

Unveiling the Sacred:  
The Emergence of Temple Museums in Japan

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**Abstract**

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Buddhist temple museums are a rising phenomenon within the landscape of museums in Japan, yet they are largely overlooked in Western scholarship and for the most part, not well understood. This qualitative study explores the emergence of Japanese Buddhist temple museums, the nature of their collections and exhibits, as well as their desired impact on temple visitors. Interviews were conducted with priests and curators at 10 temple museums across the Kansai region, Japan's cultural hub. Results suggest that temple museums use their collections to attract and maintain temple visitorship and to stimulate temple economy. Results also point to an ambiguity that pervades temple museum management regarding the curatorial intent of priests, their interpretation of visitor behavior and motives, and collections management. Further research can be pursued in the areas of traditional collection management, visitor interpretation, and temple museum best practices.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Buddhist temples in Japan have experienced enormous changes over the course of history, from their introduction and adoption in Asuka (538-710) to their establishment as centers of power in Heian (794-1185) to their near eradication from the religious landscape during the Meiji Restoration (1868-1912) and their revitalization and protection during and after WWII. During the rise of Buddhism, several emperors and influential devout poured money into new and existing temples. Gifts from these affluent patrons, along with those from visiting priests from temples outside Japan, helped temples build collections of precious objects and treasures within their repository.

Temple treasures were an invaluable resource during times of economic duress during the Meiji Restoration (1868-1912) and the temples that were able to continue operations were often able to do so by selling these valuable objects (McDermott, 2006). Foreign interest in Japanese cultural patrimony and the willingness of temples to part with their antiquities resulted in a market for Japanese cultural objects that the government soon recognized as a threat (McDermott, 2006). In response, near the end of the Meiji Restoration, Japan began developing cultural heritage legislation to designate and protect National Treasures. This transition from sacred object, to currency, to national art is the precursor to a relatively new phenomenon in Japanese Buddhist temples: the emergence of temple museums (*See Figures 1-4*).

Before the emergence of temple museums, Japan's National Museums had been the stewards of collections belonging to some of the most influential Buddhist temples. In exchange for storing and caring for their sacred and rare treasures, the National Museums could display and consequentially profit from them.

Since the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties passed in 1950, many temples began building museums of their own by remodeling or rebuilding their *kura* (temple store house) (See Figures 5 and 6) and cataloging their treasures with the possibility of being awarded “National Treasure” status which would allow them to profit from government support (Suzuki, 2007).

It is unclear, however, when and for what purpose the temple museums began opening their collections to the public. Japan has a long history of temple display practices, often as a means to raise money. The *hibutsu* or ‘secret Buddha’, living statues revealed to the public once in several years, would attract visitors from all over the country and stimulate the local economy as well as the temple (Hur, 2009). *Kaicho* and *mushiboshi* were more frequent unveilings of temple rarities that served a similar economic purpose (Hur, 2009).

Was the inspiration for the building of temple museums purely economic, as a more modern ‘unveiling’ practice to attract visitors and raise money, or were other factors involved in this decision? The nature of the emergence of the Japanese Buddhist temple museum in Japan is not well understood and along with it, the overall nature of the institution and its practices are largely unexplored. While the temple museum is not the first instance of sacred object exhibition, it is unclear what the motives are behind public exhibition at the new temple museums. Has the addition of a temple museum assisted in what Faure (1998) feared, the aestheticization, desacralization, and secularization of Buddhist art? This study hopes to explore these gaps in Western literature concerning Japanese Buddhist temples. Specifically, the study investigates three broad research areas:

- The circumstances surrounding the emergence of Buddhist Temple Museums in Japan;
- The nature of these museums, specifically their collections, their intended institutional goals, and their unique institutional challenges; and
- The role of the museum within the Buddhist Temple.

Being aware of emerging forms of museums help us better define what these institutions are and can be. Museologists, temple staff, Buddhists, and the general public of Japan benefit from knowing how these new museums are shifting the dynamic of the temple experience or if they are responding to a larger societal shift in religiosity. A basic foundation of knowledge regarding these emerging museums would inform future research and might help answer key questions, including what is the nature of the emergence of the temple museum, what is the nature of the temple museum, and what is its role within the temple.



Figure 1: Museum at Saidaiji Temple



Figure 2: Museum at Nyoirinji Temple



Figure 3: Museum at Taimadera Temple



Figure 4: Museum at Zentsuuj Temple



Figure 5: Ancient *kura* (storehouse) at Zentsuuji Temple



Figure 6: Modern museum at Zentsuuji Temple

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The presence of Japanese Buddhist temple museums in Western scholarship is limited to brief mentions within more largely discussed topics of Japanese materiality and object interpretation and the history of Japanese Buddhism and display practices. This study hopes to fill this gap in literature and form a basic foundation from which further study can be pursued. This literature review will describe what we know now about the Japanese Buddhist temple museum based on studies on related topics. By examining the elements that have contributed to its formation through history, we can start to place the emergence, nature and role of temple museums into context. These elements include the changing interpretations of sacred objects in Japan, pre-modern display practices of temples, introduction of heritage legislation, the first museum prototype, and where temple museums fit within the landscape of Japanese museums.



Figure 7: Ancient Shitennoji Temple and Modern Osaka City Skyscraper

### **Pre-modern Temple Collection Practices – *Kaicho and Mushiboshi***

Scholarly literature dealing with the changing interpretations of sacred Buddhist objects in Japanese history often focuses on the relationships between temples and the Japanese government (*Bakufu*), as we will explore in this study. Many argue that the changing dynamic between Japanese Buddhist temples and *Bakufu* led to the desacrilization of Buddhist objects by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Suzuki, 2007). To begin to understand how contemporary Japanese society views Buddhist sacred objects, it is necessary to survey the journey of Buddhist temple collections in Japan over the last three hundred years. Exploring how Buddhist devotional icons came to be perceived as objects of aesthetic appreciation requires tracing pre-modern display in temples, the influence of the foreign interest in Japanese culture, and the subsequent development of cultural heritage legislations. This also helps put into context the emergence of the temple museum and interpretation strategies of its objects.

According to P.F. Kornicki (1994), there were four patterns of pre-museum (Heian 794-1185 to Meiji 1868-1912) public display of temple objects, one of which was the temporary unveiling of sacred treasures in temples. *Kaicho*, or "opening of a curtain," refers to the special public exhibition of a secret Buddha (*hibutsu*), which is otherwise enshrined and kept "secret" behind its "curtain." A *kaicho* is therefore a special religious event that provides an opportunity for worshippers to come face to face with a secret Buddha and to appeal directly to its compassion (Hur, 2009). Hur (2009) also notes that Buddhist preachers promoted the idea that worshipping a Buddhist deity on a special date and in a direct manner would result in far greater religious merit. By promulgating this

concept, Buddhist priests captured the fascination of the laypeople in seeing and worshipping hidden Buddhas during *kaicho*.

