

The Healing Jizō:
Sōtō Zen Kōganji Temple Adapting to
Varying Social Conditions
延命地藏：順應時代的日本曹洞宗高岩寺

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Abstract

With the implementation of the mandatory Buddhist temple registration system in the Tokugawa period, some Buddhist temples gained stable, economic support for providing funerary services. Without this support Buddhist temples had to focus their activities on the secular needs of the ordinary people. The popular Buddhist deities with healing powers and the associated miracles became the main asset of these temples. The paper, by comparing the early-modern and (post) modern worship at the Sōtō Zen Kōganji temple in Tokyo shows that not only the trans-sectarian and trans-national appropriation of the popular Healing Jizō Bodhisattva helped to contribute to this Zen temple's success, but the main trigger for its success derived from its immediate social and economic surroundings in the adjacent Jizō Street market.

摘要

德川時代日本實施寺受制度（強制平民向附近佛寺登記並締結葬儀約制），某些寺院能夠藉由提供葬儀獲得穩定的經濟收入。未能受惠於此的寺廟，則必須致力於滿足民眾世俗性的日常需求，而以具有治病等相關神蹟，信眾廣大的佛菩薩為其重要資產。本文通過比較東京曹洞宗高岩寺近代初期與後期的禮敬供養，論證高岩禪寺香火之鼎盛，除了由於該寺的延命地藏菩薩受到了跨教派跨族裔的信奉之外，寺旁地藏街市的社會與經濟環境也是主要的誘因。

Introduction

According to Tamamuro Fumio there used to be 2,200,000 Buddhist temples all over Japan before 1867, when the new Meiji government issued the edict on the separation of Shinto and Buddhism.¹ That would amount to 3-5 Buddhist temples in each village. When we read about Japanese Buddhism in the Heian and Kamakura periods, we learn about the sacred scriptures and doctrines written by the founding fathers of the prominent Buddhist schools. However, in their time only 5% of these Buddhist temples existed,² while a large majority of all today's Buddhist temples were established during the early modern period (i.e. Tokugawa period, 1603-1868).³ We can assume that the social and political context in which these Buddhist temples expanded, shaped the character of Buddhist sects in Japan, however it is still often difficult to grasp the real picture of any particular Buddhist school because of the predominant Buddhist intellectuals' views of Buddhism itself. Some important studies from recent decades have provided data on the so-called "intersections" between institutional and popular Buddhism, sectarian and trans-sectarian, local and trans-national beliefs, etc. (Tamamuro 1987, Sawada 1993, Williams 2005, Bodiford 1993, Ambros and Williams 2001).⁴ While these studies provide significant data on the

1 See Fumio Tamamuro, *Sōshiki to danka* (Tokyo: Yoshikawakō bunkan, 1999).

2 Tamamuro, *Sōshiki to danka*, p. 5.

3 Statistics Bureau Japan (Sōmushō tōkeikyoku) (accessed July 26, 2015), <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/nenkan/1431-23.htm>. The main Buddhist sects in Japan today include True Pure Land (Jōdo Shinshū 浄土真宗), Sōtō Zen (Sōtōshū 曹洞宗), Pure Land (Jōdoshū 浄土宗), Rinzai Zen (Rinzaishū 臨済宗), Tendai (Tendaishū 天台宗), Nichiren (Nichirenshū 日蓮宗), and Shingon (Shingonshū 真言宗). According to the latest statistics for the year 2012 most temples belong to the Jōdo Buddhism (30,258), Zen (20,857), Shingon (13,795), Nichiren (11,792), Tendai (4,970) and Nara Buddhism (445).

4 See Fumio Tamamuro, *Edobakufu no shūkyō tōsei. Nihonjin no kōdō to shisō 16* (Tokyo: Hyōronsha, 1971); Fumio Tamamuro, *Nihon bukkyōshi: Kinsei* (Tokyo: Yoshikawakōbunkan, 1987); Fumio Tamamuro, *Sōshiki to danka* (Tokyo: Yoshikawakō bunkan, 1999). Fumio Tamamuro reoriented the study of Japanese religions in his studies on how religious specialists and laypeople participated in religious life. Following him, several important studies were published in English. See Duncan R. Williams, *The Other Side of Zen: A Social History of Sōtō*

practical functioning of Buddhist temples, their priests, and Buddhist practitioners, they all focus mainly on the late medieval and early-modern periods; thus there is still scant research on their connection to the (post)modern periods in general, and consumer society in particular. This paper tries to fill in this gap by adding some information on the survival and growth of a particular Zen temple in a longer time-span.

I focus on a popular Sōtō Zen prayer temple, Manchōzan Kōganji (萬頂山高岩寺) in Sugamo (巢鴨) in Tokyo (Figure 1), to show how this specific Buddhist temple has adapted to some changing social and economic conditions in the modernizing environment. The Buddhist temple is known throughout the country by its main object of worship – Togenuki Jizō (とげぬき地蔵) – the so-called “Splinter-Removing” Bodhisattva with renowned powers to cure heavy and karmic diseases. In recent decades Kōganji became referred to as a “*pokkuri* temple” (*pokkuri dera* ぽっくり寺 or a “temple of sudden death”), Buddhist temples where elderly people pray for a painless and quick death.⁵

1. On the Growth of Zen Buddhism

Popular and academic writing about all three major Japanese Zen schools (Sōtōshū [曹洞宗], Rinzaishū [臨濟宗], Ōbakushū [黄檗宗]) presented Zen Buddhism as a unique religious school, set apart from other Japanese Buddhist

Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa Japan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005). Duncan R. Williams based on historical documents filled up this gap by his book *The Other Side of Zen: The Social History of the Sōtō Zen*, in which he shows how Zen was shaped by the everyday concerns of the non-prominent priests and ordinary believers. Likewise, see William Bodifford, *Sōtō Zen in Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993) and Jannie A. Sawada, *Confucian Values and Popular Zen: Sekimon Shingaku in Eighteenth-century Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1993). They provided much information on the social aspects of the Zen school.

