

Contested Pilgrimage: Shikoku Henro and Dark Tourism

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1. Introduction

The origins of Japanese Buddhism can be traced back to the early sixth century, when the king of Paekche, occupying the southwestern tip of the Korean peninsula, sent a small bronze statue and Buddhist texts as part of a diplomatic mission to the Japanese court. This cultural exchange marked the beginning of a leading religion that would continue to develop over the following centuries in Japan. Approximately fourteen centuries later in 2013, Shikoku Henro, a famous pilgrimage circuit that visits eighty-eight Buddhist temples around the fourth largest island of Japan, became a site of national controversy when a racist organization posted signs along the route that read, “Let us protect our precious pilgrimage route from the hands of *chōsenjin* (Koreans).” A site with cultural and religious bonds, forged in a historic diplomatic exchange between the two countries, has instead become celebrated as a “traditional” heritage site—one structured around notions of chauvinism and cultural exclusion. Using the controversy at this location in 2013 as the starting point, my paper examines the ways in which the Shikoku pilgrimage route was presented to the public, and the ensuing claims on the emotional landscape of this site by local, national and international bodies. More than a simple story of Japanese national pride, the dark history of Shikoku Henro reveals complicated circumstances that culminated in the 2013 controversy involving a Korean pilgrim and her journey.



Figure 1: Map of the Shikoku Pilgrimage Circuit

Today, the Shikoku pilgrimage route is connected by eighty-eight temples across the four prefectures of Shikoku (Tokushima, Kōchi, Ehime and Kagawa)—although pilgrims continue to refer to them by their feudal province names (Awa, Tosa, Iyo and Sanuki). The spiritual journey crossing through the four prefectures also represents the four stages to enlightenment (*hosshin*, *shugyō*, *bodai* and *nehan*). Pilgrims who choose to undertake this eight hundred-mile route, however, do not walk alone on their path to enlightenment, but with the spirit of the Buddhist monk Kōbō Daishi, the founder of Shingon Buddhism in Japan. The spiritual relationship between the pilgrim and the saint is exemplified by the catchphrase of the pilgrimage route, *dōgyō ninin* (同行二人), or “one practice with two people,” which is also etched onto the pilgrim’s straw hat. For many pilgrims, the idea of walking with the spirit of the monk also serves as a means of paying homage to the dead. Ian Reader, who has extensively researched and participated in this pilgrimage, explained that many pilgrims carry photographs, ashes, bone fragments, and various mementos of departed family

members.¹ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn1) Reader, during one of his journeys around Shikoku, encountered a retired Japanese Air Force worker who explained that he was not walking the pilgrimage alone but with his departed wife, whose ashes were packed inside his rucksack. Reader recalled that this exchange was, for him, the most poignant embodiment of the meaning “*dōgyō ninin.*”² (https://apjff.org/#_ftn2)

For the same reason, Choi Sang Hee, a South Korean woman from Seoul, was drawn to Shikoku Henro as she sought to cope with the death of her father. In 2010, Choi began her spiritual journey around the eight hundred-mile pilgrimage circuit, and has since claimed that the treks were her only form of reprieve from her arduous life back at home in South Korea. In 2013, she became the first non-Japanese woman to qualify as an official guide (*sendatsu*) for the pilgrimage course after completing her fourth lap on foot. Touched by the kindness of strangers on the road, Choi was inspired to spread the local customs of *osettai*, or the hospitable act of giving assistance to pilgrims, to her own community, and thus began her project to encourage other South Koreans to participate in the Shikoku pilgrimage. Accordingly, she designed and produced approximately 4,000 stickers and posted them on public facilities along the route to help guide her fellow trekkers. The foreign nature of these stickers, which were written in Korean, became a source of harsh anti-Korean sentiment in the months that followed.

Members of a group calling itself “The Association for Protecting Japanese Pilgrimage” (日本の遍路を守ろう会) were irked by the stickers, and began posting their own flyers around the sites where Choi’s stickers were displayed:

“Let us protect our precious pilgrimage route from the hands of *chōsenjin* (Koreans). Recently, disrespectful *chōsen*

people have begun posting disgusting stickers all around Shikoku. In order to protect Japan’s pilgrimage route, please take them down as soon as you encounter one.” (my translation)

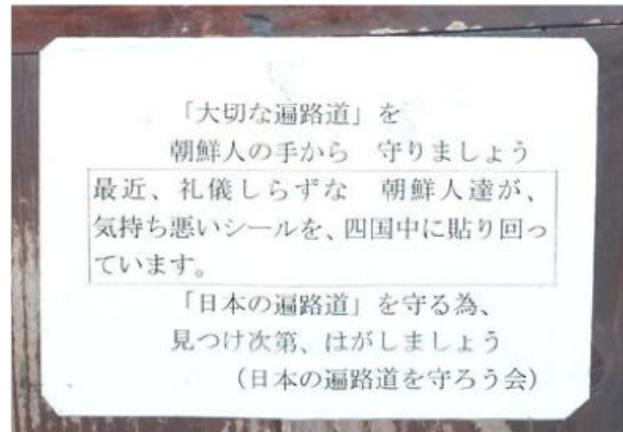


Figure 2: Flyer from the Association for Protecting Japanese Pilgrimage

According to local media sources, close to fifty of these discriminatory flyers were found at over eighteen locations including Kagawa, Tokushima, and Ehime prefectures in April 2014.³ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn3) A few weeks later, national media outlets such as *Mainichi*, *Asahi*, *Nikkei* and *Yomiuri* made a sensation out of this local dispute, bringing national and international attention to the pilgrimage controversy when the news was broadcast in South Korea and the United States. *Asahi Shinbun*, for instance, vividly described this controversy on April 10, 2014 as “The Destruction of the Spirit of *Motenashi*: Discriminatory Posters along the Pilgrimage Road (もてなしの心破壊—遍路道に外国人差別の貼り紙).” Under the headlines read: “Posters that encourage xenophobia have been found at the *Shikoku Henro*, a site known for its spirit of *motenashi* (hospitality) and willingness to warmly welcome anybody.”⁴ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn4)

To be sure, the organization's actions were not representative of the attitudes of all local residents in Shikoku. Some residents, as reported by local media outlets, censured the actions of the organization, describing them as "xenophobic" and "not aligned with the spirit of Shikoku Henro."⁵ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn5) The official Shikoku temple organization also commented that such "acts of discrimination were unforgivable."⁶ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn6) At the other end of the spectrum, some residents agreed with the spirit of the posters by arguing that the stickers were indeed "spoiling the environment," "destroying Japanese culture," and therefore not "xenophobic," as the stickers were most likely part of efforts to "preserve the environment."⁷ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn7) Other apologists began to call Choi's actions illegal, claiming that she had violated municipal ordinances that regulated outdoor advertising in public locations—despite the fact that Choi did indeed receive permits for private buildings and residences.