Effectively there were two kinds of *kaicho*: those that remained at the home temple (*igaicho*) and those that traveled elsewhere (*degaicho*). This practice can be traced back to the Heian period (794 – 1185) but became a part of urban commercial culture in the Tokugawa period (1603-1868) (Kornicki, 1994).

According to Suzuki (2007), *kaicho* events offered various levels of appeal for the public. The unveiled religious icons promised spiritual solace and merit, as well as the thrill of penetrating secrecy and privacy. Hur (2009) describes worshippers as delighted at the prospect of connecting directly with the hidden Buddha. Kornicki (1994) and Hur (2009) both note that though the *kaicho* were religious occasions, they eventually became secular entertainment. “Not surprisingly, when a *kaicho* was held, its temple site was quickly transformed into a bustling market and place of entertainment, where all kinds of sellers and street performers catered to visitors” (Hur, 2009, pg. 51).

For the temples, Hur (2009) notes that although *kaicho* events were theoretically designed to provide people with special opportunities for worship in the context of Buddhist merit-making, a concept where the good deeds, acts or thoughts accumulated in one’s life contributes to their spiritual liberation (Bhikkhu, 2005), they were used mainly for fundraising purposes. Kornicki (1994) comments that this financial incentive was especially important for temples not receiving funding from the Japanese government. Hur (2009) gives an example of how significant *kaicho* fundraising really was for Zenkoji temple who, with an annual budget of 500 ryo a year, was able to raise more than 23,000 ryo over the course of five years of *kaicho* exhibitions, funds used to rebuild their

Main Hall. Suzuki (2007) writes that the commercialization and entertainment aspects of *kaicho* and *degaicho* events as “contributing to the contested status of icons as both religious and secular objects” (pg. 131).

Another practice of displaying temple collections were the annual “airings” (*mushiboshi*) where objects held in storerooms during the year were brought into the open to be inspected for insects and mold (Suzuki, 2007). These airings were also used as a means of fundraising by temples that would charge a fee for the rare glimpse of a hidden treasure (Suzuki, 2007).

McDermott (2006) writes that although before the Meiji period (1868-1912) the concept of “museum” did not exist in Japan, temples had long been displaying their treasures and Suzuki (2007) deems these pre-modern temple display practices as precursors to the creation of modern temple museums while Konishi (1987) takes it a step further and writes that though the term *hakubutsukan* (museum) first appeared in the accounts of the delegates sent to Europe and America at the end of the Edo period (1603-1867) to the European Expositions, the prototype of the Japanese museum is the treasure hall (*homotsuden*) of the Buddhist temple or Shinto shrine where a myriad of precious objects were stored and occasionally displayed.

### **Foreign Influence and Cultural Heritage Legislation**

Throughout history, temples and churches have maintained collections of great religious and artistic significance. The Todaiji temple in Nara, Japan has been collecting items not only related to Buddhist ritual but also objects from the Silk Route, like Persian glass, exotic fabrics, and musical instruments since it was established in the early eighth century. However during the nineteenth century, these temple collections came under the

jurisdiction of the Meiji government and became “national property” under the Imperial Household Agency’s Archives and Mausolea Department (Robson, 2010) and many of the objects once found in the Todaiji temple complex were then housed and exhibited by the Nara National Museum.

One of the earliest inventories of Buddhist temple collections documented was in 1792, when officials were sent to temples in Nara to document and study the treasures held there, but according to McDermott (2006, p. 342) “its primary motivation seems to have been one of academic interest.” More extensive surveys were taken in the 1870s around the time Japan began participating in the world’s fairs of Europe (Suzuki, 2007) and creating the first national exhibits. McDermott (2006) explains the incentives of these first exhibits were to explore export markets, stimulate the economy, and strengthen Japan’s international status. Furthermore, McDermott (2006) believes that the emergence of national exhibitions was a result of international competition and not a natural progression of existing traditions of display.

This new focus on preserving the nation’s cultural property was, McDermott (2006) says, fundamental to defining and maintaining its historical identity and demonstrating its long cultural heritage to the rest of the world. Foreign interest in Japanese cultural patrimony encouraged government ordinances for the protection of antiquities, and effectively prevented further destruction of Buddhist temples and objects, a nation-wide result of the Meiji (1868-1912) government’s “shrine-temple separation edicts” (*shinbutsu bunri*). These edicts, set in motion in 1868 and petering out in 1873, sought to strengthen Shinto as the state religion by forcibly separating Buddhist and Shinto temples, which had until that point been joint institutions. The public interpreted

the edicts as an effort to abolish Buddhism and nationalist factions emerged that targeted Buddhist temples and their sacred objects (Suzuki, 2007). These events mark the beginning of a change in perspective regarding Buddhist sacred objects.

In 1872, in preparation for Japan's participation in the Vienna Exposition, objects were collected from all over the country based on a list of items recommended for exhibition by the Exposition itself which "also specifically mentioned Buddhist statues and ritual items" (McDermott, 2006, p. 345) and put in a national display called a 'hall of myriad objects' (*hakubutsukan*). This was the foundation of the first museum in Japan and "was probably the first occasion for religious icons to be identified as anything but objects associated with worship" (McDermott, 2006, pp. 345).

McDermott (2006) writes that the most significant question is the ultimate impact of the financial transaction between government and temple, where temple objects were removed from their sacred context and displayed to the public "no longer as objects for religious worship, but as icons of the national cultural heritage" (p. 367). He continues to argue that this initial transfer from temple collection to national museum collection is part of the story of "how religious objects began to assume new cultural and social meanings in the early years of the nation's modern era" (McDermott, p. 367).

Faure (1998) comments on this new cultural and social meaning as well, remarking that the repression of the 'animated Buddhist icon' was "a result of the modern and Western values of aestheticization, desacralization, and secularization" (p. 770).

Faure (1998) further notes that the Buddhist revival of the Taisho era (1912-1926) that followed did not restore idols to the same status, they "did not revert to being gods to be worshipped but were now appreciated as works of art" (p. 771). According to Faure,

Japan was rediscovering Buddhist doctrine and art in the Taisho era immediately following ‘modernist demythologization.’

Reader (1991) however would caution jumping to conclusions about religiosity and sacred object interpretation based on an adherence to traditional worship behavior, such as leaving a coin or putting one’s hands together in prayer. The switch proposed by Faure and McDermott from icon to art is less black and white and exists in more of a grey area, Reader would argue. Japanese religiosity is notoriously ambiguous its behavior, for example it is not uncommon in one’s life to visit a shrine for coming-of-age ceremonies, have a Western style wedding in a church and then a Buddhist funeral. Trying to define and quantify belief as Faure (1998) and McDermott (2006) suggest through the changing interpretation of idols is a “murky and vague area” (p. 376) according to Reader (1991).

