

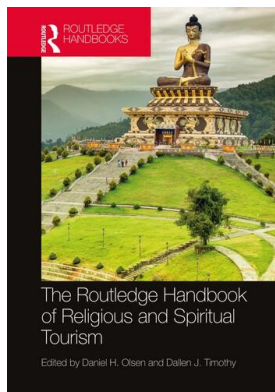
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COEXISTENCE BETWEEN TOURISTS AND MONKS

Managing temple-stay tourism at Koyasan, Japan

Kaori Yanata and Richard Sharpley

Introduction

Long acknowledged to be one of the earliest manifestations of tourism (Kaelber, 2006; Raj & Griffin, 2015), travel for religious purposes has evolved into a major sector of the contemporary global tourism market (McKelvie, 2005). To some extent, this reflects the remarkable growth in tourism – both domestic and international – in general; as ever-increasing numbers of people enjoy the means and ability to travel, it is perhaps inevitable that participation in religious tourism, in particular, is also growing. At the same time, however, both the scope and meaning of religious tourism have expanded significantly in recent decades. Not only is the variety of religious sites and events that are developed and promoted for touristic purposes becoming increasingly diverse but also, reflecting the broadening and blurring of the concepts of religion and spirituality, the very concept of religious tourism is becoming more widely interpreted (Olsen & Timothy, 2006; Sharpley, 2009). Both religion and religious tourism are being rebranded (Carrette & King, 2005) whilst supporting Suntikul and Butler's (2018: 1) argument that 'the common ground between tourism and religion has moved beyond what has been termed "religious tourism"', new touristic experiences, such as 'new age' (Attix, 2002), holistic (Smith & Kelly, 2006) or wellness tourism (Voigt & Pforr, 2013), have in recent years become increasingly popular and have spiritual connotations.

One such experience is retreat tourism (Heintzman, 2013), or so-called temple-stay tourism, a more specific form of retreat tourism most usually referring to visitors staying in religious buildings or complexes in Asian countries such as China, Thailand or Korea (Son & Xu, 2013). The provision of accommodation at religious sites in general is not, of course, a new phenomenon; monasteries and other religious places have long welcomed travellers in need of overnight facilities, typically in return for a donation (Chun, Roh & Spralls, 2017; Ron & Timothy, 2019). However, as Shackley (2004) observes, even at a time when participation in formal religious institutions and practices is on the wane, a commensurate growth in the search for spiritual fulfilment through other means (Heelas & Woodhead, 2005; Wuthnow, 1998) has manifested in increasing demand for retreat tourism 'by people in search of peace, quiet and spiritual input' (Shackley, 2004: 227). Around the world, numerous retreat houses, sometimes utilising secular locations such as historic cultural properties or purpose-built facilities but more typically in places associated with a particular

religious tradition, offer visitors accommodation, food, spaces for quiet contemplation or 'doing nothing' (Shackley, 2004: 228) and, dependent on their markets, varying degrees of organised religious or spiritual activity, from attending workshops or classes to participating in formal worship.

Significantly, such contemporary retreat or temple-stay tourist experiences are usually provided on a commercial basis, often representing a vital source of income for monasteries, convents, temples and other religious places and institutions seeking to maintain both their physical and spiritual fabric. This is not surprising. As religious tourism more generally continues to grow in scale and scope, so too has its economic potential become increasingly recognised and exploited (Griffin & Raj, 2017; Ron & Timothy, 2019). In other words, there has always been a commercial aspect to religion; for example, not only have religious artefacts long been produced for sale to worshippers (Shackley, 2006; Shi, 2011) but also the construction of places of worship has also long been dependent on donations from devotees (Ward, 2006). Indeed, it is argued that the world's major religions have always competed within a global religious marketplace (Einstein, 2008). However, religious sites, attractions and destinations are demonstrating an increasing propensity to be developed and marketed as tourist attractions (Triantafillidou et al., 2010; Vukonić, 2002) and, as a consequence of this increasingly commercial focus, are facing the challenges of commodification (Olsen, 2003).