5 See Fleur Wöss, “Pokkuri-temples and Aging,” in Mark R. Mullins, Susumu Shimazono, and Paul L. Swanson, eds., *Religion and Society in Modern Japan: Selected Readings* (Fremont, CA: Asian Humanities Press, 1993), pp. 191-202.

and non-Buddhist religious traditions.⁶ Such scholarship advanced the understanding of Zen poetics, philosophy, meditation, and culture. However, these writings have ignored the social and political context of Zen and its social role in the lives of ordinary people. They failed to illuminate how the Zen school participated in the broader social and religious landscape of late medieval and early modern Japan.⁷

There are at least two major factors that explain the growth of Zen in the early-modern period.

First, despite its idealized image in the West, Zen Buddhism did not operate in a political and legal vacuum, on the contrary, it very skillfully cooperated with political authorities of the Tokugawa government (Tokugawa bakufu 徳川幕府), which imposed a mandatory Buddhist temple registration system (terauke seido 寺受制度) to expel Christians from the country, and later to monitor and control the populace as a whole. As a result, during the Tokugawa period all Japanese were forced to become Buddhist adherents based on the regional relationship with the parish temple (danka dera 檀家寺).⁸ Parish temples benefited from the new system, having a stable membership and financial base, in turn providing their parishioner families (danka 檀家) with funerary and memorial rites for their ancestors. It was forbidden to change the temple (sect) where the

6 See Duncan R. Williams, *The Other Side of Zen: A Social History of Sōtō Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

7 See Fumio Tamamuro, “The Development of the Temple-parishioner System,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 36, 1 (2009), pp. 11-26. Tamamuro based on texts of the Zen Masters shows how the ratio between lectures on Zen meditation and funerals radically changed. In *Eihei Kōroku* 永平広録, the collected sayings of Dōgen 道元 (1200-1253), the ratio between lectures on Zen meditation versus those on funerals is 99% (Zen meditation) to 1% (funerals), while in *Entsū Shōdō zenji goroku* 円通松堂禅師語録, a collection of Zen Master Shōdō Kōsei’s 松堂高盛 (1431-1505) sayings, the ratio between lecture topics focusing on Zen meditation to funerals is 8% (Zen meditation) to 92% (funerals). For more detail on the contemporary interplay and tensions between Buddhist ideals, as reflected in the activities of Buddhist intellectuals, and the often conflicting practical needs of temple priests and Buddhist practitioners see Rowe, Mark M., *Bonds of the Dead: Temples, Burial, and the Transformation of Contemporary Japanese Buddhism* (University of Chicago Press, 2011).

8 This regional relationship based on the temple-parishioner (danka dera) system has continued until this day, although the numbers of parishioners’ families (danka) decreased gradually due to depopulation in rural areas and other social changes caused by modernization processes.

parishioner was registered. For a long time, Buddhist priests had large amounts of control over people's religious, legal, and educational matters. Based on the mandatory registration system, they confined a person to the local community in which all religious rituals were performed. In due course, parish temples became so focused on the rites for the dead that the Buddhism of the time became labeled "funerary Buddhism" (*sōshiki bukkyō* 葬式仏教).⁹

This compulsory affiliation with parish temples dominated the study of Zen Buddhism of the early modern period.¹⁰ However, it became clear in recent years that focusing only on the functioning of parish temples as a part of official religion does not explain the vast growth of temples and clarify their role in the everyday lives of ordinary laypeople.

Therefore, the second major factor that should receive more attention is the working of temples and their approach to people's concerns outside of official Buddhism. That is, in the sphere of the so-called "popular religiosity." Tamamuro Fumio was among the first to emphasize that to understand religion in the early-modern period, one should look at the combination of other-worldly (funerary and memorial rites) and this-worldly (health and economic prosperity) concerns.¹¹ The authors argue that to understand the vitality of Tokugawa

9 See Taijio Tamamuro, *Sōshiki bukkyō* (Tokyo: Daihōrinkaku, 1963).

10 Only since the 1980s has Buddhism in the lives of people in the early modern period received scholarly attention (see Swanson, Paul L. and Clark Chilson (eds.), *Nanzan Guide to Japanese Religion* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006) and Williams, Duncan R., "Religion in Early Modern Japan," in Paul L. Swanson in Clark Chilson (eds.), *Nanzan Guide to Japanese Religions* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press), pp. 184-201.