Media outlets like *Asahi Shinbun* described this incident as a part of the intensifying anti-Korean sentiment in Japan at the time. On April 24, a few weeks after their first reporting on the incident, *Asahi* ran a second article after a more thorough investigation, and reported that municipal offices in Shikoku had actually been quite lax in their regulation of outdoor advertising before Choi's stickers became controversial—"there have been all sorts of guiding posts along Shikoku Henro, but why has Choi's become the target of attack?"⁸ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn8) The left-leaning newspaper was firm in its conclusion that these actions were xenophobic. The article concluded: "It is puzzling that such an act has occurred at a site that is preparing to be registered as a World Heritage Site."⁹ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn9)

Asahi's critical reporting of the incident at Shikoku's famous pilgrimage route caused

much anxiety for local governmental officials, who had struggled for many years to submit the route as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Efforts to get Shikoku Henro nominated and subsequently designated as a World Heritage Site failed for the third time in July 2016.¹⁰ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn10) Its first nomination ten years earlier in 2006 had been rejected by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, when it was deemed that Shikoku's conservation methods were "insufficient." The process of nominating the pilgrimage route continues to be a difficult journey for the local government of the four prefectures in Shikoku, whose challenge at the time of the controversy was to define the "universal value" of the pilgrimage route as a "place of faith for the common people" (庶民信仰の場アピール).¹¹ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn11)

As Andrew Gordon's introduction mentions, the 2015 controversy over the UNESCO designation of factories, shipyards and mines founded in the Meiji era as heritage sites engendered considerable dispute between the Japanese and South Korean governments on the issue of wartime laborers. This controversy between the two neighboring countries reminded me of the 2013 incident in Shikoku, which received considerable media attention while I was studying abroad there at Ehime University. The similarities between the two cases provoked me to examine how UNESCO designation of World Heritage Sites continues to spark disagreements about how sites are publicly represented, and its implications for transnational relations between Japan and South Korea. Upon closer examination of Choi's story, I also realized that the racist actions of the anonymous organization reveal a larger (and longer) story of cultural nationalism, dark tourism and contested notions of "heritage" surrounding the pilgrimage route. Therefore, this paper will trace the contentious history of Shikoku Henro over three different eras of modern Japanese history, when global processes incited feelings of anxiety and concern among local actors surrounding the

popular representation of Shikoku Henro: first, state repression of Buddhism during the Meiji Restoration; second, the rise of “modern/secular tourism” in the 1930s; and finally, the onset of the “globalization of heritage tours” through UNESCO from the 1970s to the present. As traveling to Shikoku became more accessible over modern Japanese history, non-local pilgrims and foreign tourists began to flock to the island. Consequently, considerable debate was sparked by the question of whether the ways in which seemingly “foreign” visitors—such as Choi—participate in the pilgrimage has a bearing on their qualifications to be considered true Japanese pilgrims.

Reader, in *Making Pilgrimages*, has described the long history of pilgrimage in Shikoku as a “moving text” in which its landscape is “constantly being made and remade through a continuous interweaving of the physical and the emotional and of past and present.”¹² (https://apjff.org/#_ftn12) In addition to Reader, Sarah Thal has also written on the subtle distinction between popular religion and tourism in the context of another pilgrimage site in Shikoku. In *Rearranging the Landscapes of the Gods*, Thal traced the history of a famous shrine at Konpira—a site, she argues, that survived radical political change under the new Meiji regime through institutional adaptation. Particularly before and after the Russo-Japanese War, this adaptation on the part of its priests required a “culture at Kotohira that brought the god, the military and the business of pilgrimage into a tighter embrace than before.”¹³ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn13) In tracing these modern influences, both scholars have highlighted how various communities—“not only priests, but also politicians, pilgrims, entrepreneurs and officials”—have redefined the structures of worship and ultimately the modern landscape of religion in Japan.¹⁴ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn14) Similarly, the delicate line between religion and cultural nationalism began to blur as Shikoku Henro

became celebrated over time as a historical site of heritage exclusive to Japanese people in modern Japan.

Not many scholars have considered the transformation of the pilgrimage through the analytical lens of “dark tourism,” and its intersection with public history in the contemporary period. The role of UNESCO World Heritage in reinforcing cultural nationalism and redefining local heritage in Shikoku has been largely neglected in the study of folk and popular religion in Japan.¹⁵ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn15) Through this paper, I hope to highlight the paradox of UNESCO nominated sites in Japan—that is, the observation that the more sites acquire “universal value” or cultural values relevant to all mankind, the more they become anchored to the identity of the single nation-state in which they reside. By tracing the transformation of Shikoku Henro from a site of religion to one of cultural property, I also bring attention to the “dark,” “light,” and “gray” shades of the site’s public history in order to better understand how the act of “pilgrimage” (both domestically and globally) has changed over time, why people continue to be drawn to the site, and what kinds of historical meanings are being drawn from the activity today.

2. On Public History, Dark Tourism and Secular Pilgrimage

In their anthology on public history, James B. Gardner and Paula Hamilton have described the concept of “risk” in local communities as “an idea of cultural heritage as constantly under threat and needing to be saved from oblivion.”¹⁶ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn16) In the case of Shikoku Henro, the “risks” were not so much about saving the site from “oblivion,” but rather (re)inventing traditions in order to legitimize the site’s authenticity as perceived by the populace. Accordingly, the fear of “risks” underpinned various grassroots

movements to create their own history of the site—either by bringing a stronger focus to its religious and indigenous traditions as seen during the 1930s, or by reaffirming the national identity of “Japanese” pilgrimage as seen in the 2014 incident involving the Korean pilgrim, Choi. As archaeologist Rodney Harrison argued, when considering narratives of heritage and their relevance in the contemporary world, one must also foreground the ways in which “heritage is constantly produced and reproduced in the present.”¹⁷ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn17) Since the turn of the twentieth century, these sorts of tension between advocates of local ownership and national offices influenced the formation of “Shikoku Henro” as a contested public site, where “heritage” was being constantly reproduced by local and global communities.

Without a doubt, the commercial industries of “pilgrimage tourism” and “dark tourism” have also been central to the development of Shikoku Henro as a heritage site since the turn of the twentieth century. Of course, the intimate intersections between the religious (“pilgrimage”) and the secular (“tourism”) is not unique to the history of travelers to Shikoku, as evidenced by, for example, sacred sites in China.¹⁸ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn18) According to scholars of tourism studies, “pilgrimage tourism” has long been defined as a touristic quest for an “authentic” sacred journey that allows tourists to achieve “self-transformation and the acquisition of knowledge and status through contact with the extraordinary or sacred.”¹⁹ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn19) As will be further elaborated in my paper, starting in the 1920s, people from all parts of Japan were similarly eager to take part in pilgrimage tours around Shikoku Henro’s eighty-eight holy Buddhist temples, and the four prefectural governments in Shikoku were equally willing to take advantage of the commercial boom. According to Reader, the increase in the number of tourists to Shikoku during this time was largely

due to the shift in the popular representation of pilgrimages in the media, going from “symbols of a degraded past” to “a sign of tradition that withstood the march of modernity.”²⁰ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn20) The case of Shikoku Henro reveals that the number of pilgrimage tourists increased due to anxiety or doubts regarding “modernity,” and the desire to find new meaning in everyday life. In other words, while Foley and Lennon suggest that sites of dark tourism expose negative aspects of modernity, for pilgrimage tourists to Shikoku, uncertainty about modernity was a cause rather than a consequence of tourism. Even today, media reports and tourist pamphlets continue to represent Shikoku Henro as a site that has preserved traditions of Japan’s pre-modernity, and these nostalgic images of “tradition” continue to be juxtaposed against metropolitan Tokyo, symbolizing modernity, anxiety and mechanization. Tourist pilgrims from all over Japan, as well as from abroad, have flocked to Shikoku to escape their bustling “modern” life in the city, and to fulfill a personal quest through a quasi-religious experience that would bring enlightenment and improved spiritual well-being.