Surprisingly, despite the growth in popularity of temple-stay tourism in particular and the increasing academic attention paid to it, few if any attempts have been made to consider the potential impacts of this commodification process on the lives of those at the religious locations who interact with tourists. In other words, a number of studies have focused on the perceived consequences of the development of monasteries as tourist destinations, such as Drule, Chis and Ciornea's (2012) research in Transylvania, Ryan and McKenzie's (2003) study of the transformation of a Benedictine settlement in Western Australia into a tourist destination, or Wong, McIntosh and Ryan's (2013) study of how monks and nuns at Pu-Tuo-Shan pilgrimage site in China cope with the challenges of tourism (see also Rodrigues & McIntosh, 2014). However, by its very nature, temple-stay tourism allows tourists to penetrate and share, albeit temporarily, the religious lives of the residents of the places where they stay yet, as discussed shortly, most studies of temple-stay tourism focus on the tourists and their experiences rather than on how the residents manage the commodification of their religious practices or, more succinctly, how they coexist with tourists.

The purpose of this chapter is to address this gap in the literature. Specifically, drawing on research undertaken at Koyasan, a mountain temple complex located in the north-west of Wakayama Prefecture in Japan, it explores how those with the responsibility for maintaining the religious sanctity of the complex manage the demands of tourists. In so doing, it seeks to offer a new dimension to knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon of temple-stay tourism, albeit within the specific context of Koyasan. To provide a conceptual framework for the research, the chapter commences with a necessarily brief review of temple-stay tourism and the potential consequences of commodification before going on to introduce the empirical example and discussing the research and its outcomes.

Temple-stay tourism: the commodification of religious practices?

As noted above, temple-stay tourism has in recent years enjoyed growing popularity as a niche manifestation of retreat tourism, the latter embracing elements of spiritual, religious, holistic and wellness tourism. Typically associated with the provision of accommodation and other services at Buddhist religious sites (Chun et al., 2017 Wang, 2011), although not

unique to that religious tradition – Hindu ashrams in India have, for example, long been popular amongst Western tourists (Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005) – temple-stay tourism and the development of Buddhist heritage sites as tourist attractions more generally has been in increasing evidence in countries such as Myanmar, Thailand, Bhutan, China and Nepal (Kaplan, 2010). Typically, this occurs on an ad-hoc basis, although one country noted for its formal temple-stay programme is South Korea which, perhaps unsurprisingly, has also become the focus of much academic research (for example, Chun et al., 2017; Kaplan, 2010; OECD, 2009; Son & Xu, 2013; Song et al., 2015; Wang, 2011).

The Korean temple-stay programme originated in 2002, coinciding with the country's hosting of the FIFA World Cup, the catalyst being the government's recognition of the need for additional accommodation facilities to meet the needs of the large number of tourists attending the tournament. Initially, the idea was met with some resistance on the part of the religious authorities. However, following the use of temples as accommodation for attendees at subsequent sports events, a more formal relationship evolved in 2004 when the Jogye Buddhist Order (the representative order of traditional Korean Buddhism) established its Cultural Corps of Korean Buddhism, partly funded by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (Kaplan, 2010; Wang, 2011), the purpose being to formally promote temple stays as a necessary source of income, as well as offering visitors the opportunity to experience traditional Korean culture and to propagate the teachings of Korean Buddhism. The programme has since evolved into a successful sector of tourism in Korea. In 2017, almost 71,000 international tourists participated in temple stays whilst, since 2002, the programme has attracted a total of 495,000 international and 3.07 million domestic tourists (Korea Bizwire, 2018). Research reveals that experiencing traditional Korean Buddhist culture is a major motivating factor among visitors, while education/learning about Buddhism, escape, self-reflection/self-growth and being in nature are also significant motivators (Chun et al., 2017; OECD, 2009; Song et al., 2015). However, few if any studies explore the impacts of temple-stay tourism from the perspective of the hosts, both at Korean temples and elsewhere, although some have considered the more general impacts of tourism on monasteries and monastic life (Rodrigues & McIntosh, 2014; Shackley, 1998).

The temple-stay programme in South Korea is unique in terms of both its scale and organisation. Nevertheless, temple-stay tourism in any context is susceptible to the challenges arising from the commodification of religious heritage for tourist consumption. Commodification in general is the process by which anything – a good, a service, a cultural ritual or practice – is accorded an exchange value (Appadurai, 1986); it becomes a commodity that is produced, marketed and exchanged, usually for a financial payment. Hence, tourism as a contemporary social and economic phenomenon is a commodified activity, based as it is primarily on the purchase of goods, services and experiences. Thus, as Olsen (2003: 101) argues, one way in which 'religion and religious built heritage are commodified [for tourism] is where religious groups commodify their doctrines, customs and beliefs for economic gain'.