11 See Fumio Tamamuro, *Edobakufu no shūkyō tōsei. Nihonjin no kōdō to shisō 16* (Tokyo: Hyōronsha, 1971); Fumio Tamamuro, *Nihon bukkyōshi: Kinsei* (Tokyo: Yoshikawakōbunkan, 1978); Barbara Ambros and Duncan Williams, "Local religion in Tokugawa history. Editors' introduction," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 28, 3-4 (2001), p. 214. Tamamuro examines this dual structure of salvation in the other-world (*ōjō* 往生) and benefits in this-world (*genze riyaku*), focusing on religious life from the viewpoint of the majority of the people (1971, 1987), not only from the perspective of religious institutions (temple and shrine documents) and that of the government. On the perceptions of this-worldly salvation see, Ian Reader and George Tanabe Jr., *Practically Religious: Worldly Benefits and the Common Religion of Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998) and Tinka Delakorda Kawashima, *Religioznost in potrošništvo v sodobni japonski družbi* (Religiosity and Consumption in the Contemporary Japanese Society) (Ljubljana: Research Centre of the

Buddhism, it is crucial to examine the many rituals and practices temples provided to benefit life in this world.

For a farmer, this might have meant prayers for rain; for a fisherman, prayers for safety at sea; and for a merchant, prayers for protection from theft or fire. For almost all segments of Tokugawa society, such practical benefits (*genze riyaku* 現世利益) were sought at Shintō shrines and Buddhist temples that featured the myriad *kami*, Buddhas, bodhisattva, and other members of the Buddhist pantheon noted for their prowess in the bestowal of this-worldly benefits. Sōtō Zen Buddhists participated in this culture of protection (from disaster, illness, theft) and benefits (wealth, large catches of fish, familial harmony), and the sect's prayer temples became some of the best known in Tokugawa Japan.¹²

It was this “other side of Zen” that shaped some fundamental characteristics of Zen temples and brought dynamism to Zen Buddhism.

2. How Did Sōtō Zen Prayer Temples Emerge?

The worship of popular bodhisattvas and local deities, which formed the base of all prayer temples, had already begun during the medieval period when the sect spread into local communities, taking over small chapels of Jizō, Kannon (觀音), and Yakushi (藥師) or temples without a resident priest, especially those formerly controlled by priests of Tendaishū (天台宗) and Shingonshū (真言宗) schools or mountain ascetics (*yamabushi* 山伏). Indeed, by the Tokugawa period, deities such as Kannon, Fudōmyōō (不動明王), Yakushi, Jizō,

Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 2015), <http://iaps.zrc-sazu.si/en/publikacije/religioznost-in-potrosnistvo-v-sodobni-japonski-druzbi-1#v>).

12 Duncan R. Williams, *The Other Side of Zen: A Social History of Sōtō Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa Japan*, p. 59.

Amidabutsu (阿弥陀仏) were the most common images of worship in Sōtō Zen main halls. Even the Sōtō Zen temple main halls that featured Sakyamuni Buddha, the sect's official image of worship, was often neglected by priests, parishioners, and pilgrims more interested in the side halls with the more popular bodhisattvas and local *kami*.¹³

The alleged ability of such deities to provide various types of tangible this-worldly benefits enabled Sōtō Zen temples to attract believers through priestly prayer rituals (*kitō* 祈祷). These rituals involved special recitations of sutras or the disbursing of talismans for a good harvest, rain or bountiful fish catches, and for protection from danger at sea or from epidemic diseases. The Tokugawa government had a lot of interest in these for their own use;¹⁴ I focus here on the benefits sold to ordinary people. While most regular parish temples (*danka dera*) included such prayers as a part of their annual ritual calendar or when asked, some temples emerged that were run almost exclusively for offering prayers for this-worldly benefits. During the Tokugawa period, these became so well known for the efficacy of prayers to the temple's deities that they became called prayer temples (*kitō dera* 祈祷寺). Although most of the larger prayer temples within the Sōtō Zen school were founded in the medieval period, it was not until the mid-to-late Tokugawa period that conditions emerged for their development into popular, lay-oriented centers of worship.¹⁵ Among these conditions were the development of woodblock printing, advertising, and the increase in long-distance travel that increased the popularity of certain healing deities (and sacred medicines). The vitality of Sōtō Zen prayer temples reveals a different side of the Sōtō Zen tradition from both the austere monasticism and funerary Zen. Studies of a wide range of folk (popular) religious practices outside the confines of

13 Ibid., 61.

14 See Nam L. Hur, *Prayer and Play in Late Tokugawa Japan: Asakusa Sensōji and Edo Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000).

15 See Duncan R. Williams, *The Other Side of Zen: A Social History of Sōtō Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa Japan*, p. 61. Among most famous prayer temples in Tokugawa period were the so-called "Five great Sōtō Zen prayer temples" ("godai kitō jiin" 五大祈祷寺院).

established religions reveal how healing a trans-sectarian concern for ordinary people was.¹⁶ However, the public's strong faith in Buddhist deities for healing has been overlooked in most accounts of the Zen temples.¹⁷

I argue in this article that the growth and vitality of Zen Buddhism in the early modern period was largely based on prayers (kitō) for this-worldly benefits and newly emerging temples outside the government support, the so-called “prayer temples” (kitō dera), because they were able to freely incorporate popular deities, e.g. the Healing Jizō, and establish bonds with the lay supporters through informal and temporary affiliations. Although this has been examined and approached in recent research such as mentioned above,¹⁸ I try to show here that in the research on the temples' development and popularity it is crucial to look beyond people's beliefs and activities in temple courtyards, thereby taking the surrounding market into consideration. Because the financial support for such temples was largely based on the informal visits to the temple, the priests invested their energy into increasingly modernized ways to advertise their deities and bring people to the temple. In the following, drawing on the current Sōtō Zen prayer temple Kōganji, I will show how such massive visitation levels have been achieved by the temple's cooperation with the immediate economic market.

