen teacher – typically the abbot of a monastery where the trainee conducted his training. The rank *risshin* 立身 (‘fully fledged’, or literally: ‘standing body’; also: *zagen* 座元) is used for a monk who passed the dharma combat and served as ‘head seat’ (*shuso* 首座) for a retreat. Such retreats may be shortened for practical reasons. Abbreviated retreats last for several days to a week, and are often held on the occasion of the inauguration of a new head priest (*shinzan shiki* 晋山式) (see Foulk 2010b: 100; 119), as observed at Kasuisai in November 2011. This phase of initiation is bound to take place during a phase of monastic retreat (*seichū* 制中). Periods of *seichū* last for three months, and alternate with three-month ‘periods of loosening’ (*geai* 解間), during which a monk may register at a training monastery or depart.²⁴⁷ *Denbō* 傳法, the third step on the way to becoming a fully ordained monk, is a secretive initiation that takes place behind closed doors. Requests for ritual instructions for the ‘transmission from heart to heart’ (*ishin denshin* 以心傳心) between a teacher and a student must be made to the Sōtō central administration

²⁴⁶ This also means that many trainees do not get to experience all of the major annual observances as part of their training, such as the New Years assembly, the Obon summer festival of the dead, the spring and autumn equinoxes (*higan* 彼岸), the Buddha’s birthday assembly in April, the awakening assembly in December, or the nirvana assembly in February. All of these assemblies are held annually at training monasteries.

²⁴⁷ Interview Katō Tarō, 18 September 2011 WS450698.

office directly (Irizarry 2011: 146). The lineage chart (*kechimyaku* 血脈) that a priest receives after *denbō* functions as a material proof of this transmission, and aligns the priest within the Sōtō Zen genealogy. The priest then ‘debuts and respectfully ascends to abbacy’ (*zuisse haitō* 瑞世拜登). This final step in the process of becoming a fully-ordained priest encompasses becoming the head priest either of head monastery Eiheiji, or of head monastery Sōjiji, albeit in name only, and only for one day (‘abbot for a day’ (*ichinichi jūshoku* 一日住職); also known as ‘one night abbacy’ (*ichiya jūshoku* 一夜住職); see Foulk 2010b: 95. See Irizarry 2011: 150-153 for a description of *zuisse haitō* at Sōjiji).

As with other monastic training centers, some sixteen hours out of every day at Kasuisai are strictly regulated. Every day, every season, throughout the year, not a day goes by without rituals. The daily routine includes *zazen*, the practice most commonly associated with the training of Sōtō Zen monks; sutra-chanting services (*fugin* 諷經); three meals; cleaning services in the morning (*sōji* 掃除), among other types of collective labor (*samu* 作務); and lectures by senior monks in office. Trainees at Kasuisai also receive lessons in calligraphy, voice coaching, and lessons in tea ceremony by external teachers.²⁴⁸ Beyond their rituals, novice priests need additional time for personal study.

What distinguishes the training at Kasuisai from the training at head monastery Eiheiji is the study and practice of *kitō*, and the fact that monks get to experience a larger variety of monastic activity within less time at Kasuisai, where as few as fifteen monks are trained to become eligible for the dharma combat ceremony. At Eiheiji, where more than one hundred monks are trained at a time (Irizarry 2011: 75 mentions over 200 entrants annually), *shugyōsō* operate in branches. The labor and training is allocated in different groups, so that a trainee gets to perform the same activity for a longer period of time. Most monks at Eiheiji are still in their early twenties when they start their training. The Eiheiji training is known to be particularly gruesome and challenging. Smaller local training monastic like Kasuisai, on the other hand, are said to be more forgiving in practice. The age range of trainees at *kitō jiin* is generally wider, and the number of trainees is smaller. *Kitō jiin* do not enjoy the same prestige as Eiheiji, and are said to be better suited for monks who start their training in their late twenties or later.²⁴⁹ Considering the smaller number of trainees at Kasuisai, however, the training is challenging in different ways. With only about fifteen trainees available, monks

²⁴⁸ See also field notes 17 September 2011 WS450644; 17 September 2011 WS450645.

²⁴⁹ See also field note 19 September 2011 WS450796.

have to be trained to be able to perform as many different ritual functions as possible as soon as possible. Monks at Kasuisai may spend less time on bringing certain ritual movements to perfection, but they receive plenty of individual critique in return. Trainees at Kasuisai who conducted monastic training at Eiheiji before are generally thankful for the individual guidance they receive, and for the opportunity to engage in a variety of rituals and activities. At Kasuisai, trainees perform prayer rituals that involve complex practices like revolving reading (*tendoku*) on an everyday basis, as part of *kitō*. They also get to engage in catering services, care for guests and visitors, visit Kasuisai-affiliated parish household members on the occasion of the autumn and spring equinoxes (*higan*) and the Buddhist summer festival of the dead (*obon*), participate in local festivals, attend funerals of parishioners, and sometimes get to join monks in office on business trips. In sum, their training encompasses conducting the activities of an ordinary *danka* temple, and thus prepares trainees comparably well for their future profession as temple priests.²⁵⁰

The training of *shugyōsō* at Kasuisai is divided into fourteen consecutive steps. The curriculum entails the same basic ritual components as found in other training monasteries, except for their arrangement and inclusion of certain steps that are specific to the practice of *kitō*. At Kasuisai, monks must pass tests before they are allowed to take over important ritual functions in Akiha's special worship hall. The fire god is only to be approached by Buddhist priests who undertake the necessary monastic training, including the practice of ritual sitting. It takes novice monks an average of 100 days of monastic training to successfully pass the first ten steps in their training. Steps three to ten take place in the main hall; steps eleven to thirteen are exclusive to Akiha's special worship hall, and specific to Kasuisai in its capacity as a prayer monastery. The fourteen steps in the training of novice priests are as follows:²⁵¹

(1): *tomari* 泊まり conducts night service at the reception; practices readiness and responds to phone calls until around 8 a.m. in the morning. Calls may come in at any moment, if a parish household member dies, or in the event of an emergency. The monk on duty also conducts the night watch (*yakei* 夜警) at 9 p.m.

²⁵⁰ See also interviews Yamamoto Daisuke, 13 September 2011 WS450345; 15 September 2011 WS450436; 17 September 2011 WS450621. Yamamoto spent one year at Eiheiji, prior to his training at Kasuisai.

²⁵¹ Interview Katō Tarō, 19 September 2011 WS450800.

(2): *shuku tōban* 粥当番 prepares the *okayu* (お粥) morning gruel. Does not participate in the morning service (*chōka* 朝課), but has to wake up just as early to prepare the breakfast for all monks on time.

(3): *kaban* 加番 is a position taken over by the monk who conducted *shōsu* (5) on the previous day (a peculiarity concerning the preparation of ritual services at Kasuisai).

(4): *zenjitsu tōban* 前日当番 a position taken over by the monk who will conduct *shōsu* (5) on the next day, and *kaban* (3) the morning after *shōsu* (a peculiarity concerning the preparation of ritual services at Kasuisai).

(5): *shōsu* 鐘司 operates the portable bell used as a wake-up call at 5 a.m. before *zazen*; operates the large bell in the main hall to mark the beginning of the morning service.

(6): *jikō* 侍香 carries the portable incense holder for the ceremonial leader (*dōshi*) during rituals in the main hall, and further assists the *dōshi*.

(7): *kujū* 供頭 carries the book with *ekō* texts for the dedication of merits on the occasion of the morning service, among other ritual objects in the case of different rituals, such as pillows or chairs for the ceremonial leader.

(8): *fukudō* 副堂 operates the wooden fish drum (*mokugyo* 木魚), among other ritual instruments.

(9): *dōan* 堂行 operates the large metal gong in the main hall, as well as a small bell.

(10): *kokyō* 挙經 reads the *ekō* texts for the dedication of merits in the main hall.

(11): *densu* 殿司 moves behind the scenes in Akiha's special worship hall; transports ritual objects to and from the altar. The monk performing the role of *densu* wears a bright green robe and facial paper mask for his own protection, and to shield Akiha from the impurity of human breath.

(12): *goshinden dōan* 御直殿堂行 operates the gong and other percussion instruments (*narashimono* 鳴物) in Akiha's special worship hall, and performs *kokyō* 挙經 by reading the *ekō* texts for the dedication of merits during *kitō* prayer rituals.

(13): *taiko* 太鼓 operates the *taiko* drum in Akiha's special worship hall during *kitō*.

(14): *jikidō* 直堂 monitors the *zazen* hall; operates the *kyōsaku* stick by hitting the shoulder to motivate a sitting monk in his practice, when a monk dozes off, or if the sitting monk requests to be hit for refreshment.

Katō Tarō, the highest-ranking monk in training at Kasusai in 2011, and responsible for assigning individual positions to trainees at the time, observed each trainee's individual progress, and provided critique. Standing in front of the wooden board (*yakuhyō* 役表) where he assigned the individual positions by placing name tags under each position for all monks to see what role they would have to perform for the day, Katō explained:

This is like a school here, right? If a monk returns to his own temple without being able to perform properly what he has learned here, that would be embarrassing. It is therefore important that the monks give their best now, even if they make mistakes, and that a higher-ranking monk teaches them how it's done. I came to this point by treading that same path.²⁵²

Novice priests may bring their individual skills to Kasuisai. One monk in training at Kasuisai in 2011 was a talented drummer, who played in a rock band before he started his monastic training. His *taiko* drum skills were exceptional. Another monk had spent a year at Eiheiji before continuing his training at Kasuisai. He had previously worked as a bartender. His ability to carry ritual objects in a floating manner was unrivaled. Katō, the leader of the trainees, was popular for his recitation of sutras and *ekō* texts. The goal of the training at Kasuisai, however, is not as much focused on promoting individual talent, as it is aimed at producing 'well-rounded' monks within one year or less. Completing the above training steps at head monastery Eiheiji would take an average of five years, according to trainees. Most Sōtō Zen monks are not willing to spend five years in a monastery. They train to gain the qualifications that are needed for them to run a family temple as head priest, not to become 'career monks' with ambitious to climb the sectarian ladder. The main goal of the training at Kasuisai is therefore to allow priests to become self-confident in their overall ritual actions as

²⁵² Interview Katō Tarō, 19 September 2011 WS450800: *Koko wa gakkō mitai na mono nan desuyone. Dakara, jibun no otera ni kaetta toki nante, kore ga dekinaito, mō, hazukashii koto nandesuyo. Dakara, ima machigaete mo, issō kenmei yatte, machigaeta tokoro wa ue no hito kara oshieteitadaku toiu [no ga] taisetsu desu shi. Watashi mo onaji michi wo tōrimashita. ここは学校みたいなものなんですよ。だから、自分のお寺に帰ったときなんて、これができないと、もう、恥ずかしいことなんですよ。だから、いま間違えても、一生懸命やって、間違えたところは上の人から教えていただくという[のが]大切です。私も同じ道を通りました。*

quickly as possible. Careful attention is given to proper body movements, special procedures (*sahō*), and the proper etiquette (*igi*).

With only about fifteen monks in training, providing a well-rounded education within a limited time frame is in the interest of both Kasuisai and its trainees. While most temples aim to keep their training as short as possible, the leaders of the monastery are eager to bring the skills of trainees to a level that allows them to perform *kitō* prayer rituals as soon as possible, and for as long as possible. Katō Tarō explained:

Akiha's special worship hall comes last. There is an order of things. If you are unsuccessful in completing all positions in the main hall, you may not proceed to perform in Akiha's place, the *goshinden*. Yamamoto Daisuke is currently holding the position of *densu*, or 'green man'. He performed as the 'green man' every time, who is the protector of the special worship hall. If he were to play the *taiko* drum or read the *ekō* text instead, then who would be there to function as *densu*?²⁵³

As this quote indicates, the risk involved in making offerings to the potentially dangerous fire god for this-worldly benefits is expressed in the rule that trainees are required to conduct ascetic practices and rituals in the main hall for about three months, before they are allowed to take over certain ritual functions in Akiha's special worship hall. The resulting tension that increases with each training step structures the training, and adds a somewhat existential value to the actions of trainees. By suggesting that the consequences of misconduct or failure are damaging for all, trainees are held responsible for their actions. This is also emphasized by the fact that no trainee may take over the position of the ritual officiant (*dōshi*). At Kasuisai, *kitō* prayer rituals are exclusively officiated by monks of the highest ranks, including the abbot. More so than in other places, failing to keep the rhythm in Akiha's special worship hall, or performing improperly, increases the risk of divine retribution.

Most of the novice priests in training at prayer monasteries will rarely or never perform *kitō* at their home temples, but they may nonetheless benefit from learning to perform

²⁵³ Interview Katō Tarō, 19 September 2011 WS450800: *Goshinden wa saigo desu. Junban ga arimashite, hattō no tōyaku, pojishon wo dekiru ni naranai to, goshinden, Akiha-san no tokoro wa dekinai to natteimasu. Hai. Desunode, moshi, ima, goshinden wo mamotteiru hito, densu toiu haiyaku wo itadaita Katō-san ga maikai gurin man yattetandesuga, Katō-san ga taiko toka goshinden dōan wo yaru to natta baai, dare ga yarundesuka?* 御真殿は最後です。順番がありまして、法堂の当役、ポジションをできるにならないと、御真殿、秋葉さんのところは出来ないとなっています。はい。ですので、もし、今、御真殿を守っている人、殿司という配役をいただいた加藤さんが毎回グリーンマンをやっていたんですが、加藤さんが太鼓とかご真殿堂行をやるとなった場合、だれがやるんですか。

under the pressure of performing in front of an audience of lay practitioners. Trainees furthermore benefit from practicing *kitō* as a means of bringing basic ritual patterns to perfection. More so than *zazen*, *kitō* involves a wide range of complex body movements, sutra chants, and instruments that priests need in other contexts in their everyday lives as temple priests, notably in performing mortuary rituals and ancestor veneration rituals. The routinization of *kitō* therefore contributes to what makes for a well-rounded temple priest.

***Kitō* and Legitimacy**

In his study of *kitō* at Sōjiji, scholar and Sōtō Zen priest Ōmura Tetsuo (2006; forthcoming) distinguishes between ascriptions to prayer rituals by clergy and lay practitioners. Those who request *kitō* prayer rituals for this-worldly benefits typically direct their prayers to a local god directly, according to Ōmura. The monks thereby functioning as mediators. The monks who conduct these rituals, however, tend to draw a more complex picture of the mediation process. Ōmura breaks this process down into five steps: First, the prayer applicants make their prayer requests to the monks by filling out a prayer request form at the reception. The monks, who are believed to have acquired special powers to evoke this-worldly benefits as a result of their ascetic training, respond to this request by making offerings to a local god (*kami* 力 ㄹ). Second, the monks address the Buddhas (*hotoke* 仏) by reciting the *Heart Sutra* (*Hannya shingyō* 般若心經) in a particularly energetic way over the beat of a *taiko* drum. The ceremonial leader recites the 578th volume of the *Great Perfection of Wisdom Sutra* (*Dai hannya kyō* 大般若經), called the *rishubun* 理趣分 ('Deep Import' Section). Third, the monks receive merits from the Buddhas for reciting the sutras. Fourth, the monks transfer these merits to a local temple-guarding god, along with the wishes of the prayer applicants. Fifth, the local god answers these prayers (Ōmura forthcoming: 48-49;59-63).

Following this interpretation of monks as mediators, *kitō* is often legitimized as a means of drawing common people closer to presumed 'real' Buddhist ideals of non-attachment and renunciation. Kasuisai trainee Yamamoto Daisuke who had spent a year at Eihei-ji before his transition to Kasuisai, argues: "*Kitō* is unimportant. I just cannot really feel that it has a real meaning. Well, on the other hand, we should make use of *kitō* as an opportunity to establish bonds between people and the Buddhas."²⁵⁴ Other *kitō*-practicing

²⁵⁴ Interview Yamamoto Daisuke, 15 September 2011 WS450436: *Gokitō wa daiji janai toiuka, unn, amari imi ga kanjirarenai kana. Ma, hotoke-sama no en wo musuberu ii kikai*

monks at Kasuisai and Daiyūzan, as well as at smaller prayer temples in the Kantō area, also introduced *kitō* as a practice that is aimed at establishing a connection or bond (*en* 縁) with common people. Following this interpretation, *kitō* is merely a first step in the process of building a lasting connection with the Buddha dharma, and the teachings that are more specific to ‘Zen’. Interpretations like these are frequently perpetuated in the research and teaching at sectarian universities, which most trainees attend before they start to train at a monastery.

Monks in office at *kitō jiin* may have to actively challenge the reductive descriptions of *kitō* that some of the trainees bring with them when they start their training with an understanding of ‘real’ Zen as *zazen* meditation, or an idea of renunciation that leaves no room for *kitō*. Among the educators working on this issue was Matsui Sojun, who held the position of assistant comptroller (*fūsu* 副寺), the second-highest rank at Kasuisai, until his death in October 2011. Matsui was well-respected among the younger trainees for his community engagement, and because of his long-term commitment to the monastery. He argued that for a Japanese Buddhist priest to understand the desires and problems in the lives of commoners, clergy should familiarize themselves with the problems of lay people by going through the same issues in life. Monks, in other words, should get married and have children to experience and understand the lives of ordinary families. “Our profession is about living together with the people,” Matsui argued. “There are even priests who go out there to accompany the fishermen on sea; priests who live together with the people in their local communities, and who join them when they set sail, to give Buddhist teachings while catching fish.”²⁵⁵ Prayers for bountiful fish catches and protection at sea are also common themes in *kitō*. Matsui promoted his beliefs within his own community, by organizing monthly prayer gatherings at three different residential care homes for the elderly. He explained: “I asked myself: how could I implement the teaching of Buddhism thoroughly into everyday life, in the

toshite, gokitō ga tsukawareteikeba iinjanaidesuka to omotte [...]. 御祈祷は大事じゃないというか、うん、あまり意味が感じられないかな。まあ、仏さまの縁を結べるいい機会として、御祈祷が使われていけばいいんじゃないですかと思って[...]

²⁵⁵ Conversation Matsui Sojun, 10 September 2011 WS450301: *Minshū to tomo ni ikiru! Sore ga wareware no – tokuni wa sakana wo toru ni, umi ni hairu obōsan, ne, umi ni, fune ni notte sakana toru – buraku no shū, comyuniti no minasan, issho ni fune ni notte, sakana wo torinagara, Budda no oshie wo yaru to mo arimasuyo* [...]. 民衆とともに生きる！それが我々の—とくには魚を取るに、海に入るお坊さん、ね、海に、船に乗って魚取—部落の集、コミュニティの皆さん、一緒に船に乗って、魚を取りながら仏陀の教えをやるともありますよ [...].

context of social welfare? This was my reason to take action. [...] This is why we hold a Kannon festival every month at the home for the elderly, where we recite the *Heart Sutra*. There are quite a few people attending this event. Buddhist temples engage in such activities because this is Mahayana Buddhism.”²⁵⁶

The practice of *kitō* at Kasuisai echoes Matsui Sojun’s call for “learning about the sorrows” of people (*nayami wo benkyō suru* 悩みを勉強する). Matsui acknowledged that his understanding of Mahayana Buddhism was arguably self-interested, but his self-reflexivity invited open discussion about the legitimacy of rituals for this-worldly benefits as a source of financial gain. Spontaneous conversations about such topics made some trainees reconsider their understanding of *kitō*, or to formulate a first understanding of *kitō* to begin with. The above ‘lecture’ by Matsui took place in the back room of Kasuisai’s reception, where monks in training indulged in personal study in the evening, memorizing sutras and *taiko* drum beats while awaiting the night shift.

The critique of *kitō* among trainees should therefore not be mistaken for a critique of *kitō* per se, let alone a critique of Akiha devotion in particular. The main target of trainees’ persisting criticisms of *kitō* addressed the sheer workload associated with preparing and performing up to fifteen prayer rituals per day. What bothered trainees most was the intensity of the work load, and to be constantly kept in suspense about what they were to expect.²⁵⁷ But the same trainees who frequently complained about their training would express their joy when they noticed that the recipients of *kitō* prayer rituals appreciated their efforts.

²⁵⁶ Conversation Matsui Sojun, 10 September 2011 WS450301: *Seikatsu suru naka de, tettei shite, shakai fukushi – Buddha no oshie dō oshieteikuka, toiu koto de yarimashita. [...]* *dakara maitsuki Kannon-sai yarundesyo, Hannya shingyō wo yondekuru, yarundesuyo, rōjin hōmu desuyo. Nnde ikura irrashai. Kore, otera ga ne, sōiu koto mo yarunda toiu koto wa ne, daijō bukkō toiu koto de.* 生活するなかで、徹底して、社会福祉—仏陀の教えどう教えていくか、ということでやりました [...] だから毎月観音祭やるんですよ、般若心経を読んでくる、やるんですよ、老人ホームですよ。んで、いくらいらっしやい。これ、お寺がね、そういうこともやるんだということはね、大乘仏教ということで。

²⁵⁷ See, for example, conversation monk in training Takeuchi Takahiro, 13 September 2011 WS450340; WS450341. See also conversation monk in training Wada Takumi, 15 September 2011 WS450491.

***Kitō* and Merit Transfer as Part of the Sutra-Chanting Morning Service**

As with the midday sutra-chanting service (*nitchū fugin* 日中諷經) and evening sutra-chanting service (*banka fugin* 晚課諷經), the sutra-chanting service conducted every morning at training monasteries (*chōka fugin* 朝課諷經) is designed to cherish and appease the various gods and Buddhas that are venerated at a Sōtō Zen monastery, including Buddha Shakyamuni, the arhats, the patriarchs of Ch’an and Zen, and the lineage of former head priests (see the discussion of Kasuisai’s miniature pilgrimage in Chapter Two for an overview of gods worshipped on site). In practice, however, the morning service stands out in matters of performance, style, and importance for other reasons. The morning hours from around 5 a.m. to 10 a.m. make for the most ritualized and demanding part of the day in the life of a training monastery. Formally, all monks are required to take part in the morning sutra-chanting service, including the leaders and monks in office, who hold the power to grant or curb the privileges of trainees. This exposure and the need to demonstrate individual progress may explain why the tension among the trainees is typically highest during *chōka*. Compared to the rather tense atmosphere during the morning service, the midday and evening services at times resemble practice lessons: trainees get to try out new positions and instruments in the midday and evening, and team-discussions and critique take place on site, right after the ritual has come to an end.²⁵⁸ This stance is reflected in the ritual performance itself, with the evening service being much slower in style, and the fact that Kasuisai’s sutra-chanting services in the midday and evening do not always start at the same time. Requests for *kitō* prayer rituals are given priority over the start of the daily midday and evening services,²⁵⁹ whereas extra care is given that *zazen* and *chōka* always start on point.²⁶⁰

Kasuisai’s morning service is split in two halves of about half an hour each. The *chōka* part takes place in the main hall. The second part consists of a *kitō* prayer ritual, which takes place in Akiha’s special worship hall. *Chōka* may be abbreviated to a twenty-minute

²⁵⁸ This critique addresses the performative aspects of the midday service. For example, monks may be encouraged to chant louder, or to pay attention on their body postures. Giving advice on enhancing the performance includes teaching trainees how to keep their bodies under tension during actions like the lifting the sutra book. The tension during these moments of critique is usually high, since the successful completion each step of the training relies on the evaluation of the monks’ individual progress by the instructors. Field notes 16 September 2011 WS450523; 19 September 2011 WS450754.

²⁵⁹ The midday service normally starts between 10 and 11 a.m.; the evening service starts between 3 and 4 p.m. See field note 16 September 2011 WS450517; WS450503.

²⁶⁰ See also field notes 16 September 2011 WS450522; 20 September 2011 WS450838.

performance on special occasions, but is always followed by a *kitō* prayer ritual.²⁶¹ The morning service is preceded by ritual sitting in the monks' hall, which starts at 5 a.m., and followed by breakfast. There is no break between *zazen* and breakfast, and often also no break between breakfast and the subsequent cleaning outdoors, which starts on point at 8. a.m. This seamless transition underlines the overall sense of strictness that prevails throughout the morning hours. Following the *kitō* part of the morning service, all monks line up in front of Idaten's shrine in the *daisho'in* building, where they recite a verse and perform three bows – one to the left, one to the right, and one to the center. The head priest and the monks in training wish each other a good morning at this point. Shouting as loud as they can, the trainees demonstrate readiness before they part and run to their living quarters.²⁶²

The daily morning service must never be omitted. Not even a major typhoon could stop the monks from conducting it. On September twenty-first, 2011, a Typhoon toppled around eighty large cedars on temple grounds, causing damage not seen in decades, perhaps centuries. Despite having to direct their labor toward cleanup and rebuilding, the priests allocated the work among them so that the morning service would be conducted as normal (see Graf 2012 for video footage of the damage). Showing good will by participating in the morning service was also a precondition for my permission to conduct fieldwork at Kasuisai. As with the monks in training, I woke up at 04.50 a.m. to participate in *zazen*, the morning service, and the monastic cleaning that takes place every day until about 10 a.m. Not only were the first five hours of monastic activity recognized as particularly meritorious, but participation in the morning rituals was the only chance to establish connections with the monks in training at the time.²⁶³ Lay practitioners who spent a night at Kasuisai were also encouraged to participate in the morning service. Monk or not, no one who spent a night at Kasuisai could elude the gravitational pull of the monastic morning-routine.

²⁶¹ The shortened morning service is called *ryaku chōka* 略朝課. It includes recitation of the *Hannya shingyō* and the *Daihisshin darani* 大悲心陀羅尼 (*Great Compassionate Mind Dharani*). Shortened morning services are normally practiced on days without morning *zazen* (days with 4 and 9; *hōsanbi*), when monks are allowed to start their day at 5:45 a.m. instead of 4:50 a.m. See field notes 18 September 2011 WS450677; 24 September 2011 WS451020; 25 September 2011 WS451040.

²⁶² See field notes 16 September 2011 WS450498; 19 September 2011 WS450751; WS450753; 20 September 2011 WS450848; WS450849; 21 September 2011 WS450865; 23 September 2011 WS450966.

²⁶³ See also field note 25 September 2011 WS451042.

Griffith Foulk describes the Sōtō Zen monastic morning service as consisting of five separate rites, all of which take place in the main hall: “(1) buddha hall sutra chanting (*butsuden fugin* 佛殿諷經), (2) sutra chanting for arhats (*ōgu fugin* 應供諷經), (3) ancestral teachers hall sutra chanting (*sodō fugin* 祖堂諷經), (4) sutra chanting for founding and former abbots (*kaisan rekijū fugin* 開山歷住諷經), and (5) ancestors hall sutra chanting (*shidō fugin* 祠堂諷經)” (Foulk 2010b: 37-38). The daily performance of *kitō* at Kasuisai is not formally a part of the *chōka fugin*, but on a performative level, the combination of both as two halves of a morning service nonetheless works to normalize the practice of *kitō* for this-worldly benefits. In performing both rituals right after each other, Kasuisai makes *kitō* inseparable from the official sectarian circuits of ritualized worship as found in other monasteries. At the same time, *kitō* becomes a standard practice that is independent from individual prayer requests by temple visitors. Even on days when no requests for *kitō* comes in, *kitō* would still be performed as part of the morning service.

The spatial, temporal, and stylistic gap between *chōka* and *kitō* makes it easy to distinguish both parts of Kasuisai’s morning service. Judging from the viewpoint of theological interpretations, however, the two parts are not as different as the differences in performance and setting might suggest. Put simply, both *chōka* and *kitō* are rituals aimed at generating and transferring merits (*kudoku* 功德). Merits are generated by chanting sutras, and then are offered to a Buddha, god, or spirit in a standardized verse (*ekōmon* 回向文). What distinguishes the process of merit transfer in *kitō* prayer rituals, in comparison with the morning sutra-chanting service, is the dedication of merits to local temple-guarding gods noted to promise this-worldly benefits, but not the idea of merit transfer per se. As Chapter One has shown, the benefits ascribed to *kitō* have changed in adaptation to shifting social norms and needs, just as the legends about local gods have transformed over time. Except for the prayer purposes and particular gods addressed in the ritual, however, the logic of *kitō* is not too different from that of a standard sutra-chanting service.

As Foulk (2010b: 38) remarks, some Western Zen practitioners of Zen Buddhism understand the text for the dedication of merits as a gesture. Others chant sutras to achieve a meditative state of mind, but reject the idea of dharani as powerful text parts with ‘magical’ powers. This goes against the idea of merit transfer in the East Asian context, according to Foulk, where “[...] the formal dedication of that merit is the performative heart and defining moment of the ritual” (Foulk 2010b: 38). This comparison with the Western context is

certainly important. Within the Japanese context, however, there is no clear consensus on what the process of merit transfer actually entails. This is important to note, as both *kitō* and the standard sutra-chanting services are based on this concept. Sōtō intellectual Tanaka Ryōshō (2004: 43-44), for example, brings to mind that contemporary Japanese do not comprehend the idea of merit transfer for the dead, as part of the posthumous ordination (*motsugo sasō* 役後作僧). Sōtō Zen researcher Shiina Kōyū furthermore gives to understand that even Sōtō Zen Buddhist priests have difficulty grasping the “principles of momentary merit transfer” (*genkō giki* 現行儀軌). It would be difficult to explain the concept of merit transfer to lay practitioners, Shiina claims. Priests who fully understand this idea of momentary merit transfer, according to Shiina, are as rare as “stars at the break of dawn” (*gyōten no hoshi* 暁天の星) (Shiina 2004: 57).

As these discussions among sectarian intellectuals indicate, understandings of the process of merit transfer are subject to regional traditions, individual dispositions, and the opinions of Zen teachers at training monasteries, among other places where Japanese Buddhism is currently negotiated. The same can be said of the potential ascribed to specific sutras and dharani to evoke this-worldly benefits. Consequently, insofar as *kitō* and the standard sutra-chanting services are both concerned with the transfer of merits, they are also subject to theological interpretations and negotiations in adaptation to changing social norms and needs.

Embodied Knowledge: Authority and Etiquette

For trainees at monastic training centers, acquiring knowledge of Sōtō Zen Buddhism is first of all a physical, bodily process, not an intellectual and cognitive endeavor. This chapter elucidates how senior clergy at Kasuisai train novice priests by instructing them to engage with Buddhist teachings in corporeal forms, through interactions with Buddhist texts and material Buddhist objects, and in the practice of etiquette and special procedures (*sahō*). In showing how the image of a unified monastic body emerges in this process, the chapter asks how *kitō jūin* are currently generating and negotiating religious authority.

Saitō Shun *godō* 後堂,²⁶⁴ the roshi responsible for the education of trainees at the time of my field research in 2011, compared the relationship between teaching and practice as

²⁶⁴ The title of *godō* (rear hall roshi) refers to the seating position next to the rear exit in the *zazen* hall. *Godō* is typically the fourth- or fifth-highest rank at a monastery.

follows: “In the case of Zen, it is not only about the teaching (*oshie* 教え). Teaching and ascetic practice (*gyō*) are the same. [...] The everyday ritual observances are the most important aspect of Zen teaching, because the teaching of Zen is ascetic practice.”²⁶⁵ Rather than holding on to an intellectual reflection of the message of non-attachment, or the call for ‘just sitting’, Saitō advised his students to “read the *Shōbōgenzō* with their bodies.”²⁶⁶ This bodily reading includes the practice of *zazen*, but also encompasses other practices. Ritual sitting as found in prayer monasteries is the practice most commonly associated with an embodiment of the Buddhist truth. *Zazen* is not performed in the search for awakening, but a means of practicing enlightenment as part of the daily monastic routine.²⁶⁷ “This is all about the everyday life” (*nichijō koso ga subete* 日常こそがすべて), Saitō argued. “Awakening is to be found in obvious daily events and observances, and in life itself. We don’t ask or search for awakening beyond that,” meaning the quotidian.²⁶⁸

In following this approach to monastic training, monks must learn to perform a variety of special procedures, known as *sahō*. The basic etiquette prescribes how specific postures have to be performed, movements like bows and prostrations, actions like offering incense, and the ways in which a monk is supposed to dress. Even entering the toilet or bath is subject to special procedures, including bows and recitation of special verses for washing the face (*senmen no ge* 洗面の偈), for entering the bath (*nyūyoku no ge* 入浴の偈), and a toilet verse

²⁶⁵ Conversation Saitō Shun, 5 January 2012 WS451404: *Zen no baai wa, oshie dake janakute, oshieru koto to gyō ga issho*. [...] *Ichiban daiji na no wa, nichijō gyōji. Zen no oshie wa gyōji dakara*. 禅の場合は、教えだけじゃなくて、教えること行が一緒。[...] 一番大事なのは、日常行事。禅の教えは行事だから。

²⁶⁶ Conversation Saitō Shun, 4 January 2012 WS451377: *Shōbōgenzō wo karada de yomu* 正法眼藏を体で読む。

²⁶⁷ According to the Sōtō Zen teaching, one is already awakened by birth. Kasuisai trainee Yamamoto Daisuke, for example, explains: “Dōgen’s teaching says that we don’t practice *zazen* in order to become Buddhas. We can practice *zazen* and ascetic training because we already are Buddhas.” Interview Yamamoto Daisuke, 15 September 2011 WS450436: *Ma, zazen wo suru no wa, hotoke ni naru no wo mokuteki toshite yarunjanakute, hotoke ga, hotoke dakarakoso zazen ga dekiru, shugyō ga dekiru toiu no ga, Dōgen-san no oshie desune*. ま、坐禅をするのは、仏になるのを目的としてやるんじゃないくて、仏が、仏だからこそ坐禅ができる、修行ができるというのが、道元さんの教えですね。For a theological summary of the issue with references to the Kegon sutra, the Bodhisattva vows, and Dōgen’s *Eiheiji shōso gakudō yōjin shū* 永平初祖学道用心集, see Morita 2008 (121-124).

²⁶⁸ Conversation Saitō Shun, 5 January 2012 WS451404: *Atarimae no gyōji, ikiru koto ni satori no aru toiu kanji. Hoka ni satori wo motomenaindesuyo*. 当たり前前の行事、生きることとに悟りのあるという感じ。他に悟りを求めないんですよ。

for ‘purification’ (*senjō no ge* 洗淨の偈).²⁶⁹ Referring to Dōgen’s teaching, Saitō explained the need to adhere to the special procedures at all times with the fact that life is finite: “If you go to the toilet, how do you know if it will not be the last place in your life? [...] This is why special procedures for going to the toilet are needed.”²⁷⁰ As this example shows, reading the *Shōbōgenzō* with the body means adopting the Sōtō Zen etiquette at all times. The process of ‘reading’ may not simply be interrupted or stopped.

It is important to note how this bodily reading takes place in a communal context. Monastic training as found in Kasuisai is a communal practice. The image reflected in the collective effort to follow the diverse lectures and doctrines in Dōgen’s collected treatises is that of a unified monastic body. Group-performances allude to the synchronicity of the movements of the monks, who demonstrate a level of self-control so high that their actions appear to be guided by an otherworldly, supernatural power (Prohl 2004a). The resilience and dispensability portrayed in the everyday actions of monks form a concerted display of strength. Every aspect of monastic life is carefully planned; every monk knows his place and his responsibilities in contributing to the community. The ritual identification with Buddha’s teaching should therefore be understood as a collective practice that entails more than what Saitō’s ‘emic’ theological ascription to the significance of *sahō* conveys for an individual monk and his path to ordination might suggest. An intended or unintended side effect of the need for monks to support each other in the effort to run the monastery, while being constantly discouraged from reflecting on their actions and the purpose of their training intellectually, is the prevention of schisms (see also Faure 1991). This is not to deny the different lineages in the history of Sōtō Zen Buddhism. Scholars suggested that there are perhaps as many versions of Sōtō Zen Buddhism as there are temples in Japan. But the basic training of monks, the standard observances at training monasteries, and the process of ordination are nonetheless highly standardized affairs.

Ōtsuka Makoto, a senior monk at Kasuisai, used the expression *daishū no jinriki* 大集の人力 (“the power of the collective”) to characterize the benefits of living and training as one group. He stressed the need for trainees “to follow through by borrowing the power of the

²⁶⁹ As Griffith Foulk (2010b: 39-40) points out, these special procedures are not originally unique to Zen Buddhism, but derive from generic Song and Yuan monastic practices.

²⁷⁰ Conversation Saitō Shun, 5 January 2012 WS451404: *Toire ni ittara, toire ga saigo no basho ni naru ka wakaranai kara, [...] dōiu toire no shikata ga aru ka toiu no wa sahō ga aru wake.* トイレに行ったら、トイレが最後の場所になるかわからないから、[...] どういうトイレの仕方があるかというのは作法があるわけ。

others,” meaning the other members of the monastic community.²⁷¹ In confirming the need to understand monastic training as a communal practice, he went as far as to question the sense of practicing *zazen* beyond its embeddedness in the monastic context:

For *zazen*, you need to be dedicated to an ascetic life (*kufū* 工夫; 功夫). Without living an ascetic life, you cannot practice *zazen* in any real way. Do you know the procedures for the *kufū* of *zazen*? At first you bring your body in order, and then you order your mind. If you just sit, and believe that *zazen* is only about the form, you will have to practice for you one or two hundred years to come to the understanding [that you would gain by living at a monastic training center for one or two years].²⁷²

This understanding of *zazen* as integrated into the everyday monastic routine allows monastic training centers to define what “bringing the body and the mind in order” as a means of enabling ‘real’ *zazen* entails. Likewise, the emphasis on genealogy in the transmission of access to the Buddhist truth places authority in the hands of those who hold positions of power at training monasteries. The notion that *shugyō* is pointless without receiving guidance from “a person with the right teaching” (*tadashii oshie no hito* 正しい教えの人), as Ōtsuka described it, is a defining characteristic of the cross-generational succession of the priesthood. A range of other aspects factor in when it comes to assessing sectarian career opportunities of a monk and his access to leadership networks, notably his family’s temple’s standing within the Sōtō Zen hierarchy, and the overall time that a monk decides to spend at a training monastery, but the influence of monks in office at monastic training centers in deciding on the progress of a trainee should not be underestimated. The rhetoric of the “right teaching” (*tadashii oshie*) furthermore works to assert the presumed superiority and uniqueness of Sōtō Zen against other Buddhist sects.