### **Modern Temple Collection Practices – Temple Museums**

Since Japan began participating in the Great Exhibitions of Europe in the mid-1880s, the interpretation of Japanese cultural objects has seen a dramatic change. Global interest in Japanese art and culture and the emergence of the first National exhibitions, and later museums, created an interest in cataloging and preserving Japan’s cultural treasures that were suddenly viewed as valuable commodities.

Temples, with their vast storehouses of cultural treasures, were not exempt from this new national focus. In the late 1880s, financial incentives were given to struggling temples to hand over their treasures to museums and government officials were sent around the country to register Japanese artistic treasures, a process that “changed the Japanese people’s perception of its cultural and artistic patrimony” (Faure, 1998, p. 771).

The proliferation of private museums, functioning as centers for local community,

also took place near the turn of the century with the establishment of the Okura Shukokan Museum housing Okura Kihachiro's collection, built in 1917 and the first private museum in Japan. Private museums are now some of the best-developed areas of philanthropy in Japan (Hein, 2010). Private museums, such as the Ohara Art Museum established in 1930 by industrialist and philanthropist Ohara Magusaburo, sought to bring art collections to the common people, a new idea in pre-war Japan (Hein, 2010).

Most of the first temple museums in Japan were built after the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties was passed in 1950. This legislation also accelerated the cataloging of temple treasures, as those awarded "National Treasures" or "Important Cultural Property" status were given financial grants, tax incentives, and government support (Suzuki, 2007).

### **Modern Interpretation of Sacred Objects in Temple Museums**

One visitor experience viewing the ancient *Kudara Kannon* statue, the main attraction at Horyuji Temple's 'Great Treasure Repository' museum, illustrates the mixed feelings surrounding sacred objects in temple exhibits. On the one hand the visitor, upon seeing the *Kudara Kannon* encased and fluorescently lit remarked 'Alas, you've been confined to a place such as this' and on the other commented that photography should be allowed as it is at the MET or the Louvre (Suzuki, 2007, p. 129). Suzuki (2007) interprets this reaction as recognition of both the statue as a devotional icon and the space as a museological one rather than a place of worship. Another visitor to the Horyuji Temple museum commented that seeing the icon in a 'glass box' (*See Figure 8*) at a temple was uncomfortable, an indication that the ancient statue was felt to be an object of devotion rather than one of aesthetic contemplation (Suzuki, 2007). Using these examples, Suzuki

explains that temple museums are a contested and ambiguous space, being “not wholly secular nor sacred” (Suzuki, 2007, p. 130).

Edmund Leach (1983) explains this contextual phenomenon, saying icons are part of the “space syntax” of sacred buildings and that objects of devotion cannot be removed from this context without changing their nature. The visitor discomfort at seeing the *Kudara Kannon* statue in an unexpected environment, that of a museum, was due to the object of devotion having been removed from the “space syntax” of the temple. The temple museum, the ambiguous space between secular and sacred, has a new kind of “space syntax” that requires visitors to reinterpret the object of devotion inside it.



Figure 8: *Hakken* (soul removed) Buddha statues at Zentsuui Temple Museum

### **Temple Museums Within Contemporary Japanese Museum Landscape**

The Social Education Survey of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has counted a total of 5,614 museums in Japan as of 2005. In this survey, museums were classified as registered museums, museum-

equivalent facilities or museum-like facilities depending on certain conditions (*see Table I*). To become a registered museum, an application including copies of museum rules, business plan and budgetary documents, catalog of museum materials, names of curators, and founding ordinance must be submitted to the Prefectural board of education for screening. Of the 5,614 museums counted, only 865 were registered, while 331 were museum-equivalent facilities and 4,418 were museum-like facilities.

According to the Museum Act of Japan, a museum is an organization whose purpose is collecting and preserving materials, providing them for use and undertaking research related to those materials (Japanese Association of Museums, 2008). The ICOM (International Council of Museums) definition for a museum is a non-profit in service to society, open to the public, and which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Several interviewees in this study made it clear that the temple does not actively collect objects but that the temple museum is a place to house and exhibit items that the temple has acquired throughout its history. According to the interview data, the temple museum fits within the description of ICOM (ICOM, 2014) but not within that of Japan's Museum Act.

According to correspondence with Ms. Noriko Morii, Senior Researcher at the Japanese Association of Museums, temple museums are considered 'museum-like facilities' like most of those counted by the Social Education Survey (N. Morii, personal communication, April 4, 2014). It seems that, although temple treasure repositories have taken on the many of the qualities of a modern museum they have continued, in most cases, to use the term 'treasure house' rather than 'museum' and that both the Japanese

government (MEXT) and the Japanese Association of Museums recognize these treasure houses as museum-like facilities.

### **Summary**

The literature suggests that the dynamic between the Japanese government and Buddhist temples over the past several hundred years has played an integral part in how Japanese society views Buddhist sacred objects. Buddhist temples were given financial support and were largely government controlled during the Tokugawa era (1600-1868), first expelled and later protected during the Meiji era (1868-1912), and experienced a revival during in Taisho (1912-1926). That this changing attitude towards Buddhist temples and sacred objects was largely influenced by foreign interest and the country's involvement in international exhibits is widely accepted. Faure (1998) believes that by Taisho, the sacred nature of Buddhist objects had been lost and agrees with McDermott (2006) that during the late 1880s a perspective switch had taken place that had effectively changed sacred objects into works of art. Suzuki (2007) and Reader (1991) would agree with a change taking place, but would hesitate simplifying the change as a 'switch' and embrace a more ambiguous argument where interpretation of the sacred now encompasses both aesthetic appreciation and devotion.