16 Barbara Ambros and Duncan Williams, “Local Religion in Tokugawa History. Editors' introduction,” p. 222.

17 Duncan R. Williams, *The Other Side of Zen: A Social History of Sōtō Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa Japan*, p. 87.

18 See Barbara Ambros and Duncan Williams, “Local Religion in Tokugawa History. Editors' introduction” and Fumiko Miyazaki and Duncan Williams, Duncan “The Intersection of the Local and the Translocal at a Sacred Site: The Case of Osorezan in Tokugawa Japan,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 28, 3-4 (2001). In addition to its institutional history and its cult of Jizō, researchers often emphasize the following two factors that contributed to some Buddhist sites development into nationally-known sites: 1) the belief in the healing powers of the Jizō, 2) the spread of faith by the priests and religious non-specialists, the traveling merchants, etc.

3. Case Study: Kōganji Temple and the Popular Faith in the Togenuki Jizō

The Sōtō Zen prayer temple Manchōzan Kōganji (萬頂山高岩寺) is located in Sugamo in central Tokyo (Figure 1), where I conducted two-years of fieldwork.

Many people today are unfamiliar with the temple's name so they simply call it Togenuki Jizō (とげぬき地蔵). The name Togenuki Jizō today refers not only to the temple, but also the Jizō Street shopping area surrounding it (Jizō Doori shōtengai 地蔵通り商店街), and even wider Sugamo area. The area is also known as the “*Obaachan no Harajuku*” (Grandma's Harajuku), because of the image fabricated by the media that mostly elderly women gather there.¹⁹ Another distinctive feature of this religious site is Jizō's fete day – *ennichi* (縁日) – which is celebrated here three times per month (on the 4th, 14th, and 24th). This was a specific occasion when praying to Togenuki Jizō was believed to be especially efficacious. At the same occasion, open stalls have been set in the temple's courtyard and throughout Jizō Street. On the 800-meter long Jizō Street there are 198 shops, and on the festive days *ennichi* an additional 200 open stalls are set on one side of the street. Observing Kōganji today, between 60,000 and 100,000 people gather on *ennichi*.²⁰

In my fieldwork research, which took place during different time periods in 2007, 2008, and 2012, I used the qualitative method of participant observation and structured interviews. Data collection involved on-site interviews with a

19 Kōichi Takagaki, “Sakariba toshite no Togenuki jizō,” in Susumu Kurasawa (ed.), *Daitoshi no koreisha to sakariba* (Tokyo: Nihonhyōronsha, 1993), pp. 118-121. *Post Weekly* in September 1990 published: “Harajuku vs. Sugamo Togenuki Jizō Shopping Street: A Complete Guide to Shopping Heaven for Girls and Grandmas.” This article emphasizes common features of girls and grandmas, both “worshiping” a particular leading figure; stressing similarities in lifestyles of both troops concerning the money, care for fashion, consumption attitude etc., in short: Takeshita Street ↔ Jizō Street ↔ “a trendy spot.” Both districts tend to be considered by outsiders as “popular districts of an alien culture.”

20 See Toshirō Iida, “Shōtengai no nichijō to hinichijō,” in Susumu Kurasawa (ed.), *Daitoshi no kōreisha to sakariba*, pp. 141-176.

variety of visitors to the temple and the Jizō Street market, as well as with temple priests, shop-owners and organizers of Jizō Street and the Jizō Doori Shopping Center Promotion Association (Sugamo Jizō Doori Shōtengai Shinkōkumiai (巢鴨地藏通り商店街新振興組合),²¹ and the local city administration. Schedule-structured interviews were conducted on weekends, working days and Jizō's fete days *ennichi*.

This temple is a particularly interesting example for this study, because it was not initially established as a prayer temple, but its history shows how in the modern period it gradually changed from a parish temple to a prayer temple.²²

Before discussing the temple's development in the modernizing environment, let us look at how the temple's initial growth was achieved by appropriation of popular faith in the Healing Jizō.

4. The Temple's Appropriation of Popular Faith in the Togenuki Jizō

The name of Togenuki Jizō is derived from a story found in the 1822 *Enmei Jizōson inkou riyakuki* (*A Record of the Benefits of Printing the Image of the Life-Prolonging Jizō*). This story was, according to Kōganji's publication *Kōganji shi*,²³ written on the request of the head priest of the time to get people's support for the restoration of Kogonji's main building. It describes the supernatural power of a deity Togenuki Jizō Bodhisattva who was said to have saved people from all sorts of illnesses, curses, and other disasters.

21 For more information on this local merchant association (Sugamo Jizō Doori Shōtengai Shinkōkumiai) search their official website: <http://sugamo.or.jp> and <http://sugamon.jp> (accessed 31 January 2016).

22 As mentioned above, parish temples (*danka dera*) are Buddhist temples that provide funeral and memorial services for deceased ancestors of local families. Local parishioner families (*danka*) in return for their services financially support the temples.

23 Akinori Kuruma, *Kōganjishi* (Tokyo: Kōganji, 1986).

For some time, the Zen monk Suijin had visited the Mōri family household [in the city of Edo]. In 1716, a female maid-servant employed by the family had casually placed a broken needle in her mouth while she was sewing and suddenly, accidentally swallowed the needle. The needle got stuck in her throat and then it worked itself down to her stomach which caused her a tremendous amount of pain. Numerous medicines and talismans were used, but to no avail. The monk, Saijun, who was visiting at that time, said: 'I have a Jizō talisman that worked a miracle previously; I will give it to you.' With that, the female servant drank down the talisman with some water. After a short interval, she vomited and the talisman came out. When the talisman was taken away to be cleaned, they discovered the four-*bu*-long (1.2 cm) broken needle that had pierced the talisman. Everyone was amazed. Since I didn't hear of this story from just anyone, but from the monk Saijun who came to relate and vouch for this story himself, I have included it in this record of miraculous stories.