Within the tourism literature, the consequences of such commodification have long attracted academic scrutiny, typically, though not exclusively, in the context of the authenticity of otherwise tourist experiences. Specifically, following MacCannell's (1973) early thesis that tourist experiences are purposefully staged by the host community and, hence, such staging or commodification of tourism inevitably thwarts tourists in their presumed quest for authentic experiences, numerous commentators have debated the relationship between commodification and authenticity (Cohen, 1988; Olsen, 2002; Pearce & Moscardo, 1986; Steiner & Reisinger, 2006; Wang, 1999). A consideration of these debates is beyond the scope of this chapter, but it is important to note that more limited attention has been paid in

general to the effects of commodification on the experiences of those producing or performing tourist experiences. In addition to the very presence of large numbers of tourists, particularly in religious settings, which may disrupt the day-to-day lives of the local community, the significance or meaning (authenticity) of the production of cultural artefacts, rituals or performances may be diminished as they become commodified for touristic consumption. For example, in an early and widely-cited study, Greenwood (1989), describes how the Alarde, a public ritual that celebrates the northern Spanish town's victory over the French in the seventeenth century, became a commodified tourist attraction, not least because it came to be performed twice on the day to meet tourist demand. He later acknowledges that it has regained some significance to its participants, though as a contemporary political statement. Other studies suggest that performances for tourists may in fact reinforce local cultural identity (McKean, 1989; Xie, 2003), although more generally the potential exists for cultural practices to lose their meaning for performers, and what might be referred to as 'coping strategies' may be adopted to mitigate such negative consequences. For example, Wong (2017, 2018) discusses how monks and nuns at Pu-Tuo-Shan in China adapt to large numbers of visitors. This chapter now turns to the example of temple-stay tourism at Koyasan, Japan, to explore if and how such coping strategies are adopted to enable the monks to coexist with tourists.

The development of temple-stay tourism at Koyasan

Koyasan is a large temple settlement in north Wakayama Prefecture, Japan, and is located on an alpine plain some 800 meters above sea level, surrounded by eight peaks. These collectively are said to represent a lotus plant and, hence, Koyasan is considered to be the 'pure land' (Matsunaga, 2014). Its history can be traced back more than 12 centuries to 816 when the High Priest Kukai (774–835), founder of the Shingon (or Esoteric) school of Buddhism, was granted permission by then-reigning Emperor Saga to establish a monastic training centre there. Kongobuji Temple, which Kukai (posthumously known as Kobo Daishi) founded, subsequently became the head temple of the Shingon sect but, over the centuries, the Koyasan complex expanded significantly in line with its increasing importance as a pilgrimage centre. Initially, only nobles and Samurai visited in an early manifestation of religious tourism in Japan but, as Koya-Hijiri monks were dispatched around the country to preach Buddhism, greater numbers of people began to visit Koyasan (see Funck & Cooper, 2015). As a consequence, not only were more temples built but also from the late fourteenth century onwards, temple lodgings were established to accommodate pilgrims. By the early eighteenth century, Koyasan had become a popular religious tourism destination among the wider population, with many people visiting to hold memorial services to their ancestors, and had developed into a small town. A 1793 map details about 750 buildings, including temples, lodgings, shops and houses (Miyasaka & Sato, 1984). By the end of the Edo period, there were more than 680 temples although, primarily as a result of two major fires but also because of consolidations and the closure of many temples (see below), this number had declined to 137 by 1891. Nowadays, there are more than 100 temples in Koyasan, including the well-known Okunoin Temple, which not only houses the mausoleum of Kobo Daishi, but is also the site of Japan's largest cemetery, the resting place of more than 200,000 souls (Tables 29.1 and 29.2). There are also 52 temple lodgings, or *shukobo*, accommodating more than 84,000 international tourists in 2017, and the town offers shops, tea rooms and other facilities to meet the needs of well over one million day visitors (Tourist Bureau, Department of Commerce, Industry, Tourism and Labor in Wakayama Prefecture, 1959–2017).