As argued by scholar of tourism studies Noga Collins-Kreiner, pilgrimage tourism and dark tourism are similar in that both phenomena involve a “ritual process,” in which tourists “share the trait of searching for mystical, magical experiences which they describe as transformations, enlightenment and life-changing and conscious-altering events.”²¹ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn21) The curious pull of a spiritual quest and the expectation of experiencing something outside the accustomed patterns of everyday life—whether that explicitly involves death, intimations of darkness, or enlightenment—are undeniably what attracts most people to these sites. In fact, scholar of thanatourism, AV Seaton argued that pilgrimages should be considered the forebear of “dark tourism.”²² (https://apjff.org/#_ftn22) Seaton argued that

“death” itself is a form of heritage, and this morbid element has long been the main attraction of pilgrimage before being officially labeled as “dark tourism” by Foley and Lenon.²³ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn23)

Different cases of pilgrimage around the globe show that forms of pilgrimage may be a response to death or other tragedies. Briefly consider the Anfield Pilgrimage in Liverpool after the tragedy at Hillsborough stadium on April 15, 1989, when a huge crowd of soccer fans crushed and killed ninety-four Liverpool supporters. As a way of mourning and overcoming the tragic deaths of these young people, the people of Liverpool, as well as non-locals, began a mass spiritual movement that became known as the “Anfield Pilgrimage.” An estimated one million people, twice the population of the city, marched through the stadium and the cathedrals in Anfield in the weeks following the tragedy. This seemingly spontaneous and communal movement astonished the world. Grace Davie in *Pilgrimage in Popular Culture* wrote that the Anfield Pilgrimage of 1989 allowed the citizens of Liverpool to “break taboos about death,” which he argues has long been considered a “taboo subject in Western society.” Moreover, he concluded that this modern pilgrimage was “an explicit, conscious and collective acknowledgement of death.”²⁴ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn24)

Death, or the idea of death, often draws people seeking reprieve from their ordinary lives with acts of a religious or spiritual nature, as seen in the case of the Korean pilgrim Choi, who turned to the pilgrimage to mourn the death of her father. To be sure, in the case of contemporary Shikoku Henro, most people do not visit in order to be explicitly conscious of or collectively acknowledge death. Based on a survey conducted by Takekawa Ikuo in 2013, only 13.6% of pilgrims surveyed responded that they joined the pilgrimage in order “to hold a memorial service for ancestors and the dead

(先祖・死者の供養),” whereas the majority chose the reason of “soul searching (自分の生き方と向き合うため).”²⁵ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn25) Political forms of penance and “soul searching” also recently caught the attention of many in Japan when former Prime Minister Kan Naoto, five weeks after stepping down from his position as the leader of the Democratic Party due to a political scandal in 2004, shaved his head, changed into traditional pilgrimage garb, and set off for Shikoku Henro. When asked about his motivations during his most recent pilgrimage, he replied: “For the restoration and recovery from the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami, prayers for the souls of the victims, and recovery from the nuclear crisis — that’s all.”²⁶ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn26) For many contemporary pilgrims, and even for politicians, “soul-searching” (自分探し) more than “religious faith” (信仰心) has become the driving motivation for these practices.

In this way, many structural changes have taken place on the island since the turn of the twentieth century, when notions of “death” and “illness” were explicitly tied to the identity of pilgrims and the act of completing the pilgrimage route, as will be explored in the next section of this paper. Later, with modernization and the growing value ascribed to “heritage,” Shikoku Henro came to embody a pristine site of Japanese cultural heritage and tradition—a comforting space that Japanese people could visit to reaffirm their cultural identity. This shift in representation reveals that the power to attract a large number of people is not intrinsic to the site itself, but derived from new values and traditions that are constantly being developed or invented over time. It is equally important to recognize that these values are also ascribed by the decisions of national governments, particularly through global processes (seeking UNESCO recognition) that have determined which heritage sites and national narratives should represent the nation over others.

Through the prism of broader concepts and theories encompassing both “pilgrimage tourism” and “dark tourism,” the rest of this paper surveys the historical shift and transformation of Shikoku Henro from a site of “darkness” (for the dead and sick) to one that is more comforting (for those seeking to reaffirm their cultural roots)—as well as the ways the site continues to raise the question of what it means to be a part of this Japanese “tradition” and “heritage” in the twenty-first century.

3. On the Repression of Religion, Sanitization of Identity: The Meiji Restoration

The management of religion was an integral part of the Meiji state’s efforts to establish its legitimacy in the wake of the Meiji Restoration. Shintoism was promoted, at the expense of Buddhism, as the main religion of the state under a movement called *haibutsu kishaku*. Buddhist priests and their followers all over the nation faced harsh persecution in the state’s attempts to drive out Japanese Buddhism. By 1871, the government designated Shinto shrines, including the predecessor to the present Yasukuni Shrine, as official institutions where national rites such as the worship of Japan’s war dead would be observed. Moreover, the Separation Edict of 1868 (*shinbutsu bunri*) enforced the separation of Shinto gods from Buddhist figures in institutions that had formerly contained both elements in their halls of worship. The edict also banned Buddhist priests from holding simultaneous positions in shrines, and required every Japanese citizen to register their households at local Shinto shrines, replacing the older tradition of registering at Buddhist temples.

These bureaucratic steps that slowly purged religious institutions of “backwards” and “superstitious” Buddhist elements soon culminated in a wave of attacks on Buddhist

temples, which peaked in 1871, when numerous statues, relics and temples were destroyed all across Japan. In Shikoku, Buddhist temples along the pilgrimage route were obvious targets of these attacks. According to Reader, seven of sixteen temples around Shikoku Henro in Tosa were either completely destroyed, badly damaged or closed down.²⁷ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn27) Additionally, in 1872, a nationwide law banned *takuhatsu*, or the act of begging for alms by Buddhist monks, and as a result, a number of pilgrims were forced to leave provinces in some parts of Shikoku.²⁸ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn28) These policies and laws encouraging the marginalization of pilgrims and the repression of Buddhism took a heavy toll on Shikoku Henro, causing the numbers of pilgrims and visitors to drop significantly.

Pilgrims were persecuted because of their association with images of death and disease, which in the eyes of national officials, symbolized Japan’s “backward” and “degraded” past. These dark associations were undoubtedly at odds with the Meiji state’s aspirations to portray Japan as a modern, rational, and hygienic society. A deeper examination of the early modern history of the Shikoku Henro reveals that death and disease were quite central to the pilgrimage route and the act of becoming a pilgrim. Ill individuals, many of whom were driven from their villages, participated in pilgrimages around the island in the hopes of being cured of their illness, but many died along the way. The route itself became marked by graves of deceased pilgrims, and over time, these expeditions became known as “kill or cure.”²⁹ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn29)

Mori Masato, a scholar of Japanese pilgrimage, used three words to describe Shikoku Henro before the onset of modernization in the Meiji era: “poverty,” “discrimination” and “*ikidaore*” (meaning lying dead along the road).³⁰ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn30) Many of those who

walked the pilgrimage were infected with serious diseases such as leprosy, and in a time without proper medical facilities to care for the sick, many looked to religion and the supernatural for a miraculous cure. In fact, death was so prevalent in premodern Shikoku that the characters for “Shikoku” were popularly rendered “death” (shi) and “country” (koku) to mean “country of death (死国)” rather than the official characters used to refer to the island as the “four provinces (四国).”³¹ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn31) This homonym ideogram continues to have deep resonance in Japanese popular culture today. For example, the story of the 1999 horror film, *Shikoku (死国)*, centers on a grieving mother, who walks the pilgrimage sixteen times to mourn the death of her daughter. At the end, she realizes that she had been walking the pilgrimage backwards, thus breaking the seal between the world of the living and the dead. Also consider Haruki Murakami’s widely acclaimed novel, *Kafka on the Shore*, which is about the metaphysical journey of a young boy in Shikoku. Literary critics have noted that Murakami chose the setting of Shikoku to illustrate a land in “limbo,” based on the folk legend that the souls of dead pilgrims continue to haunt the route.³² (https://apjff.org/#_ftn32)