The training at Kasuisai disqualifies novice priests from making qualified statements about their progress and their teachers. Learning Zen, according to Ōtsuka, is a “bodily

²⁷¹ Conversation Ōtsuka Makoto, 13 September 2011 WS450318; *Minasangata no chikara wo karite, yaru koto nandesu*. みなさんがたの力を借りて、やることなんです。

²⁷² Conversation Ōtsuka Makoto, 13 September 2011 WS450318. *Zazen toiu no wa ne, zazen wa kuhū ga hitsuyō nandesuyo. Kuhū wo shinai to, hontō ni zazen wa dekinai. Zazen no kuhū no shikata, sore ga nani wo – kuhū tte shitteimasuka? Karada wo totonoeru kufū. Sorekara kokoro wo totonoeru kuhū. Tada suwattereba, kakkō sashitereba zazen da to omottara, āiumono wa hyakunen, nihyakunen shugyō shitara wakarū shikanai*. 坐禅というはね、坐禅は工夫（功夫）が必要なんです。工夫をしないと、本当に坐禅はできない。坐禅の工夫の仕方、それがなにを—工夫って知っていますか。体を整える工夫。それから心を整える工夫。ただ座ってれば、格好をさしてれば坐禅だと思ったら、ああいうものは百年、二百年修行したらわかるしかない。

experience” (*karada no taiken* 体の体験) that requires practice, comparable to learning to play a musical instrument. Performing this training entails being mindful about the practice of opening and closing a door, for example, or the moment of a step when the foot touches the ground. Following through with the ascetic training for one year, Ōtsuka argues, allows one to experience life in newfound ways. “By using our bodies in ascetic practices in this monastic training center, we are forced to learn. What we learn is not about knowledge in an intellectual sense of the word (*chishiki* 知識), but the wisdom of embodied knowledge (*chie* 智慧). We learn with our bodies, by letting our bodies move.”²⁷³ This statement is very much in line with Saitō’s expression of “reading the *Shōbōgenzō* with the body.”

Answering to my question, if his statement was to convey that an intellectual reflection of a sutra text ranked secondary, Ōtsuka agreed, stating that it was more important to access the ‘heart’ or ‘spirit’ (*kokoro* 心) of the sutra than trying to interpret and understand its ‘meaning’ (*imi* 意味) intellectually. In practice, this means memorizing the sutra texts and reciting them. In the course of their training, monks get to interact with a variety of sutras and ritual texts, including the Heart Sutra, the Kannon Sutra (*Kannonkyō* 観音經; a chapter of the Sutra of the Lotus of the Wonderful Dharma (*Myōhō renga kyō kanzeon fumon bon* 妙法蓮華經觀世音普門品)), the Great Compassion Dharani (*Daihisshu* 大悲呪), the *Dharani of the Victorious Ushnisha* (*Butchō sonshō darani* 仏頂尊勝陀羅尼; to be used for the midday sutra-chanting service), the *Ambrosia Gate* (*Kanromon* 甘露門), the *Harmony of Difference and Equality* (*Sandōkai* 参同契), the *Precious Mirror Samadhi* (*Hōkyō zanmai* 宝鏡三昧), the *Shushōgi* (see Chapter One), and the *Last Teaching Sutra* (*Yuikyō gyō* 遺教經); a sutra used in funerals that presumably contains the final teachings of Shakyamuni.²⁷⁴ Referring to the Buddhist concept of the ‘transmission from heart to heart’ (*ishin denshin*), Ōtsuka

²⁷³ Conversation Ōtsuka Makoto, 13 September 2011 WS450318: *Kono senmon sōdō de wa, kono gyō, okonai, karada wo tsukau koto ni yotte, manandeikinasai toiu. Sore wa, nani wo manabuka to iu to, chishiki dewanakute, chie wo manabu. Karada wo ugokasu koto ni yotte, karada de manabu.* この専門僧堂では、この行、行い、体を使うことによって、学んでいきなさいという。それは、なにを学ぶかということ、知識ではなくて、智慧を学ぶ。体を動かすことによって、体で学ぶ。

²⁷⁴ Conversation Ōtsuka Makoto, 15 September 2011 WS450486.

explained that the ‘heart’ of a sutra transmits by itself, if the text is read (or recited) over and over again, repetition being the key.²⁷⁵

Similar to sutra texts, Buddhist statues may also function as carriers of meaning that reveal the wisdom of embodied knowledge, or *chie*. A vital function of Buddhist statues, according to Ōtsuka, is to conserve embodied wisdom for future generations. A Buddhist statue may well be considered as a teacher, just like the statue of Monju Bodhisattva in the *zazen* hall is regarded as the most senior monk of the assembly at Kasuisai and other training monasteries. The icon of Monju bosatsu receives ritual care, food and tea every day by his personal attendant. Pointing at an image of the toilet guardian Ususama Myōō, the guest prefect explained:

[...] Even if its meaning is not understood, the time will come when someone comes who understands it. If the form is lost, nothing new can emerge; no new way of thinking can be born. [...] If things are not expressed in form, and don’t succeed in form, there won’t be anyone to understand them. No matter how much I talk and try to explain, if I talk to one hundred people, maybe one or two of them will understand what I try to convey. This is why we put things in form. We only pass them on to those who understand. This is the most important thing. If anyone asks you, “what is important in this context?” This is what matters.²⁷⁶

The process of transmitting and decoding embodied knowledge is regulated by the religious professionals who claim authority over Kasuisai and its material Buddhist culture, who regulate the exposure to objects like statues, as well as provide access to the monastery’s

²⁷⁵ Ōtsuka used the Japanese saying *dokushu hyappen i onozu kara tsūzu* 読書百遍意自ずから通ず (read it a hundred times, and the meaning will become clear of itself) in this context, which he explained in his own words: *dokusho hyakkai yomeba, kokoro ga tsutawattekuru* 読書百回読めば、心が伝わってくる (literally: “if one reads a text one hundred times over, its meaning (*kokoro*) is being transmitted”). Conversation Ōtsuka Makoto, 13 September 2011 WS450318.

²⁷⁶ Conversation Ōtsuka Makoto, 13 September 2011 WS450318: [...] *Imi ga wakaranakutemo, itsuka wa, itsuka wakaruru hito ga detekurundesu. Katachi made suteteshimau to, nanimo umaretekonai. Kangaekata mo umaretekonai. [...] Katachi ni arawashite, katachi de keishō shite ikanai to, sōiu wakaruru hito inai kara – ikura hanashi shite mo, ikura wakaruru yō ni hanashi shitemo, 100nin kara 100nin ga wakaruru sō janai desu. sono naka hitori ka futari nandesu. Dakara, katachi ni nokosundesu. Wakaruru hito dake ni keishō surundesu. Sore ga ichiban taisetsu na koto. “Nani ga taisetsu ka?” Sōiu koto. 形に表して、形で継承していかないと、そういうわかる人いないから—いくら話しても、いくらわかるように話しても、百人から百人がわかるそうじゃないです。そのなか一人か二人なんです。だから、形に残すんです。わかる人だけに継承するんです。それが一番大切なこと。「何が大切か」そういうこと。[...] 意味がわからなくても、いつかわかる人が出て来るんです。 See also field note 13 September 2011 WS450322.*

ritual spaces, and thereby enable the process of priestly training and licensing. The same monks enable the display of knowledge through form by teaching monks to adopt the Zen etiquette and special procedures as part of their training. As a result of this training, the unified monastic body merges with its extended corporeal network, including statues of monks in *zazen* (and in some cases even the mummified bodies of clergy). Insofar as the border between human and non-human actors dissolves in this process, an aura of transparency in the performance of monastic Zen is bound to emerge. Material carriers of embodied knowledge are no longer separated from human agency in this scenario, but actively regulate the monks' adherence to form. This interplay of human and non-human agency stabilizes the embodiment of knowledge, regulates the overall training regimens, and thus functions as an important pillar for the global brand image of Zen.²⁷⁷

Habitus and Distinction: Visual Markers

While monks in office at monastic training centers may not necessarily agree that the main purpose of monastic training is to teach priests how to distinct themselves and their habitus from lay practitioners, distinction is arguably the most significant effect that the consistent adherence to the Zen monastic etiquette and special procedures (*sahō*) has on outside observers and temple visitors. Many Japanese are unfamiliar with the various Buddhist sects and their nuanced differences in ritual performance, style and etiquette, but they will easily identify a Buddhist monk or nun by his or her looks. Two visual markers that underline the 'otherness' of clergy in most Buddhist sects are the tonsure and the Buddhist robe.²⁷⁸ Perhaps because of their obviousness, the *Encyclopedia of Buddhism* mentions none of these physical attributes in its entry of "Monks" (see Kieschnick 2004: 565-568).

The importance of outward appearance can hardly be overstated. The garments of a monk are a visual marker, and a part of a monk's professional religious identity, as well as a

²⁷⁷ On the agency of objects, see Latour 2007. On objects as active participants in social practices, see also Hilgert 2010; Reckwitz 2006. The agency of objects, as these scholars have shown, relies on the interplay of physical attributes, culture-specific ascriptions of meaning within a social context, and the subjective ways in which practitioners interact with and make sense of these objects. For a summary of the history of theories of agency, see Sax 2013: 25-28.

²⁷⁸ This is not to say that all Japanese priests shave their heads. The Jōdo Shinshū sect is particularly open about allowing priests to wear hair. Most Japanese priests are however obliged to shave their heads for obligatory monastic retreats and training periods.

work tool that provides storage space for religious utensils like sutra books.²⁷⁹ A typical robe as worn by Sōtō Zen monks consists of three main pieces: an outer garment (*koromo* 衣), a kimono worn under the *koromo*, and the *kesa* 袈裟, or upper robe, which is worn on top of the *koromo*, often in the form of a small *kesa* hung around the neck, known as *rakusu* 絡子.²⁸⁰ Some monks at Kasuisai described their *rakusu* as a protective shield, or as an object charged with extraordinary powers. Donning the *kesa* requires adherence to special procedures, starting with a bow in front of the *kesa* with both hands folded. The folded robe is then placed on the head, usually while kneeling or sitting, and the verse for donning the *kesa* (*takkesa no ge* 搭袈裟の偈) is chanted three times:

How great the vestment of liberation,	<i>dai sai gedap-puku</i>	大哉解脱服
robe that is a signless field of merit.	<i>musō fuku den'e</i>	無相福田衣
Wrapping ourselves in the Tathagata's teachings,	<i>hibu nyorai kyo</i>	披奉如來教
we encompass and deliver all living beings.	<i>kōdo shoshu jo</i>	廣度諸衆生 ²⁸¹

Further detailed instructions for donning the *kesa* are given in the *Standard Observances of the Soto Zen School* (*Sōtōshū gyōji kihan*; see Foulk 2010a: 500-501): Upon chanting the above verse three times, the folded cloth is to be put on the left shoulder, before it is to be dropped down to the rear. The right hand holds the outward corner of the *kesa* that faces right; the left hand holds the inward corner of the *kesa* that faces left. The *kesa* is then to be unfolded by pulling it across the back, under the right arm, and to the front. On a regular robe, the strings are tied above the left shoulder, and then covered by folding the right corner of the *kesa*, which is inserted into the knot.

According to Griffith Foulk, the “vestment of liberation” in the above-cited verse stands for the *kesa*, which is “emblematic of Buddhist monk-hood, renunciation of

²⁷⁹ Sutra books are never to be put on the floor, as monks at Kasuisai explained with the need to pay respect to the sutra. Sutra texts may be placed on a shelf, or may be stashed inside the *kimono*, but they must not be put on the floor. This includes verses, such as the verse on the occasion of communal meals. The way of holding a sutra book in the hands is also regulated: The thumbs and the small fingers are to be placed in front of the text, and the other fingers hold the book from the back. Field notes 16 September 2011 WS450549; 19 September 2011 WS450748.

²⁸⁰ Griffith Foulk (2010b: 196) counts three types of *kesa* that Sōtō Zen Buddhist monks are supposed to receive upon ordination: the five-panel robe (*gojōe* 五條衣; also known as *andae* 安陀會); the seven-panel robe (*shichijōe* 七條衣; also known as *uttarasō* 鬱多羅僧); and the nine-panel robe (*kujōe* 九條衣; also known as *sōgyari* 僧伽梨).

²⁸¹ Translation by Griffith Foulk (see Foulk 2010b: 207-208; Foulk 2010a: 500-501).

attachments, and the path to “liberation” (*gedatsu* 解脱)” (Foulk 2010b: 208). The “field of merit” stands for the monastic community that offers merits in return for donations. The term “signless” (*musō* 無相) in the above-quoted verse for donning the *kesa* refers to the absence of external marks on the *kesa*; meaning marks that would point to the liberation that it signifies. Donning the *kesa*, understood as “wrapping oneself in the Tathagata’s teachings,” is explained by Foulk as having two functions: the public identification as a monk, and the personal protection that comes with wearing the *kesa*, as well as the protection for other people in a Mahayana Buddhist sense (see *ibid.*). As this explanation indicates, the above-stated ascriptions to the *kesa* as having protective powers reflect standard theological interpretations.

The deliberate breaking of these rules in very specific situations allows senior monks and leading trainees to demonstrate their power and authority over trainees of lower rank. In preparation for kitchen work, for example, Kasuisai’s leading monk in training, who was known for his strictness and adherence to the etiquette, occasionally allowed himself to throw his *rakusu* to his back in one swift move, instead of strapping it to his robe, to prevent the *rakusu* from getting wet and dirty. He did so in the presence of trainees, who were not allowed to break the rules in this way. This display of power was intentional, and required the leading monk in training to live up to higher standards than other trainees at all times. The leader of the *shugyōsō* was never seen in sun-bleached work-robos like some of the trainees, for example, and he preferred to wear black work-gloves instead of the white work-gloves shared by the other trainees, which often looked dirty.²⁸²

As temple visitors were usually unaware of these details, the uniformed appearance of trainees was at no point compromised. The fact that all trainees wore black *kesa* emphasized the idea of *shugyōsō* as actors at the foundation of the monastic body. Even without their *kesa*, while gardening and cleaning in black monastic working-clothes (*samue* 作務衣), the trainees still appeared uniformed. The sports shoes lined up in shelves outside the side door to Idaten’s shrine in the *daisho* ’in building nearby the *yakuhyō* board were the only objects that hinted to the former lifestyle choices of trainees.²⁸³

The signifiers that allow for this outward-oriented display of cohesion also work to distinguish the monks in training from senior clergy. Not one trainee I talked to could tell me

²⁸² Field notes 9 September 2011 WS450199; 17 September 2011 WS450622.

²⁸³ Field notes 13 September 2011 WS450357; 16 September 2011 WS450550.

if the variations in style of the robes worn by senior clergy had a particular meaning, nor were they able to explain the meaning of the elaborate ceremonial robes worn by officiants on the occasion of inaugurations, and for prayer rituals. These details simply did not matter to trainees in any practical way, except for the fact that brown, green, or otherwise colored *kesa* were only to be worn by fully-ordained clergy. As the example of ascriptions to different colors indicates, the main practical purpose of the differences in style in Buddhist robes can be seen in the habitual distinction between Buddhist monks and lay practitioners; in the habitual distinction between monks in training and monks in office; and in the distinction between the ceremonial leader and other monks within a clearly defined ritual context.²⁸⁴ As the extraordinary bright green robe worn by the *densu* during a *kitō* prayer ritual demonstrates, moreover, special ceremonial robes do not only signify ritual purity attained through certain achievements in monastic training, but may also function as a protective suits that allows the monk performing the role of *densu* to approach the altar of Akiha Sanjakubō unharmed.²⁸⁵ The green robe worn by the *densu* is particular to Kasuisai, which illustrates how different prayer monasteries may differentiate their practice of *kitō* prayer rituals in nuanced ways. At Kasuisai, the bright green robe underlines the concept of *kitō* as a staged moment of crisis (see the discussion of *kitō* as a performance of urgency in Chapter Two).

In my own experience, adapting to (and distinguishing myself from) the unified look of the monks in training provided an important means of transitioning in and out of my fieldwork. At Kasuisai, I was lent the monastic work-robe of an absent monk. Feeling uncomfortable for being the only male resident with hairs on my head, I shortened my hair to six millimeters within days of my stay. While all the monks knew that I was not ordained nor planning on getting ordained, my adaptation to the looks of a monk in training was well-received as an expression of willingness to participate in the monastic life of a trainee for the time of my stay at Kasuisai. I took over monastic cleaning chores, and was eventually expected to participate in all kinds of *samu* work, so much so that after two weeks, I feared falling behind with my research plan for conducting interviews with temple visitors. The

²⁸⁴ It is not uncommon even for senior monks to attend to ritual manuals and guide books, or turn to experienced clergy in preparing larger or less-frequent rituals, such as the inauguration of a new main hall, to find out how exactly they should dress. Instructions on how to dress are also normally transmitted to monks who are invited to participate in special ceremonies, especially in services that comprise clergy of different lineages and sects. It would therefore be wrong to assume that clergy make any particular sense of the difference in robe styles and ritual accoutrements, which are not always known, even to religious professionals.

²⁸⁵ Conversation Uchida Akira, 15 September 2011 WS450425.

temple visitors, on the other hand, were so intrigued by my appearance that I was often asked “why I chose that path,” meaning the path of a monk, and how life inside the monastery was really like. Being asked about my religious persuasions required careful attention to laying open my research interests, and that I was not ordained in any way.

Perhaps ironically, my plan to distance myself from the monks in training by starting to dress casually in jeans and a shirt to allow for more interviews with temple visitors in the days before my departure resulted in less conversations by the initiative of temple visitors, who were unable to identify my relationship with Kasuisai, and who therefore assumed that I was a tourist. The more I tried to transition out of my fieldwork by changing my looks back to normal, the less comprehensive my interviews with temple visitors became, especially in comparison with later field stays at Kasuisai in 2011 and in 2012, when my hairs were longer, and when I did not wear a monastic work-robe for fieldwork. As this example shows, wearing *samue* and a buzz cut was enough of a visual signifier for visitors to put me in the category of a monk, which influenced the ways in which I was approached by temple visitors and clergy. Wearing *samue* was a success for my research interviews with randomly chosen temple visitors, if only to establish a relationship of trust. Wearing the work-robe left no doubt that I was authorized to conduct research on Kasuisai’s precincts.²⁸⁶

As much as I benefited in these ways from wearing the work-robe of an actual monk, I was surprised to realize that wearing the robe made me feel obliged to perform like one. While I did not consider myself to be a Buddhist, wearing the work-robe amongst the monks in training urged me to adopt their adherence to form, and to sit still during *zazen*. As this example shows, wearing the work-robe of a monk did not only change the ways in which monks and temple visitors approached and interacted with me, but it also changed my own behavior in newfound ways that shed light on the dynamic relationship between the visual markers of monks on the one hand, and the environmental and material characteristics of Kasuisai on the other.

While I was eager to clarify my lay status and research interests at all times in conversations with temple visitors, who assumed that I might be a monk, the power of robes and the tonsure as visual markers has recently been brought to attention by the issue of ‘fake monks’ (*nise sōryō* 偽僧僧侶) who adopt the visual markers of ordained clergy in order to

²⁸⁶ See also field notes 9 September 2011 WS450208; 13 September 2011 WS450331; 16 September 2011 WS450532; 23 September 2011 WS451002.

benefit from the generosity of strangers. The ‘fake monk’ phenomenon has been reported on internationally, targeting different societies in Asia and the West.²⁸⁷ ‘Fake monks’ are not ordained nor certified or authorized by any of the established Buddhist institutions. As with monetary donations for real monks, donations made to imposters begging for alms in the streets are often solely made based on outward appearance, and visual markers like robes, hats, and objects like alms bowls traditionally carried by wandering mendicants. Common ascriptions to these material Buddhist objects suggests that a donor’s donation will benefit a monastic community, a specific charitable purpose, or society at large. Monetary donations for charitable purposes have been collected by ordained priests across Japan in the wake of the March 2011 disaster in Japan, for example.

Rather than challenging the religious authority of ‘real monks’ in any way, it could be argued that reports about the activities of ‘fake monks’ have rather strengthened the understanding of ‘real monks’, and the definition of their activities as virtuous. But the distinction between ‘real’ and ‘fake’ is not always as seemingly obvious as media reports might indicate. The Western ‘ministers’ officiating at Japanese Christian chapel weddings, for example, often have no religious credentials at all (see Rowe 2000: 365). This lack of credentials does not diminish the popularity of Christian-style weddings, as long as the wedding and officiant look and feel real to customers. As Mark Rowe (2000; 2011) has shown, moreover, the ritual authority of Buddhist institutions has been challenged by the rise of the funeral industry in recent decades. Transformations of the spatial and logistic conditions that have occurred as part of the shift away from funerals held at Buddhist temples to funeral held in funeral halls owned by funeral companies, continue to influence the authority of priests and their scope of action. Nowadays in Japan, especially in urban contexts, priests are often merely invited to participate in funerals held at funeral halls for the purpose of conducting rituals, but they are no longer in close contact with the bereaved. In some cases, priests have never met the bereaved before the funeral.²⁸⁸ What keeps these priests from being exchanged with untrained employees at funeral companies, and what thus limits the religious authority of funeral companies, is the authority ascribed to sectarian affiliation and genealogy,

²⁸⁷ An article on ‘fake monks’ in New York was featured in the *New York Times* of 01 July 2016, see https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/02/nyregion/fake-monks-begging-buddhist.html?_r=0.

²⁸⁸ Most recently, for example, Amazon Japan introduced a new business model that allows customers to order a real Buddhist temple priest online, and to make reservations for future ritual services. See <https://www.amazon.co.jp/お坊さん便-法事法要手配-戒名授与チケット-2 箇所法要/dp/B018HVTUF4>.

and to the process of ordination, as well as the fact that an untrained employee could not simply perform like a priest. While it would be comparably simple for a Western ‘minister’ without religious credentials to officiate at a wedding – at least in terms of visual appearance and bodily movements – officiating at a Zen-style funeral is technically impossible without the proper adherence of form as practiced at training monasteries, including the complex ways in which a priest dresses, walks, and talks. It is within this context that the interplay of material Buddhist culture and the practice of special procedures and etiquette has since become an asset for Buddhist institutions in their struggle to assert authority and power on the religious marketplace.

The Ideal of Renunciation in Practice

On Becoming a Monk

The arrival of a new trainee is a theatrical staging that starts with a scripted performance of rejection. In nearly all of the cases at Kasuisai and at other monasteries in Japan today, an applicant has already been accepted before his formal begging for admittance on site. The need to submit medical test results in advance, along with other application files, makes it virtually impossible to get accepted at a training monastery without prior screening. Becoming a licensed Buddhist priest is, after all, a bureaucratic process that conditions the worldly experience of renunciation in accordance with local monastic rules and sectarian regulations.

The ritual manual *Standard Observances of the Soto Zen School* prescribes that new arrivals request admittance on site dressed as wandering monks, which illustrates the overall significance of performance and materiality over logistic and pragmatic concerns. Contrary to what their outfit suggests, new arrivals have most commonly never experienced the life of an ascetic practitioner, nor do they travel to Kasuisai on foot. Dressing as a traveling mendicant is not a reflection of the former lives of novice monks, but a projection of what is to come: By introducing themselves as ascetics, trainees pronounce their willingness to renounce their former lives, express preparedness to endure hardship and rejection, and the readiness to integrate themselves at the bottom end of the monastic hierarchy, albeit temporarily.

In accordance with proper procedure, new trainee Kobayashi Akio had long since prepared for his arrival at Kasuisai in September 2011, when he ascended the stairs to the main gate wearing straw sandals and a large bamboo hat. He wore his *rakusu* sideways, and

he only brought one bag with him. On his body, as prescribed, he carried his *kesa*, *ōryōki* bowls, a pillow (*zafu*) for *zazen*, his lineage chart, and some other important accessories that he was supposed to bring, including the ‘nirvana money’ (*nehan kin* 涅槃金), which is to be used in case a traveling monk falls ill or dies, so as to not become a burden to others.²⁸⁹ Other items for Kobayashi’s training and study had since been sent by postal services to Kasuisai, where staff and clergy were prepared for his arrival. Even the hour of his admittance was fixed, which indicates that Kasuisai’s monks did not make their decision to admit the new trainee conditional on his performance at the monastery’s door.

Standing next to the side entrance of the *daisho* ‘in building with raised elbows and his hands folded in front of his chest, Kobayashi made his presence known by shouting the words “new arrival!” (*shintō*, *yoroshū* 新到、よろしゅう) out loud. Inside, temple staff and trainees hid nearby the entrance, giggling in anticipation of the *mondō*; a formalized exchange of questions and answers aimed at testing the new arrival’s knowledge of the dharma. Kasuisai would frequently choose to welcome newcomers by sending the tallest and physically strongest monk Andō to answer the door, for his intimidating appearance added drama to the interrogation. Now was the moment for Kobayashi to confirm his intention to renounce his former life to follow the path of the Buddha by saying the words that everyone inside was waiting to hear: “I gratefully respond to your opening of the monastery, and beg that you allow me to register to become a trainee” (*gokaisan haitō*, *narabi ni menkata*, *yoroshū* 御開山拜登、並びに免掛塔、よろしゅう).²⁹⁰ To most who gathered to witness the show, it was a moment of nostalgia, as the scripted procedure reminded them of a crucial moment in their own biographies as monks. The closer the scheduled moment of Kobayashi’s admission came, the more high-ranking monks joined the assembly, to the point where monks of different ranks were standing side by side. “You are now the lowest,” (*ima*, *anata ga ichiban no shita ni nari* 今、あなたが一番の下になり), Kobayashi was told, as he was finally let in.²⁹¹

While Kobayashi knew that his intentions of becoming a monk would be challenged and questioned in a debate with the *godō roshi*, expecting to be rejected at the door for one or

²⁸⁹ Field notes 15 September 2011 WS450464; 21 September 2011 WS450867; 23 September 2011 WS451005; WS451007.

²⁹⁰ Field notes 15 September 2011 WS450457; WS450459; WS450460.

²⁹¹ Field notes 15 September 2011 WS450467; WS450469; WS450458; WS450459; interview Kobayashi Akio 19 September 2011 WS450757.

more hours did not make his transition into monkhood any less trying. The implications of renunciation were real: After fourteen years of work as a public servant, Kobayashi had to quit his job at a local city hall for good, as he was slated to take over his father's duties of head priest at a temple with some 800 affiliated parish households in Shizuoka Prefecture. For at least six months, the 37-years old father of two would not be allowed to visit his wife and his children, who were still too young to understand his need to leave home, as Kobayashi explained, nor would he be able to see his father. His father's illness, as he would later inform me, was Kobayashi's driving motivation to start his necessary training as soon as possible.²⁹² His choice to become a trainee at Kasuisai was founded in the local proximity of the training center to his family's home. Local training monasteries are often preferred by monks of Kobayashi's age, who expect the training at Kasuisai to be less strict than the training at Eiheiji – not necessarily in terms of the work load, but in terms of privileges. Kasuisai allows monks to stay in touch with families via phone, if they successfully pass the first 100 days of their training and continue to show good progress. Whereas Eiheiji trainees are forbidden to leave the monastery even for shorter periods of time, monks at Kasuisai are allowed to leave the monastery on specific occasions for one or two hours. For monks whose loved ones live nearby, especially those who with young families, the prospect of regular leave hours may outweigh matters of prestige, lineage, or allocation of workload as decisive factors in choosing a preferred site of monastic training.

Following his admission to Kasuisai, Kobayashi was guided to the so-called 'overnight quarters' (*tanga ryō* 旦過寮), where he had to spend the next five days in isolation. At Sōtō Zen training monasteries, temporary confinement for the first three to seven days into the training is a standard procedure that extends the liminal phase between a new monk's arrival and his full approval. A monk's admission will no longer be challenged at this point, but he will nonetheless have to endure this period by sitting in *zazen* in front of a wall for most of the time. An individual platform or sitting place for *zazen* in the monks' hall is assigned to the new trainee as part of a registration ceremony, on the occasion of which he will be introduced to the monastery and its leaders (see also Foulk 2010a: 163-166;486). Beyond the ceremony, for as long as the confinement to the 'overnight quarters' lasted, mandatory participation in the daily ritual observances provided the only opportunity for

²⁹² As the graduate of a private Buddhism-affiliated university in Tokyo, Kobayashi was allowed to keep his monastic training to a minimum of six months.

Kobayashi to meet his fellow trainees. The goal of this confinement, as one trainee phrased it, was “to delete the [monk’s] hitherto existing world view and sense of society.”²⁹³

The restrictions don’t end at this stage. At Kasuisai, new arrivals are forbidden to leave the monastery for at least 100 days, or longer, should they fail to pass the first ten training steps.²⁹⁴ In the early stages of their training, monks are furthermore conditioned to use the subterranean tunnel to reach the monks’ hall from the main hall instead of crossing the yard, and to take the indoor stairs to reach the special worship hall.²⁹⁵ This effectively limits outdoor activity to communal monastic cleaning in the yard. It is within this context of isolation from outside influences that monks adopt the monastic etiquette quickly and efficiently. Upon transitioning out of *tanga ryō*, new arrivals are constantly surrounded by fellow trainees, who would assist newcomers by teaching them the proper etiquette, by correcting their movements and body postures at all times.

Becoming a monk involves a great deal of learning by doing. Adopting the monastic etiquette by observing other trainees and following their advice allows for a communal monastic identity to emerge. Teachers furthermore encourage monks frequently to find meaning and orientation in understanding their practice as a continuation of the Sōtō Zen genealogy, theological interpretations of which presume a direct transmission from heart to heart. *Zazen* is emblematic of this multi-generational relationship with the patriarchs of Ch’an and Buddha Shakyamuni. By enacting Buddha’s enlightenment in the communal practice of ritual sitting, trainees act as one group. Their individual reflection of the practice may differ, but to the outside, their actions demonstrate coherence and unity. Sōtō scholar Morita Shōkō (2008: 120) considers the genealogical succession and relationship with Buddha Shakyamuni, as expressed in practicing *zazen*, to form the very foundation of faith (*shinnen* 信念) that

²⁹³ Conversation Kasuisai monk in training, 15 September 2011 WS450476: *mō, kono shakai no kankaku, ima made no kankaku wo zenbu kesu tame* もう、この社会の感覚、今までの感覚を全部消すため。 See also field notes 15 September 2011 WS450462; WS450494; 16 September 2011 WS450499; WS450500; WS450589; 19 September 2011 WS450757.

²⁹⁴ Monk in office Ishida Ryōshō described the 100-day curfew with the term *kinsoku* 禁足 (house arrest; confinement). Conversation Ishida Ryōshō, 15 September 2011 WS450473. *Kinsoku* can also be translated as “ban going on foot” (see Griffith Foulk 2010b: 69); a term used for Ancient Indian wandering ascetics, who were forbidden to wander in the monsoon season. The Buddha is said to have denied his followers the right to wander during the monsoon season, so as to not inadvertently kill animals, like insects and worms. At Kasuisai, completing the first ten training-steps in less than 100 days does not entitle a monk to leave the monastery. Making phone calls is also forbidden.

²⁹⁵ Field notes 14 September 2011 WS450419; 16 September 2011 WS450497.

enables monks to endure the austerities of monastic life. Following this logic, *zazen* becomes the very “proof of existence as a Buddhist priest” (*sōryo toshite no sonzai no shōmei* 僧侶としての存在の証明) (Morita 2008: 118).

As this chapter has shown, the arrival and integration of a new trainee is composed to look and sound the same at any time and at any monastery. As with *zazen*, the form of the practice stays the same. The process of integrating a new arrival is a highly formalized affair. The theatrical staging of rejection has recognition value, and is scripted in ways that allow for monks to identify themselves with fellow monks. Not only does the uniformity of the practice and its linear progress in subdivided steps allow for monks to reflect on the situation of those of lower rank, but a new arrival automatically changes the social reality for other trainees. This not least ensures that progress is felt, even in cases where a trainee fails to keep up and falls behind. To the monk who ranked lowest at Kasuisai in September 2011, for example, Kobayashi’s arrival was a reason to rejoice, as he no longer had to clean the outdoor toilets every morning – a task that was typically assigned to the lowest in rank. Having failed to pass the 100 day curfew applied an additional pressure on the young trainee, but seniority in this case ensured his advancement. To the lowest-ranking monk, this was a big relief, as it helped him overcome his self-doubts. Trainees furthermore found purpose in taking over responsibility for the new arrival by helping him out and by guiding him, which was recognized by supervisors with praise. My observation is that verbal acknowledgement by supervisors was well received by trainees, since this welcome attention gave them hope that they could avoid scrutiny by slipping under the radar of their teachers once in a while.²⁹⁶ It is within this context that changing constellations and turnovers may alter the experience of newcomers and lower-ranking trainees in particular.

Trainee turnovers are particularly relevant for the situation of trainees at smaller monasteries like Kasuisai, where only about fifteen monks in training live together, and where newcomers are under the pressure of being able to take over complex ritual functions for *kitō* as soon as possible. As mentioned before, Kasuisai stands out from head monasteries Eiheiji and Sōjiji in this regard, where seven times as many monks are trained at a much slower pace (judging by the time invested to complete a given training step), but with greater attention to detail. Moreover, a comparably high percentage of Kasuisai’s trainees start their training in their thirties or later, including monks who had no clerical Buddhist family background.

²⁹⁶ See also field note 15 September 2011 WS450463.

Among the monks whom I spoke to at Kasuisai in 2011 was one monk who had started his training in his sixties, after his retirement. Two others, also without a clerical family background, became monks after going through a divorce. Avoiding generalizations, it should be considered that the biographies of these monks, their expectations, and their reasons for becoming a monk were different from those of temple sons like Kobayashi, 37-years old family father, and different from younger temple sons, who conduct their training soon after college, while they are still in their early twenties.²⁹⁷

The reliance on patrilineal family succession in contemporary Japanese temple Buddhism (see Covell 2005; Rowe 2011) explains why the majority of trainees, and first sons in particular, experience “trying emotional periods before they are comfortable in taking over their father’s position” (Covell 2005: 84). Most temple sons feel obliged to follow in their father’s footsteps (Morita 2008: 116-117), or to meet the expectations of parishioners, who often support the continuity of priestly families, but they do not choose to become monks in training by their own free will. The length and intensity of the mandatory Sōtō Zen training regimens exacerbates this problem, as compared to the training of Jōdo (Pure Land) Buddhist priests, for example. The majority of temple sons with whom I have spoken during their training stressed that they wished they could turn back to their former lives as college students, as those were the years when they experience the greatest freedom from social constraints. The lives of temple children tend to be different from the start. Stephen Covell (2005: 84) remarks, “the line between secular and nonsecular life is thoroughly blurred for temple children,” since growing up at a Buddhist temple often means witnessing and participating in memorial services from early on. Children growing up at a Buddhist temple are sometimes bullied at school for being ‘different’, and for living in places where mortuary rituals are performed. Temple children are also often confronted with high expectations

²⁹⁷ I chose to introduce a temple son in this chapter, rather than a monk without a clerical family background in temple management. This is not to generalize the individual experience of becoming a monk, which is subject to individual dispositions of trainees, their personal qualifications and experience, family circumstances, the number of monks in training at a monastery, and other factors, nor do I intend to suggest that temple sons have more legitimacy as Buddhist priests. Rather than making a normative distinction, my choice of introducing Kobayashi Aiko is motivated by the fact that temple sons represent the great majority of temple priests, across sectarian boundaries. The “ratio of temple-born to lay-born priests in the Tendai sect,” for example, as Stephen Covell (2005: 91) remarks, “is four to one.” For an analysis of the complications that Japanese Buddhist Tendai monks without a clerical family background are facing in their effort to become head priest of Buddhist *danka* temple are immense, see Covell (2005: chapters 4 and 5).

concerning their morals, behavior, and academic achievement. Perhaps because of this struggle, temple sons tend to take their profession as priests very seriously later in life.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, not one trainee whom I spoke to chose to conduct his training at Kasuisai in order to become proficient in *kitō*, whereas becoming a ‘well-rounded’ monk was frequently given as a reason to give preference to a prayer monastery over training at head-monastery Eiheiji, the most popular Sōtō Zen training monastery of all. The high status and prestige ascribed to Eiheiji as a monastic training center, even compared to head-monastery Sōjiji, is owed to the strictness of the training regimens, to the monastery’s affiliation with Dōgen, and in that regard also to the modern scholarship on Dōgen and the education of priests at Komazawa University, where scholars over a long period of time have downplayed the significance of practices for this-worldly benefits. Finally, conducting monastic training at Kasuisai should not be mistaken for a lack of choice on the side of trainees, just like Kobayashi’s initial rejection should not be mistaken for a lack of concern for his skills. Local prayer monasteries like Kasuisai are glad for every temple son who chooses to join their ranks as monks in training over an affiliation with Eiheiji.