Table 1  
*MEXT Social Education Survey – Museum Classification Table*

Classification/Definition	Founder	Conditions, etc.
<p><i>Registered museums</i>  Registered museums are organizations with the purpose of collecting and preserving (including nurturing) materials related to history, arts, folk customs, industry, natural science, etc., exhibiting them, providing them for use by the general public on the basis of educational considerations, conducting necessary work in order to contribute to education, research, recreation, etc., and in addition undertaking surveys and research relating to these materials; they are registered in the museum register.</p>	<p>(1) Local governments  (2) General incorporated associations or general incorporated foundations  (3) Religious corporations  (4) Juridical persons stipulated by Cabinet Order (Japanese Red Cross Society, NHK)</p>	<p>(1) Must appoint directors and curators  (2) Must have the museum materials necessary to achieve the objectives stipulated by act  (3) Must have the curators and staff necessary to achieve the objectives stipulated by act.  (4) Must have the buildings or land necessary to achieve the objectives stipulated by act.  (5) Must be open at least 150 days a year  Note: Registered by Prefectural Board of Education</p>
<p><i>Museum-equivalent facilities</i>  These are facilities that engage in work similar to the work of museums and are registered as facilities equivalent to museums.</p>	<p>No restrictions</p>	<p>(1) Must appoint staff equivalent to curators  (2) Must have the materials necessary to achieve work that resembles the work of museums.  (3) Must have the special facilities and equipment necessary to achieve work that resembles the work of museums  (4) Must be open at least 100 days a year  Note: Facilities established by the state or independent administrative institutions are designated by the Minister of MEXT; other facilities are designated by prefectural boards of education.</p>
<p><i>Museum-like facilities</i>  These are facilities that engage in work like that of museums: they do not receive registration or designation.*</p>	<p>No restrictions</p>	<p>None</p>

\*This is the definition not in act but in the Social Education Survey conducted by MEXT

Traditional temple display practices such as *kaicho* and *degaicho* are understood to have both spiritual and entertainment value for visitors and were financially beneficial for temples by Hur (2009), Kornicki (1994) and Suzuki (2007). However, little is known of display practices as they appear in Japan today or the perceived value for visitors. Suzuki (2007) introduces the contemporary temple museum as proof of the new ‘Buddha

as art' perspective with Leach (1983) observing the difficulties of interpreting devotional objects out of traditional context.

What remains to be explored are the emergence of temple museums (their intended purpose), their nature (collections, display and interpretation strategies, mission, public programs) and their role within the temple (changing dynamics).

## CHAPTER 3: METHODS

This study is exploratory, designed to understand the emergence and nature of Buddhist temple museums in Japan. The study investigates three key research areas:

1. The circumstances surrounding the emergence of Buddhist Temple Museums in Japan;
2. The nature of these museums, specifically their collections, their intended institutional goals, and their unique institutional challenges; and
3. The role of the museum within the Buddhist Temple.

Interviews were conducted with managerial staff at 10 temple museums in the Kansai region, Japan's cultural and historical epicenter, which holds the highest concentration of temples in the country. Temple museums were identified using a Japanese museum search engine, and selected based on relative proximity in and around the Kansai region. Temple museums were contacted via email or phone and asked to participate in this research study. Of the 15 museums that were contacted, 10 were available and willing to participate (*See Appendix A and Appendix B for map and information on participating temples*). Of the 5 who declined, some did not have an available interviewee while others denied without a clear reason.

Specifically, participants were required to work in the temple museum, or in the absence of museum-specific staff, had to work in the temple and be familiar with the history and management of the museum. A letter of introduction (written in English and translated into Japanese by the researcher and a translator) explaining the purpose of the study as well as the list of possible interview questions was emailed or faxed to study

participants in August 2013 (*See Appendix C and Appendix D for the English and Japanese versions of the introductory letter*).

Participants were interviewed in person in September 2013. All interviews were conducted in Japanese by the researcher, a non-native speaker. Interview questions were predominantly open-ended, asking about the purpose of the temple museum, and issues faced by the temple museum related to collecting and interpreting (*See Appendix E for the interview guide*). Interviews lasted approximately 20 minutes to an hour, and were digitally recorded and later transcribed. Of the ten temple staff interviewed five identified themselves as priests, two as museum curators, and three identified as another type of staff including one chief of public relations, one groundskeeper, and one office manager. Nine interviewees were male and one female.

### **Data Analysis**

The researcher translated the data herself from Japanese to English, after which a certified translator went through each interview again and translated and transliterated a second time to ensure consistency and accuracy. Data were then coded using content analysis in which similar ideas and comments are grouped together. A subset of the coded responses were blindly coded by another researcher and inter-rater reliability was calculated at 82% (*See Appendix F for inter-rater reliability form*).

### **Limitations**

In Japanese culture, there are two terms that describe how one communicates: *honne* and *tatemae*. *Honne* being one's true feelings on a particular matter, which are often kept close and secret as they may be contrary to what society would expect and *tatemae* being the opinion that one displays in public (Naito, 1992). In the case of this

study, the researcher was a non-native Japanese speaking, foreign stranger, which likely resulted in responses that were *tatema* especially considering that interviewees were by extension representing the position of the temple. Perhaps some of the inconsistencies in responses were related to *honne* and *tatema*. For example, one respondent saying that most temples would not like to admit to financial motives, another saying reluctantly that income is necessary to survive, and another firmly that money does not matter. These results may denote a *honne-tatema* divide.

In addition, interview questions were in some cases dichotomous, such as “What do you think about visitors interpreting the Buddha as *art* versus as a *religious icon*?” Participants may have felt forced to decide between one or the other, which may have limited the scope of the answers given by participants.

Furthermore, the researcher, even with the best intentions and efforts towards non-bias observation, likely brought her own Western pre-conceptions and interpretations to this cross-cultural study. While the translations of interviews were done twice, once by the researcher and again by a translator, non-native speakers completed both translations, which may have influenced the nature of the transcripts.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS &amp; DISCUSSION

This chapter presents findings from the interviews according to the three main research areas:

- The circumstances surrounding the emergence of Buddhist Temple Museums in Japan;
- The nature of these museums, specifically their collections, their intended institutional goals, and their unique institutional challenges; and
- The role of the museum within the Buddhist Temple.

**What are the circumstances surrounding the emergence of Buddhist Temple museums in Japan?**

Study participants were asked “What was the inspiration for building the museum?” Responses were coded into one of five emergent categories: 1) protect the collection; 2) show the collection; 3) attract visitors to the temple; 4) enhance the visitor experiences within the temple; and 5) other. Participants often gave more than one answer to this question, resulting in a total of 29 code-able responses.

Ten of the 29 responses referred to a desire to protect their collection when building the museum. These responses tended to focus on either the preservation or security of the temple collection. Representative comments include the following:

*One reason was to show the statues and things to people and another was to prevent theft and protect the objects (Ninnaji)*

*The main purpose of having a kura (storehouse) in the past was to keep the treasures safe, and it's only been very recently in Japan that it's become a place that was shown to visitors (Shittenoji)*

*If nothing is done, the object will fall into disrepair quickly. It's our responsibility to keep it for our children and grandchildren (Ginkakuji)*

Nine of the 29 responses emphasized the desire to share the temple collection with the public. One comment in particular mentions a desire to show the temple collection “in their natural environment.” For this temple, the desire to have the temple collection viewed *at* the temple where its value, story and heritage can be connected to the space was a driving force behind the establishment of their museum. Comments from these participants included the following:

*Firstly, we wanted to display the precious objects that we have and because there were several requests that the items be shown (Nyoirinji).*

*Whether a temple has a lot of resources or not should not be a thing of importance to the temple. They can survive on their visitorship and they have a desire to show something (Ginkakuji).*

Four of the 29 responses were focused on the building of the museum as a way to bring more visitors into the temple. For example, these participants made comments such as the following:

*We want to maintain that visitorship, we have to maintain the items and that's what leads to a museum. It's a natural progression. If a temple didn't have something attractive, no one would come (Ginkakuji).*

Three of the 29 responses to the question “What was the inspiration for building the museum?” were focused on the ways in which the visitor experiences the temple. By adding another element to the experience, such as a visit to the temple museum, visitors hopefully stay longer on the temple grounds gaining “peace of mind” and also building familiarity and intimacy with that temple, giving them more reason to return (*See Figures 9 and 10*).