Not only was the act of participating in pilgrimage associated with journeying into the realm of death, but the pilgrim’s clothing also continues to be symbolically tied to the idea of death. The white robe or *hakui*—a color in Japan that represents purity and death—is layered in reverse with the right over the left, which is how corpses are commonly dressed for funerals in Japan. A Buddhist poem about impermanence, which is often inscribed on coffins, is also carved on the bamboo hat of the pilgrim. The staff, *tsue*, also represents the pilgrim’s gravestone as it was customary for it to be buried with the *ikidaore*. Moreover, in some parts of Japan, including in Shikoku, the deceased are dressed in pilgrim’s clothing and placed in a casket with the pilgrim book,

representing the “passport” into the next realm of death.³³ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn33) As Reader has described, pilgrim’s clothing, often worn by tourists today, mark them as dressed and ready for death at any time—“symbolically s/he is dead to the mundane world.”³⁴ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn34) While some contemporary pilgrim tourists in Shikoku may not be aware of these symbolic ties to the theme of death, the Buddhist symbols that are physically woven onto the attire reflect the reality of the long, dark history of Shikoku Henro in early modern Japan.

A significant response to the state’s earlier religious repression in Shikoku was the transformation of all the shrines and temples along the route into strictly Buddhist sites. As pervasive anti-Buddhist sentiment simmered down by the mid-1870s, and after the ban on *takuhatsu* was lifted in 1881, shrines and shrine-temple complexes along the pilgrimage route that had been identified either as Shinto or a mixture of Buddhist and Shinto, ended up becoming Buddhist temples.³⁵ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn35) In other words, the repressive policies of the Meiji state had unintended consequences that permanently transformed Shikoku Henro’s religious orientation. In its modern history, this transformation of Shikoku Henro into an explicitly Buddhist site appears to have been the first in a series of many local attempts by Buddhist priests to re-inscribe autonomy in response to external interests and threats.

4. On the Secularization of Religion, Modernization of Identity: The Pilgrim Tours of the 1930s

The tapering off of anti-Buddhist sentiments by the late nineteenth century, however, did not signal an end to contestation of the pilgrimage’s religious identity. Secularization through modern tourism represented the next

form of anxiety which beset the proponents of tradition. Almost all Japanese scholars who have written extensively on Shikoku Henro agree that the media (particularly newspapers) played a pioneering role in reforming Japanese society's "traditional world view from the early modern period" to "modern logic and (national) ideology."³⁶ (https://apjif.org/#_ftn36) Through mass media and travel campaigns, the idea of "tourism" and "modern travel" significantly altered the ways in which people engaged with the landscape of Shikoku Henro. External pressure and modern change during this time period also triggered a similar revival in the religious convictions of local pilgrims in Shikoku.

By focusing on the modern changes surrounding the Shikoku Henro, one can also make sense of the widespread changes that were simultaneously occurring throughout the archipelago. Improved methods of transportation (trains, cars and bus services), newly paved roads, the increased wealth of the middle class, and easy access to bank services helped propel the travel boom of the 1920s and 30s. Scholars Kate McDonald and Kenneth Ruoff have written about the expansion of Japanese tourism and travel into Japan's colonies with the expansion of the empire. In *Placing Empire*, McDonald showed that tourism to Korea, Manchuria and Taiwan reshaped the social and spatial imaginary of the modern Japanese nation. In other words, imperial tourism helped consolidate national identity, and reinforced boundaries between the metropole and its colonial territories. Kenneth Ruoff, in his article "Japanese Tourism to Mukden, Nanjing, and Qufu, 1938-1943," has similarly argued that mass tourism to battlefields and memorial monuments in the colonies, or what he has called "heritage landscapes," helped maintain and justify the empire by "providing patriotic citizenship training" and "educating Japanese about the imperial projects."³⁷ (https://apjif.org/#_ftn37) While both scholars have looked at *gaichi*

tourism, meaning expeditions to territories outside of Japan, to understand how the Japanese populace made sense of their nation as "modern," I argue that domestic tourism to sites such as Shikoku Henro (a site of Japan's primordial origins) also provided a means of making sense of the rapidly changing homeland.

Without a doubt, mass media played an integral role in changing popular attitudes toward Shikoku Henro. Only a few decades earlier, the public perception of Shikoku Henro had been generally negative and hostile due to anti-Buddhist sentiments, but by the 1920s, journalists and reporters began to depict Shikoku Henro positively—not as a "symbol of a degraded past," but as a "sign of tradition that stood against the march of modernity that threatened Japan's cultural heritage."³⁸ (https://apjif.org/#_ftn38) For example, the *Osaka Mainichi Shinbun* published a series of articles called "Shikoku Reijo Shin Henro" (四国霊場新遍路) from March 7 to March 30, 1934. These were written by four journalists who toured different temples along the pilgrimage route, and reported back on the overall quality of their spiritual experience. Through these publications, the reporters jointly coined the term "New Henro" (新遍路), which was used to depict Shikoku Henro as "the new pilgrimage for city-dwellers who have previously found it difficult to travel for faith and hobby together" (信仰と趣味の旅を兼ねた都会人の新遍路) or as the "modern pilgrimage" (モダン遍路).³⁹ (https://apjif.org/#_ftn39)

Mori Masato has argued that starting in the 1930s, "modernization" made the pilgrimage experience more "rational (合理的)," "efficient (効率的)," and "comfortable (快適)" for travelers. Lodges were being built along the temples to provide shelter for pilgrimage tourists, compared to the past when pilgrims were forced to find refuge in the precincts of nearby temples. Bus, taxi and train services also provided convenience and efficiency so

that the less physically and energetically inclined could choose the option of completing the circuit by vehicles. Shimomura Kainan and Iijima Hiroshi were two reporters dispatched to Shikoku by the *Asahi Shinbun* at this time, to complete the pilgrimage route by using as many modes of transportation as possible.⁴⁰ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn40)

Without a doubt, these technological advances helped increase the number of pilgrims and tourists to Shikoku and its pilgrimage route, but at the cost of much anxiety on the part of the locals, as well as religious people across Japan, who believed that comfort was antithetical to the true nature of Buddhist pilgrimage. Naturally, many feared that these modern developments, which promoted comfort and efficiency at the expense of self-discipline, were contrary to the ascetic spirit of the pilgrimage. It was believed that pilgrimage routes should be walked on foot, and that the therapeutic and spiritual effects after completing the circuit could only be attained through hardship and endurance. In response to these rapid changes, a Shingon priest named Tomita Gakujun established an association called Henro Dōkōkai (遍路同行会) in 1928 to promote “true pilgrimage.” He also published his own magazine, *Henro*, in which he wrote extensively on the ways in which he thought new modes of transportation were destroying the tradition of pilgrimage in Japan.⁴¹ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn41)