Of particular relevance to this chapter, until the mid-nineteenth century Koyasan was a strictly religious town; its population was limited to those engaged in temple-related activities, both religious and commercial (Matsunaga, 2014), and tourists visited only for religious purposes. However, a number of factors underpinned its commodification and transformation into the popular tourist destination it is today. Initially, during the Meiji Restoration, the declaration of Shintoism as the state religion undermined the influence of Buddhism, leading to a decline in Koyasan's fortunes with many temples being closed and, hence, the need to secure alternative sources of income other than religious donations. However, continuing improvements in access were also influential. Between January and June 1884, some 40,000 people made the climb on foot up to Koyasan (Miyasaka & Sato, 1984). Following the opening of the railway from Osaka in 1925, approximately 500,000 visitors were recorded that year, and numbers increased further following the construction of a cable car up to the town in 1930. As a consequence, Koyasan became increasingly attractive as a tourist destination, and in response, temple lodgings were refurbished and improved to appeal to this new tourist market. Soon after the end of the Second World War, they then became subject to the Inns and Hotels Act and were obliged to charge fixed prices (Akiyama, 2015). Following subsequent collaboration with tour agencies, temple lodgings began to welcome organised groups seeking rest and relaxation (Akiyama, 2018).

The construction of road links in the 1960s, however, firmly established Koyasan as a domestic mass tourism destination. In 1965, for example, more than a million people travelled there to celebrate the temples' 1150-year anniversary (Ikeda, 2015). Yet, this ease of access had a fundamental impact on tourism to Koyasan. Day visits became more popular leading to a decline in overnight stays, and accommodation was again transformed to meet the needs of mainly independent secular visitors. The popularity of temple stays was then re-established in the early 2000s, particularly among international tourists, as a result of both Japan's policy to increase inbound tourism and the inclusion of Koyasan in the World Heritage Site inscription of the 'Sacred Sites and Pilgrim Routes in the Kii Mountain Range' in 2004. Hence, Koyasan now caters for large numbers of domestic and international tourists both religious and secular, wishing to experience traditional Buddhist culture. In 2015, more than 440,000 temple-stay tourists were welcomed to *shukobo* in Koyasan, the number of international visitors in particular having tripled since 2013 (Japan Times, 2018). It is with these tourists that the monks must negotiate a coexistence. How they do so is the focus of the research now discussed.

The research: how monks manage temple-stay tourism at Koyasan

Research method

Given the overall purpose of the research, to identify how monks at Koyasan manage temple-stay tourism to minimise the potential negative consequences of the commodification of their religious lives or, more precisely, how they coexist with the tourists who temporarily share their religious world, qualitative data were deemed the most appropriate. Specifically, the first author of this chapter spent a number of days working as an intern in one temple lodging, during which time she engaged in participant observation. Subsequently, semi-structured interviews were conducted with head monks, subordinate monks and an office manager (not a monk) at the Kongobuji Temple (as noted above, the head temple at Koyasan) and nine other temples. These were selected with the support of the Koyasan Temple Lodging Association, which fulfils an administrative role for all lodgings or *shukobo* at Koyasan, on the basis of their different approaches to the provision of accommodation and

Table 29.1 Temple lodging interviews at Koyasan

<i>Believers only and Japanese only</i>	<i>Believers/Tourists and Japanese only</i>
Temple Lodging A (Head monk)	Temple Lodging B (Head monk)
	Temple Lodging C (Subordinate monk)
<i>Tourists and Japanese/Foreigners</i>	<i>Believers/Tourists and Japanese/Foreigners</i>
None	Temple Lodging D (Head monk)
	Temple Lodging E (Office manager)
	Temple Lodging F (Head monk)
	Temple Lodging G (Subordinate monk)
	Temple Lodging H (Subordinate monk)
	Temple Lodging I (Vice head monk)

other services. In particular, two sets of variables were employed to select lodgings: Those whose guests are ‘believers only’ (religious) or are also ‘tourists’ (secular) and those whose guests are ‘Japanese only’ (domestic visitors) or are also ‘foreigners’ (international tourists). Table 29.1 details the interviewees based upon these variables. As discussed shortly, these variables are also evidence of a principal manner in which different temples at Koyasan respond to the challenges of offering temple-stay experiences to tourists.