Asceticism and the Community

In order to guide, punish, and motivate trainees, and to keep the rhythms of everyday life at Kasuisai stable, monks in office draw on a pragmatic combination of rewards and restrictions. This system does not presume a desire for asceticism on the side of trainees, considering that most trainees do not choose to become world renouncers in the first place. Apart from gaining ritual skills, their training goal is to obtain the certification necessary for leading a Buddhist temple as head priest as quickly as possible.²⁹⁸ In line with this logic, the rewards for commitment and ascetic achievements are often contrary to what the idea of an ascetic life might suggest, as the rights given to trainees who passed the 100-day curfew tests demonstrate. Successful trainees are entitled to make phone calls and leave the monastery on specific occasions. The longer a commitment to the monastery lasts, the more worldly incentives one can expect to receive. An engagement of several years, for example, may be rewarded with the privacy of a single room, or a TV.²⁹⁹ This logic of rewards and restrictions may explain why spiritual seekers, who beg to engage in ascetic practices as long and as often

²⁹⁸ Field note 16 September 2011 WS450550.

²⁹⁹ Field notes 10 September 2011 WS450238; 14 September 2011 WS450385; 16 September 2011 WS450572; WS450567.

as possible, are sometimes met with suspicion.³⁰⁰ Trainees who disdain worldly incentives entirely risk delegitimizing established norms and hierarchies within the monastic community. Such candidates may not simply be ‘managed’ and disciplined like ‘regular’ temple sons.³⁰¹

Institutionalized means of rewarding and restricting trainees allow for certain monastic rules to be inverted, bent or broken by the initiative of high-ranking monks, while other rules must never be challenged. The morning service, for example, must under no circumstances be omitted, whereas rules pertaining to meat-eating, and food generally, are occasionally broken by the initiative of higher-ranking monks in office. Understood as a transmission of unwritten rules from senior clergy to younger monks, such actions may function as frameworks for the negotiation of status and power. This is not to say that all higher-ranking monks break the rules, but they certainly have more freedom in their decisions than trainees, and thus have the power to set examples by distinguishing themselves and their actions. For example, senior clergy are entitled to wear watches as symbols of worldly success that simultaneously signify a higher rank in the monastic order. As one monk in office phrased it: “I am not a Buddhist priest. I am a ‘bonze’,” meaning that he referred to himself as a ‘boss’, albeit jokingly.³⁰² The same monk would smoke cigarettes outside the entrance to the reception area, and skip meals at the monastery to eat grilled meat with parishioners in the city; rules that no trainee would dare to break.

Studies of contemporary Japanese temple Buddhism tend to place the ascetic austerity as found in training monasteries in opposition to the worldliness of Buddhism at *danka* parish temples. Kasuisai combines the characteristics of both, but does not oppose ‘worldliness’ in its emphasis on asceticism and upholding of the precepts. Worldliness (understood as social

³⁰⁰ This logic is not exclusive to Kasuisai. Drawing on his fieldwork on Tendai Buddhism, Stephen Covell points out: “Many [priests] see youth who are aggressively interested in meditation or austerities as odd (*hen*). Unfortunately,” Covell explains, “such views are often based on occasional personal experiences, and word spreads fast within the temple community.” (Covell 2005: 87).

³⁰¹ It should be noted that not all trainees are able to handle the pressure induced by the need to adjust to a lifestyle of asceticism and renunciation, and that monks’ opinions of the training regimens may change as a result of the training. The combination of rewards and restrictions employed by Zen teachers are not always well-received. Two monks I met during my fieldwork had experienced mental breakdowns and were sent to a hospital. According to monk in office Ishida Ryōshō, it happens about once or twice a year that a trainee cancels his training without completing it. Conversation Ishida Ryōshō, 15 September 2011 WS450473.

³⁰² Conversation monk in office, 15 September 2011 WS450483: *Obōsan dewanaku, bōzu*. お坊さんではなく、坊主。

competence, for example) and renunciation are not mutually exclusive characteristics of different priestly ideal types, but important aspects of different stages in the life of a temple priest: Trainees represent the renouncing type, whereas senior clergy in office at a monastery alternate between asceticism and moments of ‘secularization’ in exchanges with parishioners, public officials, local businesses, and the members of their family temples. The point is that the occasional breaking of the precepts was hardly considered as problematic by my informants.³⁰³ Far from it, parishioners of Sōtō Zen and Pure Land Buddhist parish temples where the head priest was frequently absent, due to an appointment at a sectarian head monastery, would often complain to me that they would rather have their priest back home at his family’s temple. These parishioners acknowledged the prestige commonly associated with positions at a sectarian head monastery, but the prospect of prestige derived from ascetic practices, or supervision of ascetic practices of trainees, at a monastery far away, was less attractive to them than the priest’s physical presence. The absence of high levels of asceticism in the present practice of temple priests, as this example shows, are not necessarily taken as signs of corruption – at least not the rural communities of the Tohoku area, where I conducted fieldwork (see Graf 2012a; Graf 2016a; Graf 2016b). The same can be said for Kasuisai and the various Sōtō Zen *danka* temples in Western Shizuoka that I had visited.

This observation in a way echoes the view of Sōtō intellectual Sasaki Kōkan (2008: 76-78), who rejects the dichotomy of dogma versus custom, or the incompatibility of *zazen* and mortuary rituals. In practice, both ends of the spectrum are interrelated and entangled, as the case of monastic training shows. According to Sasaki, monastic life enables access to religious powers in generating the ‘otherness’ that distinguishes a monk from a lay person. Satō Shunkō shares Sasaki’s view (in quoting Sasaki 1989) and explains that world-renouncing monks at the head monasteries are known as “religious professionals with power” (*chikara aru shūkyōsha* 力ある宗教者). The power of monks is presumed to increase with the intensity of world-renouncing ascetic practices, and the denial of extraordinary religious

³⁰³ One of the questions that temple visitors asked me most frequently during my fieldwork at Kasuisai addressed the upholding of the Buddhist precepts, or – presuming that the precepts were upheld – how it felt for me to adjust my life to that of a monk who adheres to the rules of the monastic community, such as abstaining from meat-eating and alcohol. Visitors could see the monks sitting in *zazen* behind the bamboo curtain of the monks’ hall in the morning and evening. The daily ritual sutra-chanting services were public. They could hear the sounds prayer ritual, or listen to monks practice musical instruments in the late evening hours. But informants still wondered if the outward image of austerity reflected the reality of monastic life behind closed doors.

powers (Satō 2003: 142-143). In other words, monks who reject the idea of this-worldly benefits seem to be perceived as particularly powerful in generating them, at least in the eyes of the target audience of actors with an interest in *genze riyaku*. This dynamic should not be ignored, when it comes to the presumed ‘rejection’ of *kitō* by monks who may actually intend to become recognized as *kitōshi* themselves. Following this logic, the rhetoric of rejection as a world-renouncer encompasses rejecting worldly benefits for others. Intermediary agents who sustain a balance between asceticism and worldliness are needed to transform this concept into marketable products. In the case of prayer monasteries, this task is mostly handled by senior clergy and lay members. Satō (2008: 160-161) furthermore legitimizes the presumed interconnectedness of asceticism and *kitō* by stressing a need for purification in the making of this-worldly benefits. Introspection (*naikan* 内観) by the *kitō* practitioners and a sincere attitude towards the recipients of the ritual, Satō argues, matter for the ritual’s efficacy and material outcome.

At Kasuisai, locals and elderly temple visitors in particular were hardly surprised to hear that small amounts of meat and fish would occasionally be served to provide trainees with a balanced nutrition. Curry rice is the most popular meal served to monks on the occasion of large-scale festivals at Buddhist prayer monasteries, due to the minimal effort in preparing large quantity, and as a reward for the hard labor involved in organizing and running a festival. Monks were generally not expected to abstain from meat-eating entirely, nor was abstinence considered a virtue that guaranteed the efficacy of monks. Some temple visitors whom I interviewed were even suspicious of the idea of vegetarian monks, and one expressed his concern about the need for trainees to eat meat to stay healthy. A sense of responsibility for the trainees was perceived and expressed by local temple visitors, who considered the training to be performed on their behalf, for the benefit of the local community, or for the region’s identity, considering that Kasuisai was a renowned tourist site. Locals and parishioners would also make food donations directly to the monastery, and after a major typhoon in September 2011, locals would rush to bring boiled eggs for breakfast, or help with the cleanup, as they considered it to be ‘their’ monastery.

Insofar as my fieldwork was frequently mistaken for a first step into monkhood, I was frequently encouraged to become a monk myself for the purpose of “making my ancestors proud,” or to establish connections with the families and ancestors of temple visitors. Mr. Arai, a temple visitors in his mid-forties from local Fukuroi, suggested: “Become a real monk

next time, and the ancestors will cry in joy.”³⁰⁴ To Mr. Arai, who even skipped school to spend time at Kasuisai when he was young, visiting the monastery with his wife and his son was a means of reconnecting with his childhood and his family roots. In his understanding, the ascetic practices of the monks worked to sustain and extend the multi-generational ties with the family ancestors of local community members. Monastic training was something to be practiced on behalf of the local community, according to Mr. Arai, which is why he encouraged me to become a monk and “train on his behalf” (*shugyō shite moratte sã* 修行してもらってさあ).³⁰⁵ This notion of asceticism as something to be practiced for the benefit of others is crucial for the understanding of *kitō* as practiced at prayer monasteries (see the discussion of *zazen* and *kitō* in Chapter Two). Without austere monastic practices, *kitō* has little appeal (see also Satō 2008: 159).

Self-Regulation

At Kasuisai, monks are free to leave the monastery on the ‘three’ and ‘eight’ days of the month (the 3rd, 8th, 13th, 18th, 23rd, 28th; followed by days without *zazen* in the morning), as long as they are successful in their training, and only after they have passed their 100-day curfew. However, the need of personal study and sleep, along with strict curfew hours, makes it technically impossible for monks to leave the monastery for more than one or two hours at a time, which is barely enough time for a bicycle trip to the supermarket. Monks have to return to Kasuisai before the gate closes at 9 p.m., and they also have to take a bath before the night watch makes its rounds at that same time. In following these rules, monks ensure that the image of austerity as an important source of spiritual capital is sustained at all times.³⁰⁶

Evoking feelings of guilt, and nurturing a sense responsibility for the group, are subtle but powerful means in maintaining and controlling the dynamics of renunciation within the monastic community. Being greedy, or taking too long for tasks has its consequences, especially for trainees at the bottom end of the monastic hierarchy. This form of self-regulation is particularly evident in the preparation and partaking of monastic meals. Western

³⁰⁴ Interview Mr. Arai 13 September 2011 WS450329: *Kondo wa kanzen ni bōzu ni natte, go senzosama ga naiteyorokobu*. 今度は完全に坊主になって、ご先祖様が泣いて喜ぶ。

³⁰⁵ Interview Mr. Arai 13 September 2011 WS450329; field note 13 September 2011 WS450330.

³⁰⁶ Field note 19 September 2011 WS450799.

ideas of Zen cuisine are often construed as a simple and healthy ‘Eastern’ alternative to fast food (on Zen, food, health and cooking, see for example Huber 2003). The minutely prescribed manner of handling the alms-gathering bowls (*ōryōki*) used as dishes suggests mindfulness and simplicity.³⁰⁷ Contrary to visitor expectations, however, monks in training tend to eat their meals as fast as they can, so as to not become a burden to their fellow monks. Monastic rules have it that no monk is supposed to leave the room, until the last one has finished his meal.³⁰⁸ Likewise, monks would pretend to continue eating, or request another portion of *okayu* morning gruel despite having no appetite, if the highest-ranking monk attending the communal meal requests a second helping. In doing so, monks ensure their officiating leader (the highest-ranking monk participating in the meal) would not assume that everyone was waiting for him to hurry up.³⁰⁹ Self-regulation in this context is less concerned with abstinence, as it is about renouncing one’s personal desires for the benefit of the community. The implications are pragmatic: The sooner the breakfast comes to an end, the longer the break between breakfast and subsequent outdoor cleaning chores becomes.

Having no appetite is not accepted as an excuse to leave a meal unfinished. Therefore, while monks are technically allowed to leave the temple on specific occasions to buy their own food, having in-between meals poses risks. Apart from causing a nutrition imbalance that may impede their performance, healthy trainees must never omit a meal.³¹⁰ Special procedures require the cleaning of the bowls with a piece of pickled radish and tea at the end of a meal, and thus require monks to eat up at all times.³¹¹ Problems arise when guests who participate in breakfast or lunch with the trainees as part of an overnight stay are unprepared

³⁰⁷ The nested set of *ōryōki* bowls, along with the monk’s robes, is one of the few personal objects that a Buddhist monk is originally allowed to possess. At Kasuisai, *ōryōki* are normally used for breakfast only, the most formalized meal of the day. Preparing breakfast is a formal part of monastic training, and the second of fourteen training steps at Kasuisai (see Chapter Four). The duty of preparing breakfast (*shuku tōban*) encompasses cooking rice for the Buddhas, and for the ancestors venerated in the *kaisandō*. Field notes 17 September 2011 WS450598; 19 September 2011 WS450790.

³⁰⁸ As one monk in office at Kasuisai explained, the habit of eating up fast is rooted in the tradition of having meals in the monks’ hall, where the monks are sitting in a row. Near the end of the meal, a pot of tea is passed from one monk to the next for the purpose of cleaning the bowls. Whoever has not finished his meal by the time when the tea kettle arrives at his place, causes a delay, and thus places a burden on those who have already finished their meal. Field note 10 September 2011 WS450256.

³⁰⁹ Field note 19 September 2011 WS450748.

³¹⁰ Field notes 15 September 2011 WS450432; WS450433; 19 September 2011 WS450798

³¹¹ Field note 19 September 2011 WS450798. At Kasuisai, trainees shared tips like eating the rice first, and to save the miso soup for last to avoid the risk of not being able to eat up, due to a lack of appetite.

for these rules, or otherwise unable to follow them. The following two examples show how attuned monks are to their own system of self-regulation. One younger guest, who was sent to Kasusai by his parents after dropping out of college, was so overwhelmed by the need to eat up, and so unaccustomed to the morning gruel that the spoon in his hands started to make a trembling noise by the shaking of his hands. Unnerved by the unbearable rattling sound shattering the silence, a monk sitting next to the young man took his bowl out of his shaking hands and finished the meal in lieu of the guest. Only then could the verse marking the end of the breakfast be chanted in accordance with proper procedure.³¹² Similar delays occurred during my fieldwork when guests – inspired by ideas of monastic solemnity – expressed their passion for mindfulness and wellbeing by taking more time for their meals than others. Either way, guests partaking in meals altered the regular sequence of actions in ways that allowed for moments of self-reflection. These subtle changes in the monastic routine were generally well-received by trainees, who appreciated caring for guests who showed an interest in their lives as monks, although delays in partaking meals resulted in shorter breaks for the monks.

‘Mindfulness’ as expressed by guests who eat slowly does not translate into a concern for the practical needs of the monastic community, regardless if these guests understand their mindful actions as expressions of respect or delight. Being inexperienced with monastic customs, I was not exempt from placing a high burden on my informants during my fieldwork. Monk in office Ishida Ryōshō used to pick me up for dinner, but a couple of days into my long-term research at Kasuisai, I felt confident to find my own way to the dining room of the monks in office. As with the other monks in office, Ishida used to eat only after the trainees had finished their dinner as one group. That day, however, I found the dining room empty. Walking back to the reception area, I asked the monk in office who previously introduced himself as a ‘bonze’ if it was not yet dinner time. Without further ado, he took me to the kitchen, where trainees were washing dishes, while others prepared the meals for the higher-ranking monks, including a plate for me. In a commanding tone, the monk asked the trainees why my dinner wasn’t ready. “Tim is hungry!” the ‘bonze’ bellowed, and “where is his dinner?”³¹³ Not only was I completely embarrassed by my shameless greed and carelessness, but the public scolding by the monk in office effectively put me in a new category. From that day on, I would no longer eat with the monks in office, and I would offer my help in the kitchen whenever I could. Within days of eating with the monks in training, I

³¹² Field notes 17 September 2011 WS450620; 20 September 2011 WS450807; interview *shukubō* guest 20 September 2011 WS450814.

³¹³ Field note 15 September 2011 WS450481; WS450482.

no longer felt entitled to have dinner with the monks in office. Likewise, the longer I stayed at Kasuisai, the more I felt guilty for leaving the monastery for brief walks to the convenience store. While I was at no point forbidden to leave, I feared estranging myself from the group of trainees, who were confined indoors.³¹⁴ The regulatory mechanisms within the monastic community, as this example shows, eventually altered my research experience. Renouncing some of my privileges as a researcher was a deliberate decision to establish connections with my informants, but I was unprepared for the effects. Feelings of guilt or fear came unexpected to me.³¹⁵

From receiving food donations to making the dishes, the process of preparing and partaking meals provides plenty of examples that illustrate the specific ways in which the monastic community sustains and regulates itself through food; and not always in ways that ritual manuals might suggest. If the concept of renunciation provides a source of identity and orientation for the monastic community, Kasuisai's kitchen and dining rooms are certainly important venues where this communal identity is negotiated. As with *zazen* or the arrival of a new monk, monastic meals – especially breakfast – are highly ritualized affairs, but they allow for nuanced expressions of status, and provide opportunities for self-regulation of the monastic body. Spatial arrangements illustrate this point. Since the distance between Kasuisai's monks' hall and the kitchen renders meals in the *sōdō* impractical, trainees and monks in office eat in dining rooms near the kitchen. The rules for the dining rooms are no less complex than the Song and Yuan Chinese rules of purity that regulate how meals are to be served on the sitting platforms, where the monks also practice *zazen* (see Foulk 2010b: 39). But while trainees have to adhere to these rules at all times, monks in office do not. A separate dining space makes it possible for higher-ranking monks to discuss business, politics, and current events over lunch or dinner, whereas trainees have to eat in complete silence. Only the personal attendants of higher-ranking monks and the leading trainees were

³¹⁴ Field notes 14 September 2011 WS450380; WS450413; 19 September 2011 WS450752; WS450780.

³¹⁵ I experienced similar self-regulating dynamics in exchanges with trainees, for example when I joined Uchida Akira for a bicycle ride to the supermarket. The trip was officially sanctioned, but Uchida seemed to enjoy acting as if we were not supposed to leave the monastery, as he encouraged me to move in silence. His shopping trip intended to supply his fellow monks with their desired necessities, including tooth brushes, as well as snacks. Sharing material goods facilitated a sense of solidarity novice priests, which contributed to the forming of a communal identity as Sōtō Zen clergy. Field notes 08 September 2011 WS450191; 15 September 2011 WS450472; 16 September 2011 WS450582; 18 September 2011 WS450737; WS450738; WS450739; 21 September 2011 WS450871.

sometimes allowed to eat with the monks in office.³¹⁶ It is within this context that separate (yet permeable) dining rooms allow for dynamic negotiations and displays of authority and power between monks at different ends of the monastic hierarchy.

Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, monastic training fulfills a number of practical needs: An integral part of this training is concerned with adopting the Sōtō Zen etiquette, which allows for monks to be easily recognized and identified as religious professionals, including by actors who are otherwise not concerned with Buddhism. Monks learn to chant and dress like a priest as part of their training, they familiarize themselves with a variety of ritual objects, and learn to play musical instruments for ritual purposes. Practice of the Sōtō Zen etiquette and special procedures enables priests to distinguish themselves and their practice from the habitus of other sects in nuanced ways. Throughout their monastic training, monks are taught to identify themselves with their role as the keepers of a presumed Buddhist truth, and to embody this truth in communal ritual sitting. This may not necessarily instill a sense of purpose and belonging in trainees, but the succession of institutionalized Sōtō Zen Buddhism requires priests to endure restrictions and ascetic practices as part of their training. Physically and mentally trying practices thus become a social reality for all Sōtō Zen trainees. The overall lack of privacy at monastic training centers, the intensity of the workload, and the prohibition to leave the monastery are shared experiences in the individual lives of all Sōtō Zen priests, and comprise part of the shared biography of a unified monastic body.

Perhaps more so than trainees at the head temples Eiheiiji and Sōjiji, monks who decide to conduct their training at *kitō jiin* may expect to gain social skills through interactions with members of temple support associations, parishioners, tourists, local business representatives, and actors of almost all strata of society. The relatively small number of trainees, as punctual comparisons between Kasuisai and Eiheiiji have shown, intensifies and otherwise alters the experience of monastic training at prayer monasteries. Over the course of only six to twelve months of training, monks get to partake in a wide range of activities for the benefit of temple visitors and the local community. Being forced to perform rituals in front of an audience for most of the time furthermore encourages teachers to instruct trainees in ways that further their practical skills and self-confidence in their role as

³¹⁶ Field notes 9 September 2011 WS450226; 15 September 2011 WS450483.

religious professionals. In order to allow for a “feeling of memorial” among the attending guests of a memorial ceremony to emerge, for example, monks were taught to pay close attention to the timing of their performance, as I was able to observe during a practice session in preparation for a *hōjōe* 放生会 memorial service for eel, which was held in combination with a prayer ritual for bountiful fish catches at Kasuisai in September 2011. Paying attention to timing involved guiding ninety guests – members of the Shizuoka Eel Fishery Cooperative (Shizuoka unagi gyokyo kumiai 静岡うなぎ漁協組合) – to the incense holders and back to their seats before the accompanying sutra recitations came to an end. As a practical solution, some monks were assigned to take over the function of road blocks, forming one-way roads for the guests. Trainees would practice interactions with imaginary guests first.³¹⁷

The development of social skills is welcomed by Sōtō intellectual Sasaki Kōkan (2008: 75-76), who defines a “social nature” (*shakaisei* 社会性) as one of five criteria for his ideal image of a priest.³¹⁸ His concept of a priest should not be taken for granted, considering the presumed detachment of ascetic practices from this-worldly benefits in the scholarship on Zen. The research and teaching at sectarian universities, where most future priests graduate, is still mostly concerned with Buddhist doctrine (*Bukkyō kyōri* 仏教教理) and doctrinal justifications of certain practices, but not with a broad understanding of Buddhist culture (*Bukkyō bunka* 仏教文化) (Tanaka 2008: II-III). This mirrors the rift that Saitō *godō* roshi observed between local temples and sectarian elites that have estranged themselves from the Buddhist teaching on the local temple level (*genba no oshie* 現場の教え). Saitō’s call for a stronger focus on the obvious aspects of everyday life (*atarimae no seikatsu* 当り前の生活) in the training of monks, and his open critique of a neglect of Mahayana Buddhist teachings and practices for the benefit of others, such as *kitō*, demonstrate that not all Zen teachers and sectarian intellectuals share his idea of reading Dōgen’s *Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma* through monastic practice “with the body.”³¹⁹

³¹⁷ See field notes 20 September 2011 WS450853; WS450854.

³¹⁸ The other four criteria given by Sasaki Kōkan are, first, “holiness, or the traits of a saint” (*sei(ja)sei* 聖(者)性); second, “depth of thought” (*shisōsei* 思想性); third, “etiquette; formality that comes with a knowledge of ritual” (*gireisei* 儀礼性); and fourth, “local ethnic and cultural traits” (*minzokusei* 民族性) or an understanding thereof (Sasaki 2008: 75).

³¹⁹ Saitō’s criticism furthermore targeted the overall reliance on philological approaches in the scholarship on Zen, and the disregard of *zazen* in the *Shushōgi*, a handbook for the spiritual assurance (*anjin*) of priests and parishioners that consists of passages from Dōgen’s *Shōbōgenzō*. See conversation Saitō Shun, 4 January 2012 WS451377.

Against the backdrop of theories of decline of modern Japanese Buddhism (see Chapter One), Tanaka Ryōshō (2008: II) laments that even some of the priests in contemporary Japan are “incessantly ashamed, and unable to perform mortuary rituals with self-confidence.”³²⁰ Judging by this implicit critique of the current state of sectarian education, monastic training seems inefficient in preparing trainees for their roles as temple priests in a society struggling with recent rapid social changes, including urbanization, rural depopulation, changing family structures, and the redistribution of religious knowledge. The same social changes have since affected the local modes of teaching and practicing *kitō*. Satō Shunkō observes of a declining oral tradition of *kitō* and its related locally transmitted beliefs and practices subsumed under terms like *okunai denpō* 屋内伝法 (‘transmission from master to student in the privacy of a home’) and *kuketsu sōden* 口訣相伝 (‘oral transmission of secret formulae’) (see Satō 2008: 162-163). As the idea of private local customs, and local modes of professionalization by secret initiation indicate, there is no clearly defined path to *kitō* authority in Sōtō Zen Buddhism beyond the context of *kitō jūin*. This highlights the importance of priestly training beyond the monastic context, within the local community, and as part of the succession of temples by passing on the position of head priest to temple sons. The following chapter will pick up on the thread of family succession and family training.³²¹

Calls for workshops to conserve disappearing local customs and orally transmitted teachings pertaining to *kitō* demonstrate an interest in the subject among locally organized temple priests, and a desire to keep such practices alive (see Satō 2008: 163). Technological progress has multiplied the access to formerly secretive practices. Priests may nowadays train themselves in *kitō* by using the detailed and illustrated instructions given in Volume 1 of the standard work *Sōtōshū kitō taikai* 曹洞宗祈祷大系第1巻 (*Overview of the kitō Prayer Rituals of the Sōtō Zen Sect – Volume One*) (see Nakano (ed.) 2003: 147-356), or by watching training DVDs that can only be ordered by clergy. One such DVD that a priest showed me for the purpose of my research explained the nuanced differences of *kitō* drum rhythms at different prayer monasteries; another DVD revealed the secretive hand movements of the *kitō* officiant, which, as one priest explained to me, have traditionally been handed down from

³²⁰ [...] *taezu jikuji taru omoi wo kakaе, jishin wo motte sōsai no shikkō ni ataru koto ga dekinai* [...] たえず忸怩たる思いをかかえ、自信を持って葬祭の執行に当たることができない [...] (Tanaka 2008: II). For further insights into this issue, see Nara 2004; Rowe 2004: 367-368.

³²¹ See also Starling 2015 for a study of family learning in the context of the Jōdo Shinshū sect.

teacher to student. The aforementioned section in the standard work *Sōtōshū kitō taikai* introduces the procedures for a standardized form of *kitō*, but makes it clear that the special procedures, including those of the ritual officiant, are essentially different from monastery to monastery (see Nakano (ed.) 2003: 345). In the end, however, *kitō* is still not easily made portable.

Problems of religious authority and legitimacy aside, the question remains if a newfound access to religious knowledge makes any difference in the religious practice at Buddhist temples on the ground. Chapter Two has shown that *kitō* as found in prayer monasteries is deeply rooted in a monastery's setting, material culture, and local history. Many fully-ordained monks who practiced *kitō* as part of their training will only practice it again on the occasion of festivals at the prayer monasteries where they conducted their training. As discussed in the section on changing family structures in Chapter Three, moreover, declining secretive oral transmissions and initiations at Zen Buddhist temples must not be taken as indicators for a death of *kitō* and related practices per se, as has been shown, but the market for this-worldly benefits itself has changed in the course of postwar social changes and the spread of New Religions. Perhaps more Sōtō Zen Buddhist priests would practice *kitō* at their home temples, if they found ways to successfully market the practice, and if *kitō* outside the context of *kitō jūin* was less stigmatized as a practice of New Religions, understood as 'cults'. After all, the criticisms of *kitō* among trainees at Kasuisai were mostly criticisms of the intensity of the work load involved in performing *kitō* on a daily basis, and of monastic training generally, but rarely of practices for this-worldly benefits per se. As the discussion of merit transfer in the comparison of *kitō* and daily sutra-chanting services has shown, diverging opinions on the legitimacy of *kitō* are often directly linked to the quality and presumed social value of a promised this-worldly benefit.

Chapter Five: Beyond Zen – Interactions of *kitō* and ‘Spiritual Care’ in Post-2011 Japan

Introduction

This chapter explores recent interactions of *kitō* and ‘spiritual care’ in six sections. The first two sub-chapters provide background to this study, by discussing the interplay of *kitō* and disaster through the lens of responses to different natural disasters in postwar Japanese history, and by introducing Buddhist perspectives on untimely death, beliefs in ghosts and ghost possession, divine protection, and divine punishment within different social and local contexts. Theoretical concepts that allow for an analysis of the peculiarities of untimely death and the rhetoric of divine intervention in practice are also addressed. Sub-chapters three to six outline how ‘spiritual care’ is currently being defined in Japan, and demonstrate how these definitions play out within multi-religious disaster relief initiatives that have since expanded to contribute to society at large. A strong focus is placed on the social and historical conditions that enabled the emerging trend of ‘spiritual care’ in sub-chapter four, which also elucidates why non-professional modes of religious care remain relevant in Japan today.

The 2011 disasters mark a watershed moment in the history of religions in Japan, insofar as pre-2011 religious aid initiatives have shown little success, whereas initiatives like the training of ‘interfaith chaplains’ at the Tohoku University-affiliated ‘Spirit Counseling Center’ have since been expanded successfully to contribute to society at large, and to reassess the role of religion in the public sphere. The rise of ‘spiritual care’, and the renegotiation of *kitō* as a ‘spiritual care’, as shall be shown, relate to changes in the ways that religious professionals are currently trained in Japan, and to changes how the media are framing issues pertaining to ‘folk practices’, including ghost beliefs, and the understanding of *kitō* as a practice in care for those who feel possessed by ghosts. Sub-chapter six explores how Buddhist priests are currently trained to become *rinshō shūkyōshi* 臨床宗教師, literally ‘clinical religious professionals’, or ‘interfaith chaplains’, and shows how that training relates to *kitō*. The chapter concludes with an analysis of these developments, and punctually compares the training of ‘interfaith chaplains’ with the monastic training of Sōtō Zen priests, sectarian sources of religious legitimacy, and traditional means of generating religious authority in Japan today. It is within this context that the chapter identifies clinic-inspired care and ‘folk belief’ (*minkan shinkō*) – a normative category that remains vague in the training of ‘interfaith chaplains’ – as two interactive and complementary components of a working definition of religion in post-2011 Japan.

The Dead Still Wander Japan: Untimely Death and the Stigma of Ghosts

Untimely death makes things dangerous on many levels. The handling of the bodies of the victims of an accident may have political consequences. In February 2001, a Navy nuclear submarine accidentally sunk the Japanese fishery high school training ship Ehime Maru off the shore of Hawai'i. Nine of the Japanese crewmembers were killed in the collision, including four high school students. Suddenly, those commissioned with the search and rescue of the bodies and the wreck found themselves in the waters of international relations. The sinking of the Ehime Maru "not only killed nine people, most of them teenagers, but also shocked the Japanese nation as a whole, stoking some of the most powerful resentment of the United States in recent memory," as Howard French (2001) explained in his analysis of the accident's implications. Hoping to de-escalate the political tensions resulting from a series of insensitivities in its initial dealing with the crash, the US Navy turned to George Tanabe, a Buddhist priest and scholar specialized in contemporary Japanese religions, who then instructed military representatives on how to treat the bodies in accordance with Japanese Buddhist mortuary customs. In doing so, a worsening of political tensions between the two nations was avoided.³²²

The religious interpretations and psychological effects of untimely death are no less challenging and complex than the possible consequences on the political level. Reports about ghosts of the tsunami dead haunting the areas afflicted by the 11 March 2011 tsunami in Japan (see Parry 2014) left many readers baffled, and wondering if those stories were representative of religion in Japan as a highly industrialized country. Similar reports about ghost sightings surfaced in the wake of other recent tsunamis in Asia, notably the 2004 tsunami in Thailand (see Cheng 2004; Lovgren 2006). In an interview about the 2011 disasters in Japan for the documentary *Souls of Zen* (Graf 2012), Kimura Toshiaki at Tohoku University's Department of Religious Studies went as far as describing the tsunami zone as a "sacred site" (*reijō* 霊場). Being a resident of the Tohoku area, Kimura used to attend the summer festival at Osorezan every year. 'Mount Fear', as the volcano is called in Japanese, is home to a Buddhist temple, and the famous *itako* spirit mediums. To Kimura, attending the

³²² 60 million dollars were spent in the effort to recover the bodies and personal belongings of the victims of the crash. Japanese divers were invited to monitor the search and recovery, and "to conduct a final inspection of the Ehime Maru to reinforce confidence back home that no effort was spared" in the undersea recovery of the sunken school boat (French 2001).

festival at Osorezan used to instill shock and fear in the face the destruction by the volcano, but that image was gone after March 2011. The 2011 tsunami left images of destruction much worse than anything he had ever seen in his life before. “This is difficult to express,” the scholar tried to explain his inability to explain what kind of impact the sight of material destruction has made on him personally, “but I think the entire coast has become a religious place. A sacred site, so to speak.”³²³

The 11 March 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disasters in Japan left nearly 16,000 people confirmed dead and 2,562 still missing (National Police Agency 2016). The compound disasters displaced over 340,000 survivors; more than 120,000 buildings were destroyed, and another 275,807 buildings and homes were partially damaged. About 110,000 residents were evacuated in the wake of the Fukushima nuclear crisis.³²⁴ Miyagi Terumi, a former firefighter in Kesenuma, recounted that about half of the 140 disaster victims he recovered were burned, or otherwise distorted. Six years on, he continues to see their faces in his dreams. He carried their bodies to Jōnenji, a Pure Land Buddhist temple nearby his home in Kesenuma’s Shishiori district. The temple’s Kannon-dō, a building dedicated to Kannon, the Bodhisattva of mercy, was turned into a temporary morgue for children, while survivors of the disasters found shelters in Jōnenji’s main hall. Many of them were traumatized, and unable to speak about their experiences of loss and sorrow for months.

Japanese Buddhist priests were among the first to mobilize a response to the disasters by turning their temples into temporary morgues and emergency shelters. Buddhist priests helped make boxes to transport the bodies, since coffins were unavailable. Bodies were also transported by wrapping them in sheets. Some priests suffered severe emotional stress as a result of their work under these kinds of circumstances. Most Buddhist temple priests are used

³²³ Interview Kimura Toshiaki (see Graf 2012): *Chotto iikata wa muzukashiindesu kedo, shūkyōteki na basho ni natte shimatta to omoundesu, kaigan zui zenbu wa. Itte mireba reijō desu.* ちょっと言い方は難しいんですけど、宗教的な場所になってしまったと思うんです、海岸ずい全部。いってみれば霊場です。

³²⁴ The destruction of agricultural and fishery industries left many unemployed and without livelihood (Mullins and Nakano 2016: 1-2). As these are the individuals that supported Buddhist temples in the disaster zone financially, the number of temples facing closure within the next decades is expected to be considerably higher than the number of temples that were destroyed. In the case of Soto Zen, which is strongly represented in Tohoku, the majority of the 1,254 temples in the Miyagi, Iwate, and Fukushima prefectures were partly damaged with 45 completely destroyed. Jodoshū (Pure Land Buddhism) suffered the loss of five temples and another eight temples were located inside the 30 kilometer radius of the damaged Fukushima nuclear power plant. Many of the affiliated parishioner households (*danka*) moved away (see Watts 2012: 40-41).

to handling the bodies of parishioners. Interactions with death and handling of the physical remains form an integral part of their everyday ritual practice at temples, homes, and crematories. With bodies missing and graves being swept away, however, funerals could not be conducted as normal. The impact of the disasters was so strong that “in the end, there was no distinction between those who were killed, those who suffered because of the disaster, and the rest of us,” as Kaneta Taiō, the head priest of Tsūdaiji, a Sōtō Zen Buddhist temple in Kurihara explained (see Graf 2012; Graf 2016c).

During my fieldwork in the disaster zone, it was fairly common to hear people talk or otherwise interact with dead loved ones, yet without identifying them as ‘ghosts’ (*yūrei* 幽霊). Informants who believed to have had interacted with ghosts of the tsunami dead were all known to have a previous interest in spirit phenomena (*shinrei genshō* 心霊現象). One such informant in Kesenuma saw a woman walk in and out the corridor of his house, some months after the tsunami. Wondering if she was one of the 108 victims that he found in the debris, his mind seemed to wonder off, as his eyes suddenly became fixed and glassy.³²⁵ The same informant believed to have heard someone knock on the window of his car while sitting at a traffic light on his way back home. As he moved around in his car, scared, no one was near.

Open conversations with his family and friends, and with Takahashi Issei, the head priest of Jōnenji, the temple of his family, which is also the temple of the family of former fire fighter Miyagi Terumi, helped this parishioner cope with his fear of being haunted. Takahashi Issei explained that interactions with presumed supernatural beings and the spirits of the dead are fairly common in her community, and not specific to the 3.11 disasters. In the 1960s, her father Seikai was called in to perform a spirit-pacification ritual and *kitō* for protection in response to a series of accidents that occurred at a construction site at Kesenuma’s Karukawa tunnel. Graves that were found on top of the mountain left local people wondering if the tunnel workers had disturbed the peace of the dead, who were now believed to cause further harm among the living. The ritual intended to appease their spirits, and to pray for the safety of the construction workers. Similar rituals aimed at pacifying the dead and protecting the living were occasionally performed by Takahashi and his daughter, for example when

³²⁵ Interview Jōnenji parishioner Tanaka Keiichi, 16 March 2017 WS451716.

parishioners moved into a new home, or on the occasion of the inauguration of a new Buddhist household altar.³²⁶

In rare cases, even exorcisms are performed for those who feel possessed by ghosts. Kaneta Taiō, the aforementioned Sōtō Zen priest from Kurihara, became well-known for helping a nurse (25) to get rid of more than twenty ghosts that possessed her between June 2012 and March 2013 (interview Kaneta Taiō, March 2014). The woman was desperate, Kaneta explained. Spirits had entered and left her body since she was a kid. After considering sending her to a mental hospital, Kaneta invited the nurse to his temple. During the periods of possession, she was crying and breathing heavily as the spirits took control over her body and voice.³²⁷ Kaneta Taiō responded by talking to the ghosts inside her, letting them know that they were dead, and telling one after another to leave, or ‘head towards the light’ (*hikari ni mukainasai* 光に向かいなさい).³²⁸ In doing so, he verbally emphasized the message of the *sejiki* 施食 pacification rituals that he performed on these occasions. In the Sōtōshū and other Japanese Buddhist sects, *sejiki* rituals are performed annually, on the occasion of *obon* and *higan*, for the purpose of feeding and pacifying the spirits of the victims of untimely death, notably those who died in accidents, wars, and natural disasters.³²⁹ The rituals addressed to the spirits possessing the nurse took about thirty to forty minutes each, and involved sutra chanting (beginning with the *Daihisshin darani* (*Great Compassionate Mind Dharani*), followed by the *Kanromon* (*Ambrosia Gate*) and the *Shobutsu kōmyō shingon kanchō darani* 諸佛光明真言灌頂陀羅尼 (Dharani for the Initiation to the Mantra of Radiance of all Buddhas), and food offerings. The chants were accompanied by the beating of a *taiko*, as is typical for *kitō* and related practices for this-worldly benefits. As this example demonstrates,

³²⁶ This practice is not specific to the Tohoku area. Monks at Kasuisai, for example, also occasionally left their monastery to perform prayer rituals on the occasion of the relocation of a business. In one such case, Kasuisai’s monks were called in to a home-center in Shizuoka Prefecture to perform a *kitō* prayer ritual for fire protection (*kasai shōjo*) and “safety of the company” (*shanai anzen* 社内安全). The ritual was performed in all corners of the salesroom.