In the minds of most advocates of tradition, modern means of completing the pilgrimage severed the “bodily experience (身体経験)” from one’s “sensibility (感覺性).”⁴² (https://apjff.org/#_ftn42) For people like Tomita, the most important element of the pilgrimage was the sense of fulfillment derived from having overcome feelings of fear and dread, while physically walking the perilous journey of the pilgrimage. Modern technology did not only make it easier to complete the journey, but more importantly, it also detached

one’s sensory experience, including “sense of hearing” and “sense of smell,” from the physical experience of walking the circuit. Much to his dismay, Murakami Nagahito made an observation of a tour group in 1931: “...it has become the state of condition that the automobiles (full of tourists) will come to a stop and everyone simply looks out at the stepping stones leading to a dangerous journey...”⁴³ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn43)

For many, efficiency and convenience also meant secularization of the religion associated with Shikoku Henro. In his article, “Modernity and Materiality of the Henro Pilgrimage in Japan,” Mori argued that there was growth in the movement to emphasize the “original religiosity (本来の宗教性)” of Shikoku Henro in response to threats of “secularization (世俗的な実象).” He described these reactionary forces as a “re-examination” (再帰性) of local tradition. Mori raised the example of a new movement called “Daishi Henro Gyoretsu (大師遍路行列),” which was initiated by Henro Dōkōkai. Every month starting in 1933, this association held events to train and discipline its participants to cultivate “true” Buddhist conduct, such as wearing the proper pilgrimage attire and walking the pilgrimage route on foot. The first meeting, which was held in 1931, attracted a little less than two hundred people, but the following year saw a rise to about six hundred participants, and by the mid 1930s, over a thousand people were attending these lessons.⁴⁴ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn44)

While it has been popularly believed that the Shikoku Henro pilgrimage was based on the teachings of the Buddhist monk Kūkai of the Shingon Buddhism sect, Mori raised doubts about the extent to which this was accurate. After examining all the academic journals of *Mikkyo Research* (密教研究) (the study of related practices that make up Shingon Buddhism) published up until the mid-1930s, Mori concluded that there was not a single mention of Shikoku Henro in any of its

publications, and that the sect itself did not consider it to be a serious subject of study nor officially associated with its denomination.⁴⁵ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn45) Instead, according to Mori, Shikoku Henro stood at the “periphery of religion (周縁的な地位)” and fit more under the category of “folk religion (民間信仰).” Mori concluded that people began to give more weight to the perceived “traditional religious nature of Shikoku Henro (四国遍路本来の宗教性)” in response to the growing encroachment of secular phenomena influenced by “tourism” and concepts of “national identity.”⁴⁶ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn46)

For example, starting in the 1930s, the influential organization, Dōkōkai, publicized the importance of upholding religious values by refraining from using motor vehicles to expedite the passage. “Walking pilgrimages” (徒歩巡礼) became considered the only “traditional” and “religious” method of completing the pilgrimage. However, according to Mori, not only was the routine of walking a modern construct of “tradition,” but it also intersected with the national ideology broadcast by the Ministry of Health and Welfare (厚生運動) as Japan began to expand its empire abroad. With the establishment of the “Japan Welfare Association (日本厚生協会)” in 1938 (an affiliated organization of the Ministry of Health and Welfare), the government began to insist that their citizens walk as a way of “building physical endurance for the nation,” and for the purposes of “praying for good fortune in battles (武運長久の祈願).”⁴⁷ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn47) Therefore, Dōkōkai began to align the role of Shikoku Henro with the national ideology of building endurance for the emperor, as observed by the inauguration of the “All-Japan Walking Travel Alliance (全日本徒歩旅行連盟)” in 1938. Consider the following words by Fukuda, the chairman of Henro Dokokai in 1940, who associated the idea of walking the pilgrimage with the goals of the nation:

“In a time in society that screams ‘walk, walk, walk,’ if people along the Shikoku Pilgrimage do not walk, it is not only inexcusable as an ascetic. It is also unforgivable to our society (...) We must carry out the pilgrimage without a doubt by walking.”

By the summer of 1940, Prince Konoe Fumimaro became prime minister for the second time, and under his “new order movement (新体制運動)” for a short period of time, it became compulsory for pilgrims to walk the Shikoku pilgrimage route.⁴⁸ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn48)

The tightening embrace between religion and militarism at Shikoku’s sacred sites in the midst of a militarizing economy was not new to this period of time. As Thal has observed in her study on Konpira Shrine in Shikoku at the turn of the twentieth century, priests of the shrine found themselves supporting an image of a god that embraced Japan’s military and imperial culture soon after Japan’s victory in the Sino-Japanese War. These developments encouraged priests as well as entrepreneurs in Kotohira to capitalize on the popularity of the soldiers and growing national pride as a way of bringing economic benefits to their local community. Moreover, educators in nearby elementary schools in Kotohira also began to link the shrine with images of imperial prestige by conducting field trip tours to pray at the shrine, and then tour the Marugame army base, where students could watch soldiers’ drills and exercises.⁴⁹ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn49) In this way, praying at Konpira Shrine was no longer a private act, but became a public spectacle as government bureaucrats as well as local nativists began to support a system of rites that praised the deity as “an expression of morality and respect for the public order.”⁵⁰ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn50) Similarly, at the height of war mobilization in the 1930s, every small detail of the Shikoku pilgrimage route—including the very act of

walking—became closely tied to national interests and the glorification of Japan’s formal empire.

As Japan became deeply embroiled in war overseas, the numbers of pilgrims to Shikoku naturally fell as poverty and devastation spread across the nation. Only from the mid-1950s onward, when the economic situation in Shikoku (as well as the rest of the nation) slowly started improving, was there a revitalization in the tourism industry that began to attract pilgrims to the site again. The postwar era—a time when new questions about cultural identity, heritage and discourses on the distinctiveness of Japanese-ness or *Nihonjinron* began to appear—marked the final shift of Shikoku Henro from a quasi-religious site for the local community to a national symbol of cultural heritage. The postwar transformation of Shikoku Henro in popular representation was tied to Japan’s rise as an economic power and technologically advanced society. The tourism industry in Shikoku began to expand as bus companies, such as the Iyo Tetsu Company in Matsuyama established in 1953, began to take advantage of the influx of tourists from across Japan. Local authorities, regional tourist companies, and small business owners in Shikoku all welcomed the economic growth that accompanied these tourists, especially as these areas began to struggle after the decline of former mainstays of the local economy, such as agriculture and shipbuilding.