Although there were many other amazing things that I witnessed with this talisman, I cannot include them all here. Indeed, I had not readily talked about this story or shown the talisman before; I do so now because the main hall at the Kōganji temple was destroyed and needs to be rebuilt. I told this story to the abbot and also donated a written version of it as well as copies of the talisman because there are plans to form a large association to help rebuild the temple quickly. To these supporters, the abbot has been giving out the miraculous talismans.²⁴

The text, in addition to recommending the ingestion of talismans or the sincere worship of Jizō to effect healing miracles, instructs on the practice of hand printing the Jizō talismans from the wooden printing block held at Kōganji.

²⁴ *Enmei Jizōson inkou riyakuki* 1822; trans. in Duncan Williams, *The Other Side of Zen: A Social History of Sōtō Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa Japan*, p. 103.

From the writings, we learn that this hand-printing of the talisman had to be made with deep faith, honorable intentions, and a sincere heart.²⁵ The above document shows this “legend” was written by the temple officials to gain support for its reconstruction, however it is not clear whether the ritualized printing and ingesting of the image of Togenuki Jizō Bodhisattva (omikage お御影) (Figure 4) existed before that as an independent cult. However, we may assume that the practice of hand-printing the talisman spread further from the Kōganji temple, because the wooden printing block held at Kōganji was later copied and held at other temples of the Sōtō, as well as other sets such as Jōdo, Rinzai, and Shingon.²⁶

While the above text provided the Kōganji temple with the “mythical” origin (engi 縁起),²⁷ many other writings appeared together with increasing printed publications for the wider consumer market.²⁸ For example, in 1735 the then guidebook *Zoku Edo sunago onko meisekishi* reported that:

25 Ibid., p. 107. The ritual of worship was further prescribed by the priests:

1) The paper that should be used for printing these talismans is a sheet of regular-sized paper folded into thirds lengthwise and into eighths along the width. This should produce twenty-four pieces of paper. The number twenty-four is related to the fact that the festival day of Jizō is held on the twenty-fourth of each month. However, this rule of having twenty-four pieces need not be strictly adhered to.

2) During the process of printing, idle chatter and joking are not permitted. One should simply intone the Jizō mantra with a sincere heart.

3) When it is time to scatter the talismans into a waterway, either a river or the sea can be chosen, whichever is more convenient. If they are many people in the party, the talismans can be divided among them so that the Jizō mantra is recited once with every talisman put into the water. Because it may be logistically difficult to do this with the time necessary for this ritual, it is also permissible to recite the Jizō mantra ten thousand times back at the house. One can then go out to a waterway and chant the sacred name as seems fit.

4) See Duncan Williams: If the ritual is to take place at the beach, while there are those who say that one should set up a small table on a boat with offerings of incense, flowers, candles, pure water, drink, and food, or give obeisance to dragon and water deities, these types of attention-grabbing activities should be avoided because these acts detract from the true meaning and power of the ritual. One should therefore perform the ritual as discreetly as possible. Duncan Williams, *The Other Side of Zen*, p. 105-106.

26 Duncan R. Williams, *The Other Side of Zen: A Social History of Sōtō Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa Japan*, p. 107.

27 See Akinori Kuruma, *Kōganjishi*.

28 See Nam L. Hur, *Prayer and Play in Late Tokugawa Japan: Asakusa Sensōji and Edo Society*; Penelope Francks, *The Japanese Consumer: An Alternative Economic History of Modern Japan*

there is a new *hayari Jizō* 流行地藏 (fashionable Jizō) at the Sōtō Zen temple known as Kōganji. [...] Those gravely ill or those who have difficult-to-cure ailments, if they get a hold of a talisman of this Jizō statue, will definitely find relief.²⁹

These early-modern guidebooks have further fueled numerous legends and stories of Togenuki Jizō's miraculous powers, and reports of benefits received.³⁰ This throughout subsequent centuries significantly added to the fame of Togenuki Jizō and increased the numbers of worshipers in the temple. Gradually faith in Jizō spread beyond the Kōganji temple in Edo city (today's Tokyo) to regions all over Japan.³¹ According to Williams, that happened not through sectarian networks of head-branch temple structures, but through a variety of informal networks (often via a traveling monk, or a merchant who donated a talisman or the printing block used to print the talismans to a local temple), rather than by religious specialists. It was argued that it was integration of such "popular cults" to draw believers to particular temples and their deities that helped Sōtō Zen expand into many regions.³²

Previous research on the Kōganji temple provides a better understanding of how Sōtō Zen Buddhist institutions integrated popular beliefs in the healing bodhisattva to attract believers in the early-modern period. These beliefs were promoted beyond the Zen sect and the temple's locality. I pointed out how these beliefs could further spread with the support of the growing print industry in the early-modern consumer market. In the following let me consider what other

(New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid. Records describe the cure of a wide range of illnesses: tuberculosis (2 stories), hereditary illness (2), typhoid fever (2), high fever (2), leprosy (2), stomach pains (2), inability to urinate (1), impotence (1), skin rash (1), and eye disease (1).