*The reason museums are made is because people come from far away to only ring a bell and light some incense, it makes the time that they stay on the grounds limited. By adding another feature, it offers a reason to return. I believe that the longer a visitor stays at the temple, it will build a familiarity and intimacy between the visitor and the temple. If it were only the main temple, it wouldn't be interesting enough so we decided to make the exhibition hall (Saidaiji).*



Figure 9: Woman doing watercolor at Tofukuji Temple



Figure 10: Mother and child spending time walking the grounds of Shitennoji Temple

Finally, three participants made comments that did not fit into the above-mentioned categories, and were thus coded as “other.” These comments included the following:

*Probably another reason was to teach people about Buddhism and for the patrons – we have a lot of makimono (scrolls) and things and to keep them in one place to be seen (Ninnaji),*

*The inspiration was the 700-year anniversary of the death of the priest who built Tofukuji, named Kaisan-san (Tofukuji).*

*The high priest named, Yuu-san, studied abroad in America at the University of Chicago – and he saw a museum and came back and at his own temple we should make one too. And at that time we built it (Zentsuuji).*

In addition to being asked about the inspiration for building the museum, study participants were also asked, “What were some challenges to building the museum?” Again, responses were coded into emergent categories: 1) space and infrastructure challenges; 2) collections management challenges; and 3) funding challenges. Again, multiple responses were given to the question, resulting in 23 code-able answers.

Ten of the 23 responses centered around issues related to space and infrastructure. Several participants mentioned the difficulties of controlling temperature within a concrete building and others pointed out lack of accessibility for people with disabilities. Representative comments were as follows:

*The second floor is the exhibition space and the third floor is the storage space. Even though we have all these items we only have the two floors to work with and we have to split those floors into different functions. Also making the museum accessible to people with needs is a difficulty, right now we only have stairs (Toji).*

*Within a concrete building, if the power is cut off, there is a dramatic change within the environment and can be catastrophic to the items in the storehouse. That’s scary. There’s always a chance of an earthquake (Zentsuuji).*

*There used to be a space where airflow could happen, [between outer wall and roof] and that was making it hard to maintain a consistent temperature (Tofukuji).*

Nine of the 23 responses focused on difficulties within the collection, including display practices and preservation theories. For example, the display practice of one temple museum included placing objects behind glass or on pedestals or both, placing Buddha statues above visitor eye-level to show respect, or how objects are grouped (by size, by theme, etc). Preservation theories, in this context, related to participants' thoughts on preventative care. In some cases, priests expressed an embrace of the "natural order" or process of decay while others commented on the importance of safeguarding objects for the future. Within this category, a comment was made that indicates a tension between placing Buddha statues behind glass and how priests would prefer the Buddha to be viewed. This will be discussed further when under the category 'unique challenges'. Representative comments include:

*Sealing something away so that it doesn't change disallows it to have patina for example and doesn't develop that same value. Purposefully aging paper and other items might increase their aesthetic value (Zentsuuj).*

*We don't have a lot of space to exhibit in and we don't have very many exhibit pieces (Saidaiji).*

*But for the temple, it's difficult to put a Buddha statue behind glass you're not supposed to see the Buddha indirectly with the glass between you. There's a principle behind that, if you go to the main temple, that's how it is...As far as the priests go, there's a movement of thought that it's better to look upon the Buddha directly (Todaiji).*

Finally, four of the 23 responses emphasized funding challenges:

*The funding was difficult to start and thinking about whether or not they could sustain themselves year to year after construction and we wanted top of the line when we built. We took donations (Ninnaji).*

*The building itself was difficult to find funding for (Shitennoji).*

**What is the nature of Buddhist Temple museums in Japan, specifically their collections, their intended institutional goals, and their unique institutional challenges?**

**Collections**

Two interview questions were asked to tap the nature of Buddhist Temple museum's collections: "What kind of collection does the temple museum have?" and "Who manages the collection and how?" Responses to the question "What kind of collection does the temple museum have?" were answered in one of three ways, either by listing specific items that the temple museum has in their collection, by listing specific historical persons whose objects they have, or by broadly referring to a myriad of objects that the temple has come into possession of over the years. These responses were coded into one of four emergent categories: 1) National Treasures, Prefectural Treasures and Important Cultural Properties; 2) Specific Object Types; 3) Historic; and 4) Temple Collection. Participants often gave more than one answer to this question, resulting in 26 code-able responses.

Six of the 26 responses mentioned government-designated National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties. These properties, determined by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, are considered by the government as Japan's most precious tangible objects that possess historic, artistic, or academic. "Of the total number of fine arts and crafts designated as National Treasures or Important Cultural Properties, almost 60% are owned by shrines and Buddhist temples" (Agency of Cultural Affairs, 2013, p. 40).

Representative comments include the following:

*We have several National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties with those mainly as the items to be focused on, we store those in the museum (Tofukuji).*

*Visitors look forward to ringing the chousen gane (Korean bell), an Important Cultural Object, on New Years (Saidaiji).*

*Certain documents in our collection have become National Treasures or Important Cultural Properties (Todaiji).*

Ten of the 26 responses mentioned particular types of objects within their collection. Within these responses, objects were mentioned in varying frequencies: Documents, Scrolls and Books (7), Statues (4), Pictures (3), Painted Screens (1) and Paintings by Priests (1). Representative comments include:

*We have tens of thousands of documents, but currently there are only 10 displayed in the document section of the museum (Todaiji).*

*Statues, scrolls, religious items, and old items. We are in the process of cataloging everything we have some 10,000 items in the collection. It'll take years (Zentsuuj).*

*We have lots of scrolls, pictures, statues, etc (Tofukuji).*

Five of the 26 responses referred to their collection as related to a historic person or event. Comments in this category include:

*Scrolls, statues, objects embroidered with Hime-sama's hair, Hime-sama's razor (Taimadera).*

*Higashiyama Gyobutsu<sup>1</sup> of the Muromachi bakufu<sup>2</sup> collected pictures, tea ceremony and flower arrangement items, and painting tools (Ginkakuji).*