5. Globalization: 1970 to the Present

The notion of “heritage” has in many ways become the “light” or the positive face of Shikoku’s pilgrimage route. A site traditionally associated with symbols of death, sickness and homelessness in the early modern period, Shikoku Henro has now become characterized as a tourist site where visitors can explore traditional art, local cuisine, and visual culture

as a way of reconnecting with Japan’s past. As Reader lamented, the pilgrimage in public representations has moved away from being described as “an ascetic endeavor associated with miracle tales and the presence of a wandering Buddhist holy man,” towards “a fashionable and consumer item [...] in which faith, miracle and the like take a backseat.”⁵¹ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn51)

Since the 1970s, “heritage tourism” in Japan has become the mechanism through which ideas of national belonging and community were reconstructed with substantial emphasis on a reimagined collective past. “*Nosutarujii*” was a term prevalent in mainstream popular culture in the 1970s, promoted by major advertising companies like Dentsu, whose goal was to use perceived “traditional culture” as a commodity which could be used to assuage public uncertainties in a period of rapid social change.⁵² (https://apjff.org/#_ftn52) For example, with the help of Dentsu, Japan National Railways launched its “Discover Japan” campaign in October 1970, which encouraged consumers to travel out into the rural periphery of Japan—presented as a forgotten site of pre-modernity and native purity.⁵³ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn53)

Accordingly, there was a growing interest in domestic travel to sites in Japan where tourists could seek a reaffirmation of their lost “traditional” identity. As sociologist Millie Creighton has argued, this nostalgia-driven “retro boom” since the 1970s functioned to address “fears of a vanishing cultural identity, by asserting a unique Japanese heritage in the face of an increasingly Westernized life, and by promising an affirmation of belongingness to Japan’s urban dwellers.”⁵⁴ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn54) Nostalgic images of Japan’s preindustrial past were successfully packaged by the travel industry, and also eagerly consumed by members of Japanese society. Inherent in the notion of national heritage was also the idea of community and

belongingness. According to anthropologist Theodore Bestor, these symbols provided “cultural legitimacy” in neighborhoods and communities by representing “a history of cultural continuity with the pre-industrial past.”⁵⁵ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn55) Similarly in the case of Shikoku, the idea of “heritage” played a fundamental role in reaffirming Japanese identity, but at the cost of secularization and the complete revamping of the religious and spiritual nature of the pilgrimage route.

On November 16, 1972, UNESCO established the World Heritage program at the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. In the name of “preserving the cultural and natural heritage of the world,” this new comprehensive system sought to designate certain sites around the globe with “outstanding universal value” as official UNESCO heritage sites. In doing so, it has successfully brought prestige, economic benefits and widespread recognition to some parts of the world.⁵⁶ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn56) The official designation by UNESCO became a well-known brand, and consequently, there has been an increased global enthusiasm among national governments, and among prefectural and local governments in Japan, for nominating sites as a way to bring economic growth to their locality. In the 1970s, Japan was among ten countries chosen to help implement the World Heritage project, although it was not until 1992 that it successfully submitted Mt. Fuji as its first nominated site. UNESCO continues to exert much influence in Japan by nominating or rejecting which sites should be considered representative of the nation—particularly at the cost of appropriating as well as abstracting the local history of those sites.

It may be no coincidence that the “retro boom”—or “the renewed interest in Japanese traditions and nostalgia for the past”—also occurred during this time, and the keywords

“furusato” (one’s hometown), “nihonjinron” (theories of Japaneseness) and “kokusaika” (internationalization) started becoming extensively used by the media and tourism industry into the 1980s.⁵⁷ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn57) Similarly, in the process of its UNESCO nomination, Shikoku Henro has become “nationalized” in the sense that its “cultural” values have become preferred over its “religious” values as the symbolic embodiment of a collective, national past. In the recent nomination of the Shikoku Henro to UNESCO, Reader argues that the campaign was bereft of descriptions often historically associated with pilgrimage, such as “religion, faith, practice, sacred icons, apparitions or miracles.” Instead, the site was identified by the national government as a “cultural treasure” with the main focus on its natural and traditional surroundings:

“...the document thereafter avoids talking about Kōbō Daishi and eschews any use of terms such as shūkyō (religion) or shinkō (faith). Words such as reigen and kiseki (both of which are commonly used in Japanese to refer to miracles) do not feature at all. Instead, the application emphasizes the pilgrimage’s location in the natural surroundings of Shikoku [...]. The pilgrimage is described as a ‘living cultural property’ (ikita bunkashisan p. 9), whereas references are made repeatedly to the ‘pilgrimage culture’ (henro no bunka, henro bunka) of Shikoku (e.g., p. 40) and of the need to conserve this heritage for future generations.”⁵⁸ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn58)

Moreover, in their recent publication, *Sekai Isan UNESCO Seishin: Hiraizumi, Kamakura, Shikoku Henro*, Japanese scholars Igarashi Takashi and Sato Hiroshi have suggested that Shikoku Henro had to “overcome religion to embrace culture” in order to be considered a site of “outstanding universal value” for UNESCO.⁵⁹ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn59) While the

pilgrimage's association with spirituality and religion has been a central element of its history, the onset of globalization and Japanese prefectural governments' keen interest in the World Heritage program have brought new forms of anxiety to members of local communities in Shikoku, many of whom continue to be wary of the secularizing consequences of Shikoku Henro's possible inclusion in the World Heritage List. Igarashi and Sato have also looked into other nominated sites in Japan that have been successfully recognized by UNESCO, such as Hiraizumi, as well as those that have failed, such as Kamakura. These examples reveal that heated contestation of local identity due to global processes is not unique to Shikoku Henro, and certainly not unique to Japan.

Scholar Michael Herzfeld, who has taken a critical view of UNESCO's influence in Greece and Thailand, stated in an interview that the UNESCO Heritage project does not promote "internationalization," but rather "reinforces national narratives because it works with national offices."⁶⁰ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn60) Certainly, as we have seen in the case of Japan, UNESCO-nominated sites have incited much international controversy on the topic of national narratives, particularly with South Korea on the historical issue of forced laborers at the "Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution." Moreover, UNESCO's "memory of the world" program has also brought much attention to the controversy over the historical documents related to the "comfort women" issue and the history of kamikaze pilots. These recent conflicts between Japan and South Korea reveal that historical sites become contested when certain historical narratives are nationally and globally endorsed over others. In response to the South Korean government's objection to the nomination, the Japanese government dodged the issues of forced labor, and instead explained that the sites reflected only the history of industrialization from 1850 to 1900, thereby

excluding the legacy of the sites that contributed to the death and suffering of many Korean, Chinese and Japanese laborers. Similarly, as scholar Kimura Shisei has written on the failed nomination of the Chikuhō coalfield, many accidents and explosions that occurred after the 1900s at these coalfields have not been recognized in the national narrative submitted to UNESCO, and consequently, the stories of local regions outside that framework have become obscured.

Not just nations, however, but also regional offices and local businesses have benefited from the economic impact of nominations, and in working with national offices to nominate local sites, they have also played an important role in reinforcing national narratives. For example, local prefectures in Shikoku have been concerned that the concrete paths paved for motor vehicles in the early twentieth century may not meet the standards of UNESCO that prefer sites with elements of "authenticity." As the "original" tradition of the pilgrimage is to "walk" the natural path, the prefectural governments have looked to emulate the UNESCO-nominated Kumano Road (熊野古道), a site that replaced their concrete roads with dirt roads in order to meet the requirements of "authenticity." As Igarashi and Sato have noted, Shikoku's new project of "restoring authenticity," modeled after Kumano, will foreseeably place an economic burden on regions already facing issues of depopulation and aging, as the costs of maintaining these sites may outweigh the benefits.⁶¹ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn61)

Moreover, based on many of his field research trips to Shikoku, Reader has described the slow secularization of the physical landscape of the Shikoku Henro, citing examples such as the disappearance of visual reminders of the historical "miracle tales" from the site. In 2005, when Reader asked a temple official why they had taken down signs that described the

miraculous recoveries of sick pilgrims at certain sites along the route, the official replied that these changes were a permanent part of the movement to “eradicate items associated with premodern superstitions and to develop a more modern orientation to the pilgrimage.”⁶² (https://apjff.org/#_ftn62) These attempts to remove signs associated with religious belief were part of the local governments’ strategies to make their sites more amenable, and to attract as many tourists as possible interested in “comfort and heritage.”