31 See Duncan R. Williams, *The Other Side of Zen: A Social History of Sōtō Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa Japan*.

32 Ibid.

factors worked to promote visitation of the temple based on the local market strategies.

5. The Modernizing Environment and Its Impacts on the Kōganji Temple

The Kōganji temple moved to Sugamo in central Tokyo in 1891. It has since then faced the city's modern development, resulting in its transformation from the parish temple to the prayer temple. Considering the time when some major reorganizations of the temple occurred, we should view these in the broader context of modernization processes. Here I describe some major developments in a rather limited area of Sugamo.

As viewed from Kōganji's history, the temple, since its establishment at Kanda Myōjinshita Dōhōchō in 1596, has burned down and been forced to move several times (Figure 1). When it was finally settled in its present position in Sugamo in 1891, it had to completely reorganize itself due to the changing urban infrastructure of the rapidly modernizing Tokyo.

In 1931, the New Nakasendō (today's Route 17) was constructed, which directly connected Sugamo with Saitama and Gunma Prefectures. However, this change pushed Kōganji into a difficult situation, because it enclosed it within the boundaries of the Old Nakasendō Road (today's Jizō Street) and New Nakasendō Road, therefore taking a large part of Kōganji's land (see Figure 1). This caused the loss of a great part of Kōganji's graveyards, which led to the loss of its parishioners (danka).³³ Kōganji, which used to be a parish temple responsible for

33 This relationship between the parish temple (danka dera) and parishioner families (danka) serves as the primary economic underpinning for a large majority of Buddhist temples in Japan. In the city, many temples chose to build parking lots on the temple grounds or construct apartment and office buildings. If the tendency on the part of many temples to use their land to guarantee their continued existence is characterized as passive, in the highly mobile urban situation some temples undertook to spread Buddhist teaching actively. Instead of relying on

funeral and memorial rites for its parishioners, was now left without affiliated parishioners and in need of economical support. This situation further pushed the Kōganji temple to strive for visitors who would come to the temple, make donations, purchase amulets, and pay for their prayers and petitions offered to Togenuki Jizō.

On the other hand, it could be said that the temple also benefited from the modernizing developments. The first such advances were the opening of Sugamo Station in 1903 on the Yamanote loop line (Figure 1) that circles the center of Tokyo at the south, and the Kōshinzuka Station on the Arakawa line at the north of Jizō Street. This way the circular route from Sugamo Station through Jizō Street and to Kōshinzuka Station was completed. Next was the opening of the city tramline connecting Sugamo with the city center. Sugamo therefore became one of most easily accessible central stations in Tokyo, making the Kōganji temple easily accessible to the visitors, especially the elderly (65-85 years old), who make up the majority of the temple visitors today. The temple has in recent decades increasingly benefited from the attention of the mass media and the surrounding Jizō Street market, which have significantly added to the popularity of Togenuki Jizō.³⁴

1596	Founded at Kanda Myōjinshita Dōhōchō (神田明神下同朋町)
1636	Construction of the Main Building
1657	Destroyed by fire
1706?	Moved to Shitaya Byōbuzakashita (下谷屏風坂下)

the dead to mediate their ties with the living, instead of depending solely on funerals and graveyards, these temples and priests are venturing to establish deeper bonds with living supporters. However, many people still look to the Buddhist temple for the funeral and post-funeral ritual services despite this threat to their traditional role. Fumio Tamamuro, *Zusetsu nihon bukkyō no rekishi: Edo jidai* (Tokyo: Kōsei Shuppansha, 1996), p. 61.

34 For more details on the symbolic appropriation of the Togenuki Jizō see Tinka Delakorda Kawashima, *Religioznost in potrošništvo v sodobni japonski družbi* (Religiosity and Consumption in the Contemporary Japanese Society) (Ljubljana: Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 2015), <http://iaps.zrc-sazu.si/en/publikacije/religioznost-in-potrosnistvo-v-sodobni-japonski-druzbi-1#v>.

1728	Tazuke, M., <i>Shitaya Kōganji Jizōson engi ryōki</i> 下谷高岩寺地蔵尊縁起靈記 (Jizō's origin of the Shitaya Kōganji Temple)
1732	“There is a small popular Jizō, which is about 30 cm tall,” in Kikuoka, S., <i>Edo sunago</i> 江戸砂子 (Famous Places in the City of Edo)
1735	“Supernatural Power of <i>Mikage</i> ,” in Kikuoka S., <i>Zoku Edo sunago onko meisekishi</i> 続江戸砂子温故名跡志 (<i>Accounts of Noteworthy Places in the City of Edo</i>)
1756	Establishment of the temple town (monzenmachi 門前町), which was ruled by magistrate's office
1814	Mention of Jizō, in Tsuda, K., <i>Yūreki zakki</i> 遊歴雜記 (Travel records)
1838	Registration of the Kannon as the 22nd Kannon on the 33 Kannon pilgrimage route <i>Sanjūsankasho</i> Kannon (三十三ヶ所観音), in Saitō, G., <i>Tōto saijiki</i> 東都歳時記 (Customs of the Eastern Capital)
1891	Moved to Sugamo
1897	(or after) <i>Ennichi</i> (縁日) set on every date with a “4” in it - “4 no hi” (四の日)
1901	Description of “ <i>goriyaku</i> ” (benefits) of Kōganji in <i>Tokyo meibutsushi</i> 東京名物誌 (Tokyo's attractions)
1902	Construction of the Sugamo Station on the Yamanote Line
1911	Construction of the Ōzuka Station on the Toden Arakawa Line
1911	Description of Kōganji's courtyard, in <i>Tokyo kinkō meisho zue</i> 東京近郊名所図会 (Illustrated famous sites of the suburbs of Tokyo)
1923	Gonda, Y., <i>Goraku gyōsha no mure</i> 娯楽業者の群 (Entertainers' groups)
1929	Kōganji's courtyard reduced by the construction of the Route 17
1935	Increase of the open market stalls at the Jizō Street
1946	Construction of the Kōganji's temporary Main Building
1959	Construction of the Togenuki Community Center (Togenuki Seikatsukan)