³²⁷ Observation based on audio recordings of these sessions.

³²⁸ All twenty-five cases of spirit possession had in common that the ghosts, among them twenty tsunami victims, were disoriented and alone at the bottom of the sea or in otherwise dark and cold places.

³²⁹ “Food-offering assemblies” (*sejiki’e* 施食会) are also known as *segaki’e* 施餓鬼会, or rituals for the feeding of hungry ghosts, and address those who did not receive the proper ritual care, especially the victims of disasters, and those who died under otherwise tragic circumstances. The practice of these rituals on the occasion of *higan* relates to concerns over ancestors not being able to find their way back into the afterlife.

Buddhism offers a set of beliefs and practices in dealing with issues of untimely death and its associated problems to appease the living.

In an interview for *Souls of Zen*, Kaneta Taiō expressed his surprise (*bikkuri shita* びっくりした) about the fact that a *kitō* prayer ritual that he performed on behalf of a parishioner of his temple showed the intended healing effect. The man had fallen ill after visiting the disaster zone out of curiosity. Stricken by guilt, he turned to Kaneta for help, who performed a prayer ritual on his behalf, along with a counseling session. It is within this context of interactions with untimely death in the wake of the 2011 tsunami that Kaneta came to reevaluate the efficacy of some of the rituals that he subsumed under the term *kitō*, and which he used to perform as a standard practice, in following an annual ritual calendar.³³⁰ Other impactful catastrophes have had similar effects on priest volunteers. The documentary film *Fragment* by Sasaki Makoto (2006), for example, expresses vividly the re-evaluation of religious identity resulting from a confrontation with untimely death through the lens of a young Japanese Buddhist priest, who returned to Japan from New York to undergo *aragyō* after the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks in the US.³³¹ The experience of 9/11 became the protagonist's driving motivation to become a *kitōshi*, or *kitō* specialist.

While interpretations of untimely death are often suggestive of a risk of spirit retribution, reports about ghost encounters in post-disaster situations are generally far less frightening than what popular images of exorcisms, hells, and hungry ghosts suggest. In his monograph *Tamashii de mo ii kara, soba ni ite: 3.11-go no reitaiken wo kiku* 魂でもいいから、そばにいて—3.11 後の霊体験を聞く (I want you close to me, if only your soul: Listening to post-3.11 tales about ghost encounters), Okuno Shūji (2017) collected sixteen stories of people who believe to have interacted with ghosts of the tsunami dead. Many of the tales collected by Okuno on the occasion of his visits to the disaster zone since 2012 reflect a

³³⁰ Kaneta Taiō is not the only priest who expressed his surprise about the efficacy of his ritual practice in the tsunami aftermath. Almost all of the priests whom I interviewed in the disaster zone expressed a newfound interest in their profession or vocation as priests in the wake of the disasters. Among those priests is Shōji Ryōshō, the vice-head priest of Unjōji, a Pure Land temple in Shiogama. Shōji explained that before the March 2011 disaster, he used to take his work as a temple priest for granted. His temple survived the disasters intact, but some of the members of his parish community died, others lost their homes. In the wake of the tsunami, Shōji found new meaning in providing ritual and material care and spiritual support for the surviving members of his community and beyond, by providing disaster relief services for victims who were not affiliated with his temple in any way. For a discussion of different case studies, see Graf 2012; Graf 2016a.

³³¹ On *aragyō*, see the introduction to Chapter Four.

desire of his informants to meet dead family members: A 44-years old husband claims to have heard his wife and daughter say “we won’t leave you” (*doko ni mo ikanai yo* どこにも行かないよ), and “we’re waiting” (*matteiru yo* 待っているよ). Both of them died in the tsunami. In another story published in the book, a mother who lost her three years old son claims that he moved his toys for her, telling her to smile. In other cases, people claim to have received emails from departed family members on their cell phones. Others heard dead relatives knock on their doors.

Similar stories were reported on earlier in the Japanese media, in magazines, and by priests and scholars of religion. Takahashi Hara at Tohoku University’s Department of Practical Religious Studies conducted a survey on some 1.400 religious institutions in the disaster zone. 68 of the 275 respondents (about 25 percent) claimed to have experienced a spirit phenomenon.³³² In 2013, NHK aired a program titled *Nakihito to no “saikai”* 亡き人との“再会” (A ‘reunion’ with the departed). Soon after, an article about ghosts of the tsunami dead was published in the *London Review of Books* (see Parry 2014). More recently, sociologist Kanebishi Kiyoshi (2016) wrote an article that asks: “Why do so many ghosts appear in the disaster zone?” (*Naze, hisaichi de “yūrei” ga takusan deru ka* なぜ、被災地で「幽霊」がたくさん出るか). Journalist and writer Udagawa Keisuke (2016) authored a monograph about “Curious post-disaster stories” (*Shinsai-go no fushigi na hanashi* 震災後の不思議な話), including widely publicized tales by taxi drivers, who claim that ghosts of the tsunami – often unaware that they have died – requested to be taken home. An article by Kudō Yūka (2016) in a volume by Kanebishi Kiyoshi (ed. 2016) picks up on similar accounts under the title “Where the dead commute: The ghost encounters of taxi drivers” (*Shishatachi ga kayou machi – takushī doraibā no yūrei genshō* 死者たちが通う街—タクシードライバーの幽霊現象). These various publications have in common that issues pertaining to the religious beliefs and practices of disaster victims are treated seriously and respectfully. As Okuno Shūji mentions in an interview with the *Kahoku shinpō* (21 February 2017), it is his wish that “[...] here and there an environment emerges where tales of the dead are treated as

³³² Presentation Takahashi Hara, 11 December 2013, Tohoku University, slide number 23. The total number of religious institutions addressed in Takahashi’s survey is drawn from an article about Takahashi’s survey in the *Asahi shimbun digital* of 20 December 2013. For a newspaper article on Takahashi Hara’s research on “spirit phenomena” in the disaster zone (authored by Takahashi himself), see Takahashi 2013. See also Takahashi 2016, and the discussion of the training of “interfaith chaplains” below in this chapter.

normal.”³³³ As this comment indicates, Okuno considers his collection of tsunami ghost tales as a work against the stigma of ghosts and ghost possession in Japanese society. This was not least achieved by fictional works on interactions with the tsunami dead in post-2011 Japan.³³⁴

In contrast to the plethora of books and carefully written articles on ghosts in post-2011 Japan, encounters with ghosts were hardly reported on after the Hanshin Awaji Earthquake disaster in 1995. The Hanshin Awaji Earthquake disaster killed 6,434 people (among them 4,571 in Kobe city), and wounded 43,792 more. 249,180 households were completely or partly destroyed.³³⁵ There is a possibility that ghost beliefs are specific to the rural Tohoku area, and that victims affected by the Hanshin Awaji Earthquake were not concerned with ghosts, but my conversations with scholars of religion – among them Stephen Covell and Mark Rowe – and with Buddhist priests in Japan indicate otherwise. A well-connected maker of Buddhist household altars, temple altars, and statues for temples from Kyoto explained to me that many of his customers in Kyoto came to him as a result of the recommendation by spirit mediums, as customers often secretly turned to the spirituality marketplace in the search for different or additional ways of communicating with the spirits of family ancestors. These and other examples indicate that beliefs in direct interactions with the dead are far from uncommon in Japan (see also the discussion of *kitō* on the marketplace in Chapter Three of this dissertation), and that the stigmatization of beliefs in ghosts and ghost-possession decreased in the wake of the 2011 disasters, as compared to 1995. Based on the examination of the training of ‘clinical religious specialists’, or interfaith chaplains (*rinshō shūkyōshi*) below in this chapter, I argue that changes in the representation of ghost beliefs in the Japanese media are attributed to the ways in which the media, scholars, and religious professionals are framing the issue within multi-religious disaster relief collaborations.

The ways in which ordinary Japanese get to experience the physical realities of death and the bodies of relatives and friends have changed profoundly in the course of modern

³³³ [...] *shisha no monogatari wo futsū ni katareru kankyō ga achikochi ni umarete hoshii* [...] 死者の物語を普通に語れる環境があちこちに生れてほしい。For an earlier article on ghosts in the same newspaper, see *Kahoku shinpō* of 4 January 2015.

³³⁴ For a prominent example of post-2011 literature dealing with the topic of ghosts and interactions with the dead, see *Sōzō rajio* 想像ラジオ (“Imagination Radio”) by Itō Seikō (2013), who was awarded for his work with the Noma Prize for New Writers, and who was short-listed for the Mishima Yukio Prize and the Akutagawa Prize for *Sōzō rajio*. The novel was published on the second anniversary of the 3.11 disasters.

³³⁵ Figures drawn from <http://www.city.kobe.lg.jp/safety/fire/hanshinawaji/higai.html>, accessed 15 May 2016.

transformations of mortuary practices, and in the course of the rise of the professional funeral industry in postwar Japan in particular (see Rowe 2000; Rowe 2011; Tanabe 2012). In medieval Japan, up until the postwar period, funerals in Japan were commonly communal practices that involved neighbors and friends. Medieval fears over ancestors not being able to find their way back into the afterlife played a major role in the spread of Buddhism. Priests contributed to this trend by promoting their beliefs and practices. Beliefs in hells or in potentially dangerous, vengeful spirits thirsting for proper ritual care, drew their power in part from Buddhist concepts of the afterlife (see Bodiford 1993), such as the idea of a Buddhist paradise (*ōjō* 往生). Buddha Amida's Pure Land (*gokuraku jōdo* 極樂淨土; later nearly synonymous with *ōjō*)³³⁶ in particular marked focal points of post-mortal ambitions. The goals and expectations of practitioners are reflected in songs, poems, and educational texts of the time, for example concerning the understanding of a 49-days interim phase following death. The souls of the dead are believed to remain in a state of uncertainty for seven weeks. Buddhist priests chant sutras and conduct rituals to transfer merits to the departed, and to comfort the bereaved until this Buddhist limbo comes to an end (see Stone 2007: 134; Stone and Walter 2008: 4-7; Satō Hiroo 2008).³³⁷ Accordingly, for many Japanese, April 28 and 29, 2011, were somber days of reflection, contemplation and silence (see Graf 2012). Local Buddhist leaders joined with other priests around the world and conducted prayer vigils across sectarian boundaries to mark the end of this period and the arrival of the souls of the victims of the tsunami in the afterlife. But while a great sense of responsibility and respect toward familial ancestors remains deeply ingrained in society, it has since become common in Japan to shorten the traditional 49-day period. The first seven day ritual (*shonanoka*; *shonanuka* 初七日) is often no longer practiced on the seventh day after death, but on the day of the funeral. This is due to the fact that in most of the cases, the family only comes together on the occasion of the funeral itself, since people no longer use to live in the same cities, which causes logistic problems (see Suzuki 2003: 668; Wöss 1992: 81). Moreover, death has become less visible, due to the fact that nowadays in Japan, the majority of people die in

³³⁶ Before the *nenbutsu* movements of Hōnen (1133-1212; founder of the Jōdoshū) and Shinran (1173-1262; founder of the Jōdo Shinshū), who propagated the chanting of the *nenbutsu* for the salvation of everyone, achieving a rebirth in Buddha Amida's Pure Land was considered to be an extraordinary difficult endeavor. See Stone 2007; Stone and Walter 2008.

³³⁷ Some monks, who were less inclined to follow a defined clerical career path, turned towards supporting the dying at the deathbed. The ritual actions of these practitioners, known as *zenchishiki* 善知識, or 'good friends' at the deathbed were believed to increase the chance of the dying to achieve a rebirth in Buddha Amida's Pure Land (see Stone 2008: 61-62; 88-90).

hospitals, not at home. Suzuki Hiharu (2003: 662) has shown that in the year of 1947 in Japan, 90.8 percent of all deaths registered occurred at home. This trend came to an end in 1977, when 50.6 percent of people in Japan died in hospitals. In 1990, 75.1 percent of people in Japan died in hospitals (this percentage increased to 93.3 percent in cases of terminal cancer).

The social and religious implications of untimely death, as experienced by some victims of the 2011 disasters, and as introduced in this chapter through the lens of beliefs in ghosts and ghost possession, demonstrate a need to understand the practice of religion as a temporary process. Satō Hiroo (2016: 4) brings to mind that the 2011 disasters “[...] made modern Japanese once more aware of the closeness of death.” This is certainly the case, if we consider that most people in Japan today live their lives without being confronted with the material dimensions of death and its visible and olfactory consequences. The experience of a catastrophic disaster may have different temporary and long-term effects, depending on social and cultural conditions, as well as individual dispositions of practitioners. Many Japanese may consider the existence of hells or ghosts only after losing a loved one under tragic circumstances. The age of the deceased also matters. Inken Prohl addressed this point by introducing the concept of a phase-based reception of intersecting sets of religious beliefs and practices (“phasenweise Rezeption religiöser Schnittmengen”) in her study of New Religions (see Prohl 2003a: 33-36). Understanding the reception of religion as a temporary process is not least significant when it comes to the interpretation of questionnaires about religious behavior, as has also been shown in the context of discussions about the dwindling consciousness for Japan’s traditional religious culture (see the discussion of Akiha temple support associations under depopulation in Chapter Three of this dissertation). It also helps us understand *kitō* as a practice with different functions in different contexts, and for different phases in life. In times of crisis, and in dealing with ghosts, as this chapter has shown, and as the following chapters will further elucidate, *kitō* is a practice of choice for Buddhist priests in their effort to recreate and stabilize the rhythms of everyday life through supernatural means. It also increasingly functions as a means of religious professionals to distinguish themselves and their practice from other, ‘regular’ care providers.

The Rhetoric of Divine Protection

The promise of divine protection has inspired Japanese Buddhist teachings and practices since the early introduction of Buddhist statues, texts and rituals to the archipelago in the sixth

century (see Chapter One of this dissertation). Prayer monasteries like Kasuisai and Daiyūzan Saijōji gained popularity by promising protection, health and wealth for everyone. Japan's postwar economic growth contributed to the rise of *kitō jiin* and their affiliated support networks (see Chapter Three). But while the logic of divine protection is likely to remain unchallenged in times of peace and prosperity, national crises or individual calamities in the lives of practitioners are often a trigger for theological interpretations. Natural disaster, for example, may elicit theological justifications, not necessarily to explain as to why a disaster happened – most Japanese know about plate tectonics – but to provide behavioral and interpretive guidelines, for example concerning the legitimacy of public expressions of religious persuasion, or expressions of gratitude for having survived. In order to show how Buddhist clerics adapt their message to social expectations and needs to sustain their authority, this chapter follows up on earlier chapters on Akiha devotion, by examining Kasuisai's practical responses to and soteriological interpretations of three different disasters: The Hanshin Awaji Earthquake disaster of 1995; the March 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disasters in Japan; and Typhoon Roke, a storm that hit Kasuisai on 21 September 2011, causing destruction not seen in decades, perhaps even centuries. In pulling at the thread of divine protection, the chapter unravels different interpretive frameworks for times of peace and crisis moments. The specific ways in which Sōtō Zen monks considered the 1995 disasters to render public expressions of gratitude to supernatural powers inappropriate are also addressed, along with perspectives on theoretical implications of the discourse on divine protection and its consequences for the analysis of *kitō*-related beliefs and practices.

Kasuisai's response to the Hanshin Awaji Earthquake demonstrates how the rhetoric of divine protection plays out in a crisis situation. As with many other Buddhist temples in Japan, monks at Kasuisai rushed to mobilize material and ritual support right after the earthquake struck on 17 January 1995.³³⁸ Monetary donations, foods, and relief goods were gathered on the occasion of memorial services for the disaster victims. Monks then forwarded these goods to the disaster relief center of the Sōtō Zen Mission Branch Office for the Kinki

³³⁸ For an overview of Buddhist responses to the 1995 Hanshin Awaji Earthquake with a focus on the Tendai sect, see Covell (2005: 106-107). Covell explains that the Tendai sect's disaster relief initiatives were channeled through its affiliated youth association in Hyōgo Prefecture. Sectarian officials visited the disaster zone on the day of the earthquake; emergency headquarters were installed promptly in the effort to coordinate nationwide support for temples and local communities affected by the quake. These efforts in response to the 1995 earthquake disaster are comparable to the relief initiatives organized and run by the Sōtō Zen sect and other sects of Japanese Buddhism.

Area (Sōtōshū Kinki kyōka sentā 曹洞宗近畿教化センター). A wooden *tōba* 塔婆 stupa with the inscription “memorial rites for the victims of the Hanshin Earthquake disaster” (*Hanshin daishinsai higai bukkōsha kuyō* 阪神大震災被害物故者供養) was erected in front of Kasuisai’s main hall. More specific to Kasuisai, *kitō* prayer rituals on behalf of survivors were also performed. On top of these efforts focused on providing aid on its precincts, and by collecting and forwarding relief goods, Kasuisai dispatched clergy to the disaster-afflicted areas to offer help on site, and to learn about Akiha devotion in the aftermath of the quake. The following reflections on the “spirit of prayer” (*inori no kokoro* 祈りの心) are drawn from an article for Tamura Sadao’s edited volume *Akiha shinkō*, authored by monks in office at Kasuisai, who reported on their visit to an Akiha temple in the earthquake-afflicted city of Kobe (see Kasuisai yakuryō ichidō 1998).

Within the first five days after the Hanshin Awaji Earthquake, visitors walked up to the Akiha temple in Kobe to express their gratitude for having survived, and to exchange their protective *ofuda* amulets. The priest from Kobe, according to Kasuisai’s monks, mentioned that visitors to his temple expressed their gratitude in statements like: “Thanks to the *ofuda* of Akiha, our house sustained only this little damage”³³⁹ This dynamic of the concept of divine protection is reminiscent of responses to the 1923 Great Kantō Earthquake, when Akiha veneration is said to have boomed, due to the fact that Tokyo’s Akihabara district was relatively unharmed by the quake and subsequent fires, which local people attributed to the power of the fire god (see Chapter Three of this dissertation).³⁴⁰ At the same time, Kasuisai’s monks were informed that public expressions of gratitude for having survived were inappropriate, according to the priest from Kobe, who explained: “One cannot say thank you with a loud voice” (*okage wo ookina koe de wa ienai no desu* お陰を大きな声ではいえないのです) (see Kasuisai yakuryō ichidō 1998: 302). This priest’s call to consider the feelings of the bereaved led Kasuisai’s monks to the conclusion that, instead of expressing gratitude for having survived, the goal for Akiha devotees must be to diminish the gap between those who had lost their lives and livelihood, and those who were able to go on in life. Following this logic, a survivor’s reticence becomes a source of his or her compassion. In other words, when

³³⁹ *Akia-sama no ofuda no okage de, waga uchi wa kore dake no higai de sunda toiu no desu.* 秋葉さまの御札のお陰で、我が家はこれだけの被害で済んだということです。(Kasuisai yakuryō ichidō 1998: 301-302).

³⁴⁰ This version of the story was also shared among monks at Kasuisai, see interview Yamamoto Daisuke, 4 January 2012 WS451374, and interview Nakada Ken’ichi, 5 January 2012 WS451405.

people say that they cannot pay respect to Akiha publicly, they do so with intentions to practice compassion. The monks argued that wisdom (*chie* 知恵) and compassion (*jihī* 慈悲) enabled a connection with the Buddha dharma in the moment when Akiha's presumed power to fulfill prayers and the voices of those in need intersected. This "spirit of prayer," according to Kasuisai's monks, is identical to the spirit of *kitō* (Kasuisai yakuryō ichidō 1998: 302).

What characterizes this understanding of compassion, from an analytical point of view, is its justification of secrecy by practicing self-deprecation. Expressions of commitment to Akiha Sanjakubō are omitted in consideration of the feelings and needs of disaster victims, to the effect that a clear assessment of the spread and practice of Akiha devotion in post-disaster situations becomes impossible. It is within this context of secrecy surrounding beliefs and practices of the Akiha cult, as Chapters Two and Three of this dissertation have shown, that we may observe and learn what makes local deity cults so appealing to believers. Explanations as to why a disaster happened, in spite of the promise of divine protection, are muted, and so are criticisms of Akiha. On different occasions, and in the presence of Akiha devotees, monks at Kasuisai have indeed stressed the importance of Akiha worship for the purpose of averting disasters. The sermon following the feeding of the *tengu* during Kasuisai's 2011 fire festival equated the decline in *kō* group activity with a threat to peace, besides claiming that the 3.11 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disaster was a result of insufficient Akiha devotion, and of recent rapid social changes that have since exacerbated *kō* group decline.³⁴¹ As this example shows, there is a shared understanding of a causal relationship between Akiha *kō* group activity, societal change, and the occurrence of natural disasters among clergy and Akiha devotees.

During my fieldwork in Western Shizuoka Prefecture, I furthermore met believers in Akiha Sanjakubō who turned to the fire god to pray for a containment of the Fukushima nuclear crisis, and for the prevention of a possible future disaster in Western Japan. Takahashi Kaneko, the co-organizer of an anti-nuclear poster exhibition at the Kakegawa city library, mentioned that the Hamaoka nuclear power plant was only twenty-four kilometers away. Her citizen-initiated and -organized poster exhibition was designed to raise awareness of the risks posed by radiation, and to discuss possibilities for exploring alternative energy sources. Fearing that her civic engagement was insufficient in coping with the crisis, she and her husband turned to Akiha in summer 2011: "We walked up Mt. Akiha, because there is a fire

³⁴¹ Sermon 15 December 2011, WS451143.

god. We prayed that the Hamaoka nuclear power plant won't explode, and that the Fukushima nuclear crisis will come to an end. It's so scary."³⁴²

As this interview with Takahashi Kaneko indicates, praying to fire god Akiha is generally not understood as absolving religious practitioners from practicing preparedness, nor are civic engagement and religious participation considered as mutually exclusive means of stabilizing the rhythms of life after disaster. Rather, ritual prayers for fire protection work as a reminder of one's own responsibilities in handling fire carefully, and as an additional protection, or divine backup. Jolyon Baraka Thomas suggested the term "Just in case religion" to describe "ritual activity that is performed on the off chance that it might have efficacy even though the practitioner acknowledges that the action itself is inherently irrational" (Thomas 2015). This concept describes the driving motivation of many Akiha devotees, who engage in practices for this-worldly benefits for disaster protection and prevention. Following the rhetoric of divine protection, if a fire breaks out, chances are that not Akiha is to be blamed, but human actors who neglected their responsibilities in handling fire carefully. If greater harm to one's household was prevented, on the other hand, as recounted by the priest from Kobe after the 1995 Hanshin Awaji Earthquake disaster, religious practitioners may well identify this favorable outcome as an act of divine intervention. This ascription to Akiha's power is sometimes extended to also encompass divine prediction. The aforementioned temple priest from Kobe explained that an unusual event preceded the earthquake, when smoke resulting from the burning of wooden *goma* plaques on the occasion of the temple's annual festival, held on 15 January 1995, did not leave the building as normal. The incident was *ex post* interpreted as a sign of warning.

The examination of religious responses to Typhoon Roke at Kasuisai lead to similar conclusions. As with the March 2011 disasters, theological interpretations of Typhoon Roke reveal an understanding of Akiha devotion as a means of avoiding greater harm. "I am glad that we suffered only such light damage, and that none of us sustained significant injuries. [...] If you put it in a positive light, the way we see it, we were protected because we pray to Akiha every day." Those were the words of Katō Tarō, the highest-ranking monk in training at Kasuisai, who shared his opinion over a breakfast break from the cleanup one day after the

³⁴² Interview Takahashi Kaneko, 25 December 2011 WS451151: *Akiha-san nobotte, hi no kamisama dakara, Hamaoka genpatsu wo bakuhatsu shinai yō ni, Fukushima ga shūsoku shimasu yō ni tte, oinori shite kitandesuyo! datte kowai desu mon.* 秋葉山登って、火の神様だから、浜岡原発を爆発しないように、福島が終息しますようにって、お祈りしてきましたんですよ！だって怖いですもん。

storm.³⁴³ An overpowering scent of cedars filled the air, as the morning sun warmed the trunks of some eighty giant Japanese cedars that typhoon Roke had toppled on Kasuisai's grounds. The storm killed thirteen and left three more missing in Japan, with damage adding up to about USD 120 million.³⁴⁴ At Kasuisai, the building of temple-protecting god Hakusan was smashed and destroyed by a tree; the Bentendō suffered light damage; and water broke into the monks' hall, where a tree had damaged the roof. Another cedar had smashed the car of the monk in charge of Kasuisai's kitchen. The banner poles in front of Akiha's special worship hall were damaged, and the windows in the monks' dining room were shattered by the wind. The main hall, however, was unharmed, and so was Akiha's special worship hall. The overall damage at Kasuisai was minimal, compared to what could have happened, had a cedar hit one of the main buildings directly.

The damage caused by Typhoon Roke confronted the monks with the task of shaping a unified narrative of the disaster and its aftermath; all this while trying to restore normalcy, and while trying to avoid consecutive human errors as a result of attempts to control the situation.³⁴⁵ Three days before the Typhoon Roke disaster, Kasuisai's abbot Sase Dōjun (otherwise known by his abbot title of *saishu rōshi* 齋主老師) held a speech for a *kō* group of temple supporters, where he emphasized the significance of having faith in times of crisis: "When the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami struck, there was a big difference between people who were believers and people who weren't."³⁴⁶ *Saishu rōshi* went on to assert the significance of annual visits to Kasuisai for prayers to Akiha Sanjakubō, and to practice awareness of the dangers of fire. One day after the typhoon, the abbot emphasized the significance that Kasuisai's main buildings had survived the typhoon intact, and confirmed

³⁴³ Interview Katō Tarō, 22 September 2011 WS450901: *Mā, kore dake no higai de, mā, hito no inochi toka ni eikyō ga nakute yokatta desune. [...] ii yō ni omoeba, watashitachi no kankaku de iu to, sono Akiha-san wo mainichi ogandeiru kara* まあ、これだけの被害で、まあ、人の命とかに影響がなくて良かったですね。[...] いいように思えば、私たちの感覚で言うと、その秋葉さんを毎日拝んでいるから。

³⁴⁴ See Shōbōchō Saigai Taisaku Honbu 消防庁災害対策本部 26 September 2011: [www.fdma.go.jp/bn/data/台風15号による被害状況について\(第3報\).pdf](http://www.fdma.go.jp/bn/data/台風15号による被害状況について(第3報).pdf). Accessed 29 May 2016.

³⁴⁵ A stove left unattended nearly caused a kitchen fire on the day after the typhoon.

³⁴⁶ Speech Sase Dōjun, 18 September 2011 WS450677: *Daishinsai ga kita toki ni, shinkō wo mottenai hito to shinkō wo motteiru hito to de wa ne, taihen na chigai datta*. 大震災が来た時に、信仰を持っていない人と信仰を持っている人とではね、大変な違いだった。

that it was due to the monks' daily prayers that greater harm had been averted.³⁴⁷ The force of the typhoon, he suggested, was a result of global warming.³⁴⁸ Since no other temple building was completely destroyed, he took the loss of the Hakusandō, “a building for the protection of Kasuisai” (*Kasuisai wo mamottekudasaru tatemono* 可睡齋を守ってくださる建物), as a signifier for divine protection in practice.³⁴⁹ The fact that the smaller shrine box housing god Hakusan inside the Hakusandō temple building survived the typhoon intact was considered as further proof of the abbot's theory of divine protection. In presenting his damage assessment in a positive light, and in sharing his opinion with all monks in training soon after the storm had come to an end, abbot Sase Dōjun helped shape a unified response to questions by temple visitors and the media.

External Delegitimizing Factors

While Kasuisai's monks dismissed interpretations of the Typhoon Roke disaster as divine punishment (*tenbatsu* 天罰; *tenken* 天譴), not all visitors were convinced that the survival of all major buildings was a sign of divine protection, as suggested by abbot Sase Dōjun. Some temple visitors indeed took the damage caused by the storm as a sign for the monastery's inability to provide the protection it promises. While it remains impossible to quantify such statements, both examples illustrate how natural disasters, depending on the damage they cause, the timing of events, and other circumstances, may pose risks to a prayer monastery's brand image and value, as much as these institutions may benefit from disasters. This chapter focuses on external factors that delegitimize the rhetoric of divine protection at *kitō jūin*, by picking up on the discussion of Typhoon Roke and its aftermath, and by exploring the real risk of fire at Kasuisai as a temple noted for promising fire prevention.

³⁴⁷ The fact that so many trees toppled without hurting anybody was described as a “precious experience” (*kichō na taiken* 貴重な体験). Speech Sase Dōjun, 22 September 2011 WS450957.

³⁴⁸ Speech Sase Dōjun, 22 September 2011 WS450957: “[Global] warming goes on, and the sea water temperature is rising, which increases the risk of typhoons” (*ondanka ga susunde, taiheiyō no kaisuion mo takai kara, taifū mo hassei shiyasui shi* 温暖化が進んで、太平洋の海水温も高いから、台風も発生しやすい). See also field notes 21 September 2011 WS450892; WS450898; WS450899; speech Sase Dōjun, 22 September 2011 WS450957.

³⁴⁹ Sermon Sase Dōjun, 02 January 2012 WS451287: *Kasuisai wo mamottekudasaru tatemono* 可睡齋を守ってくださる建物.

Within the first week of the Typhoon Roke aftermath, thousands of disaster tourists came to have a look at the damage. Some visitors chose to visit Kasuisai for the sole reason that they had seen footage of the monastery's damage on TV.³⁵⁰ Television stations, among them NHK, sent teams to film on site. Broadcasting vans pulled up Kasuisai's driveway, and a helicopter circled over Akiha's special worship hall right when a group of monks lifted one of the broken banner poles in front of it.³⁵¹ Perhaps ironically, the larger-than-life *geta* clogs and shovel standing nearby the *goshinden* caused the impression that an angry *tengu* had himself ravaged the temple. The driveway up the slope was blocked by massive trees, much to the fascination of visitors. The smashed Hokusandō raised newfound interest in the building's history among disaster tourists. The lower-level souvenir shop, which was mostly ignored before the typhoon disaster, became a meeting point for bus travelers, who were eager to learn about the legend of Akiha.³⁵² The material destruction worked to raise Kasuisai's appeal, at least temporarily, for as long as it took to clean up and rebuild what was broken. The fact that no one at Kasuisai was injured made it acceptable for tourists to indulge in the sensation of material destruction.³⁵³

The long-term effects were less favorable. As more and more trees were removed for safety reasons, the 'forest' on the slope seemed to vanish, and with it the vague illusion of Kasuisai as a secluded 'mountain' (see Chapter Two of this dissertation). The forest embracing the monastery's front remained intact on the left and the right side of the hill, but these tree lines were no longer connected, to the effect that the front view appeared less wild and mysterious. The remaining trees could no longer hide the view on the main building complex from the main gate.³⁵⁴ As previous chapters have shown, Sōtō Zen prayer monasteries rely on the twilight of forests and an image of wilderness to make events like *tengu* feedings look plausible. These rituals take place in spaces that are temporarily made off-limits to attending visitors. Akiha worship may not require a 'mountain' per se, but the

³⁵⁰ Field notes 22 September 2011 WS450914; WS450915; Field notes 23 September 2011 WS450980; WS450987; WS450990; Field note 25 September 2011 WS451078.

³⁵¹ Field notes 22 September 2011 WS450901; WS450908; WS450910; WS450912.

³⁵² Field notes 22 September 2011 WS450917; WS450918; field note 23 September 2011 WS450979.

³⁵³ One of the monks in office suggested that the typhoon would raise Kasuisai's popularity, considering that all major buildings survived the storm intact. Interview Ishida Ryōshō, 24 September 2011 WS451037.

³⁵⁴ Field note 25 September 2011 WS451078. This transformation became even more obvious, as the reconstruction work proceeded. When I returned to Kasuisai in November 2011, the slope looked irreversibly bleak, and Kasuisai seemed less distinguished from the surrounding townscape.

illusion of untamed wilderness is vital for the mediation of the *tengu* cult. With the trees cut down, some of Kasuisai's illusion of impenetrability was gone, and with it a part of the monastery's history and appeal.

While the impact of a typhoon, earthquake or tsunami may impede the brand image of *kitō jiin* that promise disaster protection, most Japanese would agree that natural disasters are beyond the control of human agency. They are not considered to be signifiers for a lack of ritual efficacy. Human-made disasters, on the other hand, are not as easily dismissed and negotiated. For Kasuisai, the greatest threat to its brand value is fire. No insurance could compensate for the loss of image caused by a fire at the head center for the veneration of fire god Akiha. Despite practicing preparedness, Kasuisai's inner temple (*oku no in*) burned twice since the disassociation of Buddhas and *kami* at Mt. Akiha: First in 1912, and again 2006. The 1912 fire was perceived as a wakeup call, as Dominick Scarangelo remarks: "[...] the entire monastery became filled with dread, convinced that the disaster was in fact an inauspicious fire admonishing Kasuisai for failing in its responsibilities and neglecting its duties" (Scarangelo 2012: 257-258).³⁵⁵ The 2006 fire was likely the work of an arsonist. The inner temple building caught fire at around 11:30 a.m. on 18 December 2006, a mere two days after the annual fire festival. The 92 square meter large inner temple, which had been erected at Kasuisai in 1913, was completely destroyed. Its hillside location behind and above the main hall made it difficult for firefighters to reach the inner temple. Police in Iwata investigated a possible relation to three other fires that occurred in the area since mid-November that year (*Asahi Shimbun* 19 December 2006).

The inner temple's important role in the annual fire festival as the locus of the *tengu* feeding prompted Kasuisai under the leadership of abbot Itō Seiki to arrange for its immediate reconstruction. The financial support of Akiha support associations and donors, in collaboration with local carpenters and architects, enabled Kasuisai to finalize the reconstruction project within a mere eighteen months. The opening of the new inner temple was celebrated in June 2008. At the time, monks in training were assigned to stand sentry and patrol Kasuisai's precincts, since another suspected case of arson was noted in April 2007,

³⁵⁵ Kasuisai's inner temple had been replaced with a temporary structure. In 1913, Kasuisai received an Akiha temple building from Mt. Fudō. However, Kasuisai abbots Genrei and Nishiari Bokusan were both unable to gather the funds needed to reconstruct the inner temple. The disassembled structure from Mt. Fudō was forgotten for some four decades in a warehouse, until the temporary structure that was used as an inner temple went up in flames (Scarangelo 2012: 257-258).

when a fire at Kasuisai's bell tower broke out.³⁵⁶ Other temples nearby also suffered from suspected cases of arson around that time. Kaikō'in, a Shingon Buddhist temple in Hamamatsu's Harunochō district at Mt. Akiha, went up in flames on 13 December 2009. Kaikō'in, and the temple was abolished as a result of the fire. As with Kasuisai and Shūyōji, Kaikō'in had claimed to be in possession of Shūyōji's original, pre-Meiji period inner temple icon.³⁵⁷ It remains unclear at this point, if the above-mentioned fires at Kasuisai and Kaikō'in were caused by the same actor, but the fire of 2006 risked Kasuisai's brand value regardless. As little time as it took for Kasuisai to gather funds and build a new inner temple within its precincts, the monks still faced challenges in legitimizing Kasuisai's role as a place of protective powers. Some locals of Shizuoka, who shall remain nameless, informed me that the fire was reason enough for them to refrain from investing in prayers for protection by Kasuisai.

The risk of material destruction of the infrastructure and special buildings that are vital for the survival of religious institutions can hardly be ignored, especially for *kitō jiin* that rely on promising disaster protection. The destruction of Kasuisai's inner cloister signified the loss of a marker of authority over Shūyōji, and an embodiment of Kasuisai's supremacy over Akiha devotion in Western Shizuoka Prefecture. The inner temple formed a historical connection with the religious compound at Mt. Akiha. The only thing worse for the monastery, in terms of the destruction of special buildings, would have been the destruction of Akiha's special worship hall. In looking back at the 3.11 disasters and Typhoon Roke, the priest delivering the sermon on the night of the 2011 fire festival at Kasuisai explained: "If Akiha's special worship hall gets destroyed, Akiha veneration and the place where we all pay our respect to him will disappear. The destruction of the special worship hall, the priest argued, would result in Akiha's death."³⁵⁸ As this statement indicates, natural and human-made

³⁵⁶ See Tenpō Kensetsu news December 2007. <http://tenpou.co.jp/media/334.html>, accessed 27 May 2016.