6. Conclusion: Reflecting on Choi Sang Hee and the Controversy of 2013

In the postwar era, there was a growing disconnect between the national and regional governments’ attempts to designate Shikoku Henro as a site with “universal values,” and its consequences of engendering forms of particularistic cultural nationalism. The anti-Korean controversy of 2013 in Shikoku makes sense in this framework of a historical shift of Shikoku Henro from a Buddhist faith-centered site into one of exclusive, Japanese cultural heritage. Perhaps, the symbolic linkages of the pilgrimage with images of Japanese identity and cultural tradition was successful, despite attempts to promote the site as one of universal significance.

Needless to say, the hostile political climate of hate speech and xenophobia in Japan at the time were not conducive to the hopes of the Shikoku prefectural organization to register the pilgrimage route as a UNESCO World Heritage site. At the time of the controversy, the Zaitokukai, an ultra-nationalist and right-wing political organization, was very active in leading anti-Korean demonstrations, particularly in Osaka and Tokyo. In early 2014, there were several violent attacks on Korean schools and schoolchildren in areas such as Kobe and Osaka.

As the local heritage site in Shikoku was becoming associated with the larger national trend of escalating anti-Korea sentiment and hate speech in Japan, Tokushima local authorities grew anxious that these negative press reports might spoil their chances of designating the Shikoku pilgrimage route as a cultural site that reflected UNESCO values, such as the ability to “exhibit an important interchange of human values.”⁶³ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn63) In a news report, the prefectural office expressed concern that “the absence of a formal standardization (of signs) might reflect negatively on their registration to UNESCO.” By April 17, only a week after the *Asahi’s* first report on the controversy, the World Heritage Registration Council of Shikoku Eighty-Eight Sacred Temples and Pilgrim Road released an official statement, calling on all affiliated organizations to be attentive to the matter of preventing such discriminatory actions from recurring.⁶⁴ (https://apjff.org/#_ftn64)

By exploring the history of this single local dispute, we can observe how Shikoku Henro became a site of competing visions among various levels of society (the local, prefectural, national and global). A conflict between a Korean individual and a prejudiced organization attracted national mass media attention, which, in turn, forced the prefectural World Heritage Registration Council to salvage their site’s reputation for the sake of their global audience. This controversy is also an example of the ways in which the growing emphasis on tourism and cultural heritage not only diluted the religious history of this local site, but also possibly provided the nationalistic grounds on which the anonymous racist group could justify their actions.

This case study of Shikoku’s pilgrimage route also reveals an important issue for the age of “UNESCO heritage” from the 1970s onwards—that is, the reality that the perceived heritage values of certain nominated sites are

not “authentic” or intrinsic to the site. Rather, value may be the product of current social norms or external authorities such as UNESCO. The power of a heritage site is not derived from its value as a local or regional historical site, but instead, those values are ascribed to represent what contemporary society understands to be of “outstanding universal value.” Through the case of Shikoku Henro, we can understand how the good intentions of UNESCO to introduce universalism as a way of preserving sites of cultural heritage around the world have instead caused a surge in nationalistic responses within what Herzfeld has called “the global hierarchy of value”:

“Nation-states [...] have a deep investment in protecting what I call their cultural intimacy, [and] are not going to present, as part of their national traditions, dirty jokes, obscene songs, stories that are favorable to their enemies, [...]. What was previously listed as folklore or tradition therefore gets driven even further underground; it becomes, if you will, even more intangible, while the officially acceptable gets reified.”⁶⁵
(https://apjjf.org/#_ftn65)

As Herzfeld has astutely observed, certain elements of history, which may include symbols of death and sickness in the case of pilgrimage, have been driven “underground” in pursuit of the nation-state’s goals to maintain a certain image of their “cultural intimacy.” In the same interview, Herzfeld insisted that UNESCO designation represents a “condescending view on the part of an elite that they, and only they, understand what culture really is.”⁶⁶
(https://apjjf.org/#_ftn66)

To be sure, Herzfeld argues convincingly that UNESCO “reinforce[s] national narratives.” But he overestimates the reach of the nation-state in dictating cultural identities and also overlooks the role of non-state actors in stressing an argument most fundamentally

critical of the state. As seen in the countless historical examples of local organizations that have formed in response to “threats” to their perceived traditions, heritage is not and has not been exclusively under the control of the state. It is also crafted, or at times initiated, from below through regional movements as seen in the actions of Buddhist priests, associations to promote “walking” the pilgrimage route, and the anonymous racist organization in 2013. Additionally, although it is unclear the extent to which the backlash against Choi was locally driven or a part of the nationwide network organized by Zaitokukai, actions at the local level nevertheless suggest that popular support for Shikoku Henro’s UNESCO nomination was unevenly distributed and contested.

The racist posters and the organization’s attempts to maintain exclusivity can be understood as one method of the historical conservation of “tradition.” On the other hand, there are more encouraging, bottom-up efforts to counter xenophobia also taking place on the island. In the spring after the 2014 controversy in Shikoku, Choi and others in Japan started a joint project called “Japan-Korea Friendship Henro Cabins (日韓友情ヘンロ小屋),” through which volunteers in Shikoku began to build cabins and rest stops for all pilgrims regardless of nationality along the pilgrimage route. According to the Kagawa local newspaper, members of the project hoped that this joint collaboration would become “a symbol of Japanese-Korean friendship.”⁶⁷
(https://apjjf.org/#_ftn67) Choi herself also commented that she hoped this endeavor would become “the bridge connecting the two countries from the bottom-up.” Choi continues to uphold her duties as an official *sendatsu*, guiding people around the pilgrimage, and has also recently published a book in Korea called, *The Girl Who Walks Shikoku* (Sik'ok'u rül kōnnūn yōja), chronicling her journey and friendly encounters along the route.

Moreover, local governments in Shikoku continue to encourage pilgrims to abide by “traditional” modes of completing the pilgrimage. In 2018, Niantic Lab’s game *Ingress* included Shikoku Henro in their game portal, called “Capture 88 in Tokushima,” which encouraged its users to physically walk the pilgrimage and interact with their surroundings, while virtually navigating the sites through their smartphones. This seemingly counter-intuitive method of using technology to embolden pilgrims to rely on “traditional” modes of conducting the pilgrimage (walking) is a poignant example of the ways in which many layers of tradition and modern innovations are grafted onto one another, continuing to play an integral role in shaping the contemporary identity of the site. Moreover, this new technology that seeks to draw touristic interest to Shikoku Henro, perhaps specifically targeting members of the younger generation, is also an element of post-modern “dark tourism” as identified by Lennon and Foley.

All in all, religious themes that were, for much of their history, fundamental to pilgrimage life are slowly fading away, and the “dark” history of death, illness and homelessness has become drowned out by the “light” of a vibrant, national culture packaged for global consumption. Shikoku Henro reveals that the landscape of dark tourism is not static, but constantly in conversation with the cultural politics of the time. From the Meiji period to the present, there has been a clear movement away from a type of pilgrimage that was centered on mourning and salvation for individuals, to one constructed by notions of national exclusivity and cultural identity. The Buddhist origins of the temples and shrines around the pilgrimage circuit suggest an era in the world when “authenticity” was not presented in national terms. Several centuries later, the multiple contentions among local actors reveal the power and hegemony of national thinking that continues to deeply

influence the celebration of heritage value in Japan. In this narrative of global and state intervention, it is equally important to realize that the shift in the portrayal of Shikoku Henro cannot be attributed solely to the nation-state, but must be contextualized within the stories of local movements, where acts of racism have been managed and justified in the name of local heritage, as well as in the framework of national thinking,

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SPECIAL FEATURE

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Notes

¹ Reader, Ian, *Pilgrimage in the Marketplace* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 112.