Figure 1. Outline of the history of Kōganji (after Kawazoe)³⁵

35 Noboru Kawazoe, *Obāchan-no-Harajuku* (Grandmas' Harajuku) (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1989), pp. 9-22.

6. The Temple and the Jizō Street Market Strategies

Ennichi regained popularity once the current Kōganji's main building was rebuilt in 1956 (after being demolished in WWII). Because the number of visitors increased, the Sugamo Jizō Doori Shopping Center Promotion Association started to actively rebuild the Jizō Street, which flourished in 1965. From then on, the Shopping Center Promotion Association, and the town (including the local administration) have cooperated closely with the Kōganji temple, especially in organizing and holding a variety of annual events (*nenjū gyōji* 年中行事) (see Figure 3). In fact, some researchers of the area consider the Kōganji temple as the leading actor in the formation of the Jizō Street shopping area.³⁶

It is important to notice that the Jizō Street market strategies largely changed from the 1960s and 1970s, when the goods offered for sale were aimed at the neighbourhood residents and, therefore, consisted of daily necessities and fresh food. The increasing growth and development of the area, e.g. the opening of large stores with ample food supply in the vicinity and the building of new subway connections that brought a new wave of relatively distant visitors to Kōganji (Mita Line of Toei Metro), have all influenced Jizō Street to find a new niche on the market.

For example, because the majority of the visitors at that time were elderly people, storekeepers changed their market strategy by switching from the goods consumed by people of different ages to those targeting older, female customers. Some of these products, such as working pants (*monpe* もんぺ), and red underwear (*akai shitagi* 赤い下着), became so popular that they became referred to as the widely known "Togenuki Jizō fashion." Besides from clothing, the storekeepers developed certain local specialties and opened souvenir stores and restaurants for visitors from distant places. Haberdasheries, restaurants, drug

36 Tooru Amano, "Jizō Dōri kūkan no hensen," in Susumu Kurasawa (ed.), *Daitoshi kōreisha to sakariba*, pp. 56-60.

stores, and souvenir stores remain the most popular kind of businesses in Jizō Street shopping area even today.



Figure 2: Shops on Jizō Street³⁷

Local associations and Kōganji struggled jointly to preserve the former appearance of the Jizō Street shopping area so that the area maintains a (elsewhere already disappearing) friendly nostalgic “*shitamachi*”³⁸ atmosphere. In comparison with the large department stores areas, the small shops and street stalls of the Jizō Street area create a sense of festivity.

Adopting such strategies, the temple succeeded in finding and maintaining the niche on the market in the postmodern Tokyo.

37 Author’s photograph.

38 *Shitamachi* retains a nostalgic atmosphere as it has failed to catch up with the modernization of Tokyo. Sugamo was historically a village outside of Edo city (today’s Tokyo) and is not a part of *shitamachi* in its original sense. However, it well retains the very atmosphere of *shitamachi*.

1/1	New Year's day (ganjitsu 元日)
1/4	Jizō's first fete day of the year (hatsu Jizō 初地蔵)
1/24	Annual Kōganji festival (taisai 大祭)
2/3	The day before the spring festival (setsibun 節分)
4/8	Buddha's birth festival (bukkyō-e 仏教絵)
5/24	Annual Kōganji festival (taisai 大祭)
7/24	Jizō's fete day (Jizō-e 地蔵絵)
9/24	Annual Kōganji festival (taisai 大祭)
12/8	Buddha's enlightenment celebration (jōdō-e 成道会),
12/24	Final Jizō (osame Jizō 納め地蔵)

Figure 3. List of annual events (nenjū gyōji) (Source: www.sugamo.or.jp).

7. Religious, Social, and Economic Motivations for the Visits

The on-site observations and interviews with the current visitors to the temple can give us valuable insight into the reasons for the contemporary popularity of this Zen temple.

8. Observation of the Worship Ritual

Comparing the strictly prescribed rules for worshipping the Healing Jizō, about which we learn from the priests' official documents of the early-modern period, the stance of the current priests towards worshippers (in practice at least) seems to be far less prescriptive. Although the temple is still selling the aforementioned ingestible Jizō talismans among several other types (Figure 4),

the priests do not seem to particularly encourage the purchase of the ingestible Jizō.