Research outcomes

To contextualise the more specific questions regarding specific means of achieving a balance between commodification for economic gain and maintaining the sanctity of the temples and the lives of their residents, the research first sought to establish the monks’ overall attitudes towards temple-stay tourism. Broadly, those interviewed held positive attitudes, for two reasons. First, it was accepted as a necessary way of addressing the financial difficulties faced by the Shingon sect, not only at Koyasan itself but also at ‘branch’ temples elsewhere in Japan. On the one hand, the number of monks and practicing Buddhists visiting the temples has long been in decline; on the other hand, the number of tourists visiting Koyasan continued to demonstrate an upward trend. Hence, admission fees and other spending represented a vital source of income to sustain the religious activities of the temples. As one respondent remarked:

Kongobuji Temple is the head temple of the Koyason Shingon sect, with about 3600 branch temples all around Japan. Therefore, Kongobuji has two kinds of income... on the one hand, money from monks and from branch temples, but this income is declining. On the other hand, the main income at the head temple is from admission fees, offering charms, amulets and prayers, and from donations. We are thankful that many people visit Koyasan, regardless of whether they are believers or tourists, because they pay admission fees, buy charms and offer donations.

Second, the monks also perceive the opening up of Koyasan to tourists to be an opportunity to fulfil their mission of sharing the teachings of Buddhism as widely as possible, supporting a similar finding from other studies (Wong et al., 2013). This was clearly articulated by one monk (Temple C):

I don’t care about individual motivations to visit Koyasan... However, Koyasan is a sect of Mahayana Buddhism [which] teaches that everyone can take a large boat together,

Table 29.2 A typology of temple-stay lodgings at Koyasan

	<i>Specialist Faith</i>	<i>Faith and Stay</i>	<i>Experiential</i>
<i>Core service</i>	Faith: religious services, prayers	Faith (prayers, etc. and accommodation/food)	Temple stay Buddhist training
<i>Facilitating services</i>	Accommodation/food Postcards Personal consultation/ counselling	Multi-language service Luggage storage Reservation services	Multi-language service Luggage storage Reservation services
<i>Supporting services</i>	Buddhist training	Buddhist training	Food
<i>Guests</i>	Believers/Japanese only (Temple A)	Believers/Tourists and Japanese/International (Temples B, D, E, F, and H)	Believers/Tourists and Japanese/International (Temples C, G, and I)

whilst Theravada Buddhism teaches that individuals need to take a small boat by themselves. I would like to let many visitors take this large boat together through teaching the Esoteric Buddhism developed by the Great Monk Kukai.

Nevertheless, despite this overall positive perspective, the nature of the provision of temple-stays at Koyasan varies between temples dependent upon both the financial needs and the position adopted by the head monks of individual temples with regard to the extent to which tourism is embraced. The research revealed three distinctive approaches to (or levels of) commodification of the temples for touristic consumption which, for convenience, can be framed by Gronroos' (2000) widely-cited concept of service products comprising three elements: core, facilitating and supporting services. Table 29.2 summaries these three approaches, defined here as 'Specialist Faith', 'Faith and Stay' and 'Experiential'. These are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Specialist faith

The core focus of this form of temple stay is on religious practices, particularly praying for ancestors, and is available only to Japanese 'believers' who actively engage in Buddhism. The provision of accommodation and food (the same food that monks eat) is hence one of a number of facilitating services, such as mailing postcards or counselling guests on personal or religious matters from a Buddhist perspective, whilst the opportunity exists for guests to participate in training/education in Buddhism as an additional supporting service. For the temples, the benefit of this form of temple-stay tourism is that it is, in a sense, 'low impact-high value'; guests pay relatively high prices but also develop a relationship with the temple that continues from one generation to another. Moreover, numbers are restricted to one or two small groups at a time, so the monks are able to focus on the spiritual needs/experiences of individual guests who are able to concentrate on their prayers in a quiet and calm atmosphere. Thus, an authentic experience is maintained for both monks and guests.