*Hadaka matsuri or Eyou-related<sup>3</sup> items such as ladles to pour water over participants (Saidaiji).*

Five of the 26 responses mentioned objects collected by the temple over the years non-specifically. Representative quotes include:

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<sup>1</sup> Higashiyama Gyobutsu refers to the collection of the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimasa (Jaanus, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> The Muromachi period lasted from 1337-1573

<sup>3</sup> *Hadaka matsuri* or *Eyou* (Naked Festival) is an annual event held at Saidaiji Temple where thousands of men, dressed in traditional *fundoshi* (loincloths) and struggle to win two lucky sticks

*It's a museum of the things that the temple has collected over the years, not the museum's collection. Museum is something that serves as a window to what the temple has collected over the years (Todaiji).*

*There are things in the collection that are from abroad and are mostly from Asia and many from China. From China we have things mostly from Gen and Min dynasties. Some of those objects are gifts, like a tray for treats, and others are rare items from that country (Ninnaji).*

Responses to the question “Who manages the collection and how?” were divided into two questions “Who manages the collection” and “How [are collections managed]” and were then divided into categories. Responses to the question “Who manages the collection?” were divided into one of three emergent categories: 1) Priests; 2) Curators; and 3) Qualified Staff. Participants often gave more than one answer to this question, resulting in 16 code-able responses.

Ten of the 16 responses related to the priests' role regarding collection management. Looking across these responses, it is clear that even with the presence of a hired curator or other ‘qualified staff’, respondents agreed that the priests have the ultimate say in how collections are managed. One participant, for example, when asked this question answered that he was hired for his expertise and to give advice, but that final decisions pass through the head priests. Representative comments include:

*Some other temples ask to borrow objects and the head priest decides (Shitennoji).*

*The priests manage the museum (Taimadera).*

*When we remove things from storage, there has to be permission from the top Buddhist priest, then the key can be taken from the safe, then the person who can move the items are restricted to a certain few monks at Ginkakuji with that expertise (Ginkakuji).*

Five of the 16 responses related to the curators' role regarding collection management. Of the ten participants interviewed, only two were curators and it was

unclear whether, in interviews with non-curators (priests and ‘qualified staff’), there was a curator at the temple museum or not. However, across these responses it seemed that when a curator is present that they decide exhibit themes, layout, and management of the collections but that priests, not they themselves, are still the final say in temple museum activities. Comments in this category include:

*The main search proxy of the database now is based on subject matter, and the curator is the one that is in charge of managing that. The curator decides the exhibit theme and the priests make suggestions and they change it academic year by academic year (Toji).*

*Depending on the theme, the layout and items change. There are times we exhibit small things, other times large things, things that need cases, things that are dangerous. There is a curator who decides what to put out and myself [priest] (Tofukuji).*

Finally, one of the 16 responses mentioned a qualified staff person as managing the temple museum collection. This comment was:

*Staff are required to have some qualification to work. If there’s a situation where qualifications are necessary for some maintenance of the collection, we’ll call someone in (Shitennoji).*

Responses to the question “How [are collections managed]?” were divided into one of nine categories: 1) Object Display; 2) Object Storage; 3) Exhibit Timeline; 4) Conservation; 5) Borrowing and Lending; 6) Environmental Controls; 7) Database; 8) Marketing and Advertising; and 9) Other. Participants gave more than one answer to the question, resulting in 58 code-able responses.

Ten of the 58 responses related to choosing which objects are displayed. Within these responses, comments included displaying objects that relate to the event their temple is most known for which caters to the demographic most likely to visit (those familiar with the event), another comment mentioned trying to attract specific groups, for

example patron families, by focusing on objects that relate to them. Because many families and individuals are linked to the temple where their family lives, and likely has lived for generations, displaying temple objects that relate back to local families encourages patrons and their families living outside their hometown to return. These families and individuals who feel particularly connected to the temple this way are often the temples best sponsors. From a business perspective, the temple is catering to these current and/or potential donors. On the other hand, some responses mentioned having a permanent exhibit telling the history of the temple. In contrast to drawing in specific visitors with targeted exhibits, this approach has a consistent message that is geared towards sharing the temple's history. This trend appears again later when respondents explain what the purpose of the temple museum is. Representative quotes from this category include:

*There's still a wide variety of objects in storage. We don't take them out so much because they're not related to the Hadaka Matsuri (Naked Festival) and we don't feel like people are interested in the temple objects so much. There are people who are regulars and members of old families who have come Shitennoji for a long time. When we exhibit a certain object or plan for it. There's a lineage-based obligation that we tap into in order to draw visitors from all over (Shitennoji).*

*The theme doesn't change. It's a permanent exhibit about Nyoirinji's history. You can see about 80 percent of our collection in the museum. The other 20 is only for special occasions. It's a technique to gather new visitors so by telling people that during this time you can see something normally kept private. It's an extra bonus (Nyoirinji).*

Ten of the 58 responses related to object storage (See Figures 11 and 12). Several respondents mentioned that objects in their collection are often stored off-site, often in other temple museums or National Museums. It was common after the Meiji Restoration when many objects in temple collections became designated as “national property” for temple collections to be entrusted to the National Museums (Robson, 2010). These

facilities, managed by the Japanese government, have the largest and most capable facilities to care for and conserve artifacts. Though many temple museums have reclaimed portions of their collections previously housed in the National Museums, as noted previously in order to show them in their natural environment and later we will note the financial gains associated with attracting visitors with objects, many temples still entrust parts of their collection to these museums. Reasons given for this are lack of space, lack of resources to care for more delicate items, and risk management (if all the collection is kept in one place, one fire or earthquake would decimate it). During these interviews, participants often brought up the amount of times buildings on the temple complex were rebuilt due to fire or earthquake damage. It makes sense then, considering the losses temples have faced through their long history, to spread out their valuables to minimize this risk. Comments in this category include:

*Our most precious items are held at Shoukokuji Joutenkaku Art Museum. They have the proper maintenance facilities; they have environmental controls, and are not made of wood like the one Ginkakuji has (Ginkakuji).*

*All of the collections are in the Houmotsukan (museum) except the National Treasure, which are divided between the National Museums. The most precious items, like the letters written by Kukai-sama<sup>4</sup> are entrusted to them (Toji).*

*We have in total probably 10,000 items, but we don't have them all here at once. We spread them across other museums and temples. We have an agreement with Kyoto National Museum that they will conserve the items in exchange for letting them keep and exhibit from the objects (Ninnaji).*

Eight of the 58 responses spoke about their exhibit timeline. Of the timelines mentioned, there were often set seasonal exhibit change-overs (4 times a year, 2 times a year), with new exhibits often landing on holiday seasons, such as Golden Week (April