³⁵⁷ Kaikō'in had been a part of today's Harunochō district since the late Taishō period. The temple was formerly located at Mt. Ryūtō (Ryūtōzan 竜頭山). See Hokuen information site "Daisuki Hokuen" だいき北遠 <http://yama-machi.beblog.jp/sakumab/2009/12/post-b17d.html>, accessed 28 May 2016.

³⁵⁸ Sermon 15 December 2011, WS451143 (minute 45): *Akiba-san no goshinden ga kowasareteshimaimasu to, sono shinkō, mina-san ga omairi suru basho ga nakunatte shimau kedo ne. desukara Akiba-san mo nakunatteshimau toiu koto de – naru wake desune* 秋葉さんの御真殿が壊されてしまいますと、その信仰、皆さんがお参りする場所がなくなってしまうけどね。ですから、秋葉さんもなくなってしまうということで—なるわけ

disasters alike pose imminent risks to the succession of local deity cults. Following this interpretation, the communities that are oriented towards Akiha's icon are at risk of falling apart, should the monastery fail to protect its special worship hall from harm, and vice versa.

Theological interpretations by sectarian elites concerning the meaning or reasons for disasters should not overshadow the fact that most Japanese are not concerned with a search for religious explanations as to why disasters happen. *Kitō jūin* relate to the rhetoric of divine protection in different ways, due to their particular self-understanding as sites of disaster protection. *Kitō jūin* are thus prone to adjusting their interpretation of disastrous events in nuanced ways that allow for a continuity of worship, and for the continuous support of lay associates. The majority of religious practitioners who volunteered in response to the 3.11 disasters, by contrast, were not concerned with religious interpretations of the earthquake and tsunami. This is important to note, considering that random theological reflections initially elicited the widest among all 'religious' responses to the disasters in the media, notably when Tokyo Governor Ishihara Shintarō described the 2011 tsunami as "divine punishment" (*tenbatsu*) for the "egoism" of the Japanese people. As McLaughlin (2011) clarified, religious practitioners ignored him, and instead focused on mobilizing material and spiritual aid quickly and efficiently. At the same time, as the wide spectrum of 'Just in case religion' presented in this chapter has shown, it would be false to attribute the rhetoric of divine protection to religious elites exclusively. The following chapters will further examine this issue through the lens of the renegotiation of *kitō* and related 'folk practices' in the context of spiritual care, and in the training of interfaith chaplains.

The Renegotiation of *kitō* as Spiritual Care

Responses to the 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disasters in Japan have marked a new stage in clinic-inspired approaches to care that normalize the recognition of 'folk belief' (*minkan shinkō*) and related practices, like *kitō* prayer rituals for this-worldly benefits and beliefs ghost-possession. Eschewing pretense that the progressive psychologization of religion (see Shimazono 1996; Shimazono 2007; Harding, Iwata, and Yoshinaga eds. 2015) has rendered sectarian or 'traditional' religious beliefs and practices obsolete, the chapter explores

です。 (The priest giving the sermon explained that, coming from Chiba Prefecture in Eastern Japan, he preferred pronouncing Akiha as Akiba).

the trajectories and intersections of *kitō* and ‘spiritual care’ in practice, and in the theoretical concepts of religion and spirituality employed by advocates of ‘spiritual care’.

The understanding of *kitō* as a form of ‘care’, in the broadest sense of the word, is not new. Over the past two decades, sectarian researchers have repeatedly introduced *kitō* as a religious form of treatment in the attempt to normalize *kitō* in Sōtō Zen Buddhism, also in a clinical context, yet without necessarily drawing on clinical care-inspired vocabulary. Nakano Tōzen, in his foreword to Volume 1 of the standard work *Sōtōshū kitō taikai* 曹洞宗祈祷大系 第1巻 (*Overview of the kitō Prayer Rituals of the Sōtō Zen Sect – Volume One*), writes:

Cancer patients and others who suffer from severe illness have various wishes and hopes. At first, they give in to musings, believing that the doctor’s diagnosis must be wrong, thinking “I will be able to go home by tomorrow.” As they realize that there is no escape from the pain and the fatigue, however, they give in to the illusion that “a cure will be found in time,” thinking: “I will be saved as by a miracle.” Soon after, as they have to acknowledge the reality of their circumstances, their physical strength decreases, and their interests narrow down, turning towards wishes and hopes concerning the future of their family, momentary peace, and the relief of their pain. Then, as their debilitation goes on, they express a desire to “be at ease.” Wishes and hopes turn towards the afterlife. Prayer (*inori*) is what holds the “direction of the heart or spirit” (*kokoro no hōkō*) that we call hope (*kibō*) (Nakano 2003a: 1).³⁵⁹

Nakano goes on to give an example of a man who turned to religion only after falling ill with cancer, before he concludes with a definition of *kitō* as a means of stabilizing the rhythms of life in coping with illness and crisis:

Kitō has the power to summarize and arrange the spirits of those who feel restless and anxious in order. From prayers for this-worldly benefits to prayers for the attainment

³⁵⁹ *Gan nado no kanja wa, iroiro na kibō wo motsu. Hajime wa “isha no mitate chigai de, ashita wa kaereru ni chigainai” toitta kūsō deattari shimasu. Shikashi, itami ya darusa nado de, nigerarenai to wakattekeruru to, kondo wa “tokkō yaku” ga mitsukatte kisekiteki ni naoru” toiu musō ni fukettari shimasu. Yagate, genjitsu wo mitomezaru wo enakunaru to tomo ni, tairyoku mo otoroete, kansin ga dandan semakunari, “kazoku no shōrai ya, jibun no mesaki no Heian ya, itami no kaishō” ni kibō ga mukaiteikimasu. Sara ni suijaku ga susumu to “raku ni naritai” toiu kibō ni nari, sara ni wa “ano yo” ni kibō ga mukattari shimasu. Inori to wa “kibō” toiu “kokoro no hōkō” wo motsu koto desu. ガンなどの患者は、いろいろな希望を持つ。初めは「医者の見立て違いで、明日は帰れるに違いない」といった空想であったりします。しかし、痛みやだるさなどで、逃げられないと分かってくると、こんどは「特効薬が見つかって奇跡的に治る」という夢にふけたりします。やがて、現実を認めざるをえなくなるとともに、体力も衰えて、関心がだんだん狭くなり、「家族の将来や、自分の目先の平安や、痛みの解消」に希望が向かいていきます。さらに衰弱が進むと「楽になりたい」という希望になり、さらには「あの世」に希望が向かったりします。祈りとは「希望」という「心の方向」を持つことです。*

of enlightenment, there is a broad range of prayer (*inori*). Different types of prayer coexist, such as those directed at outward goals, with hopes to realize a desired achievement, and prayers that are directed inwards. *Kitō* is not only just a ritual, but something that brings back stability to people's spirits and hearts (Nakano 2003a: 2).³⁶⁰

The understanding of *kitō* as “not just a ritual,” and the concept of *kitō* as a means of bringing back stability to people's spirits and hearts (*hito no kokoro ni antei wo torimodosasetekureru mono* 人の心に安定を取り戻させてくれるもの), or recreating the rhythms of everyday life, reflects approaches to care that address the emotional needs of the recipients. The same approach is reflected in clinic-inspired models of spiritual care. Nakano's understanding of prayer furthermore reflects notions of “ritual” as highly formalized. His underlying definition of “ritual” implies that rituals are not necessarily concerned with people's individual needs and hopes. Nakano's quote is as well a critique of the limited understanding of *kitō* as a set of prayer categories for different types of this-worldly benefits. While he criticizes the understanding of *kitō* as “just a ritual” beyond individual desires and hopes, he emphasizes the stabilizing effect of *kitō* as a standardized and formalized practice. His overall image of *kitō* resembles the conclusions drawn from observations made in Chapter Two about *kitō* as a staged moment of crisis, which showed that *kitō* is subject to the individual expectations and interpretations of those who request these rituals for different reasons; it has always provided opportunities for spiritual care in conversations with temple priests and staff. What Nakano criticizes is thus the understanding of “ritual” as a repetitive yet ultimately meaningless action. By ascribing value to the significance of *kitō* in its capacity to stabilize the spirits and minds of the terminally ill, Nakano legitimizes the practice as socially relevant, as relevant for the Sōtō Zen sect, and as a welcome contribution to clinical care aimed at healing the body. In describing how the hopes and expectations of patients with terminal cancer are changing from the moment of the diagnosis of the illness to the moment of death, Nakano furthermore turns

³⁶⁰ *Kitō wa, fuan wo motsu hito no kokoro to inochi wo matomeru chikara wo mochimasu. Soshite, inori wa genze riyakuteki na inori kara, satori wo motomeru inori made, haba ga hiroku, mata, nanika wo jitsugen shiyō to suru sotomuki na inori to, naiseiteki na inori toka kyōson shiteimasu. Kitō toiu no wa, tannaru gishiki dewanaku, hito no kokoro ni antei wo torimodosasetekureru mono desu.* 祈禱は、不安を持つ人の心といのちをまとめる力を持ちます。そして、祈りは現世利益的な祈りから、悟りを求める祈りまで、幅が広く、また、何かを実現しようとする外向きな祈りと、内省的な祈りとか共存しています。祈禱というのは、単なる儀礼ではなく、人の心に安定を取り戻させてくれるものです。

kitō into a means of framing the process of dying, thus allowing for a better understanding of the needs of the terminally ill.

Recent definitions of ‘spiritual care’ and ‘religious care’ echo what Nakano aims to convey in his discussion of *kitō*. ‘Spiritual care’ concerns the individual beliefs of the clients, as recipients of care are often called in the context of religious clinic-inspired aid initiatives (see Graf 2016a). These clients are not necessarily ‘religious’, according to their own self-understanding, or they may favor certain religious practices and beliefs over others. *Kitō*, if requested, may function as a means of providing religious or spiritual care, along with other practices, such as sutra chanting, and attentive listening (*keichō* 傾聴). A prominent advocate for this understanding of care is Taniyama Yōzō, who is a professor at Tohoku University’s Department of Practical Religious Studies, and an ordained Jōdo Shinshū priest trained in Vihara.³⁶¹ In an interview for a short video documentary vignette on spiritual care in post-2011 Japan, Taniyama explains:

I distinguish between two forms of religious care. One is comparable to missionary work, or the preaching of a specific religious teaching. So far, religious care in Japan has mostly been understood in that sort of sense, I think. But there is another form of religious care that I favor. This other form of religious care welcomes participation in rituals of other religions without presupposing beliefs. [...] A non-Christian performing a pastoral Christian practice, for example, would be a typical case. If it makes the recipient happy, then this is a good thing. Likewise, if the recipient of religious care asks a Christian to recite a Buddhist sutra, then it is good to recite that sutra. The question is not whether the Christian becomes a Buddhist by performing Buddhist rituals. What matters is that it helps the client, and that he or she feels relieved (Quote Taniyama Yōzō, see Graf 2016d).³⁶²

³⁶¹ Vihara is a small Jōdo Shinshū-affiliated chaplaincy hospice program. There may be as few as three fully qualified Vihara priests in Japan today, but the movement remains relevant, not least because of the many publications brought forward by its proponents (see Taniyama 2012, 78-79; McLaughlin 2013b, 318).

³⁶² *Shūkyōteki kea toiunowa, sono, osoraku watashi kara miru futatsu atte, hitotsu wa iwayuru dendō fukyō to onaji yō na koto. Oshie wo toku toiu koto desune. De, ima made shūkyōteki kea toiuto sōiu koto bakari kangaeteita to omoimasukedo, watashi wa mō chotto chigau shūkyōteki kea mo aru to omottete, de, sore wa shinkō wa zentei ni shinai. Kedomo, girei ni wa sankā shitemo ii. [...] Sore wa tatoeba non-Christian ga bokushi-san ni notte morau. Toiu no wa tabun tenkeiteki na pattern desu. De, sore wa honnin ni wa totemo ureshii koto desu. Honnin ni yoroshikereba sore wa ii wake desu. Christian ga Bukkyō no gyō wo agetemorau to mo, honnin ga sore de ii toiu nara sore de iidesu. De, soko de betsu ni, Christian ga “kore wa Bukkyō to narimasu” toiu hanashi janaidesune. Nanka tonikaku de kimochi wo yasumaru toiu koto ga daiji de... 宗教的ケアというのは、その、おそらく私から見る二つあって、一つはいわゆる伝道布教と同じようなこと。教えを説くということですね。で、今まで宗教的ケアというそういうことばかり考えていたと思いますけど、私は*

Taniyama Yōzō's understanding of spiritual care is reflected in the second, or "other" form of religious care. He elsewhere distinguishes religious care from spiritual care more clearly:

To put this in another way, whereas in religious care the provider (chaplain) takes on the role of a 'key person', by performing religious rites and giving necessary advice, in spiritual care the recipient is the key person, and religious rites and advice are unnecessary" (Taniyama 2015: 253).

One of the reasons why Taniyama and other advocates of spiritual care in Japan aim at downplay notions of religion in offering care services, apart from the need to be able to respond to the expectations of the clients, lies within the institutional framework and setting that constitutes and restricts the 'places of action' (*genba*) where the advocates of 'spiritual care' see a need for their services. Japan's constitutional separation of religion and state discourages clergy from practicing their religion in public places, like in hospitals. Spiritual care as practiced in multi-religious aid initiatives is aimed at enabling religious professionals to overcome these boundaries that hinder them from practicing in the public sphere, by training them to employ different religious identities in private and public contexts. The transgression of sectarian boundaries in multi-religious collaborations furthermore works to deemphasize sectarian norms and regulations for priests. This allows for a renegotiation of stigmatized practices, like *kitō*, which is forbidden in certain Buddhist denominations, notably the Jōdo Shinshū sect, to which also Taniyama belongs.³⁶³ Multi-religious collaborations thus

もうちょっと違う宗教的ケアもあると思ってて、で、それは信仰は前提にしない。けども、儀礼には参加してもいい。[...]それは例えば non-Christian が牧師さんにのってもらおう。というのは多分典型的なパターンです。Christian が仏教の行をあげてもらおうとも、本人がそれでいいというならそれでいいんです。で、そこで別に、Christian が「これは仏教となります」という話じゃないですね。何かとにかくで気持ちを休まるということが大事で...

³⁶³ Readers interested in the historical development of the critique of *kitō* and related practices for this-worldly benefits as "superstition" (*meishin*) in the Jōdo Shinshū sect are advised to read the works by Ōmi Toshihiro. See Ōmi 2015 for a study of the relationship between the Jōdo Shinshū and Shintō in modern Japan. Ōmi Toshihiro's examination includes perspectives on *kitō* through the lens of the development of Shinshū studies. In discussing the religious origins of Yoshimoto Naikan therapy, Shimazono Susumu furthermore remarks: "There have been followers of both Jōdoshū and Jōdoshinshū who were uncertain about whether they would be reborn in the Pure Land after death, and occasionally groups of people emerged who tried to achieve salvation from Amida Buddha through esoteric training. Considered heretical, these practices were suppressed in the Edo period, and members of these groups were known as 'clandestine nembutsu' groups. From the Meiji period onwards, however, they were accepted to some extent within the mainstream" (Quote Shimazono Susumu, see Shimazono 2015: 157). For a monograph on covert Shin Buddhists in Japan, and, more broadly, secrecy in Japanese Buddhism, see Chilson 2014.

work to provide alternative modes of religious authority that work independently from theological norms and regulations established by sectarian elites.³⁶⁴

The medical palliative care specialist Okabe Ken, founder of the ‘Spirit Counseling Center’ (Kokoro no sōdanshitsu) in Sendai, the most widely publicized multi-religious disaster relief initiative in post-2011 Japan, understood the “clinical religious specialist” (*rinshō shūkyōshi*) as a “Japanese-style chaplain” (*Nihon-teki chapuren* 日本的チャプレン).³⁶⁵ In following this logic, Taniyama Yōzō proposes a process “from chaplain to clinical religious specialist” (*chapuren kara rinshō shūkyōshi he* チャプレンから臨床宗教師). This transformation entails familiarizing chaplains with – and making them acknowledging of – Japanese customs and cultural backgrounds. This includes knowledge of local-specific religious beliefs, values, and norms. In order to be able to respond to the needs of clients, according to Taniyama, ‘clinical religious specialists’ have to be able to adapt to a set of rules when acting in the public sphere. The most important restriction for ‘clinical religious specialists’ concerns the need to refrain from proselytizing in public places, like hospitals, hospices, or at temporary housing units in disasters-afflicted areas, and to provide religious care (for example by practicing rituals) only after obtaining the approval by the care recipients. ‘Clinical religious specialists’, according to Taniyama, furthermore need to be willing to engage in multi-religious collaboration, to cooperate with nonreligious specialists, and to respond to the needs of clients with different social and local backgrounds. In meeting these requirements, ‘clinical religious specialists’ function as counselors and mediators, who “connect the rational world (of medical clinical care) and the irrational world (of religion).”³⁶⁶

In distinguishing ‘clinical religious specialists’ from ‘regular religious specialists’, Taniyama not only formulates standards for making Buddhist priests portable, by giving them behavioral guidelines for practicing Buddhism in the public sphere, and for interactions with

³⁶⁴ Some scholars, among them Shimazono Susumu, have warned that multi-religious collaboration, rather than dissolving religious boundaries, may also strengthen sectarian walls. See also the works of Masuzawa Tomoko on this subject. However, this is not what the advocates of interfaith chaplaincy in post-2011 Japan are concerned with. For Taniyama and others, the need to find common ground in establishing a platform for the negotiation of religion in the public sphere outweighs matters of religious dissent.

³⁶⁵ Okabe died of cancer soon after the center’s founding on 27 September 2012.

³⁶⁶ *Gōriteki sekai (iryō nado) to hi-gōriteki sekai (shūkyō nado) wo musubu kakehashi* 合理的世界（医療など）と非合理的世界（宗教等）を結ぶ架け橋). Literally: “A bridge that connects the the rational world (medical clinical care etc.) and the irrational world (religion etc.)” Taniyama Yōzō (presentation for *rinshō shūkyōshi* trainees, 13 November 2013, Sendai).

clients who are not the parishioners of their temples. He also distinguishes ‘clinical religious specialists’ from nonreligious care providers. This is emphasized in the fact that Taniyama requires ‘clinical religious specialists’ to be religious professionals (*shūkyōsha* 宗教者) to begin with, meaning that they have to undergo ‘traditional’ training and certification before they can be selected for the additional training that eventually allows them to join the ranks of *rinshō shūkyōshi*. The required additional knowledge (and acknowledgement) of Japanese religious culture and local religious customs subsumed under the category of ‘folk belief’ (*minkan shinkō*) thereby works to distinguish a ‘clinical religious specialist’ from a ‘regular’ clinical specialist, or nonreligious care provider.³⁶⁷ Accordingly, far from only being concerned with clinic-inspired approaches to care, much of the training of ‘clinical religious specialists’ or ‘interfaith chaplains’ is concerned with the study of ‘folk belief’, as also the *rinshō shūkyōshi* training examined below in this chapter will show. Clinic-inspired care and ‘folk belief’, as shall be argued, function as two interactive and complementary components of a working definition of religion in post-2011 Japan (see also Graf 2016a; Graf 2016b).

Perspectives on the Intersections of Buddhism, Spiritual Care, and Modern Psychotherapy in Japan, and Why Non-Professional Care Remains Relevant

Enabled by exchanges with supporters of Christian welfare thought in particular, efforts to nurture social engagement were furthered on and off throughout the nineteenth century in Japan.³⁶⁸ Stephen Covell notes that by the late 1800s, “[...] Buddhists were involved in a variety of efforts, from prison chaplaincies to schools for young children” (Covell 2005: 98), as well as “aid to the poor, disaster relief, orphanages, local development, education [...] and social welfare movements such as the prohibition movement” (Covell 2005: 99). However, it was only in the 20th century that concepts of spiritual care found recognition in Japan as part of the emerging hospice movement. In order to understand the renegotiation of *kitō* as spiritual care in post-2011 Japan, it is therefore fruitful to first of all reconsider the concept of ‘religion’ in modern Japan, as well as the import of the concepts of ‘spirituality’ in the context of the emerging hospice movement.

³⁶⁷ Taniyama Yōzō presented on this concept of Japanese-style chaplaincy frequently. The above descriptions and quotes are derived from a lecture by Taniyama Yōzō of 13 November 2013, addressed to *rinshō shūkyōshi* trainees in Sendai.

³⁶⁸ For a brief history of social engagement in Japanese Buddhism, see Covell 2005: 95-100)

As Chapter One of this dissertation has shown, the question as to why certain beliefs and practices have been stigmatized by scholars and religious specialists alike, relates to the global transfer and transformation of religion in the modern period. Scholarship on the concepts of religion and religious studies in transcultural contexts asks what kind of impact the introduction of the Western concept of religion (*shūkyō* 宗教) has had on cultural and academic identities in Japan. Historian and scholar of religion Isomae Jun'ichi, besides discussing the influence of intellectuals like D.T. Suzuki, introduces some of the early Japan-related academic works on this subject (see Isomae and Graf 2012: 59;63-69). In the early 1990s, Michael Pye explored the similarities in Western and Japanese understandings of religion and the study of religion in his article “An Asian Starting Point for the Study of Religion” (see Despland and Vallée 1992). Since the mid-1990s, other scholars addressed similar issues of comparability, interrelatedness, and issues pertaining post-colonialism and cultural hegemony (see Olupna 1997; Fitzgerald 1997; Fitzgerald 2000 Strenski 1998). A common theme in these and other works is the aim to reassess and ‘rectify’ Western concepts of religion and religious studies through the lens of Japanese religions. Early Japanese research from the 1970s, by contrast, was “[...] not focusing on religious studies or conceptions of religion per se [...]” (Isomae and Graf 2012: 65), except for the work of Suzuki Norihisa (1979). Japanese research more critically examining the transfer and transformation of concepts of religion in the historical and political contexts of religion began to emerge around the mid-1990s (see Isomae 1995; Shimazono 2001; Hayashi and Isomae eds. 2008). Within this context, the scholarly discussion of State Shintō in particular “[...] shows continuities or breaks with previous concepts of religion” (Isomae and Graf 2012: 67).

The term ‘spirituality’ (*supirichuariti* スピリチュアリテイ) developed in distinction from ‘religion’ (*shūkyō*);³⁶⁹ partly as a response to criticisms of religion. Shimazono Susumu traces the term ‘spirituality’ in Japan back to the year of 1995, when new understandings of seemingly unrelated topics concerning consciousness and the body, healing and self-help became widespread as part of the global spread of a new spirituality movement and culture. The term religion, as defined in distinction from spirituality, is often understood to signify a high degree of institutionalization and formalization, as well as limited individual control over the means of religious participation. Spirituality, by contrast, is frequently considered as less restrictive and more personal. Another driving force behind the spread of the concept of

³⁶⁹ The same can be said for earlier counterparts of “spirituality” in Japan, like the term *reisei* 靈性.

‘spirituality’ identified by Shimazono are health care institutions, schools and universities (see Shimazono 2004; Shimazono 2007). Among those responsible for adopting Western concepts of spirituality in Japan were the pioneers of the hospice movement, who imported Western models of spiritual care in chaplaincy. One the first to introduce hospice care in Japan was Kashiwagi Tetsuo (born in 1939), a Christian psychiatrist who invented the ‘team approach’ care model at Yodogawa Christian Hospital in Osaka in the 1970s, upon learning about chaplaincy during his studies in the USA. Other pioneers of spiritual care at hospices and palliative care institutions followed the same approach in establishing similar programs. One of the most prominent proponents of spiritual care in Japan is Tamiya Masashi, whose terminal care concept ‘Vihara’ (*bihāra* ビハーラ) is rooted in Jōdo Shin Buddhist beliefs and practices. Tamiya was inspired by Cicely Saunder’s founding of the Christopher’s Hospice in London in 1967, when he initiated Vihara in 1984 (see Tamiya 2007; see also Shimazono 2007; McLaughlin 2013b). It is within this context of the spread of the hospice movement that the defining characteristic of spiritual care as a multi-religious and trans-local endeavor in the public sphere emerged.

Another field that has since worked to define the practical role of religion in the public sphere in Japan opened up with the introduction of Western psychotherapy. In bringing the discussion back to *kitō*, it is important to note that traditional understandings of mental illness derived from popular beliefs in malevolent ghosts and spirit possession, such as fox possession (*kitsune tsuki*). The introduction of Western psychiatry in late 19th century Japan did not instantly replace traditional therapies for mental illnesses that were practiced at shrines and Buddhist temples, despite the Meiji government’s nationwide campaign against ‘superstition’ and ‘evil customs’ (*rōshū*). Such practices included baths under waterfalls and in hot springs, *kitō* prayer rituals, and exorcisms.³⁷⁰ Hashimoto (2015: 52-3, 65-66) assumes that interest in traditional religious therapies declined around the 1930s and 1940s, but he also states that, according to government reports, the number of religious institutions that accommodated the mentally ill seems to have increased from eighteen in 1917 to twenty-nine in 1927 and fifty-five in 1940. By 1935, all but two prefectures in Japan had one or more mental hospitals (Hashimoto 2015: 65-66). The care standards at hospitals, however, were not necessarily deemed to be acceptable (Harding 2015: 38), nor were many people convinced to give up on prayer rituals for the cure of spirit possession in favor of hospitalization. After the

³⁷⁰ See Hashimoto 2015: 51-63. See also Chapter One of this dissertation.

Second World War, the accommodation of mental patients outside psychiatric institutions was prohibited by the Mental Hygiene Law of 1950 (Hashimoto 2015: 65-68).

Modern, scientific psychotherapies in Japan developed in distinction from Western concepts of psychotherapy and traditional Japanese approaches to mental care. This complex interplay of religion and psychotherapy is evident in the invention of Morita therapy by Morita Masatake (1874-1938), one of the first Japanese psychotherapies that gained international recognition for its treatment of neuroses, anxiety and compulsiveness.³⁷¹ Morita presented his therapy as a modern, scientific treatment. According to Kondo and Kitanishi (2015: 112), however, Morita's true worth "lies in his combinative approach and his re-discovery of the curative value of traditional Japanese therapies [...]." In its application, "the cultural value and efficacy [of popular and folk health care] have been fully recognized and utilized" (Kondo and Kitanishi 2015: 105). Apart from experimenting with exorcisms and incantation prayer rituals (*kaji kitō*), Morita showed great interest in religion and healing (Kondo and Kitanishi 2015: 107). We here see parallels to Yoshimoto Naikan,³⁷² which is also recognized as a rational psychotherapy and generally accepted in academic circles. As with Morita Therapy, which originated in response to (and critique of) Western concepts of psychotherapy, Yoshimoto Ishin (1916-1988) developed Naikan within the context of traditional cures, after practicing *mishirabe* 身調べ (introspection, or 'looking into oneself') at an esoteric Shin Buddhist temple that he encountered at Taikan-an, before he reformed his therapy by deemphasizing religious connotations in the 1940s to 1953 (Shimazono 2015: 154, 157-159).

Enabled by the discursive disassociation from its roots in 'traditional' religious beliefs and practices, Morita Therapy has since been institutionalized in Japanese terminal care facilities, in mental health facilities, and in schools (Kondo and Kitanishi 2015: 101). The trends of downplaying religious connotations by practitioners and advocates of these therapies, and of describing them as modern and compatible with Western scientific rationalism, however do not give answers to the question as to how the religious and cultural values and normative attributes at the foundation of therapies like Morita and Naikan are implicitly defined by practitioners and others, and what kinds of ideas of 'Japaneseness' they

³⁷¹ On Morita Therapy, see Kondo and Kitanishi 2015.

³⁷² On Yoshimoto Naikan, see Shimazono 2015; Terao 2015.

presume. The same questions arise in the context of spiritual care as it is currently being employed in multi-religious disaster relief initiatives in post-2011 Japan.

It is important to note that different types of care in contemporary Japan that draw on different concepts of religion, therapy, healing and wellbeing coexist, and that different modes of religious and spiritual care, as observed through the lens of various modern therapies, are interrelated and entangled. It is therefore important to consider the social, historical, and local contexts of care, to ask where different types of care take place, as well as question how different agents position themselves towards the subject of care, particularly when it comes to discussing the continuation of ‘traditional’ beliefs and practices. In her study of contemporary Inari worship, Karen Smyers (1999: 59-61) shows that shrine priests, temple priests, and *kō* group leaders in Japan today are critical of the continuation of beliefs in fox possession, insofar as they tend to denounce rituals in response to presumed cases of fox possession as ‘folk practice’, understood by these practitioners as a category that is opposed to ‘real’ Inari worship: “Priests were united in their denunciation of the idea that Inari is a fox,” Smyers (1999: 59) explains. In providing more detail on fox possession, Smyers elaborates more extensively on the relationship between pejorative understandings of ‘folk customs’ and cures on the one hand, and attempts to distinguish imagined real beliefs in Inari on the other:

Fox possession is a spiritual/psychological malady that has been associated with Inari for centuries. Although priests at major sacred centers did perform exorcism rituals in the past, today this function is left mostly to the shamanic religious specialists. Priests today deal with the problem quietly: performing a prayer service (*gokitō*) or ritual purification (*oharai*) or advising the family or person what to do next. Although the number of cases brought to shrines and temples is decreasing yearly as the interpretive idiom shifts from spiritual to psychological, priests still considered the idea a “dormant volcano” (*kyūkazan*): it seems to be sleeping but is still very much alive, especially in rural areas. Most priests admitted that a religious cure often worked, but they seemed uneasy with the idea of fox possession because it represented a superstitious level of popular belief from which they wanted to distance themselves and the sacred centers (Smyers 1999: 60-61).

As this quote shows, first of all, *kitō* continues to be performed as a treatment for fox possession in Japan today. Second, *kitō* and fox possession are stigmatized among religious elites as ‘superstition’. Third, this stigma and the overall culture of secrecy concerning local deity cults and mental health problems make it difficult to quantify and conduct research on associated beliefs and practices. Fourth, and perhaps more important for the understanding of the renegotiation of *kitō* in the context of spiritual care, Smyers presumes a shift “from spiritual to psychological;” a shift that is being explained as the reason for a yearly decrease in *kitō* at contemporary sites of Inari devotion. This is a significant statement, because while

Smyers presumes this shift, she also mentions that her priest informants understand beliefs in fox possession to be a “dormant volcano,” meaning that beliefs and practices pertaining to fox possession are well and alive, yet hidden from the surface, and thus out of reach for researchers.

Drawing on the findings presented in Chapter Three about *kō* groups and *kō* group decline, it would be important to discuss Smyer’s claim of a causal relationship between the shift “from spiritual to psychological” and the yearly decrease in *kitō*, as practiced by shamans and healers in response for those who feel possessed by foxes or spirits. Rural depopulation is certainly a driving reason for declining participation in *kitō* against fox possession that Smyers misses to address. She does not ask how long-term social changes are experienced within the individual lives of practitioners, or how other institutions in rural areas, like schools, are affected by the same social changes. An exclusive focus on the decline of beliefs in fox possession in these areas misses to show how rural areas themselves are changing in the course of depopulation and urbanization. This is not to deny that different agents promote a shift “from spiritual to psychological” as part of the progressive psychologization of religion in contemporary Japan, but to ask where and in which fields and places of action this shift “from spiritual to psychological” takes place, and where the ongoing research about it is being conducted, initiated by whom, and with what kinds of intentions. The presumed modern shift “from spiritual to psychological,” as Smyers describes it, arguably explains why many Western scholars were surprised to read stories about ghosts of the tsunami dead in the wake of the 2011 disasters in Japan.³⁷³ The above discussion of untimely death furthermore challenged the presumed linearity of this process “from” spiritual “to” psychological modes of interpretation among people in the Tohoku area.

Smyer’s work illustrates that Inari worship continues to be relevant in Japan today, especially in rural areas. However, ethnographic works like Smyer’s monograph are hardly ever addressed in the scholarship of religion and psychotherapy, nor has it elicited considerable attention in the media. Scholarship on Japanese folk practices, on the other hand, often ignores recent theories of religion, as discussed by Isomae Jun’ichi with a focus on Japan, among others. The role of religion in contemporary clinic-inspired contexts of care and therapy is also often ignored. Research that employs the categories of ‘*minzoku shinkō*’ and ‘*minkan shinkō*’ as analytical concepts often operates with an essentializing idea of ‘folk

³⁷³ The article by Parry (2014), for example, was widely shared and commented on in social networks.

belief' and 'folk customs' as something that is placed in opposition to the idea of an 'elite religion', or, in pejorative terms, 'folk belief' as a category that represents a deprived (and ultimately insignificant) counterpart to 'real' religion, which scholars and religious leaders often seek in doctrine. Descriptive ethnographic research on 'folk beliefs' in local contexts in Japan, moreover, is often circulated in smaller academic journals that have since received little attention by scholars of religion.³⁷⁴

Gaitanidis and Murakami (2014), in their article on shamanism titled "From *Miko* to Spiritual Therapist," besides criticizing the essentialism of previous research on Japanese shamanism, have rightly pointed out that "[...] researchers of 'spirituality' in Japan avoid discussing spiritual therapists along with shamanistic practitioners, in the same way that *supirichuariti* aficionados avoid mixing 'spirituality' with 'religion.'" Gaitanidis and Murakami explain this desideratum with the statement that "[the researchers] often conceive of the first concept as the next step in the 'evolution' of the second, thus a 'different,' or even 'better' concept" (Gaitanidis and Murakami 2014: 7). One of the strengths of *Religion and Psychotherapy in Modern Japan* (eds. Harding, Iwata, and Yoshinaga 2015) lies in bringing the diverse aspects of modernity, global dynamics, and the different histories of academic disciplines and religious practices together in one concise, accessible, and self-reflective discussion that refrains from idealizing either category. But while the volume by Yoshinaga et al. explores modern developments and therapies like Morita and Naikan in detail, and even includes a chapter on the acceptance of spirit possession in Okinawa (see Shiotsuki 2015), questions as to how spiritual care in post-2011 Japan relate to 'traditional' religion are largely ignored. This lack of concern for theoretical questions in the discussion of religion in post-2011 Japan, and for the social and religious context of post-2011 spiritual care, is probably what Adam Valerio (2015) means to criticize in describing Taniyama Yōzō's chapter in *Religion and Psychotherapy in Modern Japan* as "somewhat prescriptive."³⁷⁵ The volume overall acknowledges that spiritual care initiatives in post-2011 Japan have reached a new stage, but it provides no clear assessment as to how this change relates to pre-2011 spiritual care and religion in Japan. This is arguably due to the book being published in 2015, a mere four years after 3.11. I argue that different types of care coexist in post-2011 Japan, and that

³⁷⁴ See for example the research by Kawashima Shūichi on *kitō* in Kesennuma (Kawashima 2012).

³⁷⁵ The notion of research on post-2011 spiritual care initiatives as prescriptive is true of other works, and will be further explored below. Levi McLaughlin (2016: 128) comes to a similar conclusion when he states: "Almost no self-reflection is evident in scholarly engagements with post-3.11 religious activism [...]."

traditional types of non-professional care and new approaches to clinic-inspired care form interactive and complementary components of a working definition of religion, as also the training of “interfaith chaplains” in its relationship to the monastic training of Buddhist priests will demonstrate.

1995 and 2011 as Turning Points in the History of Religions in Japan?

By comparing religion reportage after the 1995 and 2011 disasters in Japan, Levi McLaughlin (2016) has shown that the large-scale religious aid mobilization in the wake of the Hanshin Awaji Earthquake disaster of 1995 has been all but overlooked by the national Japanese media, whereas religious aid initiatives after the 11 March 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disasters in Japan elicited favorable media attention.³⁷⁶ This change is remarkable, insofar as academic work on religious responses to both disasters suggests that individual Buddhist priests and their networks, like sectarian youth associations (*seinenkai*), engaged in comparable disaster relief initiatives on the occasion of both disasters in recent Japanese history. Stephen Covell, for example, in discussing Buddhist youth associations (*seinenkai*) of the Tendai sect, describes how sectarian leaders dispatched within hours after the Hanshin Awaji Earthquake on January 17 in 1995 to visit the disaster zone. Tendai clergy mobilized practical and material support, including food, water, and daily necessities in aid for victims of the quake. A mobile bath service was started soon after for those who had to move into temporary housing units. Buddhist memorial services and rituals to appease the souls of the dead were also performed. Other events included concerts and nature tours for those affected by the 1995 disasters (Covell 2005: 106-107). The example of Sōtō Zen and Kasuisai’s response to the 1995 earthquake, as discussed above in the context of divine protection, demonstrates that other Buddhist sects and *kitō jin* in the area engaged in similar relief activities. The Jōdo Shinshū sect, besides offering practical support in the disaster zone, collected 37 million yen in donations by January 25, 1995, and the staggering sum of 920 million yen by January 1998, parts of which were used to finance the rebuilding of affected Shinshū temples in the disaster zone. (McLaughlin 2016: 110). In sum, hundreds of religious groups, including temple Buddhist sects and so-called New Religions have rushed to “[...]”

³⁷⁶ McLaughlin analyzed newspapers and other sources, including portrayals of religious aid initiatives in books, using the *Asahi shimbun* Kikuzō II Bijuaru database, the *Mainichi shimbun* Maisaku database, and the *Yomiuri Shimbun* Yomidasu Rekishikan database. On the research methods applied, see McLaughlin (2016: 130, note 8).

rescue disaster victims; house displaced residents in homes, temples, churches, and other institutions; raise funds for relief; and otherwise care for survivors and the deceased” (McLaughlin 2016: 109). In doing so, religious groups and other volunteers compensated for the inability of the Japanese state and local governments to provide aid quickly and efficiently (McLaughlin 2016: 109-111).