² Ibid.

³ J-Cast News, “Ohenro ni tsugitsugi ‘gaikokujin haijo’ no harigami hanguru annaishiru he no kōgi data (<https://www.j-cast.com/2014/04/10201844.html?p=all>),” April 10, 2014.

⁴ Asahi Shinbun, “The Destruction of the Spirit of *Motenashi*: Discriminatory Posters along the Pilgrimage Road,” April 10, 2014. (my translation)

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ “*Henrodo doko he*,” Asahi Shinbun, April 24, 2014. (my translation)

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ See here (<http://www.topics.or.jp/articles/-/10916>).

¹¹ Asahi Shinbun, “Ohenro Sekai Isan no Yume: San do me no Shojiki naru ka?” December 24, 2016.

¹² Reader, *Making Pilgrimages*, 74.

¹³ Sarah Thal, *Rearranging the Landscapes of the Gods: The Politics of a Pilgrimage Site in Japan, 1573-1912* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), 260.

¹⁴ Ibid, 9.

¹⁵ However, there has been much discussion on the series of controversies regarding the role of the UNESCO World Heritage, and controversies surrounding the history of slave labor and the ‘comfort women’ issue between Japan, Korea and China.

¹⁶ James B. Gardner and Paula Hamilton, “Introduction” in *The Oxford Handbook of Public History*, ed. Gardner and Hamilton, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 9.

¹⁷ Rodney Harrison, “Forgetting to remember, remembering to forget: late modern heritage practices, sustainability and the ‘crisis’ of accumulation of the past,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 19, no. 6 (2013): 581.

¹⁸ For example, as described in Pei-Yi Wu’s article in the book *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in*

China, the behavior of seventeenth century Chinese pilgrims to Mt. Tai was very similar to that of modern tourists, in that ritualized ablutions and donations to the gods were encouraged as part of package tours.

¹⁹ Noga Collins-Kreiner, "The lifecycle of concepts: The case of 'Pilgrimage Tourism'," *Tourism Geographies* 18, no. 3 (2016): 324.

²⁰ Ian Reader, *Making Pilgrimages: Meaning and Practice in Shikoku* (University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 144.

²¹ Noga Collins-Kreiner, "Dark tourism as/is pilgrimage," *Current Issues in Tourism* 19, no. 12 (2016): 1187.

²² Anthony V. Seaton, "Guided by the dark: From thanatopsis to thanatourism," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 2, no. 4 (1996): 234.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Grace Davie, "You'll Never Walk Alone," in *Pilgrimage in Popular Culture*, ed. Ian Reader, (Palgrave Macmillan, London, 1993), 217.

²⁵ Iku Takekawa, "What Sorts of People Make the Shikoku Pilgrimage? From Interviews Conducted in 2011 (<http://henro.ll.ehime-u.ac.jp/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/a6dda776a18124a8c662939af6950c8d.pdf>)," *Research Center for the Shikoku Henro and Pilgrimages of the World*, (Date Unknown), pp 20.

²⁶ "Naoto Kan, The Pilgrim (<https://blogs.wsj.com/japanrealtime/2011/10/03/naoto-kan-the-pilgrim/>)," *The Wallstreet Journal*, October 3, 2011.

²⁷ Reader, *Making Pilgrimages*, 139.

²⁸ Ibid, 143.

²⁹ Reader, 133.

³⁰ Mori Masato, *Shikoku Henro: hachijūhakkasho junrei no rekishi to bunka*, (Tōkyō: Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2014).

³¹ Reader, 64.

³² Chiaki Takagi, "From Postmodern to Post Bildungsroman from the Ashes: An Alternative Reading of Murakami Haruki and Postwar Japanese Culture," PhD diss. (University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2009), 199.

³³ Reader, *Pilgrimage in Popular Culture*, 63.

³⁴ Ibid, 112.

³⁵ Igarashi, Igarashi, Takayoshi, & Satō, Hiroya, *Sekai isan Yunesuko seishin : Hiraizumi, Kamakura, Shikoku henro* (Tōkyō: Kōjin no Tomosha 2017), 276.

³⁶ Hoshino, E., & Asakawa, Yasuhiro, *Shikoku henro: Samazama na inori no sekai* (Rekishi bunka raiburari) (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2011), 118.

³⁷ Kenneth Ruoff, "Japanese Tourism to Mukden, Nanjing, and Qufu, 1938—1943," *Japan Review* (2014): 194.

³⁸ Reader, *Making Pilgrimages*, 144.

³⁹ Masato Mori, "Modernity and Materiality of the Henro Pilgrimage in Japan," *Research Center for the Shikoku Henro and Pilgrimages of the World* (Date Unknown), 152.

⁴⁰ Reader, 144.

⁴¹ Reader, *Pilgrimage in Popular Culture*, 146.

- ⁴² Mori, "Modernity and Materiality of the Henro Pilgrimage in Japan," 152.
- ⁴³ Reader, *Pilgrimage in Popular Culture*, 146.
- ⁴⁴ Mori, "Modernity and Materiality of the Henro Pilgrimage in Japan," 33.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid, 18.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid, 19.
- ⁴⁹ Thal, *Rearranging the Landscapes of the God*, 261.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid, 276.
- ⁵¹ Reader, *Pilgrimage in the Marketplace*, x.
- ⁵² Sandra Buckley, *The Encyclopedia of Contemporary Japanese Culture* (Routledge, 2006), 365.
- ⁵³ Joshua S. Mostow, "Museum as Hometown: What is 'Japanese Beauty'?" in *Japan at the Millennium: Joining Past and Future*, ed David W. Edgington, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003), 222.
- ⁵⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵⁵ Theodore Bestor, *Neighborhood Tokyo* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), 265.
- ⁵⁶ UNESCO, "Basic Texts of the 1972 World Heritage Convention (<http://whc.unesco.org/uploads/activities/documents/activity-562-4.pdf>)," 2005 Edition.
- ⁵⁷ Millie Creighton, "Consuming rural Japan: The marketing of tradition and nostalgia in the Japanese travel industry," *Ethnology* (1997): 241.
- ⁵⁸ Reader, *Pilgrimage in the Marketplace*, 179.
- ⁵⁹ Igarashi and Satō, *Sekai isan Yunesuko seishin*, 279.
- ⁶⁰ Byrne, Denis. "Archaeological heritage and cultural intimacy: An interview with Michael Herzfeld." *Journal of Social Archaeology* 11, no. 2 (2011): 148.
- ⁶¹ Igarashi and Sato, *Sekai isan Yunesuko seishin*, 277.
- ⁶² Reader, *Pilgrimage in the Marketplace*, 169.
- ⁶³ For more information on UNESCO's criteria for selection, see here (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/>).
- ⁶⁴ Asahi Shinbun, "Prevention of Recurrence of Pilgrimage Posters," April, 17 2014.
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- ⁶⁶ Ibid.
- ⁶⁷ Shikoku News, "Nikkan yūjō no shinboru ni: henrodo ni koya kensetu he (http://www.shikoku-np.co.jp/kagawa_news/culture/20140618000183)," June 18, 2014.