Faith and stay

This is similar to the 'specialist faith' stay inasmuch as religious services are offered as a core 'product'. However, accommodation and food are also offered as core services and, significantly, guests, who may be domestic or international and practicing /non-practicing

Buddhists, and include both individuals and organised groups, are not required to attend religious services. Hence, this temple-stay can be thought of as 'ordinary' accommodation but within a religious complex, and the spiritual element may be limited to attending training in Buddhist activities such as meditation or Sutra (Buddhist scripture) copying, considered to be a devotional practice in Buddhism. Significantly, the monks do not make concessions to the potential needs of international/non-Buddhist guests (for example, all guests are served the same vegetarian food). That is, all guests are received and treated, as far as possible, in an 'authentic' religious manner, although written instructions on how to behave within the temple are provided in English for international visitors. In addition, these temple-stays are not promoted through agencies, again limiting the degree of commodification:

Koyasan was originally founded as a training site, so I think offering a temple-stay service is enough if it earns money for running the temple. So, I do not refuse or select guests, but I don't contract with specific tourist agencies. And I keep time to pray in the daytime.

(Temple B)

Experiential

Three temples in this research (C, G and I) offer a temple-stay 'package' that perhaps most closely aligns with the broader concept of retreat tourism. The core product is a temple-stay experience that offers visitors, the great majority of whom are international tourists not familiar with Buddhism, the opportunity to experience prayer/religious services as well as training in Buddhist practices. Moreover, it is also the most commodified form of temple-stay tourism at Koyasan; the temples have their own Internet and social media pages to attract and communicate with potential guests, and information is provided in English to explain day-to-day life and practices at the temples. In addition, one temple (Temple C) has created a package specifically targeting female guests, including special vegetarian menus and sutra copywriting:

We have made a package called the 'maiden plan', collaborating with a tourist agency. For a long time, Koyasan prohibited entry to women... however, we would like even women on their own to feel free to visit Koyasan...

(Temple C)

Another temple created an additional experience to complement the temple-stay package, namely, a night tour of Okunoin cemetery. Initially created unofficially by monks for groups of visitors, it became transformed into an organised tour available also to non-temple-stay guests:

We started the night tour six or seven years ago... the reason that we started it was that we saw many guests with nothing to do [after mediation and dinner]... We visited Okunoin and prayed at night time on the monthly date anniversary of Kobo Daishi's death, and we decided to do it in English. On average, we had 20 to 40 participants. We found they did not even know the name of Kobo Daishi; that is why we decided to talk about him and his teachings on the night tour.

(Temple I)

Another temple (G) occasionally organises special stays based on ‘purifying mind and body’. Outside specialists offer training in yoga and vegetarian cooking, while the traditional activities of meditation and sutra copying are supplemented with other activities such as group running. Such commodified experiences compete with traditional notions of the Buddhist faith, yet the monks in these temples consider it a legitimate means of sharing Buddhist teachings:

We would like to talk about kobo Daishi’s teaching... we are sure we can spread Buddhist teachings, even to international guests, as long as we work hard.

(Temple I)

Generally, then, the segmentation of temple-stay tourism based on different visitor demands, the financial needs of specific temples and the varying attitudes of monks appears to be a pragmatic means of achieving coexistence between monks and visitors. Nevertheless, as the following section discusses, the research revealed a number of challenges that still exist in managing temple-stay tourism at Koyasan.

Managing temple-stay tourism at Koyasan

Although the temples in this research distinguished between ‘believers’ and ‘tourists’ (or non-believers), a major issue to arise from the research was that some monks expressed concern that even those who visit Koyasan to pray for their ancestors are losing faith:

It seems that believers now don’t hesitate to watch TV and drink alcohol after the ceremonies.

(Temple I)

Most Japanese visitors are day trippers; they now have less desire to pray for their ancestors or visit graveyards... More and more guests visit Koyasan to enjoy the cool air in summer, to experience forest therapy and to eat vegetarian food. Moreover, some misunderstand temple lodgings; they think they are general accommodation, and ask if they have lunch there.

(Temple E)

Perhaps as a consequence, many temples face a number of challenges in managing the behaviour of visitors, both domestic and international. Respondents in the research lamented that many guests do not observe the times for meals, prayers and training sessions, thereby disrupting these activities and the lives of the monks (Temple G), while other guests often talk loudly, disturbing the calm atmosphere of the temples (Temple C). International tourists in particular do not follow traditional modes of behaviour. For example, they fail to take off their shoes, they lean on sliding paper doors and damage them, and they wear swimming costumes in the baths (Temple I).