More so than the quantity of media reports following disasters in Japan in 1995 and in 2011, changes in media representation concern the quality and normativity of publications on the subject. New spiritual care initiatives have contributed to this shift from skepticism to affirmation. As McLaughlin points out in discussing media responses to the 2011 disasters: “Skepticism and allusions to sinister ulterior motives that defined religion coverage in 1995 have mostly slid away in Japan’s major dailies, replaced by story after story recounting on-the-ground contributions of non-threatening, good-hearted, and safely apolitical clergy and lay volunteers caring for the bereaved and the dead” (McLaughlin 2016: 128). Suspicion against religions had prevailed ever since 1995 in Japan, when members of the New Religion Aum Shinrikyō committed a sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway, among other crimes.³⁷⁷ The sarin gas attack on the Tokyo Subway was executed on March 20, a mere two month after the Hanshin Awaji earthquake, which explains why hostility against religions prevailed in the media, while religious aid initiatives were discredited, or ignored in favor of sensationalist reports about ‘cults’ (McLaughlin 2016: 115).

An important reason for the shift from pessimism and hostility against religions in media representations after 1995 towards reports that were affirmative and supportive of religion after the 2011 disasters lies in the changes of the ways in which the religion narrative has been adapted to shifting social norms and needs, notably through collaboration of religious professionals, medical doctors and social workers in multi-religious university-affiliated disaster relief networks, where religion is currently being adapted and renegotiated through the lens of ‘spiritual care’. Here, it is important to clarify that such care initiatives were not merely the result of responses to the 3.11 disasters in Japan. Attempts to establish multi-religious spiritual care initiatives were undertaken before the 2011 disasters, yet without making a lasting impact on the religious landscape in Japan. Levi McLaughlin specifically mentions Bukkyō University, Kōyasan University, Dōhō University, and the Christian Nagasaki Wesleyan University as educational institutions that “have previously launched

³⁷⁷ On Aum Shinrikyō, see Reader 2000; Kisala and Mullins eds. 2001; Prohl 2003d; Mullins and Nakano eds. 2016.

degrees in spiritual care,” meaning before the 2011 disasters, “but all of all of these programs have folded in recent years for lack of applicants” (McLaughlin 2013b: 317-318).

While attempts to bring non-Buddhists into sectarian universities have also failed in spite of existing institutional structures that would have allowed for a deepening interactions between religious and non-religious providers and researchers of care, there was an ongoing move since the mid-1990s or earlier among Japanese Buddhist leaders to recreate Buddhism by discussing Buddhism’s role in society generally, not only regarding means of providing ‘spiritual care’. Questions of Buddhism’s role in society not least inspired the founding of sectarian research centers like the Research Center for Sōtō Zen Buddhism (Sōtōshū sōkō kenkyū sentā) in 1999.³⁷⁸ Much of this discussion took place on a local level, and within sectarian frameworks. In his study of Japanese Temple Buddhism focused on the Tendai sect, Stephen Covell explains: “Officials of Tendai and other sects are aware of the need to breathe new life into the priesthood and to overcome negative images associated with the temple as a family business or as a funerary service provider” (Covell 2005: 90). Efforts to counterbalance these negative views included the recruitment of clergy among the laity, and changes made to the training at Buddhist universities that most future temple priests undergo on their path to full ordination (Covell 2005: 90-95). The open call “has been far from successful,” however, according to Covell (2005: 95), due to the overwhelming reliance on the system of temple inheritance, as well as the reliance on sectarian professional networks, and on the traditional master-disciple relationship in the Tendai sect. Buddhist welfare activities were thus mostly the work of individual priests, who practiced social engagement within their local communities, by opening kindergartens or day-care centers, but also by visiting homes for the elderly, like Matsui Sojun at Kasuisai (see Chapter Four of this dissertation), or via participation in the hospice movement. The 1998 Nonprofit Organization Law (*tokutei hierikatsudō hōjinhō* 特定非営利活動法人) furthermore “[...] opened the door to increased involvement in welfare activities outside the bounds of the temple by making donations to nonprofit organizations (NPOs) tax deductible,” as Stephen Covell (2005: 100-

³⁷⁸ See Tanaka 2008: I. According to Tanaka, the Sōtōshū sōgō kenkyū sentā was preceded by the Gendai kyōgaku kenkyūkai 現代教学研究会 (“Research Group for Contemporary Sōtō Teaching”), founded in 1989, which was later renamed in Gendai kyōgaku kenkyū sentā 現代教学研究センター (“Research Center for Contemporary Sōtō Teaching”). Mark Rowe (2006: 208) mentions the founding of a Gendai shūgaku kenkyū bumon 現代宗学研究部門 (“Research Division for Contemporary Sectarian Teaching”) in 1994. The Jōdo Shu Research Institute (浄土宗総合研究所) was founded in 1989. See <http://jsri.jodo.or.jp/about/>, accessed 23 April 2017.

101) explains. Financial benefits and other circumstances pertaining to the individual skills and the training of clergy aside, however, most temple priests with an interest in practicing welfare services are still relying on the support of their temple's *danka* members. This causes restrictions, as priests generally refrain from engagement in experimental practices without the approval of their supporting community. Priests are thus “trapped between two religious ideals,” as Covell (2005: 103) elucidates: The ideal of social engagement, and the ideal of the continuation of ancestor veneration and mortuary practices, as expected by parishioners (see Covell 2005: 101-103. On socially engaged Buddhism and the efforts of Buddhists to move beyond sectarian boundaries and frameworks, see also Nelson 2013).

The embedded teachings and basic claims of socially engaged Buddhists are reflected in their understanding of ‘volunteer activity’.³⁷⁹ Sōtō Zen researcher Aki Eibun, in discussing Buddhist responses to the 1995 Hanshin Awaji Earthquake disaster, described Buddhist volunteerism as “Bodhisattva practice (*bosatsugyō no jissen*),” or a selfless help for others (see Aki 2008: 251-260).³⁸⁰ The start of volunteering in Japan is often linked to responses to the Hanshin Awaji Earthquake. Accordingly, 1995 is often described as *borantia gannen* (ボランティア元年), or “First year of volunteers.”³⁸¹ The Hanshin Awaji Earthquake disaster indeed elicited a surge of volunteer activity, also among religious practitioners. Various influential volunteer associations, such as SeRV, an organization affiliated with the Buddhist New Religion Shinnyoen that also engaged in disaster relief efforts in the wake of the 2011 tsunami in Japan were founded in response to the Hanshin Awaji Earthquake in 1995.³⁸² But while volunteering in Japan is said to have increased, or even started in 1995, and while the

³⁷⁹ Paola Cavaliere (2015: 13-14; citing Avenell 2010) notes that the word *borantia* ボランティア, the Japanese counterpart for volunteer, is relatively new in Japan. It conveys a notion of spontaneous action, individuality, and self-realization, and is used by religious and other activists and providers of social work, whereas the terms *hōshi* 奉仕 and *hōshi katsudō* 奉仕活動 convey a sense of obligation.

³⁸⁰ The notion of selfless help for others is also reflected in trans-sectarian workshops on suicide prevention, as organized by the Sōtō Zen sect in October 2010 in Tokyo, and in more recent conference titles like “Compassion in Practice: Walking the Dharma Together,” which was the title of the 2017 All Japan Young Buddhist Association (Zen-Nihon Bukkyō seinenkai 全日本仏教青年会) biennial meeting, held in March 2017 in Sendai to commemorate the sixth anniversary of the 3.11 disasters.

³⁸¹ According to Barbara Ambros (2016: 151, note 14), the year of 1995 has been discussed by several authors in Japan early on, notably by Asahi Sonorama (ed. 1995). Kashida Hideki (1997), Morita Takuya (2001) and others have also used the term *borantia gannen*. The idea of 1995 as *borantia gannen* has also been questioned by some of the authors, like Kashida.

³⁸² On the history of SeRV and its mission, see <https://www.shinnyoen.org/social-awareness/philanthropic-activities.html>, accessed 21 April 2017.

discourse on volunteering and religion has been framed in newfound ways in the second half of the 1990s, research focused on religious practice indicates that religions have been socially engaged before that time. The Sōtō Volunteer Association (SVA; also known as Shanti International) affiliated with the Sōtōshū sect, for example, was founded in 1981.³⁸³ Using the example of the New Religion Tenrikyō, Barbara Ambros (2016: 148-149) has shown that religious volunteering in response to natural disasters among New Religions in Japan began much earlier, in the late nineteenth century.

Expanding the scope to Japanese temple Buddhism, one could argue that Buddhists have always been socially engaged within their affiliated communities, albeit without necessarily identifying themselves as ‘volunteers’, and without understanding practices like attentive listening as ‘spiritual care’. In a talk directed to monks in training after Typhoon Roke, Kasuisai abbot Sase Dōjun recounted his experience of the Isewan Typhoon of September 1959, which killed around 5,000 people. Memorials were held at Kasuisai for a full month at the time. Besides performing commemorative rituals at the monastery, the trainees at the time followed a rotation principle in entering the disaster zone in and around Nagoya to offer material and spiritual support.³⁸⁴ Examples like these support the claim that Buddhists have responded to disasters before 1995, by mobilizing material and spiritual support.

The activities of temple support associations, or *kō* groups in Japan, are particularly close to what is nowadays being subsumed under the term ‘volunteering’. Yoshida Shun’ei (1998: 231), for example, recounts a conversation with a *kō* group leader that supports this understanding. In describing his *kō* group engagement “for the protection of all” (*minna no anzen* 皆の安全) and “for the joy of all” (*minna no yorokobi* 皆の喜び), the leader explained that “in contemporary parlance, one would describe what we do as volunteer activity” (*konnichiteki na kotoba de ieba, borantia-teki na kōi dearu* 今日の言葉でいえば、ボランティア的な行為である).³⁸⁵ It is worth noting that this conversation between Yoshida and

³⁸³ The association was initially founded to help Cambodian refugees. It has since been active in providing aid in Cambodia, Thailand, Laos, and Japan, among other countries. See <http://sva.or.jp/english/about/history.html>, accessed 21 April 2017.

³⁸⁴ Speech Sase Dōjun 22 September 2011 WS450957; field notes 22 September 2011 WS450959; 23 September 2011 WS450983.

³⁸⁵ See also Chapter Three on this subject.

the *kō* group leader took place as part of Yoshida's fieldwork in the 1980s, well before the presumed "First year of volunteers."

While the members of temple support associations in affiliation with *kitō jiin* have engaged in volunteer activity early on, across different regions, and across sectarian boundaries, relatively little has been introduced about them in the scholarship and in the media. It would be wrong to assume that the surging interest in volunteering in post-1995 Japan did elicit substantial interest in *kitō jiin* in the media or in the scholarship on Buddhism. The topic of ghosts was also widely stigmatized, as compared to 2011. The public self-representation of Kasuisai after the Hanshin Awaji Earthquake, on the other hand, demonstrates that monks at Kasuisai deliberately chose to associate themselves and their practice of *kitō* with ideas of disaster relief and social engagement, as observed in the description of Kasuisai by Kasuisai's monks in Tamura Sadao's edited volume *Akiha shinkō* (see the above discussion of divine protection in this chapter). Kasuisai is not the only temple introduced in Tamura Sadao's seminal volume on *Akiha shinkō* (Tamura 1998). The subsection "Our Akiha belief" (*Waga Akiha shinkō* わが秋葉信仰) comprises ten articles authored by the head priests of select Akiha temples and shrines in Japan. Except for Kasuisai, however, no other self-introduction subsumed under the header "Our Akiha belief" focuses on Akiha devotion in its relationship to social engagement and volunteering.³⁸⁶ The comparison of Kasuisai and Shūyōji (see Aitani 1998) in *Akiha shinkō* is particularly revealing.³⁸⁷ Kasuisai draws its legitimacy and leadership role from a description of its engagement in disaster relief initiatives, by highlighting the importance and actuality of Akiha veneration in times of crisis. The historical argument surrounding different sites claiming to be the 'real' site of Akiha devotion is entirely ignored by Kasuisai, whereas Shūyōji seems concerned with asserting its status as the 'original' center of Akiha worship. Aitani Shun'yū, the head priest of Shūyōji, delivers a descriptive account based on historical-philological study; an approach followed by most other temples introduced in the section "Our Akiha

³⁸⁶ The other nine contributions are mostly focused on outlining the respective mythical origins and early institutionalization of their temples or shrines, whereas contemporary practice and *kō* activity are absent, or dealt with in two or three sentences.

³⁸⁷ On the relationship between Kasuisai and Shūyōji, see Chapters One and Two of this dissertation.

belief” follow.³⁸⁸ Aitani picks up on the historical argument between Shūyōji and Kasuisai in his concluding remark:

One could say that this temple [Shūyōji] is the head center of Akiha worship, but a systematized doctrine or ceremonial practice [of Akiha worship] does not exist. Rather, what we see here are autonomous developments [of the Akiha cult]. This is why we protect this tradition not so much as the “head center” of Akiha worship, but as its “original site” (Aitani 1998: 300).³⁸⁹

It is clear, therefore, that Shūyōji picks up on the idea of originality as a source of legitimacy and authority, whereas Kasuisai presents itself as a protector of Akiha devotion and society at large by providing spiritual and material support in the wake of disaster.³⁹⁰ Both temples follow different approaches and means of self-representation, legitimacy, and branding.

Nearly twenty years after its publication, Kasuisai’s self-introduction in Akiha Shinkō reads like a blueprint for the socially engaged Buddhism that has elicited noticeably favorable

³⁸⁸ Two pages of the four-page article consist of a list of historical events, beginning with the foundation of a temple in the year 718 that later came to be known as Shūyōji at Mt. Akiha. The list is followed by a remark that all listed events preceding the late Muromachi period, or the late sixteenth century, are based on speculation, not on facts, and that Akiha veneration began to spread from Mt. Akiha since the late Muromachi period, and during the Tokugawa in particular (Aitani 1998: 299). Other Akiha temples and shrines follow a similar pattern in presenting historical overviews. Some of these accounts are reflective of the desire to point out an institution’s historical unique features. The chapter about Entsūji in Nagoya, for example, introduces the temple as “the oldest sacred ground of Akiha daigongen in Japan” (Nihon saiko no Akiha daigongen no reijō “日本最古の秋葉大権現の霊場”) (Kuwabara 1998: 308).

³⁸⁹ *Tōzan wa kono shinkō no sōhonzan no tachiba ni aru ga, taikeika sareta kyōgi, saishi no shikata wa naku dokuritsu na tenkai ga mirareru. Sono tame sōhonzan yori wa, “genzan” toshite sono dentō wo mamoritsuzuketeiru.* 当山はこの信仰の総本山の立場にあるが、体系化された教義・祭祀の仕方はなく独自の展開がみられる。そのため総本山というよりは、「元山」としてその伝統を護り続けている。

³⁹⁰ The discussion of “original center” (*genzan*; literally: “original mountain” or “original temple”) versus “head center” (*sōhonzan*), which could also be translated literally as “head temple” or “head mountain,” brings to mind questions of originality, tradition, and legitimacy. Since Kasuisai also claims to be the “head center” (*sōhonden*), Shūyōji here asserts its status as “original” center of Akiha worship – a status that distinguishes Shūyōji from Kasuisai. Aitani furthermore implies that one could understand Shūyōji as the head center of Akiha worship. Kasuisai’s status as the “head center” is neither confirmed, nor does Shūyōji claim a status of exclusivity as “head center.” Instead, the status of “head center” itself is devalued by relativizing the structural lack of organization of Akiha worship generally, and by pointing out the pluralism and trans-locality of Akiha worship, which lacks a formalized set of doctrines and practices. Readers should also note that Shūyōji opens the chapter on “Our Akiha belief” as the first temple of discussion, followed by Kasuisai as the second temple. This arrangement of introductions make the discrepancy in approaches to self-representation, legitimacy, and branding even clearer.

media coverage in post-2011 Japan, by acknowledging how priests mobilized material and spiritual support instantly, over a long period of time, and without using the disaster aftermath as an opportunity to proselytize. After the 2011 disasters, religious practitioners generally avoided promoting their religious beliefs and their practices, which is one of the reasons why they were successful in making their efforts known. This was arguably a lesson that religious practitioners have learned from the experience of the Aum Shinrikyō incident and the ensuing hostility targeting religions in the media. In other words, while the media coverage of religious aid initiatives after the Hanshin Awaji Earthquake of 1995 was overshadowed by the Aum Shinrikyō incident, which resulted in suspicion against religions, understood as potentially dangerous ‘cults’, Buddhist professionals have been successful in presenting themselves and their activities in response to the 2011 disasters as a social contributor.

This shift was enabled by a relatively small number of religious specialists and scholars who functioned as curators in collaboration with higher educational institutions, medical doctors, social workers, and the media in Japan. The most prominent relief initiative aimed at opening up new places of religion in the public sphere is the aforementioned ‘Spirit Counseling Center’ (Kokoro no sōdanshitsu), a multi-religious disaster relief project that has since been expanded to contribute to society at large. The Spirit Counseling Center started its activities in the immediate tsunami aftermath in 2011 at a local crematory in Kuzuoka, Sendai, where an information desk was opened for survivors who were unable to contact their family temples for mortuary rituals. It was then turned into a multi-religious disaster relief network that also offers counseling services in hospitals, hospices, temporary housing units, and via telephone. The center has since led the development of spiritual care by training ‘clinical religious specialists’ (*rinshō shūkyōshi*), or ‘interfaith chaplains’ in association with Tohoku University, a public university in Japan, where also the headquarters of the Spirit Counseling Center are currently located. The transfer of the headquarters of the Spirit Counseling Center to the Department of Religious Studies at Tohoku University in 2011 intended to keep any particular religious organization from taking hold over the center and its funds, and to ensure that ‘neutral’ scholars of religion were in charge of administrative matters. Among the most influential leaders of the ‘Spirit Counseling Center’ is Taniyama Yōzō, whose definition of spiritual care has been discussed earlier in this chapter.³⁹¹

³⁹¹ For a recent monograph on “spiritual care” that includes biographical detail about Taniyama Yōzō, see Taniyama 2016.

Multi-religious collaboration as practiced at the Tohoku University-affiliated Spirit Counseling Center in Sendai requires that participating religious professionals refrain from asserting their individual group's religious identity. This downplaying or deemphasizing of sectarian beliefs and characteristics in the wake of the 2011 allowed reporters to discuss religious disaster relief efforts without risking to appear 'religious' themselves. Constant reference to the 'spirituality' paradigm and 'spiritual care' has thereby since worked to enable discourse on particular religious beliefs and practices that have previously been considered as inappropriate by the national media. The training of interfaith chaplains explored below elucidates more clearly how 'folk practices' and ghost beliefs are being made accessible for reporters and for media consumption by religious specialists, scholars, and others who collaborate in the effort to frame the narrative of religion in post-disaster Japan.

The lack of a liturgy in multi-religious aid initiatives in itself constitutes a belief or core value pertaining to recent developments in spiritual care in Japan. In accordance with Taniyama Yōzō's definition of spiritual care discussed earlier in this chapter, the number one core value stipulated by the guidelines for 'clinical religious specialists' the Spirit Counseling Center is "to respect the autonomy of the recipients of care" (*kea taishōsha no jiritsu-sei wo sonchō shinakereba naranai* ケア対象者の自律性を尊重しなければならない), and "not to hurt the recipients of care" (*kea taishōsha wo kizu tsukete wa naranai* ケア対象者を傷つけてはならない), as well as to respect the privacy of recipients of care, to practice 'spiritual care' in public spaces by following the rules of the institutions where the care is provided, and to refrain from proselytizing.³⁹² At the same time, participating religious professionals rely on their basic training and licensing, otherwise they may not be admitted to the 'interfaith chaplaincy' training at all. Accordingly, for Buddhist priests, forming an identity as a spiritual care provider does not result in a loss of their identity as Buddhist clergy. Still, transformations of the Buddhist message are likely to emerge as a result of an intensified interfaith dialogue among clergy, who "need the ability to switch their mindset, when acting

³⁹² The ethical guidelines for "clinical religious specialists" are publicly accessible on the internet platform of the "Spirit Counseling Center," see <http://www.sal.tohoku.ac.jp/p-religion/neo/wiki.cgi?page=%CE%D7%BE%B2%BD%A1%B6%B5%BB%D5%CE%D1%CD%FD%B5%AC%CC%F3%A1%CA%A5%AC%A5%A4%A5%C9%A5%E9%A5%A4%A5%F3%A1%CB%A4%AA%A4%E8%A4%D3%B2%F2%C0%E2>, accessed 09 May 2017. The guidelines quoted above are from 24 July 2015, and consist of eleven points, including the ones addressed above.

as clinical religious specialists.”³⁹³ This raises questions about the selection of participating religious groups and their members, as much as it raises questions about the specific ways in which this “switch” relates to changes in the visual markers of priests and their practice of a distinct Buddhist etiquette.

It is important to note that the success of the Spirit Counseling Center relies heavily on its affiliation with Tohoku University as a national higher educational institution. The legitimacy of educational facilities in Japan can hardly be overstated, not only in their capacity to generate public acceptance of religion in society, but also for the acceptance of alternative or additional, voluntary training among religious practitioners themselves. Participants in the *rinshō shūkyōshi* training stressed frequently that they preferred undergoing their training at Tohoku University in particular, although similar training programs have since been installed at sectarian universities across Japan. The Jōdo Shinshū-affiliated Ryukoku University in Kyoto launched its own *rinshō shūkyōshi* training program in April 2014. At the same time, a significant revision of the regulations for care providers was secured by Yoshida Kei’ichi, a Tohoku University *rinshō shūkyōshi* graduate and True Pure Land Buddhism temple priest from Osaka (see Graf 2016b: 214). As a result of this revision, Buddhist temples can offer nursing care services in their recognized legal status as ‘religious juridical persons’ (*shūkyō hōjin* 宗教法人), meaning that they do not have to register as a secular social welfare corporation or NPO. The procedures of starting a home care service, for example, are no longer as complicated in terms of the necessary administrative knowhow. The costs involved in running a home care service are also lower, as compared to running a private company. Yoshida argues that it was due to his status as ‘clinical religious specialist’ and the program’s affiliation with Tohoku University that his application to have the rules for care providers revised was approved within a mere three month after his initial application to the Agency of Cultural Affairs (Bunkachō 文化庁) in Tokyo.³⁹⁴

³⁹³ Quote Taniyama Yōzō (presentation 13 November 2011 for *rinshō shūkyōshi* in Sendai): *Shūkyōsha ga rinshō shūkyōshi toshite katsudō suru toki ni wa, mindosetto wo henkan suru hitsuyō ga aru*. 宗教者が臨床宗教師として活動するときには、マインドセットを変換する必要がある。

³⁹⁴ Interview with Yoshida Kei’ichi, 22 October 2014. See also Graf 2016b: 214. Scholars of religion, among them Shimazono Susumu at Sophia University, and Suzuki Iwayumi at Tohoku University, have long since supported religious professionals in their effort to establish common standards in the training and licensing of chaplaincy in Japan. According to Yoshida Kei’ichi, bureaucrats in Tokyo had heard about the *rinshō shūkyōshi* training program from Hara Takahashi. This interpersonal connection, Yoshida argues, has

It is clear, therefore, that the legitimacy and authority derived from interpersonal connections, the prestige ascribed to the status of the training of religious specialists at a public university, and the activities of graduates of the *rinshō shūkyōshi* training have since contributed to the expansion of religion-related disaster relief initiatives into a social contributor. The ‘Spirit Counseling Center’ has since been expanded to respond to a range of social challenges, including those related to urbanization and rural depopulation in Japan’s aging society.³⁹⁵ The constellation of conditions within which the emerging trend of spiritual care took place is rooted in the hospice movement and other modern social developments, as well as in the chaos caused by the 11 March 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disasters. Put simply, the disasters lowered the barriers to entry, insofar as chaos allowed for changes to occur that would otherwise not have been thinkable in Japan at the time. The intensity and longevity of collaborations between religious specialists and a public university for the purpose of educating religious practitioners in opening up new places for religion in the public sphere is deeply rooted in the tsunami aftermath. Finally, the factor of coincidence must not be ignored, when it comes to assessing as to why post-2011 spiritual initiatives have shown more success than previous attempts to establish chaplaincy training programs in Japan. One of the reasons why Tohoku University started its Department of Practical Religious Studies lies within the fact that Tohoku University was familiar with the process of installing a temporary chair funded by donations (*kifu kōza* 寄附講座).

On the Training of ‘Interfaith Chaplains’

Since 2012, Tohoku University has led the development of ‘spiritual care’ by training ‘interfaith chaplains’, otherwise known as *rinshō shūkyōshi*, or ‘clinical religious specialists’ in collaboration with scholars, medical doctors, and religious professionals. The training – an initiative in response to the March 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disasters in Japan – consists of lectures, practical fieldwork, and group work sessions.³⁹⁶ Most trainees are Buddhist temple priests from different areas in Japan and with various sectarian backgrounds.

contributed to the fact that he received the approval to operate nursing services by the Osaka City Welfare Department in July 2014, within two months after receiving the approval of the Bunkachō.

³⁹⁵ For on-the-ground perspectives on the same social issues in the context of *kitō jiin*, see Chapters Two and Three of this dissertation.

³⁹⁶ In general, it takes religious professionals about eighty hours to complete the program: Thirty hours are designated for lectures, thirty hours for fieldwork, and twenty hours for group work. Interview Taniyama Yōzō; see Graf 2016d.

During my fieldwork in Tohoku, I conducted participant observation at three training sessions for ‘interfaith chaplains’ in 2013 and 2014. Nineteen applicants were selected to participate in the fifth training cycle, which lasted from May to July 2014. Fifteen of the trainees were Buddhist priests; the four others were members of two Christian denominations, and two so-called New Religions in Japan.³⁹⁷ The practical training consisted of group excursions to the disaster zone, and individual training at either of the Spirit Counseling Center’s affiliated venues. The Café de Monk, which is a mobile counseling service initiated by the Sōtō Zen priest Kaneta Taiō from Tsūdaiji in Kurihara, Miyagi Prefecture, who also serves as a board member (*riji* 理事) at the ‘Spirit Counseling Center’. The café, apart from appearing in the form of a radio show (see Kaneta 2012), has also offered material and spiritual support – cake and rituals – in areas affected by the 2016 Kumamoto earthquake. Other training venues for ‘interfaith chaplains’ are the food radioactivity measurement station Inori (‘Prayer’) in Sendai, a telephone counseling service initiated and run by the Spirit Counseling Center, and selected hospices and clinics, notably Vihara institutions.

The exploration and legitimization of ‘folk belief’ within the training of ‘interfaith chaplains’ is evident in the lectures that those admitted to the program have to attend as a requirement for graduation. A lecture presented on 11 December 2013 by Takahashi Hara at the Department of Practical Religious Studies at Tohoku University, was based on Takahashi’s research on ghosts (*yūrei*) and spirit phenomena (*reisei genshō* 霊性現象) in the wake of the 2011 tsunami in Japan. The presentation approached the subject in a rather prescriptive manner, by providing answers to the lecture’s title, which was formulated as a rather straight-forward question: “What should I do when asked: Please help, I’m being haunted by a ‘ghost’?” (“*yūrei*’ *ni toritsukareteiru no de nantoka shitekudasai*” *to sōdan sareta toki ni dono yō ni taiōsuru ka* 「《幽霊》に取り憑かれているので何とかしてください」と相談された時にどのように対応するか?). Following a brief introduction of practical religious studies, the lecture turned to a characteristic legitimization of the ‘spiritual care’ training initiative: The distinction of religious care providers from doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, and social care workers. Following this rhetoric, what distinguishes religious care providers is the knowledge about spirit phenomena (*shinrei genshō*), and the authority ascribed to religious professionals in dealing with related issues, such as problems that are

³⁹⁷ The two Christian denominations represented by trainees were the Japan Baptist Convention and The Japan Church of the Nazarene; the members of the two New Religions were the members of Risshō Kōsei-kai and Tenrikyō.

rooted in beliefs in ghost possession. Besides exploring possible reasons and symptoms of ghost beliefs, Takahashi outlined how carefully the topic has been introduced by the media, notably the aforementioned NHK special *Nakihito to no "saikai"* (A 'reunion' with the departed), which aired on 28 August 2013, as well as articles on ghosts of the tsunami dead in the *Sankei Shinbun* (18 January 2012) and the *Asahi shimbun* (19 November 2012). It is important to note that these important publications were informed by members of the 'Spirit Counseling Center', notably the Sōtō Zen priest Kaneta Taiō.

According to interviews and surveys on ghosts in the tsunami zone conducted by Takahashi Hara, some 25 percent (68 of 275 respondents) claimed to have experienced a spirit phenomenon (*shinrei genshō wo jissai ni taiken shita* 心霊現象を実際に体験した). In some cases, respondents expressed a desire to meet dead relatives and loved ones. While many responding religious professionals stated that sectarian doctrines were open or unclear about interpretations of spirit phenomena, some priests of the Jōdō (Pure Land) and Jōdo Shinshū (True Pure Land) sects of Buddhism in particular pointed out that their own sectarian doctrines denied the existence of 'spirit phenomena', such as ghosts. Takahashi specifically mentioned a case where a Jōdo Shinshū priest denied a client's request to have an exorcism or 'spirit extraction' (*jorei* 除霊) performed on his behalf. Here is where the training of 'interfaith chaplains' reaches beyond sectarian regulations, by formulating guidelines that enable alternative professional identities that allow for practices that are otherwise forbidden for some religious professionals. In a lecture on 'religious care' (*shūkyōteki kea* 宗教的ケア), for example, held on 13 November 2013 for the fourth class of *rinshō shūkyōshi* trainees, Taniyama Yōzō suggested offering religious care to clients who feel haunted by ghosts in the form of sutra chanting or prayers.³⁹⁸

The case of the *rinshō shūkyōshi* graduate Miura Hideki from Kumamoto, Kyūshū, illustrates how the renegotiation of *kitō* as 'spiritual care' plays out in the everyday life of a Japanese Pure Land Buddhist temple priest. Being a member of the Jōdo Shinshū, Miura was trained to consider *kitō* to be forbidden by sectarian regulations. However, locals and parishioners of his temple requested such practices regardless, for example if they think that

³⁹⁸ Presentation Taniyama Yōzō, 13 November 2013, slide number 18: "If there is a need, to offer religious care (sutra recitation or prayer)." *Hitsuyō ga areba, shūkyōteki kea (dokyō ya inori) wo teikyō suru.* 必要があれば、宗教的ケア（読経や祈り）を提供する。

an ailment that they suffer from was caused by ancestral spirits. Their needs and reasons to turn for him to help were explained by Miura as follows:

In most of the cases, conversations [about *kitō* and ghosts] occur on the occasion of monthly visits to the homes of parishioners, whom I visit monthly on the days of death of their close relatives. For example, this is an extreme case, but if a parishioner seeks the advice of a spirit medium because they feel ill, and they have it checked by a spirit medium, or are asked to have it checked, and the medium tells them that they are possessed by a spirit of an ancestor that causes *tatari* [harm³⁹⁹] as the reason for the illness, then it happens that parishioners are requested [by the spirit medium] to turn to their home temples and ask for a sutra to be recited on their behalf. This is how I get involved occasionally, in the search for solutions.⁴⁰⁰

While asking where this unease comes from, Miura then counsels the parishioner and listens attentively to their life stories, before he performs a sutra recitation (*dokyō* 読経) in response to the spirit possession. In Miura's own view, his actions were in accordance with common Jōdo shinshū practices. By chanting the *nenbutsu* and reciting sutras and texts that are commonly used in the Shinshū, namely the *Jōdo sanbukyō* 浄土三部経 (Three Sutras of the Pure Land), or parts of Shinran's *Kyōgyōshinshō* 教行信証, and by using only standard equipment to support his chanting – a bell and a percussion instruments – Miura relied on the basic ritual components and patterns of True Pure Land Buddhist practice. Yet he readily

³⁹⁹ On the concept of *tatari*, or harm caused by malevolent spirits in ancient Japanese history; the codification of responses to *tatari* in the era of the *ritsuryō* system; the shift concerning interpretations of the cause of *tatari* as something that was “being regarded as completely unintelligible demands to explanations focused on cause and effect” (Satō 2016: 7-8); and the subsequent more frequent occurrence of interpretations of natural disasters as a result of cause and effect, or even “divine punishment” (*tenken*), see Satō 2000. For a discussion of *tatari* in modern Japan, see also Bernstein (2006: 25-28).

⁴⁰⁰ Interview Miura Hideki, 24 October 2014 WS451662: *Ichiban ooi no wa, tsuki meinichi ni itta toki ni, soko de hanashi ga deru koto ga ooi desu. De, tatoeba, kore mo kyokutan no hanashi desukeredomo, nanka aru, reibaishi-san mitai na kata no tokoro ni ittara, ano, “rei ga toritsuiteiru” to iwareta to, de, “watashi wa byōki wo shiteiru node, mono sugoku fuan da” to omotte, aru hito ga sono reibaishi-san toiuka sōiu fū na kata “mitemorai ni ikinasai” toiutte ittara, soko de, senzo no rei ga tsuitete, sore ga tatari wo okoshitete, byōki ni natteiru to iwareta to. Sore de, “sono otera-san ni okyō wo agete kudasai” to iwareta kara, dōshimashō toiu hanashi toka aru toki ga mare ni arimasu. 一番多いのは、月命日に行ったときに、そこで話が出る人が多いです。で、たとえば、これも極端の話ですけども、何かある、霊媒師さんみたいな方のところに行ったら、あの、「霊が取り付いている」と言われたと、で、「私は病気をしているので、ものすごく不安だ」と思って、ある人がその霊媒師さんというかそういうふうな方「見てもらいに行きなさい」というっていったら、そこで、先祖の霊が付いてて、それが祟りを起こしてて、病気になっていると言われたと。それで、「そのお寺さんにお経をあげてください」と言われたから、どうしようという話とかあるときがまれにあります。*

admits that the occasion and intentions of his practice were rather untypical, if not opposing the Jōdo Shinshū doctrine, as also the interviews with Shinshū priests conducted by Takahashi Hara at Tohoku University have shown. His own interpretations and ascriptions of legitimacy to his practice aside, Miura is aware of the fact that some of his fellow Jōdo Shinshū priests discredit him for his actions. In the view of the parishioners of his temple, on the other hand, Miura is often understood to perform a ritual purification, or a ritual prayer for this-worldly benefits with a healing effect. In the words of Miura: “If it shows the intended effect [...] chances are that what I do is being understood as something like a *kitō* prayer ritual for this-worldly benefits.”⁴⁰¹

Upon asking Miura Hideki how his understanding of his counseling and *kitō*-related practice for his parishioners compared to his training and practice as a ‘clinical religious specialist’, his response was: “to me it is the same in content.”⁴⁰² What changed was the clientele. While his practice as a temple priest was addressed to *danka*, and in rare cases their friends or relatives – via the introduction of parishioners of his temple – ‘spiritual care’ as Miura had practiced it at Tohoku University’s ‘Spirit Counseling Center’ encompassed providing care services for clients who were not the members of his temple. As this example shows, priests don’t necessarily rely on additional training as counselors, in order to provide services that their parishioners interpret as relevant means of care. This dissertation on *kitō jūin* in Sōtō Zen Buddhism presented other examples that have shown that Buddhist temples and monasteries, in promoting their material offerings and practices, do not rely on sectarian frameworks of interpretation alone, just as visitors to Kasuisai do not necessarily understand the monastery as a site of Zen Buddhism. Likewise, Miura’s parishioners are not necessarily concerned with understanding ‘their’ priest as a ‘clinical religious specialist’. For Miura, on the other hand, being a ‘clinical religious specialist’ provides an additional source of authority and legitimacy that helps him reassess his practice in interactions with practitioners of different religious groups, by talking about *kitō* and related beliefs and practices concerned with ghosts, spirit mediums, and his interactions with ‘folk belief’ as spiritual care. In doing so, practices and beliefs that were previously marginalized, or considered as peripheral, are turning into potential assets in the self-representation and networking of religious

⁴⁰¹ Interview Miura Hideki, 24 October 2014 WS451662: *Ii hōkō ni iku to [...] kitō-teki na uketori wo sareteiru kanōsei wa arimasu.* いい方向に行くと [...] 祈禱的な受け取りをされている可能性はあります。

⁴⁰² Interview Miura Hideki, 24 October 2014 WS451662: *Watashi no naka de wa, onaji naiyō desune.* 私の中では、同じ内容ですね。

practitioners. Discourse on *kitō* and related beliefs and practices as ‘spiritual care’ thereby functions as a proof of knowledge of local religious customs, as a marker for a deepened understanding for the needs of local people, and as a signifier for their trust in local religious institutions.