Figure 4: Talismans (*ofuda/omamori* お札 / お守り) sold at the Kōganji temple include traffic safety (*kōtsū anzen* 交通安全); opening up of good fortune (*kaiun* 開運); prevention of danger (*yakuyoke* 厄除); the manifestation of Togenuki Jizō (*omikage / osugata* お御影 / 御姿); protection (*goshugo* 護守後); protection against roundworm (*mushi fūji* 虫封じ); and safe childbirth (*anzan / fukutaishu* 安産 / 腹帯守)³⁹

After entering the Kōganji temple's courtyard, visitors would fan some smoke from the incense burner toward themselves, as it is believed to have healing powers. Afterwards, they would throw a coin into the offering box placed

39 Other benefits petitioned for at Togenuki Jizō include *saiyaku shōjo* 災厄消除 (eradication of calamities), *kanai anzen* 家内安全 (family safety), *shōbai hanjō* 商売繁盛 (business prosperity), *shinjō anzen* 身上安全 (physical safety), *byoki heiyū* 病氣平癒 (recovery from illness), *jigyō hanei* 事業繁栄 (business success). Usually all these prayers are essentially petitions most commonly addressed to one or more objects of worship.

in front of the Kōganji's main building and make a short prayer. Having done so, they would proceed to a bodhisattva statue in the courtyard of Kōganji, where they would line up and wait their turn.



Figure 5. Pouring water on the Kannon statue⁴⁰

Togenuki Jizō (the Jizō Bodhisattva) is the main image of worship (honzon 本尊) enshrined in the Kōganji temple. Besides Togenuki Jizō, the temple has a statue of Kannon (the Bodhisattva of Compassion) in its courtyard. Today this Kannon seems to be the most popular statue, and is continuously mistaken for Togenuki Jizō among the worshipers. Despite its obvious appearance as a Kannon statue, people worship Kannon and turn to it with requests that only the famous Splinter-Removing Jizō can answer. Interesting though easily

40 Author's photograph.

understandable is the fact that Kōganji and its priests do not strive to explain this mistake to their worshipers.

For the research record, however, Kōganji's priests confirm that there is no connection of any sort between the two objects of worship. As mentioned above, Togenuki Jizō's origin relates directly to the Kōganji's history, whereas the origin of the Kannon in its courtyard was a mystery until recently. With the intention to replace it with a new one, Kōganji's priests removed the old Kannon statue, the surface of which was already abraded from having been polished for years. After removing the statue from its stand, they found the sculptor's name and occupation, including the exact year of engraving at the lower side of Kannon's feet. According to this data, they found out that a local craftsman had it erected for his wife, who died in the great fire of Edo. However, it remains unknown when exactly people began to wash and rub the surface of the Kannon's statue. The fact is they still do it, strongly believing it will relieve them from pain in the places they touch.

9. Talks with Togenuki Jizō's Visitors

From the regular observations of visitors' behaviour at Togenuki Jizō it became clear that most people (on *ennichi* in particular) actively engage in the worship rituals described above, as well as in the shopping on Jizō Street.⁴¹ From the information I collected during profound talks with the visitors, however, I found that these seemingly opposite activities have been intricately connected and should not be treated separately. The visitors' motivations for visiting this particular site very often include religious and social aspects which can be viewed from the answers on the reasons for their visit: 1) visit of gratitude in

41 See Susumu Kurasawa (ed.), *Daitoshi no kōreisha to sakariba*; Tinka Delakorda Kawashima, *Religioznost in potrošništvo v sodobni japonski družbi*.

return for favors granted; 2) visit to fill up the time or to escape boredom combined with a walk taken regularly to maintain or restore good health; 3) visit to meet and talk with people who share similar experience; 4) Sugamo's informality and naturalness (compared to constrained formality of other popular districts in Tokyo, such as Shinjuku or Ueno); 5) friendliness of the Jizō Street merchants; 6) relaxed shopping in the stores adapted to tastes of elderly people; 7) easy approachability and free transportation to Sugamo by the "Silver Pass" ticket for senior citizens.

From their answers on shopping at the Jizō Street market, I could find that Togenuki Jizō provides a meaningful context to the goods sold on Jizō Street, so that the association of goods with Togenuki Jizō gives them added value, be it in association with its divine powers, or in association with good health, good luck, or nostalgia for the good old times. In the festive atmosphere of *ennichi* they can allure the elderly into a fantasy world, yet they are consumed in the framework shared by others. Viewed from a Durkheimian perspective, the shared experience of each individual to purchase goods at the Jizō shopping street constitutes communal feelings focused around a symbolic Togenuki Jizō.

Drawing on the insights into people's attitudes at this religious site clarified the close relationship between the Kōganji temple and the Jizō Street market. Indicating that, particularly in the study of the popularity and growth of religious sites, the rituals of worship should be examined as meaningfully related to other consumer's (social and economic) activities at a site.

Conclusion

The historical and fieldwork research on the Kōganji temple showed a remarkable continuity in the temple's endeavors to appropriate and further promote peoples' beliefs in the healing powers of Togenuki Jizō since early-

modern times. Although the new modernizing environment has brought some initial disadvantage to the temple, forcing it to reorganize into the prayer temple, at the same time it provided plenty of advantages and new techniques for the promotion of its object of worship. The early-modern ways of drawing visitors to the temple (using cross-sectarian popular beliefs and lay proselytizers) have been made even easier by modern technological advancements in advertising, media, communication, infrastructure, and tourism. However, the growing popularity of this particular Zen temple in modern consumer society could be found not so much in the privacy of the ritual of ingesting the printed image of the Healing Jizō, but in the public character of the site and the social and economic gains that it can provide quite exclusively for a certain cohort group.

One could conclude that among the reasons for the growing popularity of religious institutions we should consider not only their trans-sectarian and trans-national appropriation of popular beliefs, but, at least in modern consumer society, their immediate economic market.♦

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