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<sup>4</sup> Kukai-sama, also known as Kobo Daishi, was the priest who founded the Shingon sect of Buddhism in Japan

29<sup>th</sup>-May 5<sup>th</sup>), when tourism is at its peak. Other temples reportedly change their exhibits to complement other temple events or keep a permanent exhibit, such as one sharing the temple history, and make small special additions occasionally to draw in visitors. The reason for these various timelines was not clear, though some participants expressed the opinion that they did not feel they had either enough interesting objects or sufficient resources to constantly be changing their exhibits. Comments in this category include:

*We change the exhibit twice a year (Ninnaji).*

*We have a 'most famous treasure' exhibition (meihouten) so we decide the theme and the objects one by one. The reason we do this is that we have it opened by mid-April until Golden Week so people can come see it during that holiday (Tofukuji).*

*Themes in the museum are linked with special temple offerings or events throughout the year (Taimadera).*

Eight of the 58 responses mentioned something specific about how conservation of objects in the collection is undertaken. Within these responses, there were differences in how government-designated National Treasures and non-treasures are treated in regards to conservation. Because National Treasures are able to receive funding support for maintenance and conservation, specialists are either called in to work on the piece or pieces are sent to the National Museums for conservation work. Objects not receiving this support are prioritized and treated through a fundraising campaign or taken care of by “qualified” temple staff, though it was unclear from the interview data what these qualifications are. It was mentioned by one participant, a curator hired to manage the temple collection, that in his experience staff are rarely aware of appropriate art-handling and cleaning procedures and that much damage has been done historically by priests and staff, not knowing any better. Comments in this category include:

*The objects start to wear and specific conservation efforts need to be taken and we try to do that little by little in order to keep them for the next generation (Ginkakuji).*

*Staff are required to have some qualification to work. If there's a situation where qualifications are necessary for some maintenance of the collection, we'll call someone in (Shitennoji).*

*We don't have a budget to cover the conservation fees. We have to take care of things within different buildings like the kura (storage room) or the sutra-reading room. Building repairs happen all the time. Every so often, we are required to declare the items for repair to the government and they send back the funds (Toji).*

Six of the 58 responses mentioned borrowing and lending practices. It seems that most temple museums in this study lend their objects to outside museums, National Museums especially as they often have long-standing relationships with these institutions but also art and city museums. Borrowing objects was not mentioned much at all however, and when describing differences between the temple museum and traditional museums (as we will explore later on) one of the most common responses was that the temple collection does not take in objects from the outside, that it remains a collection of objects accumulated by the temple throughout its history. Comments in this category include:

*Now it's common to have inter-museum borrowing and lending and the greater majority is between art museums and the temple. Long ago...there were people who wanted to study the sutra and we used to let them borrow those things. Now we only allow scholars to view it. Or if a rich patron that became interested in the sutras, they could but we would expect a donation or some sort of payment (Ninnaji).*



Figure 11: Collection Storage at Zentsuui Temple Museum



Figure 12: Collection Storage at Zentsuui Temple Museum

Five of the 58 responses focused on environmental controls or lack thereof. Within these five responses, there were three situations regarding environmental controls within temple museums. Situations were highly varied with one museum using traditional methods of temperature and humidity controls such as bamboo charcoal (though details on its use were not discussed), another using modern temperature controls and humidifiers to keep storage temperature and humidity consistent but without object separation, and another museum having no system in place at all. Comments in this category include:

*All we do to control humidity is put humidifiers in the room or use 'take no sumi' (bamboo charcoal) (Ginkakuji).*

*We don't have that sort of system [temperature control] we leave it to nature. In the exhibit space, there isn't a protective system for each item. But in the storage we have temperature controls that keep the room at a consistent temperature but we don't separate object types (Ninnaji).*

Five of the 58 responses talked about the temple museum database or collection cataloguing system. Responses suggested that resources did not permit an electronic database, and that the process of transferring items from the *kura* (storehouse) includes entering objects into the catalogue first (See Figures 7 and 8). Representative quotes in this category below:

*There's an electronic database at Nara Museum but there isn't one here yet. Not enough staff or money to take on a project like that (Todaiji).*

*There are still items in the old kura (treasure house). It won't fit. The stuff in the kura will be moved after the cataloging process is over (Zentsuuji).*

Three of the 58 responses talked about marketing and advertising practices in regards to collection management. These responses consistently reported marketing

strategies such as temple websites or basic brochures and flyers: *We do advertise on Taimadera's website for the different exhibitions (Taimadera).*

The remaining three responses did not fit in any of the aforementioned categories and were thus coded as "Other." Responses in this category include:

*We receive council from the National Museums regarding certain items as well (Toji).*

*Typically people put things they don't want visitors to touch behind glass, we rope off the item to discourage handling and there's a security sensor also (Toji).*

### **Institutional Goals**

Four interview questions were asked to tap the nature of Buddhist Temple museum's institutional goals: "What is the purpose of the museum?"; "Are there any programs for visitors?"; "What kind of relationship does the temple museum have with traditional museums?"; and "Are the statues in your temple museum *kaigen*? Why or why not?".

In many ways, answers to the question "What is the purpose of the museum?" were similar to those given for the question "What was the inspiration for the building of the museum?" The hope was to confirm the present purpose or mission of the museum, which may have changed since its establishment. Responses given were coded into one of five emergent categories: 1) Protect collection; 2) Enhance the visitor experience; 3) Share the Temple's history; 4) Show the collection; and 5) Financial gain. Participants gave more than one answer to the question, resulting in 42 code-able responses.

Ten of the 42 responses talked about the protection of the temple collection as the main purpose of the museum. In some cases, participants even contrasted this purpose

with the notion of exhibiting the collection, saying they felt that temple museums existed primarily for protection not for exhibition. Representative quotes include:

*The main purpose of the museum is for the storage of our collections rather than the exhibition of said items (Tofukuji).*

*So the houzoukan (treasure house) of the temples serve the purpose of holding the items and temples serve to the government the purpose of holding the items (Todaiji).*

*People have figured out that in order for the future to be able to view these items like we are now, we need to find a way to manage those items. If nothing is done, the object will fall into disrepair quickly. It's our responsibility to keep it for our children and grandchildren (Ginkakuji).*

Nine of the 42 responses focused on some aspect of enhancing the visitor experience as the purpose of the temple museum. Specifically, these comments were focused on the role that the temple museum played in augmenting people's experience of the temple overall. Comments include:

*The main mission of the temple [and temple museum by extension] is for people to come here and then feel fulfilled when they leave. It's nothing to do with money. Within the temple grounds that never change, a peace of mind is created and if there is a small space that is new where they can spend a little time, it makes it easier for the patrons to enjoy that peace of mind they get in the familiar temple (Saidaiji).*