Miura, who had initially learned about the training of ‘interfaith chaplains’ in Tohoku on the internet, has since contributed to establishing a local multi-religious network of *rinshō shūkyōshi* care providers in Kyūshū, called the Kyūshū *rinshō shūkyōshi kai* 九州臨床宗教師会. His team was responsible for providing material and spiritual support in the wake of the 2016 Kumamoto earthquake, notably by starting a local Café de Monk Kyūshū.⁴⁰³ As with the ‘original’ Café de Monk initiated by Kaneta Taiō in the wake of the 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disasters in Japan – and which has functioned as a practical training venue for *rinshō shūkyōshi* trainees since 2012 – the Café de Monk Kyūshū relies on the interplay of earnest religious commitment and recreational, ludic activities. What draws the people to the mobile counseling café is cake, more so than Buddhism. The counseling and offering of rituals follow at a later time. This includes prayers for this-worldly benefits, and sometimes even exorcisms. One of the *kitō*-related practices that Kaneta Taiō offers by request is the making of protective clay figurines, known as *te no hira jizō* 手のひら地藏 (literally ‘palm of hand *jizō*’) together with survivors at temporary housing units. The practice has also been reported on in the media,⁴⁰⁴ and discussed by Taniyama Yōzō as an example of ‘religious care’ in his lectures for *rinshō shūkyōshi* trainees. Taniyama considers the process of “wholeheartedly handing over the figurine by the religious specialist (priest)” as an act of “religious care,” insofar as the figurine is believed to be charged with supernatural powers by

⁴⁰³ Interviews Miura Hideki, 24 October 2014 WS451662; WS451666. The group of spiritual care providers in Kyūshū is active on Facebook, see:

https://www.facebook.com/kyusyurinsyousyuukyoushikai/?hc_ref=NEWSFEED&fref=nf, accessed 01 May 2017. An article about the Kyūshū *rinshō shūkyōshi kai* and its activities was published in the *Kumamoto nichi nichi shinbun* of 17 September 2016, page 20. The newspaper article addresses the Café de Monk, the specifics of multi-religious disaster relief initiatives, and the overall effort to apply the experience and professional knowledge gained through participation in multi-religious disaster relief initiatives in the wake of the 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disasters in Japan to help survivors of the 2016 earthquake in Kumamoto.

⁴⁰⁴ See, for example, *Kahoku shinpō* of 26 May 2012. Video footage of Kaneta handing over a *jizō* figurine was furthermore presented in various news programs by NHK and NHK World, and in the documentary *Tomorrow: Nakihito no tamashii to tomo ni* 亡き人の魂とともに (Together with the souls of the dead) by NHK BS-1 (10 July 2013).

the religious specialist.⁴⁰⁵ Besides discussing the need to obtain the approval of the recipient of religious care in advance (*kea taishōsha no ryōkai ga hitsuyō* ケア対象者の了解が必要), Taniyama frequently stresses that careful attention of the surroundings is required for the practice of religious care in public spaces (*kōkyō kūkan* 公共空間), so as to not upset people who reject *kitō*, or the idea of a transmission of supernatural powers into a material object, in this case a clay figurine. It is within this context that ‘folk belief’ and clinic-inspired care form two interactive and complementary components of the training of ‘interfaith chaplains’ in post-2011 Japan.

Conclusion

The training of ‘clinical religious specialists’, or ‘interfaith chaplains’ at Tohoku University essentially prepares religious professionals to become portable. The program encourages Buddhist priests to leave their temples and practice in temporary housing units, hospices, and hospitals, where ‘spiritual care’ is needed. In pursuing their vocation in public spaces, priests get to interact with clients who are not affiliated with their temples, and who may not necessarily consider themselves to be religious. Formalizing these interactions through clinical licensing is a main concern of the training of ‘interfaith chaplains’ in affiliation with Tohoku University. In order to establish rules and standards for the practice of religion in the public sphere, Taniyama Yōzō and other teachers at the ‘Spirit Counseling Center’ educate clergy to become self-aware, and to be reflective about their individual sectarian training and practice. For Buddhist priests, this first of all concerns the etiquette and special procedures (*sahō*). Parishioners of family temples, Taniyama argues, generally expect ‘their’ priest to assume authority in conversations about Buddhism, death, or the family ancestors. They may expect him or her to express that authority through their choice of wording and bodily movements. Trainees on their way to becoming ‘clinical religious specialists’ are thus frequently reminded of their responsibilities, not only when it comes to refraining from

⁴⁰⁵ Slide number 13 of Taniyama’s presentation of 13 November 2013 for *rinshō shūkyōshi* trainees explains: “Since the religious specialist (priest) hands [the *jizō* figurine] over wholeheartedly, it is an act of religious care” *Shūkyōsha (sōryo) ga kokoro wo komete tewatasu koto de, shūkyōteki kea ni naru*. 宗教者（僧侶）が心を込めて手渡すことで、宗教的ケアになる。Taniyama Yōzō is not the only member of the “Spirit Counseling Center” who understands the making of the *jizō* figurines as a “magical” practice for this-worldly benefits. Ōmura Tetsuo, a Sōtō Zen priest and professional counselor, specifically used the term *kitō* for what Kaneta Taiō does when he hands over the figurines.

proselytization and expressions of sectarian norms and beliefs, but concerning their overall habitus, language, and style. A priest who talks to a stranger in a temporary housing unit or hospital as if he or she was a parishioner, Taniyama argues, is easily criticized for being an “arrogant person” (横柄者 *ōheisha*).

According to Taniyama, both ‘spiritual care’ and ‘religious care’ start with attentive listening (*keichō*). Attentive listening is considered to be a safe practice, insofar as the religious sentiments of the provider of care is concerned only by the request of the care recipient. As a non-professional way of providing care, however, *keichō* is not exclusive to religious specialists. The knowledge and practice of ‘folk belief’, combined with the knowledge of a formalized etiquette for interactions with clients in the public sphere, on the other hand, allows ‘clinical religious specialists’ to distinguish themselves from both ‘regular’ care providers, and from ‘regular’ religious specialists. It is within this combination that the chapter outlined a working definition of religion in post-2011 Japan. Following this definition, ‘folk belief’ and clinic-inspired care, as expressed in terms like *rinshō* 臨床 (clinical), form two interactive and complementary sources of legitimacy and authority.

Taniyama’s warning that “special care pertaining to the surroundings is needed” (*shūi he no hairyō wa hitsuyō* 周囲への配慮は必要) when charging hand-made *jizō* figurines with religious powers, illustrates the real danger involved in performing *kitō* and related practices in public spaces, especially when it comes to interactions with the spirits of the dead, exorcisms, and rituals that involve charging material objects with religious powers. One could argue that the risk reflected in Taniyama’s warning combines well with the danger that has always been ascribed to the practice of *kitō* as a potentially dangerous practice. Chapter Two has shown how the understanding of *kitō* as a staged moment of crisis is deeply embedded in the material culture of prayer monasteries, where the risk involved in dealing with potentially dangerous local gods is made tangible and accessible in sensory terms, through priestly accoutrements, special robes, special stages, mood lighting, and dramatic performances. This is not to misunderstand Taniyama’s warning as an expression of fear of spirit retribution; the risk implied by Taniyama in his warning of the dangers of practicing religion as a ‘clinical religious specialists’ in hospitals, hospices, or temporary housing units is first of all concerned with the fear of upsetting those who are suspicious of religions, understood as dangerous ‘cults’.

Putting *kitō* out of prayer monasteries and into the post-disaster context of religious care in temporary housing units certainly contributes to the fascination and appeal ascribed to the ‘clinical religious specialist’. As the media reports by NHK, Parry (2014), and other publications discussed in this chapter have shown, portrayals of religious aid initiatives in post-2011 Japan convey a fascination with ghosts and ‘folk beliefs’ that is new, compared to media portrayals of previous disasters. The curious fascination with ghosts and the mental health of disaster victims and their spiritual needs has seemingly outweighed concerns over possible negative repercussions in the media. It is possible that these portrayals lead to a reevaluation within sectarian discourses concerning the significance of *kitō* as a means of providing care, in the effort to promote sectarian disaster relief initiatives, just as the mass destruction and death in the wake of the 2011 tsunami has caused individual priests to reconsider their professional roles, and even motivated some of them to apply for admittance to the ‘interfaith chaplaincy’ training.

With that being said, it remains difficult for Japanese Buddhist priests to find access to medical health care facilities as sites of religious practice, even under the framework of ‘spiritual care’. This is not least due to the common association of Buddhist material culture with death and death-related practices. The visual markers of a Buddhist priest, notably the robe and tonsure, are instant reminders of a professional involvement in funerals. Most people in contemporary Japan die in hospitals, which perhaps only emphasizes the hesitation of medical care providers, many of whom oppose the idea of hosting priests as counselors in health care facilities, if only because of their visual appearances and the ‘religious’ associations they evoke. It is for these reasons that Buddhist priests are often seen wearing informal work robes (*samue*), which are not exclusive to religious professionals, when they provide counseling services at hospitals, but which may nonetheless make those wearing them appear Buddhist in style, as also Chapter Four has shown. Accordingly, what makes for a ‘clinical religious specialist’ starts with his or her appearance in the public sphere, with material markers, and with the ability and willingness to switch between religious and non-religious types of etiquette and appearance. What matters in this context are not only the professional theological ascriptions to certain material objects and texts, and their functions and use, but the types of ascriptions made by clients and others, whose views and expectations of the Buddhist etiquette, priestly accoutrements, and material Buddhist culture and practice may vary, depending on their age, their education, as well as their social, local, and cultural backgrounds. It is for these reasons that the training of ‘clinical religious specialists’ discusses

the intended or unintended effects of *sahō*, and the peculiarities of formalized conversations between religious professionals and clients.

The Tohoku area has become a test case for the exploration of ‘spiritual care’, as much as it has become a laboratory for the exploration of Buddhist culture in action, and more broadly, for the exploration of religious responses to pressing social problems, such as rural depopulation and urbanization. This chapter presented perspectives on selective case studies to show how religious organizations have redefined their mission by responding to emerging social needs through training. Interestingly, the most popular ‘interfaith chaplaincy’ training in Japan today takes place far away from Japan’s economic and political urban centers, in an area that is well-known for its local religious culture and association with ‘folk beliefs’. Municipalities in Miyagi and Iwate prefectures are drawing on their image as sites where ‘traditional’ Buddhism and ‘folk beliefs’ are still alive. Tōno in Iwate Prefecture, for example, is best known for being a site of action in Yanagita Kunio’s collection of folk legends, titled the *Tōno monogatari* 遠野物語 (*Legends of Tōno*). More than one hundred years after its first publication in 1910, the *Tōno monogatari* continues to draw tourists to the area. Locals in Tōno city continue to promote and celebrate local ‘folk beliefs’ and rural customs in a dedicated theme park, where also Yanagita and his works are being introduced to visitors, and where a wide range of material objects are on display in a souvenir shop, including *kappa*-styled foods, drinks, and toys. The training of ‘clinical religious specialists’, or ‘interfaith chaplains’ offers religious professionals opportunities to explore ‘dying’ local beliefs and practices in rural areas that they may not find in urban centers like Tokyo. Not only is the *rinshō shūkyōshi* training’s focus on the local ‘spiritual capital’ of the Tohoku area arguably just as important for the shaping of the care providers’ individual religiosities as the focus on clinic-inspired care, but the question arises as to how this training initiative changes the locale. Further research should also address the recipients of ‘spiritual care’, their social and local backgrounds, and the effects that the practice may have on them.

In any case, the training of ‘interfaith chaplains’ in Tohoku allows participants to explore their individual identities in an environment that allows for the study of and interactions with *kitō* and ghost beliefs, and to explore the portability of religious practices and etiquette in private and public spaces. Multiple sources of legitimacy for participants of the training are provided in presenting them with the opportunity to help disaster victims and others in need of spiritual care, by providing opportunities to explore the effects of rural depopulation first-hand, and by offering the chance to access ‘dying’ local networks and

practices in recreational settings. The identities of religious aid providers and how they see themselves in the world are likely to change in the process, as a result of these interactions in the disaster zone, as also Taniyama addressed in an interview for a video about the training of ‘interfaith chaplains’:

It rarely happens in Japan that someone from a different religion participates in one of your ceremonies. The time that participants spend together in the course of our training furthers the trainees’ mutual understanding and acknowledgement of each other’s religious beliefs. [...] Religious specialists value their own religious beliefs over anything. In the process of our training, their beliefs are being acknowledged by members of other religions. This seems to boost their self-confidence. [...] At the same time, they learn to acknowledge the religious persuasions of others. It is within this context that the training provides for an effective moment of spiritual care among the participants, as well as a learning experience. (Quote Taniyama Yōzō, see Graf 2016d).⁴⁰⁶

This self-reflective transformation of participants in the course of their ‘interfaith chaplaincy’ training can also be observed in the concrete ways that religious professionals are studying and marketing themselves and their own practice as part of their training, when they give interviews to reporters, or when media publications about these activities are being analyzed in lectures as part of the ‘interfaith chaplaincy’ training at Tohoku University, where also the latest academic contributions to the study of chaplaincy by the teachers at the ‘Spirit Counseling Center’ are discussed.

This chapter explored how the Tohoku University-affiliated Spirit Counseling Center, in its distinctive collaboration of religious and non-religious aid providers, has contributed to a shifting image of religion in Japan’s public sphere, and in doing so illustrated how the renegotiation of *kitō* as spiritual care developed in the course of this process. I have shown how disasters in recent history in Japan have changed priests and their understanding of *kitō*,

⁴⁰⁶ *Chigau shūkyō no hito ga jibun no girei ni sankā suru toiu koto mo, ma, mettani nai wake desune. dakara sono jikan wa otagai no shinkō wo mitomeau toiu jikan ni naru wake desu. [...] shūkyōsha ni totte wa jibun no shinkō tte ichiban daiji na mono desukara, sono ichiban daiji na mono wo chigau shūkyō no hito ga mitometekurerunda. Sore ga osoraku sono jiko kōteikan ni tsunagarundesuyone. [...] De sore wa dōji ni tasha wo mitomeru toiu koto ni mo naru node, otagai ni totte hijō ni ii kea no jikan de mo aru shi, manabi no jikan de mo aru desuyone.* 違う宗教の人が自分の儀礼に参加するということも、ま、めったにないわけですね。だから、その時間はお互いの信仰を認め合うという時間になるわけです。[...] 宗教者にとっては自分の信仰って一番大事なものですから、その一番大事なものを違う宗教の人が認めてくれるんだ。それがおそらくそ自己固定感につながるんですよね。[...] でそれは同時に他者を認めるということにもなるので、お互いにとって非常にいいケアの時間でもあるし、学びの時間でもあるですよ。

by setting up priests as counselors, and by exploring *kitō* as a means of ‘spiritual care’. Interactions around *kitō* and spiritual care revealed that this renegotiation is aimed at performing a normative turn among religious elites, not only in response to unfavorable media reportage on religion in the wake of the Aum Shinrikyō incident of 1995, but to overcome sectarian restrictions against *kitō* and other, related stigmatized practices and beliefs.

This is not to say that Buddhist sects try to ‘medicalize’ their priests for public acceptance, but to highlight that these sects are not to be understood as monolithic blocks, as different agents and contexts suggest different types of legitimization and practice within and beyond sectarian frameworks. Licensing in collaboration with universities in Japan provides one important means of legitimization, but other modes of nonprofessional care and ‘traditional’ sources of religious authority remain relevant. It would thus be wrong to understand clinic-inspired licensing as a substitute or genealogical progression of the protective *ofuda* amulets distributed by prayer monasteries and their legendary tales (*engi*) about local temple-guarding gods. Not only does the training of ‘interfaith chaplains’ require and presume traditional modes of religious training and *sahō*, but ‘interfaith chaplains’ may elaborate on different types of professional identities as temple priests, counselors, or working combinations of both. At the same time, the contextualization of *kitō* and disaster in different social and historical contexts in this chapter has shown the extent to which the renegotiation of *kitō* as ‘spiritual care’ emerged from earlier precedents, insofar as many aspects of ‘spiritual care’ are comparable to what priests have traditionally offered as *jinsei sōdan* 人生相談, or “having an open ear and useful tips to help others with their issues in life” within their local communities, albeit without receiving much attention by scholars or the media.

Conclusions

Kitō is a practice at the heart and center of modern Japanese Sōtō Zen Buddhism, as much as it remains peripheral to how many of the Sōtō sect's leaders define their mission. *Kitō* does not qualify for what the great majority of temple priests and lay associates envision as representative of 'Zen', especially if compared to *zazen* – a practice that has defined the self-understanding and global brand image of Sōtō Zen Buddhism for centuries. This dissertation drew on theories of religious practice and material religion to demonstrate how 'meditation', or ritual sitting and prayer rituals relate to each other within a local and social context on the ground. A crucial finding of this thesis concerns the fact that in nearly all of the cases explored, diverging opinions about the legitimacy of *kitō* relate to the quality ascribed to the worldly benefits *kitō* promises, the purpose and timing of prayer rituals, as well as to questions concerning the agency of *kitō* recipients, their social standing, and their presumed expectations and needs. It is here that all chapters of this dissertation intersect: From Dōgen and the ascriptions to his practice and criticism of *kitō* in medieval Japan, to the attempted distinction from the rituals and offerings of so-called New Religions, to the discussions of merit transfer in the context of monastic training, or the interactions of prayers for this-worldly benefits and spiritual care in the wake of the 2011 tsunami, *kitō* has always marked some sort of a fault line, along which worldly norms and religious identities were contested, often in adaptation to shifting social norms and needs. Pulling at the thread of *kitō*, as each chapter of this dissertation has shown in various ways, unravels complex problems pertaining to sectarian identity, religious authority, matters of representation, and institutional structuring in contemporary Japanese temple Buddhism. Even the apologetic views of *kitō* presented in this study show a strong tendency to justify prayers for this-worldly benefits by discrediting or excluding certain benefits and their recipients, depending on their backgrounds, motivations and intentions to have a prayer ritual performed on their behalf.

Kitō has always been subject to negotiation, and a potent means of negotiating worldly norms, social capital, and power. Chapter One has shown criticisms of *kitō* in Sōtō Zen Buddhism are as old as the Sōtō Zen sect, and as enduring as the practice of *kitō* in Sōtō Zen Buddhism. Far from being concerned with theological answers to the question whether its long history qualifies *kitō* as a Sōtō Zen practice or not, this dissertation addressed specific socio-historical developments in order to examine the normativity of sectarian discourse on *kitō*. The research that perpetuates this normative discourse is often reflective of contemporary negotiations of religious authority and professionalization, perhaps more so

than it reflects the social reality of the distant past, as the discussion of Dōgen and his ritual calendar has shown, which included prayers for protection from fire that addressed the kitchen god Sōshin, among other gods and practices for this-worldly benefits that were marginalized by scholars in the modern era in particular. Based on the examination of modernist criticisms of *kitō* that tend to project contemporary subjects of negotiation into the distant past without considering the local and social conditions of the time, this dissertation sought to show how different understandings and norms pertaining to the history of Zen and *kitō* play out on the ground in Japan today. Using the example of Kasuisai, Chapters Two and Three addressed the specific ways in which prayer monasteries envision, promote, and materialize selective views of history and modern, transculturally shaped understandings of ‘Zen’, with what kinds of intentions, and to what effect.

The study of *kitō* may yield further insights into how Buddhist institutions in Japan transformed in the midst of modern social change. Chapter One has shown that the popularity of *kitō jiin* increased in the modern era in particular, due to a pluralization of access to religious practices, the ability to travel, a diversification of *kitō* in adaptation to shifting social needs and expectations, and the religious marketing of *kitō jiin*, which funded sectarian modernization initiatives. In any case, Satō Shunkō (2003: 138-139) reminds us that *kitō* may not simply be considered as a negligible “obstacle” (*shōgaibutsu* 障害物) to modernity that stands in the way of ‘original’ Buddhism, understood as a religion compatible with modern social norms. Over a long period of time, scholars of Japanese Buddhism and sectarian intellectuals suggested that modern scientific rationalism and the development of medical care would mark the end of *kitō* as a non-professional means of cure. However, promoting the end of *kitō* as an anti-modern practice that opposes an ideal image of ‘Zen’, Satō argues, means destabilizing the very foundation that the Sōtō Zen sect as a modern institution is built on. The revenue derived from *kitō* is believed to account for only about ten percent of the Sōtō sect’s income. Compared to the overwhelming reliance on funerals and ancestor veneration rituals, *kitō* plays a marginal role in the management of the great majority of Sōtō Zen temples. With few exemptions, however, the few wealthy temples that function as the financial backbone of the Sōtōshū’s sectarian institutional structures and training regimens, are *kitō jiin*. Further research should address the role of *kitō jiin* in the modern restructuring of other Buddhist sects more broadly.

Using the examples of Kasuisai and Daiyūzan Saijōji, Chapter Two introduced the everyday life at *kitō jiin* through the lens of the setting of prayer monasteries, their layout,

material culture, ritual calendars, and circuits of ritualized worship. By focusing on the constellation of conditions that enable the experience of *kitō* as a religious sensation, and by elucidating the relatively fixed ‘sensational form’ of *kitō*, to speak with Meyer (2008), the chapter was able to demonstrate how *kitō* relates to *zazen* as two interactive and complementary components of ‘prayer Buddhism’, how prayer rituals address the bodies and the senses of the recipients of this-worldly benefits in what I described as a staged moments of crisis, how understandings of the danger and curiosity ascribed to Akiha devotion materialize in the process, and how opportunities for spiritual care open up before and after prayer rituals, in conversations over tea with priests and staff. Further research should pay attention to the important roles of women employees at prayer monasteries. As Chapter Two suggested in its discussion of temple staff as mediators between clergy and temple visitors, the role of women employees in enabling and framing the experience of *kitō* by mediating between different groups of social actors, and by providing catering and care services before and after the ritual, can hardly be overstated. A study addressing this topic should also encompass assessing the role of women employees in the branding and marketing of *kitō*, which this dissertation observed through interactions between clergy and public officials, business leaders, tourist associations, publishers, and artists.

An overarching theme of Chapters Two to Four concerns the various identities of *kitō jiin* as sites of religious branding, worship, training, and tourism. The study of co-existing, at times conflicting identities of Kasuisai as a prayer monastery for fire protection, Zen temple, ‘power spot’, and meditation center, for example, revealed how seemingly unrelated aspects of religious practice may be equally important factors in the making of this-worldly benefits, and in maintaining Kasuisai’s status as a prayer monastery against shifting ascriptions to ‘Zen’ as a global and local phenomenon. It is within this context that Chapter Three in particular gave insights into the particular ways that modern, transculturally shaped beliefs and practices of global Zen Buddhism play out on the ground, by showing how and why Zen Buddhist prayer monasteries in contemporary Japan employ marketing strategies that draw on a presumed ‘otherness’ of Zen, observed for example through the lens of the implementation of package deals that sell a variety of religious experiences in bundles, as part of overnight temple stays. Monks have to research trends, and advertise their products in the effort to target different audiences in different ways, using different means and channels of communication.

One of the most important findings of Chapter Three concerns the fact that decreasing support by *kō* groups is hardly visible on the outside, as busloads of tourists continue to visit

Kasuisai on an average weekend. Compared to temple support associations, individual tourists show no interest in supporting prayer monasteries financially on a continuous basis, nor do they act on behalf of their local communities. It can hardly be overstated that most of the ‘regular’ visitors to prayer monasteries, among them spiritual seekers, Zen interests, and people with a general interest in Japanese culture and history, or in nature, flowers, and photography, no longer strive to maintain multi-generational relationships with *kitō jūin*. Monks turn to experimental approaches in their search for ways to establish lasting and meaningful connections with families, couples, and individual tourists, but the profit derived from overnight temple stays, *zazen*, and vegetarian cloister cuisine will arguably never compare to the magnitude of support by *kō* groups. Temple support associations are disappearing from Japan’s religious landscape, due to demographic changes that put the future of Japanese temple Buddhism at risk.

Kasuisai’s package deals in response to decreasing *kō* group activity cater to ordinary Japanese who expect convenience and entertainment, based on their interactions with marketing in their everyday lives, but the monastery keeps the promise of this-worldly benefits alive. The recontextualization of *zazen* and *kitō* in the making of new package deals not only reflects modern and transcultural understandings of both practices, as the idea of letting practitioners sit in *zazen* at Kasuisai demonstrates, but it shapes and transforms Buddhism in the process, as Kasuisai combines *kitō* with sutra copying, while deemphasizing the role of local deity cults in the mediation of this-worldly benefits. As with *zazen* and the monastic garden work, sutra copying for this-worldly benefits is a practice that requires temple visitors to participate actively, more so than in a traditional prayer ritual. The understanding of *kitō* as a staged moment of crisis is still reflected in the everyday performance of *kitō*, but this sensation alone no longer seems to suffice for temple visitors, who expect their bodies and their senses to be challenged as part of the experience of ‘Zen’. As the analysis of overnight temple stays has shown, tourism to prayer monasteries nowadays often presumes the sensations of pain and pain release in an extraordinary setting. It is within the experiences of pain and stress relief resulting from active participation by temple visitors and lay practitioners in everyday monastic activities that we may observe and learn how contemporary responses to declining *kō* group activity are different from previous opportunities for religious participation at *kitō jūin*, which were based on the understanding of monks as religious professionals who endure ascetic practices on behalf of the recipients of this-worldly benefits and their communities, in return for donations.

Chapter Four picked up on the interplay of renunciation and this-worldly benefits in the training of monks at *kitō jūin*, by discussing the concept of merit transfer, and by exploring the making of religious authority as it relates to the special procedures and etiquette that monks in training learn to adopt. In evoking the religious sensation of a staged moment of crisis on an everyday basis, prayer monasteries not only require a unique setting and special worship halls, but they rely on a workforce that only sectarian training centers are able to mobilize. In performing *kitō* as part of their training, monks may learn basic ritual patterns and liturgical components in a relatively short period of time, as well as gain social skills in interactions with different audiences and actors from almost all strata of society. Once they completed their training, however, most priests will never practice *kitō* on a regular basis again. This is partly due to the embeddedness of *kitō* in the environmental settings of prayer monasteries and their material Buddhist culture, because prayer rituals require at least around ten monks for the religious sensation of *kitō* as a staged moment of crisis to come into effect, and because there is no clearly defined path to *kitō* authority in Sōtō Zen Buddhism beyond the context of *kitō jūin*, as local oral traditions of secretive transmissions from master to student are declining. It is for these reasons that the sensation of *kitō* as practiced at prayer monasteries in contemporary Japan is not easily made portable. This is important to note, not only when it comes to the exploration of efforts to make priests portable as ‘interfaith chaplains’, but because Sōtō Zen scholars tend to identify priests as religious professionals and their training as sources of *kitō* authority, whereas the materiality of *kitō jūin* is widely ignored. Satō Shunkō (2008: 158), for example, argues that only an “appropriate priest” (*fusawashii sōryo rashii* ふさわしい僧侶らしい) with a professional sophistication may qualify as a Buddhist *kitō* professional. In practice, such a priest is qualified by his otherworldly lifestyle and appearance. The more world-renouncing and indifferent a monk is believed to be towards this-worldly benefits, Satō explains, the stronger his or her extraordinary powers are believed to be (see Satō 2003: 142-143; a view that also Sasaki (1989) shares). This understanding implies that the authority of *kitō* priests relies on their training and personal character and attitude towards worldliness, but ignores the material culture of *kitō jūin* as a source of *kitō* authority, and the diverse sources of spiritual capital of those who offer *kitō*. As Chapter Four has shown, moreover, the turnover of trainees and monks in office at *kitō jūin* is generally much higher than at ‘ordinary’ *danka* temples, suggesting that the environmental, material, and historical characteristics of prayer temples and their legendary tales about local temple-guarding gods matter more to visitors than the ‘appropriateness’ of individual priests, who are believed to function as mediators between

local gods, the Buddha Dharma, and the recipients of this-worldly benefits, but who are essentially exchangeable, whereas the place and its material culture are not.

In comparing the traditional Sōtō Zen training regimens explored in Chapter Four with the training of ‘clinical religious specialists’, or ‘interfaith chaplains’ at Tohoku University, Chapter Five examined how alternative modes of religious professionalization emerged from earlier precedents and represent responses to problems that some of the leaders of new ‘spiritual care’ training initiatives experienced in their own sectarian education as Buddhist priests. In so doing, the chapter clarified how the exploration of *kitō* and training may yield further insights into how Buddhism transforms in the midst of urbanization and demographic change in Japan’s aging society. An essential goal of the training of ‘clinical religious specialists’, as has been shown, is to make priests portable, by educating them to pursue their vocation in public spaces. The guidelines established within new ‘spiritual care’ initiatives are aimed at regulating interactions with clients of different local, social, and religious backgrounds. Formalizing these interactions in practical terms is probably even more important than the aspect of licensing, as the mere affiliation of the training program with Tohoku University generates legitimacy and interest. What trainees receive upon graduation is actually a certificate of completion, but they do not obtain an academic degree. Further research should explore the ongoing effort by religious and academic actors in Japan to establish a nationwide standard for ‘spiritual care’ providers, and how different religious groups in Japan envision their future role in the public sphere. The future of the ‘Spirit Counseling Center’ and its training of ‘interfaith chaplains’ remains uncertain, and practitioners of ‘spiritual care’ in Japan lack access to medical care facilities, but the Tohoku University-affiliated program has since expanded to other universities. Moreover, the field of home nursing care is growing.

The careful attention given to the intended and unintended effects of public displays of Buddhist visual markers in the training of clergy at Tohoku University indicates that clerics who already operate as care providers in the public sphere perceive a need to raise awareness among religious professionals to reflect on the impression they make on clients who are not the members of their temples and sects. Monastic training at *kitō jin* entails interactions with actors from almost all strata of society, including many visitors who are entirely unaware of the monastery’s sectarian affiliation, or even the sects their families belong to. Interactions with *kitō* recipients may even require monks to offer counseling to clients who are essentially strangers, yet this counseling takes place within the monastery’s precincts, where monks

present themselves to visitors as a unified monastic body. Trainees receive no education in practicing Buddhism in hospitals, hospices, or temporary housing units, where displays of the Buddhist etiquette may have different effects. Chapter Five has shown how practicing Buddhism in the public sphere requires self-reflective adjustments to the habitus and appearance of priests in accordance with the rules of host institutions, the willingness to collaborate with non-religious care providers, as well as special conversational skills, and the ability to comprehend and respond to criticisms of religion and proselytization on the spot.

Chapters Three, Four, and Five intersect in arguing that traditional non-professional and clinic-inspired approaches to care and clinical licensing coexist in Japan's contemporary religious landscape. Chapter Five furthermore showed that 'folk practices' and 'spiritual care' form interactive and complementary sources of legitimacy and authority for proponents of Buddhism in the public sphere. Further research should not only look at the ways in which volunteer activity in post-disaster treatment initiatives inspires clergy to explore their identities as counselors, temple priests, or working combinations of both, but to explore how volunteer activity changes the locale. It would also be insightful to learn how the training of 'interfaith chaplains' and their education in 'practical religious studies' draws on the local academic profile of religious studies at Tohoku University, and its rich history of ethnographic research on folk customs in the Tohoku area. Future studies should also focus on the clients and recipients of 'spiritual care' within a local context. Chapter Five presented selective views on Buddhist priests as care providers, but lacked a client-oriented focus that addresses the age range and gender of clients, and their reception of 'spiritual care' within and beyond post-disaster religion-related care initiatives. Interactions between chaplains and social workers and medical doctors should also be addressed. Chapter Five focused on Buddhist priests in particular, but neglected the involvement of counselors from Christian groups and New Religions, among others. Further inquiry into the field of 'spiritual care' and religion and health-care in contemporary Japan should examine the selection of participating organizations, the admittance of trainees to the *rinshō shūkyōshi* training program, and the age range, gender, and social backgrounds of participants. Broader aspects of religion in the public sphere that need clarification are matters of hospital accreditation requirements, and the long-term effects of religion-related disaster relief initiatives. Transcultural and comparative studies should expand the scope of research on 'spiritual care' as it relates to local-specific customs, rules, and beliefs across Asia and the world. Future studies should also address the relationship between 'spiritual care', psychology, and psychotherapy in the broader healthcare context, as well as the local and cultural embeddedness of therapy culture in Japan and in

other regions. It is within this context that religious studies may contribute to the interdisciplinary research on healthcare being conducted in the broader context of cultural studies.

Religion has always been subject to negotiation. *Kitō jūin* in Japanese Sōtō Zen Buddhism, and the disaster-afflicted communities of Tohoku both form test cases for Buddhist culture in action, and for the exploration of religious training, branding, and marketing. This thesis argued that multi-methodological and multi-sited approaches, along with an amalgamation of theories of religious practice, material religion, and religious aesthetics may further our understanding how this negotiation plays out on the ground. The mediation of religion on the internet should not be exempt from this study. The success of the ‘clinical religious specialist’ would arguably not have been possible without digitization and the spread of social media applications like Twitter and Facebook in the wake of the 2011 tsunami in Japan. The training in affiliation with Tohoku University draws heavily on the visual power of images of *sahō* in the disaster zone, and arguably aims to normalize the practice of ‘spiritual care’ by producing and sharing images and video footage of religious specialists in public spaces, particularly by showing them both in ceremonial robes, performing rituals, as well as in secular garments, in conversations with clients.

As with the different global and local brand images of Zen, religion-related post-disaster aid initiatives in Japan rely on the visual power of the Buddhist etiquette, as much as those producing and sharing these images seem to aim to further define the meanings ascribed to what this etiquette stands for. Photos and film footage of the 2011 disasters in Japan circulated on the news worldwide, including powerful images of praying priests amidst the destruction caused by the tsunami that conveyed a message of compassion and earnest religious commitment in the face of calamity. Such images also graced magazines and book covers (see for example Watts ed. 2012). Media reports depicting monks in conversations with clients and disaster victims, or on the occasion of rituals and ludic, recreational activities in the disaster zone were less concerned with the presumed ‘decline’ of funerary Buddhism in a normative sense, as they portrayed priests as engaged community members, who respond to disasters in practical ways, by providing important spaces and practices for recreation along with ‘spiritual care’ and earnest prayers, and, on rare occasions, even exorcisms. The future role of Buddhism in the public sphere not least depends on answers to the question whether Buddhist professionals will be successful in retaining their influence on ascriptions to Buddhist visual markers, by asserting their authority over the material dimensions of Buddhist

culture, including the unique material and environmental characteristics of *kitō jin*, as they relate to a presumed control over supernatural powers for the purpose of this-worldly benefits, no matter if these benefits are defined by traditional prayer categories or, more generally, in terms of stress-reduction, recreation, and personal wellbeing.