To an extent, such problems are addressed by the provision of instructions on arrival, a guide book in guests’ rooms and signage around the temples (Temples C, E, G and I). Monks also warn visitors verbally if their behaviour is inappropriate (Temples C and G). Nevertheless, the growing number of guests that some temples are now attracting makes it more difficult for monks to meet all their needs, particularly when catering for both traditional believers and for experience-seeking tourists. For example, during the research, it was observed that two Japanese women at a ceremony (at Temple G) attended primarily by

international tourists were confused when, following prayers to ancestors, rather than giving a sermon as conventionally expected, the attendant monks commenced a question and answer session on Buddhism in English with the international visitors. Nor is it only visitors who are impacted; growing demands for training in sutra copying and other activities is imposing on the lives and workloads of the monks. For example, Temple G has a monk who can instruct on meditation and two on sutra copying. One of those is the same monk who instructs on meditation; he once lost his chance to have dinner because of the time it took for these sessions. Interestingly, a recent newspaper article (Japan Times, 2018) reports that one monk has filed a lawsuit for damages and unpaid wages against his temple, claiming that he was suffering depression from overwork.

In addition, although the temples at Koyasan seek to maintain their sanctity and traditions as far as possible, there is a need for some, particularly those attracting international visitors, to respond to the needs of their guests (often revealed in on-line evaluations of their experiences) to remain competitive. For example, one temple decided to provide Wi-Fi, coffee lounges and morning baths following repeated requests from guests (Temple I), while another offered alternative vegetarian food to suit international tastes (Temple G). Temple C found it necessary to redesign its interior to improve accessibility for its ageing, predominantly domestic, clientele. In other words, as the temples of Koyasan become increasingly dependent on tourism as a source of income, they are having to adapt and commodify the services they provide and the overall temple experience in order to meet the varying and evolving needs of their guests.

Conclusion

As observed in the introduction to this chapter, temple-stay tourism is becoming an increasingly sought-after experience (Son & Xu, 2013). Yet, as with all forms of religious tourism, the provision of temple-stay experiences involves some degree of commodification of religious places and practices, potentially impacting upon their sanctity and on the authenticity of the religious lives of the temples' residents. Hence, the purpose of this chapter was to explore how the monks of Koyasan in Japan, as a specific case study, seek to manage temple-stay tourism in order to maintain as far as possible their traditional religious existence or, in other words, to coexist with tourists and tourists.

Temple-stay tourism at Koyasan has developed primarily out of financial need; without the income from tourists, the future of the temples would be uncertain. Yet, the commodification of their religion (Mahayana Buddhism) for touristic consumption is justified by a central tenet of that religion – to spread the teachings of Buddhism as widely as possible. Hence, the provision of temple-stay experiences not only contributes necessary financial resources but also enables the monks to fulfil, in part, their religious duties.

Nevertheless, a variety of temple-stay 'products' are offered by different temples at Koyasan, essentially on a continuum from traditional, religiously-focused stays to a broader temple experience for secular visitors. This enables the individual temples to manage tourism according to both financial need and the extent to which they wish to minimise the commodification of their religious practices, although as this chapter has revealed, a number of more specific measures are also necessary to ensure that the behaviour of visitors not only conforms with the traditions of temples but also does not disrupt the day-to-day lives of the monks.

However, as this chapter has also suggested, these practical arrangements may not be sufficient in the longer term to maintain coexistence between the monks and tourists. More specifically, those temples or *shukobo* offering temple-stay experiences may be required to

respond to transformations in the markets for tourism to Koyasan, not least the increasing numbers of international non-Buddhist tourists and the evident increasing secularisation of the domestic Japanese market. As a consequence, it may become more difficult for the temples and the monks not to compromise their traditional religious practices; that is, it may become increasingly necessary for them to adapt to the needs of tourists (to commodify further the temple-stay) and, in so doing, perhaps seek means of distinguishing between the provision of temple-stay experiences to tourists and their own religious practices. In other words, it may become necessary to formalise the temple-stay 'business' with, for example, defined tasks and roles for the monks, separate from but supporting the continuation of their traditional activities.

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