Glossary

Aichi Senmon Nisōdō	愛知専門尼僧堂	the Sōtō Zen Aichi nunnery
Akiha	秋葉	name of a fire god (worshipped at Kasuisai)
Akiha jinja	秋葉神社	Akiha Shintō Shrine at Mt. Akiha
Akiha Sanjakubō	秋葉三尺坊	name of a fire god (worshipped at Kasuisai)
<i>Akiha sōhonden</i>	秋葉総本殿	‘head-center of Akiha worship’
<i>anjin</i>	安心	spiritual assurance; ‘peace of mind’
<i>anjin ron</i>	安心論	doctrines of spiritual assurance
<i>banka fugin</i>	晩課諷經	evening sutra-chanting service
Benten	弁天	name of a god (worshipped at Kasuisai)
<i>bentenden</i>	弁天殿	building dedicated to the god of fortune Benten at Kasuisai
<i>bihāra</i>	ビハーラ	‘Vihara’ a Buddhist terminal care concept is rooted in Jōdo Shin Buddhist beliefs and practices
Bishū shusse kō	尾州出世講	name of a temple support association affiliated with Kasuisai
Bishū takahane kō	尾州鷹羽講	name of a temple support association affiliated with Kasuisai
<i>borantia</i>	ボランティア	the Japanese counterpart for volunteer
<i>borantia gannen</i>	ボランティア元年	‘First year of volunteers’
<i>butsuden fugin</i>	佛殿諷經	Buddha hall sutra chanting
<i>bunka kōenkai</i>	文化講演会	culture lecture series
Bunkachō	文化庁	Agency of Cultural Affairs
<i>bunrei</i>	分霊	‘share of the spirit’ of a deity
<i>bunrei jiin</i>	分霊自院	here: temples in possession of a ‘share of the spirit’ of Akiha Sanjakubō
<i>bunshin</i>	分身	replica; literally: ‘part of the body’ of a statue;

		synonymous with <i>buntai</i>
<i>buntai</i>	分体	‘share of the body’ of a deity
<i>chie</i>	智慧; 知恵	embodied knowledge; wisdom
<i>chirashi</i>	散らし	pamphlet; poster; flyer
<i>chiryō</i>	治療	treatment
<i>chishiki</i>	知識	knowledge (in an intellectual sense)
<i>chōka</i>	朝課	morning service (performed at Zen training monasteries)
<i>chōka fugin</i>	朝課諷經	morning sutra-chanting service
<i>chōnaikai</i>	町内会	neighborhood association
Chūōji	中央寺	a temple in Tokyo
<i>daiaragyō</i>	大荒行	a 100-day ascetic practice conducted annually in winter by male Nichiren priests
<i>daigomi</i>	醍醐味	‘most exquisite taste’; (a ritual component of the annual fire festival at Kasuisai that involves the degustation of <i>sake</i>)
<i>daigongen</i>	大権現	a title that refers to a local god’s status as a great avatar, or manifestation of Buddha
<i>dai-kitō</i>	大祈祷	large-scale prayer monastery; ‘big <i>kitō</i> ’
<i>daisan jiku</i>	代参軸	a special scroll designed to register the dates of <i>kō</i> group visits and <i>ofuda</i> amulet sales
<i>daisan kō</i>	代参講	a temple support association that pays regular visits to a prayer monastery, often on an annual basis, by sending representatives to attend prayer rituals and collect <i>ofuda</i> amulets on behalf of their communities
Daiyūzan Saijōji	大雄山最乗寺	prayer monastery in Kanagawa Prefecture
Daiyūzan Saijōji Hakone Betsuin	大雄山最乗寺箱根別院	a branch-temple of Daiyūzan Saijōji in

Hakone

Daiyūzan Saijōji Tōkyō Betsuin 大雄山最乗寺東京別院 a branch-temple of Daiyūzan Saijōji in
Tokyo

<i>dajōkan</i>	太政官	Council of State
<i>dajō daijin zenji</i>	太政大臣禪師	‘priestly chancellor’ (a rank awarded to Dōkyō)
<i>daisho'in</i>	大書院	name of a main building at Kasuisai, which also houses the reception hall
<i>daitei'en</i>	大庭園	name of an inner garden at Kasuisai
Daitokuji	大徳寺	name of a Rinzai Zen monastery in Kyoto
<i>danka</i>	檀家	temple parish household
<i>danka seido</i>	檀家制度	multi-generational system of affiliations between Buddhist temples and supporting families, for which Buddhist temples conduct mortuary rituals and ancestor veneration rituals continuously
<i>dantai</i>	団体	group
<i>deai</i>	出合い	encounter
<i>denbō</i>	傳法	a secretive initiation, and the third step on the way to becoming a fully ordained Sōtō Zen monk
<i>densu</i>	殿司	moves behind the scenes in Akiha's special worship hall; transports ritual objects to and from the altar (position at Kasuisai)
<i>dōan</i>	堂行	operates the large metal gong in the main hall, as well as a small bell (here: position at Kasuisai)
<i>dokyō</i>	読経	sutra recitation
Dōryō	道了	name of a temple-guarding god at Daiyūzan Saijōji
<i>dōshi</i>	導師	ceremonial leader; officiant
<i>Doyō sanzen kyōshitsu</i>	土曜参禅教室	Saturday Zen Class

Ehima kō	江比間講	name of a temple support association affiliated with Kasuisai
<i>eitai kuyō bo; eitai kuyō baka</i>	永代供養墓	‘eternal memorial grave’
<i>ekōmon</i>	回向文	a standardized verse for the offering of merits to a Buddha, god, or spirit
<i>en</i>	縁	(karmic) bond
En no kai	縁の会	‘Society of Bonds’; name of a lay association initiated and run by Tōchōji in Tokyo
<i>engi</i>	縁起	legendary tale about the foundation of a temple
<i>enjū nenju</i>	園頭念誦	invocation by the head of the monastery garden
<i>fugin</i>	諷経	sutra-chanting service
<i>fukudō</i>	副堂	operates the wooden fish drum (<i>mokugyo</i> 木魚) among other ritual instruments (here: position at Kasuisai)
<i>fushigi</i>	不思議	‘mysterious’
<i>fūsu</i>	副寺	assistant comptroller; here: the second-highest monastic rank at Kasuisai
<i>fusumae</i>	襖絵	sliding doors
<i>gakkō sanzen kenshū</i>	学校参禅研修	Zen training for schools
<i>gakyaku settai</i>	賀客接待	formal invitations of lay pay patrons as part of the New Year’s ceremonies at a Zen prayer monastery
<i>gedatsu</i>	解脱	‘liberation’
<i>genba</i>	現場	literally: ‘place of action’; a term used to refer to the local temple level
Gendai kyōgaku kenkyū sentā	現代教学研究センター	‘Research Center for Contemporary Sōtō
Gendai kyōgaku kenkyūkai	現代教学研究会	‘Research Group for Contemporary Sōtō Teaching’ Teaching

Gendai shūgaku kenkyū bumon 現代宗学研究部門 ‘Research Division for Contemporary Sectarian Teaching’

<i>genkō giki</i>	現行儀軌	‘principles of momentary merit transfer’
<i>genze ri'yaku</i>	現世利益	this-worldly benefits
Gesshin'e	月心会	‘Moon Spirit Society’; name of a lay society initiated and run by Kasuisai
<i>geta</i>	下駄	wooden clogs
<i>godai kitō jūin</i>	五大祈禱寺院	also <i>godai kigansho</i> 五大祈願所; the ‘five great Sōtō Zen prayer temples’
<i>godō</i>	後堂	literally: ‘rear hall roshi’; a Zen monastic title that refers to the seating position next to the rear exit in the <i>zazen</i> hall. <i>Godō</i> is typically the fourth- or fifth-highest rank at a prayer monastery
Gohonzan Tenryūji	護本山天龍寺	a temple nearby Shinjuku Station
<i>gojōe</i>	五條衣;	the five-panel robe (also known as <i>andae</i> 安陀會)
<i>gokaichō tokubetsu kitō</i>	御開帳特別祈禱	here: ‘special prayer ritual on the occasion of the public exhibition of Dōryō’
<i>gokokutō</i>	護国塔	literally: ‘nation-protecting stupa’; name of a stupa at Kasuisai, constructed by Itō Chūta
<i>gokuraku jōdo</i>	極楽浄土	Buddha Amida’s Pure Land
<i>goma</i>	護摩	wooden plaques burned at temples and shrines for this-worldly benefits, and for the veneration of ancestral souls
<i>goshinden</i>	御真殿	a special worship hall for Akiha Sanjakubō at Kasuisai (commonly known as 御神殿 at other prayer monasteries that worship local gods in dedicated special worship halls)
<i>goshinden dōan</i>	御直殿堂行	operates the gong and other percussion instruments

		in Akiha's special worship hall, and performs <i>kokyō</i> 拳經 by reading the <i>ekō</i> texts for the dedication of merits during <i>kitō</i> prayer rituals (here: position at Kasuisai)
<i>goshintai</i>	御真体	main icon; literally: 'true body' of a local god
Gunzenbō Daigongen	軍善坊大権現	a <i>tengu</i> noted to help cure people's feet and legs
<i>gyō</i>	行	ascetic practice
<i>gyōja</i>	行者	ascetic practitioner
Gyoran Kannon	魚籃觀音	a Kannon Bodhisattva venerated in ancestor veneration rituals for fish (worshipped at Kasuisai)
<i>gyōten no hoshi</i>	暁天の星	'stars at the break of dawn'
Hakusan Myōri Daigongen	白山妙理大権現	a god noted to guard the earth and temple precincts (worshipped at Kasuisai)
<i>han</i>	藩	feudal domains in Tokugawa Japan; turned to prefectures in 1871
Hanabi kō	花火講	name of a temple support association affiliated with Kasuisai
<i>Hanshin daishinsai higai bukkōsha kuyō</i>	阪神大震災被害物故者供養	memorial rites for the victims of the Hanshin Earthquake disaster
<i>hatsumōde tsuā</i>	初詣ツアー	New Year's tours to shrines and temples organized by travel agencies
<i>hattō</i>	法堂	dharma hall; term used by monks at Kasuisai for the monastery's main hall
<i>hei</i>	幣	sacred paper wands, used for the embodiment of local gods
<i>hi watari</i>	火渡り	fire walk
<i>hibuse sōhonzan</i>	火防総本山	'fire prevention head monastery'
<i>hibutsu</i>	秘仏	'hidden Buddha'

<i>higan</i>	彼岸	the spring and autumn equinoxes
<i>hihō nana-jū-go sen gokūshiki</i>	秘法七十五膳御供式	‘secret feeding ceremony with seventy-five plates’
<i>hijutsu</i>	秘術	secret performance related to <i>kitō</i>
<i>hi-nichijōteki</i>	非日常的	‘extraordinary’
<i>hishiryō</i>	非思量	‘non-thinking’; an orthodoxy that aims to terminate individual reflection by Sōtō Zen practitioners
<i>hōjōe</i>	放生会	here: memorial service for eel (practiced annually at Kasuisai)
<i>hōmotsukan</i>	宝物館	literally: ‘treasure room’; functions as a museum at Kasuisai
<i>hondō</i>	本堂	main hall
<i>hontai</i>	本体	original icon of a deity
<i>honzon</i>	本尊	main object of worship
<i>hōō</i>	法王	‘Buddhist king’, or ‘king of the dharma’ (a rank awarded to Dōkyō)
<i>hōsanbi</i>	放参日	days where no <i>zazen</i> takes place in the morning (the ‘four’ and ‘nine’ days of the month: the 4 th , 9 th , 14 th , 19 th , 24 th , 29 th)
<i>hōsankai</i>	奉讃会	associations for the promotion of Akiha veneration and Sōtō doctrine
<i>hōshi</i>	奉仕;	also: <i>hōshi katsudō</i> 奉仕活動: ‘volunteer activity (the term conveys a sense of obligation)’
<i>hossen shiki</i>	法戦式	‘dharma combat ceremony’ in Sōtō Zen Buddhism
<i>ichidō no niwa</i>	一道の庭	‘garden of the way of the Buddha’ (name of a garden at Kasuisai)
<i>ichinichi jūshoku</i>	一日住職	‘abbot for a day’

<i>ichiya jūshoku</i>	一夜住職	‘one night abbacy’
<i>Idaten</i>	韋駄天	name of a god (worshipped at Kasuisai)
<i>Idaten fugin</i>	韋駄天諷經	special sutra recitation service dedicated to the god Idaten (on the 5 th day of every month)
<i>igi</i>	威儀	monastic etiquette
<i>ihai</i>	位牌	memorial tablet
<i>inari</i>	稻荷	a popular god in the shape of a fox
<i>inaridō</i>	稻荷堂	a shrine for a popular fox-shaped god called Inari (worshipped at Kasuisai)
<i>inori</i>	祈り	prayer
<i>inori no kokoro</i>	祈りの心	‘spirit of prayer’
<i>ippan no hitobito</i>	一般の人々	‘ordinary people’
<i>ishin denshin</i>	以心傳心	‘transmission from heart to heart’ between a Zen teacher and a student
<i>Itoku</i>	威徳	name of a support association affiliated with Kasuisai
<i>iyashi</i>	癒し	healing
<i>iyashi no kūkan</i>	癒しの空間	healing-spaces
<i>Izuna Daigongen</i>	飯縄大権現	name of a god
<i>Jibo Kannon</i>	慈母觀音	name of a Kannon Bodhisattva (worshipped at Kasuisai)
<i>jichitai</i>	自治体	local municipality
<i>jidaigeki</i>	時代劇	historical period drama
<i>jieitai</i>	自衛隊	Japan Self-Defense Forces
<i>jihi</i>	慈悲	compassion
<i>jikidō</i>	直堂	monitors the <i>zazen</i> hall; operates the <i>kyōsaku</i> stick by hitting the shoulder to motivate a sitting monk in his practice, when a monk dozes off, or if the sitting

		monk requests to be hit for refreshment (here: position at Kasuisai)
<i>jikō</i>	侍香	carries the portable incense holder for the ceremonial leader (<i>dōshi</i>) during rituals in the main hall, and further assists the <i>dōshi</i> (here: position at Kasuisai)
<i>jingikan</i>	神祇官	Department of Divinities
<i>jingi jimukyoku</i>	神祇事務局	Bureau of Divinities
<i>jizōdō</i>	地藏堂	building dedicated to the Bodhisattva Jizō at Kasuisai
<i>jōdō'e</i>	成道会	a ceremony in commemoration of Buddha Shakyamuni's great awakening, also commonly known as Bodhi Day
<i>Jōdoshū shohatto</i>	浄土宗諸法度	'prohibitions for the denomination of Pure Land Buddhism' by the Jōdoshū (Pure Land Buddhism); 1615 (targeting wandering priests)
<i>Jōdoshū sōgō kenkyūshō</i>	浄土宗総合研究所	The Jōdo Shu Research Institute
<i>jorei</i>	除霊	exorcism or 'spirit extraction'
<i>jōsai shōfuku</i>	攘災招福	to 'avert misfortune and bring good luck'; a main purpose ascribed to of Japanese Buddhism in the seventh century
<i>jōza</i>	上座	'ascending the seat'; literally: 'top seat'; a practice as part of the ordination process of a Sōtō Zen monk, as he or she begins his or her monastic training
<i>jujutsu kitō</i>	呪術祈祷	'magical' prayer ritual
<i>jujutsu kōi</i>	呪術行為	'magical practices'
<i>jūshoku</i>	住職	head priest
<i>kaban</i>	加番	a position taken over by the monk who conducted <i>shōsu</i> on the previous day (a peculiarity concerning the preparation of ritual services at Kasuisai)

<i>kabane</i>	姓	system of titles and ranks from around 400 C.E.
<i>kabō</i>	火坊	fire protection
<i>kadomatsu</i>	門松	New Year's decoration made of bamboo, used to grace the entrance of a house (here: the entrance to Kasuisai)
<i>kaichō</i>	開帳	literally: 'lifting the curtain'; term used for public exhibitions of local gods and 'hidden Buddhas'
<i>kaihōgyō</i>	回峰行	a practice that comprises part of the Tendai sect's training; requires monks to run through the forests of Mt. Hiei as part of a seven-year retreat
Kaikō'in	戒光院	a temple in Hamamatsu's Harunochō district at Mt. Akiha
<i>kaisan rekijū fugin</i>	開山歷住諷經	sutra chanting service for the patriarchs of Zen and
<i>kaisandō</i>	開山堂	here: name of a building behind the main hall at Kasuisai, dedicated to the worship of the patriarchs of Zen and the founders of the monastery
<i>kaisha sanzen kenshū</i>	会社参禅研修	Zen training for business companies
<i>kaiun</i>	開運	good fortune
<i>kaji kitō</i>	加持祈祷	prayer ritual for this-worldly benefits involving incantations
Kanagawaken kōkai	神奈川県講会	Kanagawa Prefecture Kō Group Association
<i>kanai anzen</i>	家内安全	household protection
<i>karasu tengu</i>	烏天狗	crow <i>tengu</i> ; a bird-like mountain ghost or goblin with wings and a beak
<i>kasai shōjo</i>	火災消除	fire extinction (also: fire prevention)
Kashōzan Ryūge'in	迦葉山龍華院	prayer monastery in Gunma Prefecture
<i>kasō jiin</i>	過疎寺院	literally: 'depopulated temple'
Kasuisai	可睡斎	prayer monastery in Shizuoka Prefecture

		<i>Kasuisai kaisō roppyaku nen daihōyō</i> 可睡齋開創第六百年大法要 a special memorial on the occasion of the 600 th anniversary of Kasuisai's foundation
<i>katsu koe</i>	喝声	loud scream; a practice related to <i>kitō</i>
<i>kechimiyaku</i>	血脈	lineage chart that a Sōtō Zen priest receives after <i>denbō</i>
<i>kegare</i>	穢れ	ritual pollution; pollution caused by death
<i>keichō</i>	傾聴	attentive listening
<i>ken</i>	県	prefecture
<i>kesa</i>	袈裟	upper robe of a Buddhist robe; worn on top of the <i>koromo</i>
<i>kessha</i>	結社	lay society
<i>kifu kōza</i>	寄附講座	a temporary chair funded by donations
<i>kigan</i>	祈願	prayer
<i>kigancha</i>	祈願茶	‘prayer tea’ (offered at Kasuisai)
<i>kigansha</i>	祈願者	<i>kitō</i> recipient; the practitioner who requested a prayer ritual for this-worldly benefits
<i>kinen</i>	祈念	prayer
<i>kinenhin</i>	記念品	souvenir, keepsake
<i>kinhin</i>	經行	ritual walking (between longer sessions of ritual sitting (<i>zazen</i>))
<i>kirigami</i>	切り紙	literally: paper strip; medieval initiation document
<i>kisei</i>	祈青	prayers rituals for rainmaking and good weather
<i>kitō</i>	祈祷	prayer ritual for this-worldly benefits
<i>kitōji</i>	祈祷寺	prayer temple; prayer monastery (term introduced by Tamamuro Fumio in opposition to funeral temple)
<i>kitōshi</i>	祈祷師	<i>kitō</i> practitioner; also: a religious professional

		specializing in <i>kitō</i>
<i>kitō jiin</i>	祈祷寺院	prayer monastery; prayer temple
<i>kitsune tsuki</i>	狐憑き	fox possession
<i>kō</i>	講	temple support association
<i>kōan</i>	公案	here: paradoxical questions that Zen Buddhist priests seek to answer as part of their training
<i>kōchi kōmin</i>	高知公民	a policy in seventh-century Japan that put land and people were under the control of the emperor
<i>kōchū saiseika</i>	講中再生化	‘revival of <i>kō</i> groups’
<i>kodomo zen no tsudoi</i>	子ども禅のつどい	Kids Zen Days
<i>kōhō senden</i>	広報宣伝	advertising and public relations
<i>kokoro</i>	心	spirit; heart; mind
Kokoro no sōdanshitsu	心の相談室	‘Spirit Counseling Center’; name of a Tohoku-University-affiliated disaster relief project
<i>kokyō</i>	挙経	reads the <i>ekō</i> texts for the dedication of merits in the main hall (here: position at Kasuisai)
<i>kōkyō kūkan</i>	公共空間	public spaces
<i>kokutai</i>	国体	‘national body’; a presumed essence of the Japanese state
<i>kōmoto</i>	講元	<i>kō</i> group leader
<i>koromo</i>	衣	outer garment of a Buddhist robe
<i>kōsha</i>	講社	temple support association (see <i>kō</i>)
<i>koshintō</i>	古神道	‘ancient Shintō’
<i>kōshōkai</i>	敲唱会	a type of teaching assembly that was primarily directed to clergy, founded by Nishiari Bokusan
<i>kōso Jōyō-daishi nanahyaku gojū kai daionki yoshu hōyō</i>	高祖承陽大師七百五十回大遠忌予修法要	a memorial on the occasion of the 750 th anniversary of

		Dōgen's death
<i>kōsobyō</i>	高祖廟	name of a shrine dedicated to the patriarchs of Zen and Kasuisai inside the <i>daisho'in</i> building at Kasuisai
Kōyasan	高野山	a temple in Wakayama Prefecture
<i>kudoku</i>	功德	merits (as generated by chanting sutras)
<i>kufū</i>	工夫; 功夫	here: living an ascetic life
<i>kujōe</i>	九條衣	nine-panel robe (also known as <i>sōgyari</i> 僧伽梨)
<i>kujū</i>	供頭	carries the book with <i>ekō</i> texts for the dedication of merits on the occasion of the morning service, among other ritual objects in the case of different rituals, such as pillows or chairs for the ceremonial leader (here: position at Kasuisai)
<i>kuketsu sōden</i>	口訣相伝	'oral transmission of secret formulae'
<i>kuyō</i>	供養	ancestor veneration ritual
<i>kyōka</i>	教化	sectarian edification; propagation
<i>kyōkai</i>	教会	here: teaching assembly
<i>kyōku</i>	教区	regional district of a Buddhist sect
<i>kyōsaku</i>	警策	a stick used to slap the shoulders of <i>zazen</i> practitioners
<i>kyūden</i>	宮殿	box shrine; inner shrine doors
<i>machi</i>	町	city; urban district
<i>mai asa kitō</i>	每朝祈祷	'every morning <i>kitō</i> '
<i>meishin</i>	迷信	'superstition'
<i>meisō</i>	冥想	'meditation'
<i>mikkyō</i>	密教	'esoteric' schools of Buddhism
<i>mikkyō kitō</i>	密教祈祷	'esoteric' prayer ritual for this-worldly benefits
<i>mikoshi</i>	神輿; 御輿	portable shrines

<i>minkan shinkō</i>	民間信仰	‘folk belief’
<i>mishirabe</i>	身調べ	introspection, or ‘looking into oneself’
<i>mizutori</i>	水取り	an ascetic practice by the Hossō sect that involves in preparation of a festival in spring
<i>mokugyō</i>	木魚	wooden drum used as an instrument in Buddhist rituals
<i>mondō</i>	問答	exchange of ‘questions and answers’ between a Zen teacher and a trainee
Monju bosatsu	文殊菩薩	Bodhisattva Monju (worshipped at Kasuisai)
<i>motsugo sasō</i>	役後作僧	posthumous ordination
<i>mura</i>	村	village
<i>musō</i>	無相	‘signless’
<i>naikan</i>	内観	introspection
<i>naimushō</i>	内務省	Ministry of the Interior
<i>namu myōhō renga kyō</i>	南無妙法蓮華經	‘praise the law of the Lotus Sutra’; the title (<i>daimoku</i> 題目) of the Lotus Sutra (<i>Hokke-kyō</i> 法華經)
<i>nehan kin</i>	涅槃金	‘nirvana money’ (to be used in case a traveling monk falls ill or dies, so as to not become a burden to others)
<i>nenbutsu</i>	念仏	recitation of the name of a Buddha
<i>nichijō gyōji</i>	日常行事	everyday ritual practice
<i>Nihonjin-ron</i>	日本人論	literally ‘theories about the Japanese’
<i>Nihon-teki chapuren</i>	日本的チャプレン	‘Japanese-style chaplain’
<i>Nippon-ichi no daitōsu</i>	日本一の大東司	informal name of Kasuisai’s toilet; literally: ‘the number one king size monastery toilet in Japan’
<i>nise sōryō</i>	偽僧僧侶	‘fake monk’
<i>nitchū fugin</i>	日中諷經	midday sutra-chanting service
<i>nureokaki</i>	ぬれおかき	baked rice crackers with soy sauce taste

<i>nyoi kisshō</i>	如意吉祥	good fortune
<i>nyūyoku no ge</i>	入浴の偈	special verse for entering the bath
Odawara-shi Kankō Kyōkai 小田原市観光協会 Odawara-shi Tourist Association		
<i>ofuda</i>	お札	amulet
<i>ōgu fugin</i>	應供諷經	sutra chanting service for the arhats
<i>ōjō</i>	往生	a Buddhist paradise
<i>okaruto būmu</i>	オカルト・ブーム	‘occult boom’
<i>okayu</i>	お粥	morning gruel (served for breakfast at Zen training monasteries)
<i>oku nikai</i>	奥二階	a chamber in a prestigious section on the second floor of Kasuisai’s <i>daisho</i> ’in building
<i>oku no in</i>	奥の院	‘inner temple’
<i>okunai denpō</i>	屋内伝法	‘transmission from master to student in the privacy of a home’
<i>onsen</i>	温泉	hot springs
<i>ōryōki</i>	応量器	sets of bowls wrapped in cloth
Osasuri Daikoku	おさすり大黒	name of a god (worshipped at Kasuisai)
<i>oshie</i>	教え	teaching
<i>otera no shikitari</i>	お寺のしきたり	‘manners’ at a Buddhist temple (see also <i>igi</i> and <i>sahō</i>)
<i>rakusu</i>	絡子	a small <i>kesa</i> hung around the neck
<i>reidan</i>	靈断	a Nichiren-Buddhist divination practice for this-worldly benefits, the offering of which requires completion of the 100-day <i>aragyō</i>
<i>reijō</i>	靈場	sacred site
<i>reisei genshō</i>	靈性現象	spirit phenomenon
<i>rinshō</i>	臨床	clinical

<i>rinshō shūkyōshi</i>	臨床宗教師	literally ‘clinical religious professional’, or ‘interfaith chaplain’
<i>rinzō</i>	輪藏	prayer wheel
<i>risshin</i>	立身	‘fully fledged’, or literally: ‘standing body’; also: <i>zagen</i> 座元); rank of a Sōtō Zen monk who passed the dharma combat and served as ‘head seat’ (<i>shuso</i> 首座) for a retreat
Risshō Kōseikai	立正佼成会	a so-called New Religion
<i>rōshū</i>	陋習	‘evil customs’
<i>ryaku chōka</i>	略朝課	short version of a morning service
Ryōgoku Kokugikan	両国国技館	a venue for sumo wrestling tournaments and other events in Tokyo’s Sumida district
<i>ryūjin</i>	龍人	dragon god; noted for promising bountiful fish catches and protection at sea
<i>sahō</i>	作法	special procedures performed by monks at a Zen monastery
<i>saidō</i>	齋堂	name of a large dining room for guests at Kasuisai
<i>saisei itchi</i>	祭政一致	‘unity of rite and government’
<i>saishu rōshi</i>	齋主老師	title of the abbot at Kasuisai
Sakazuka Kannon	酒塚觀音	name of a Kannon Bodhisattva (worshipped at Kasuisai)
<i>sakoku</i>	鎖国	‘isolation’ of Japan beginning in the 1630s
<i>samu</i>	作務	collective labor performed at Sōtō Zen training monasteries
<i>samue</i>	作務衣	(monastic) working-clothes
<i>sandai kitō jūin</i>	三大祈禱寺院	also <i>sandai kigansho</i> 三大祈願所; the ‘three great Sōtō Zen prayer temples’

<i>sanmon</i>	山門	mountain gate (here: name of a gate at Kasuisai)
<i>sanpachi nenju</i>	三八念誦	invocations of the names of ten Buddhas
<i>sanzen kenshū</i>	參禪研修	Zen training for lay participants
<i>segaki 'e</i>	施餓鬼会	pacification rituals for the purpose of feeding and pacifying the spirits of the victims of untimely death
<i>seichū</i>	制中	a phase of monastic retreat at Sōtō Zen monasteries. Periods of <i>seichū</i> last for three months, and alternate with three-month 'periods of loosening' (<i>geai</i> 解間), during which a monk may register at a training monastery or depart
<i>seigyō han 'ei</i>	生業繁栄	prosperous business
<i>seisetsu kankin</i>	聖節看經	silent sutra recitations for a long life of the emperor on the occasion of his birthday
<i>seishin sekai</i>	精神世界	the 'spiritual world'
<i>seiza</i>	正座	literally 'proper sitting'; sitting with the knees on the floor
<i>sejiki</i>	施食	pacification ritual for the purpose of feeding and pacifying the spirits of the victims of untimely death
<i>sekinin yaku 'in</i>	責任役員	lay Buddhist board member of a Buddhist temple
<i>senjō no ge</i>	洗淨の偈	special verse for 'purification' of the toilet
<i>senmen no ge</i>	洗面の偈	special verses for washing the face
<i>seppō</i>	說法	sermon
<i>sesshin</i>	接心	a phase characterized by intense periods of ritual sitting at Zen prayer monasteries
<i>sewanin</i>	世話人	here: local mediator affiliated with a prayer monastery
<i>shagi</i>	謝礼	honorarium
<i>shakai genshō</i>	社会現象	social phenomenon

<i>shakyō</i>	写経	sutra copying
<i>shanai anzen</i>	社内安全	‘safety of the company’
<i>shichifukujin</i>	七福神	the ‘Seven Lucky Gods’
<i>shichijōe</i>	七條衣	seven-panel robe (also known as <i>uttarasō</i> 鬱多羅僧)
<i>shidō fugin</i>	祠堂諷經	ancestors hall sutra chanting service
<i>shingan jōju</i>	心願成就	fulfillment of a wish made by heart
<i>shingon</i>	真言	‘quintessential words of truth’ of a specific god
<i>shinnen</i>	信念	faith
<i>shinnen hatsu kitō</i>	新年発祈祷	first <i>kitō</i> of the New Year
<i>shinrei genshō</i>	心靈現象	spirit phenomenon
<i>shinsen</i>	新鮮	‘fresh’
<i>shinzan shiki</i>	晋山式	inauguration of a new head priest
<i>shikantaza</i>	只管打坐	‘just sitting’
<i>shimi</i>	<small>しみ</small> 汚点	here: ‘blemish’; expression used by Tamamuro Taijō to describe <i>kitō</i> in Sōtō Zen Buddhism
<i>shinbutsu bunri</i>	神仏分離	disassociation of Buddhas and <i>kami</i> ordered by the Meiji-government in 1868
<i>shinkoku</i>	神国	‘land of the gods’
Shō Kanzeon	聖觀世音	name of a Kannon Bodhisattva (worshipped at Kasuisai)
<i>shōen</i>	莊園	land sold by the imperial household in the Heian period, which de facto functioned as private property under the fiscal authority of the <i>shōen</i> owner
<i>shōfuku</i>	招福	good fortune
<i>shōgaibutsu</i>	障害物	‘obstacle’
Shōgun Jizō	勝軍地藏	a Bodhisattva noted for wining battles (worshipped at Kasuisai)

<i>shōjin ryōri</i>	精進料理	vegetarian cloister cuisine
<i>shomin</i>	庶民	‘ordinary people’
<i>shonan shōmetsu</i>	諸難消滅	elimination of various problems and crisis
<i>shonanoka; shonanuka</i>	初七日	the first seven-day-ritual after death, as part of the traditional 49-day period of ritualized worship after death
<i>Shoshū jiin hatto</i>	諸宗寺院法度	‘prohibitions for the temples of all sects’ proclaimed by the government in 1665
<i>shōsu</i>	鐘司	operates the portable bell used as a wake-up call at 5 a.m. before <i>zazen</i> at Kasuisai; also operates the large bell in the main hall to mark the beginning of the morning service (here: position at Kasuisai)
<i>shugyō</i>	修行	ascetic practice; monastic training
<i>shugyōsō</i>	修行僧	a Sōtō Zen monks in training (see also <i>unsui</i>)
<i>shukubō</i>	宿坊	overnight temple stay
<i>shukushin fugin</i>	祝聖諷經	sutra recitations for the benefit of the emperor, held on the first and fifteenth of a month
<i>shuku tōban</i>	粥当番	prepares the <i>okayu</i> (お粥) morning gruel (position at Kasuisai)
<i>shūkyō</i>	宗教	religion
<i>shūkyōsha</i>	宗教者	religious professional
<i>shūkyōteki kea</i>	宗教的ケア	‘religious care’
<i>shūkyō hōjin</i>	宗教法人	‘religious juridical persons’
<i>shūmon aratame-chō</i>	宗門改帳	register of sectarian inspection; a measure against the influence of Christianity in Tokugawa Japan
<i>shusse roku no ji no ana</i>	出世「六の字穴」	literally: ‘Career cave in the shape of a figure six’; name of a cave at Kasuisai, also known as <i>hora roku</i> ほら六 (‘cave [in the shape of a] six’, and as <i>kaiun</i>

		<i>roku no ji ana</i> 開運六の字穴 (‘cave in the shape of a figure six for good fortune’)
Shūyōji	秋葉寺	name of a temple in Shizuoka Prefecture
<i>sōdai</i>	総代	also <i>danshinto sōdai</i> 檀信徒総代; leading parishioners of a temple
<i>sōdō</i>	僧堂	monks’ hall; at Kasuisai: also known as <i>zendō</i> 禅堂 (Zen hall) and <i>zazendō</i> 坐禅堂 (<i>zazen</i> hall)
<i>sōdō dokui cha</i>	僧堂特爲茶	a special tea service as part of the New Year’s ceremonies at Sōtō Zen prayer monasteries
<i>sodō fugin</i>	祖堂諷經	ancestral teachers hall sutra chanting service former abbots
<i>sōhei</i>	僧兵	‘warrior monk’
<i>sōji</i>	掃除	cleaning service, performed in the morning at Sōtō Zen training monasteries
<i>sōkō fugin</i>	竈公諷經	sutra recitations for kitchen god Sōshin
<i>sōmon</i>	総門	main gate (here: name of a gate at Kasuisai)
Sonnō hōbutsu daidōda	尊皇奉仏大同団	Great Society for Revering the Emperor and Worshiping the Buddha
<i>sōrokuji</i>	僧録寺	supervisory temples that oversaw the legal affairs of <i>danka</i> temples and the movement of monks on a regional basis in Tokugawa Japan
<i>sōsai mondai</i>	葬祭問題	‘funeral problem’
<i>sōsaiji</i>	葬祭寺	funeral temple (term introduced by Tamamuro Fumio in opposition to prayer temple)
Sōshin	竈神	a kitchen god, or god of the stove
Sōtōshū sōgō kenkyū sentā 曹洞宗総合研究センター Research Center for Sōtō Zen Buddhism		
Sōtōshū Kinki kyōka sentā 曹洞宗近畿教化センター Sōtō Zen Mission Branch Office for the Kinki		

		Area
<i>suigyō</i>	水行	a ritual purification practice that involves cleaning the body with ice cold water
<i>supirichuariti</i>	スピリチュアリテイ	‘spirituality’
<i>tabiji</i>	旅寺	‘travel temples’
<i>taiko</i>	太鼓	a type of wooden drum; at Kasuisai: the position of a monks who operates the <i>taiko</i> drum in Akiha’s special worship hall during <i>kitō</i>
<i>taisai daikitō</i>	大祭大祈祷	large-scale prayer ritual performed on the occasion of the annual fire festival at Kasuisai
<i>takkesa no ge</i>	搭袈裟の偈	verse for donning the <i>kesa</i>
<i>tanga ryō</i>	旦過寮	‘overnight quarters’ for new arrivals at a Zen monastery
<i>tarento</i>	タレント	retainer; literally: talent
<i>te no hira jizō</i>	手のひら地藏	literally ‘palm of hand <i>jizō</i> ’
<i>tenbatsu</i>	天罰;	divine punishment (see also <i>tenken</i>)
<i>tendoku</i>	転読	accordion-style reading of sutras by throwing them; also known as ‘revolving reading’
<i>tengu</i>	天狗	mountain ghost; goblin
<i>tengu sugi</i>	天狗杉	name of a cedar at Yusanji, where the god Gunzenbō Daigongen in the shape of a <i>tengu</i> is believed to reside
<i>tenken</i>	天譴	divine punishment (see also <i>tenbatsu</i>)
<i>tenzo</i>	典座	monk in charge of a Zen monastery’s cloister kitchen
<i>terauke</i>	寺請	certification of the population by Buddhist temples in Tokugawa Japan
<i>terauke-jō</i>	寺請状	certificate issued by a Buddhist temple in Tokugawa Japan, as part of the certification of the population by

		Buddhist temples
<i>tōba</i>	塔婆	stupa here: wooden stupa-styled plaques placed at family graves in commemoration of ancestral souls
<i>tōkasa</i>	湯菓茶	offerings of decoction, sweets, and tea
<i>tokudo shiki</i>	得度式	receiving the Bodhisattva precepts and the tonsure
<i>Tokutei hierikatsudō hōjinhō</i> 特定非営利活動法人 The 1998 Nonprofit Organization Law		
<i>tomari</i>	泊まり	night service at the reception (here: position at Kasuisai)
Toyokawa Inari	豊川稲荷	also known as Myōgonji 妙厳寺; prayer monastery in Aichi Prefecture
Tōyōken	東陽軒	original name of the prayer monastery Kasuisai
<i>unsui</i>	雲水	a Sōtō Zen monks in training (see also <i>shugyōsō</i>)
Ususama Myōō	烏芻沙摩明王	name of a god (worshipped at Kasuisai)
<i>yado</i>	宿	here: a portable altar's temporary home that is circulated among <i>kō</i> group members
<i>yakei</i>	夜警	night watch (here: position at Kasuisai)
<i>yamabarai</i>	山払い	cleansing of the 'mountain' (as part of the annual fire festival at Kasuisai)
<i>yaku</i>	厄	literally: 'something bad'
<i>yakusō</i>	役僧	monk in office
<i>yaza</i>	夜坐	evening zazen
<i>yūrei</i>	幽霊	ghosts
<i>zazen</i>	坐禅	'ritual sitting'; often understood as meditation
<i>zazendō</i>	坐禅堂	<i>zazen</i> hall; at Kasuisai: also known as <i>zendō</i> 禅堂 (Zen hall) and <i>sōdō</i> 僧堂 (monks' hall)
<i>zenchishiki</i>	善知識	'good friends' at the deathbed, who were believed to increase the chance of the dying to achieve a rebirth in

		Buddha Amida's Pure Land
<i>zendō</i>	禪堂	Zen hall; at Kasuisai: also known as <i>zazendō</i> 坐禪堂 (<i>zazen</i> hall) and <i>sōdō</i> 僧堂(monks' hall)
<i>zenjitsu tōban</i>	前日当番	a position taken over by the monk who will conduct <i>shōsu</i> on the next day (a peculiarity concerning the preparation of ritual services at Kasuisai)
<i>zenjōriki</i>	禪定力	'meditative power'
Zen-Nihon Bukkyō seinenkai 全日本仏教青年会 All Japan Young Buddhist Association		
Zenpōji	善宝寺	prayer monastery in Yamagata Prefecture
<i>zenkai ichinyo</i>	禪戒一如	a Buddhist concept, according to which 'meditation and the precepts are identical'
<i>zuiryūkaku</i>	瑞龍閣	name of a chamber decorated with flower paintings on sliding doors in Kasuisai's <i>daisho'in</i> building
<i>zuisse haitō</i>	瑞世拜登	'debut and respectful ascension to abbacy'

Names

Abe Takashi 阿部孝

Aitani Shun'yū

Aizawa Seishisai 会沢正志斎

Aoyama Shundō 青山俊董

Banjin Dōtan 万仞道坦

Dōgen 道元

Dōkyō 道鏡

Eisai 栄西

Ezaki Sekkō 江崎接航

Fukazawa Sennō 深沢仙能

Hakuchō Teizan 白鳥鼎三

Hayama Michio 葉山道雄
Hōjō Tokimune 北条時宗
Hōnen 法然
Itō Seiki 伊東盛熙
Itō Shin'ichi 伊藤伸一
Jitō-Tennō 持統天皇
Jochū Tengin 如仲天閻
Kanmu-Tennō 桓武天皇
Kawakami Kenji 川上賢治
Kayama Yūzō 加山雄三
Kōken-Tennō 孝謙天皇
Kūkai 空海
Makiguchi Tsunesaburō 牧口常三郎
Matsuda Bun'yū 松田文雄
Meiji-Tennō 明治天皇
Menzan Zuihō 面山瑞方
Minamoto no Yoritomo 源頼朝
Musō Soseki 夢窓疎石
Nishiari Bokusan 西有穆山
Nōnin Hakugan 能仁柏巖
Ōuchi Seiran 大内青巒
Pōru Maki ポール牧
Senrin Tōzen 仙麟等膳
Shimaji Mokurai 島地黙雷
Shinran 親鸞
Sugimoto Shunryū 杉本俊龍
Suzuki Chieko 鈴木智恵子

Takei Shōgu 武井正弘

Toda Jōsei 戸田城聖

Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康

Tokugawa Mitsukuni 徳川光圀

Tokugawa Yorifusa 徳川頼房

Uirō Takeshi 外郎武

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