*Our purpose is for people to be positively influenced and if that is accomplished, we are satisfied (Ginkakuji).*

Nine of the 42 responses mentioned that the purpose of the museum is to share temple history. Based on the responses relating to exhibit timeline, we know that temple museums often use their exhibits to showcase an event the temple is known for or a family or notable persons the temple is connected to. Temples focus on areas of familiarity or unique qualities they possess (*See Figure 13*). More support for this trend is

seen in the responses below, one of which describes the museum as helping people to connect the temple with Prince Shotoku<sup>5</sup>. Representative quotes in this category include:

*The hakubutsukan protects our temple's identity as connected to Prince Shotoku... We want to everyone to feel that history and know that it happened (Shitennoji).*

*Museums have two types of functions, one is for people to view things, and the other is for people to view history. So at our temple museum, we are more history-based and we have a lot of stories to tell through our museum. We have a lot of items related to those stories. They may not be items of great importance, but those who are interested in the history of Nyoirinji<sup>6</sup> will find things of value there (Nyoirinji).*

*To properly protect the objects and exhibit them and teach about people about the history of the temple (Zentsuuji).*

Six of the 42 responses talked about showing objects as the purpose of the temple museum. Letting people see the objects in the temple collection, whether as a response to requests, the temple identifying and following a trend in the practices of other temples, to help share temple history, to allow visitors to enjoy the temple “peace of mind” for a while longer by letting them linger in an exhibition space, several reasons have been given related to the museum purpose that are directly related to the exhibition of objects.

Responses in this category include:

*We have a lot of treasures and people didn't know that. When we take them out little by little, people realize “Oh, Tofukuji has amazing stuff”. Since we weren't displaying it, it became an essentially useless possession (Tofukuji).*

*The motive behind the museum is to let people see the objects (Taimadera).*

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<sup>5</sup> Prince Shotoku, son of Emperor Yomei, was an influential politician and regent during the Asuka period (538-710). Prince Shotoku is believed to be one of the first converts to Buddhism and helped to spread the new religion throughout Japan during his reign. He established a centralized government, inspired by Buddha's teachings, and commissioned the construction of temples Shitennoji and Horyuji. A devotional cult formed around him for his political accomplishments and devotion to Buddhism (Schumacher, 2014).

<sup>6</sup> Kusunoki Masatura, military leader under Emperor Go-Daigo, carved a farewell message into the door of Nyoirinji Temple with an arrowhead, before departing for his final battle. The poem reads Kaeraji to kanete omoeba azusayumi nakikazuniiru nawozo todomuru (“I think I cannot return alive this time. So I wrote down my name on the necrology and I am going”) (Nyoirinji, 2014).



Figure 13: Door with Kusunoki Masatura's farewell message at Nyoirinji Temple Museum

Five of the 42 responses mentioned the temple museum as a revenue generator. While some warned of a reluctance for temples to admit to a monetary element in their dealings with the public, others noted that adding a museum to the temple grounds did not necessarily result in high financial gains, since admission fees went to operational costs and/or the general temple budget. Another response focused on the financial

benefits (in the way of assisted care and conservation) of having a museum by receiving grants from the government. What these grants are or how this process works was not explained in detail however. Comments in this category include:

*There's a huge monetary element involved with temple and outside relations, although most temples would not like to admit that (Ninnaji).*

*The revenue gained from the museum goes to running the temple (Nyoirinji).*

*If you have prefectural and national treasures, you can receive grants...the reason temples are asserting exhibit programs is because they want the government to protect the item (Zentsuuj).*

Finally, three of the 42 responses did not fit in any of the above categories and were thus coded as "other." Spreading the word about the temple, creating fans and engaging the public in Buddhism were all isolated responses. Comments listed below:

*As long as the museum is helping spread the word about Tofukuji, it serves its purpose regardless of being profitable (Tofukuji).*

*It's more about creating fans of the temple (Taimadera).*

*We want people to know more about Buddhism and think about how to engage the public in Buddhism (Toji).*

Responses given to the question "Are there any programs for visitors?" were coded into one of four emergent categories: 1) Yes, within museum; 2) Yes, outside museum; 3) No; and 4) Other services and resources. Participants gave more than one answer to the question, resulting in 19 code-able responses.

Four of the 19 responses to the question "Are there any programs for visitors?" said that there were programs for visitors held within the museum. These programs seemed to coincide with special exhibitions or were sporadic in nature. Comments in this category include:

*We have lectures but they're sporadic and we have 20 attendees per lecture usually. Something like once a month. For elementary and middle school students during the summer we have programs too (Todaiji).*

*During the special exhibitions when we want to express something in particular we invite specialists in mandala for example to come lecture and on those occasions we limit the audience to 100 and advertise those events in advance (Toji).*

Four of the 19 responses said that there were programs for visitors held outside of the museum. It was not always clear whether these programs were *museum* programs held somewhere else on the temple grounds or simply temple programs not related to the museum. Comments in this category include:

*We don't have things that are done specifically at the museum. One time we had a community program where we made necklace charms, but other than that... There are many ceremonies at the temple and people come during those times (Shitennoji).*

*We do copying of the sutras and explain the sutras at the temple (Saidaiji).*

*As far as programs for visitors, we've had several. Usually those lectures and programs happen within the main hall though. We don't do them in the Reihoukan [museum] (Taimadera).*

Two of the 19 responses said simply that there were no programs for visitors.

Again, it was unclear if the respondents were saying there were no *museum* programs or no programs at all. Comments in this category include:

*There are no programs right now, or lectures. But we'd like to have them. We just don't have the space or the money. We don't have space within the museum for those types of things (Ninnaji).*

*We don't have programs or tours for visitors (Tofukuji).*

Nine of the 19 responses talked about other resources or services available to visitors. Most of these responses explained that tours could be arranged when requested.

Representative quotes include:

*Tours of the permanent exhibit are given to those who ask and to special guests (Nyoirinji).*

*When the travel agency requests that a tour be given to tourists, then the priests will. Other than that we give out brochures and things (Saidaiji).*

*If there are more than 10 people in a party, the staff can arrange a guided tour of the museum (Ginkakuji).*

Responses given to the question “What kind of relationship does the temple museum have with traditional museums?” were coded into one of five emergent categories: 1) Lending and borrowing; 2) Holding and entrusting; 3) Conservation; 4) Research; and 5) Other. Participants gave more than one answer to the question, resulting in 30 code-able responses.

Ten of the 30 responses to the question “What kind of relationship does the temple museum have with traditional museums?” mentioned a lending and borrowing relationship between the temple museum and traditional museums. In most cases, participants talked about the temple lending to outside museums, as opposed to the temple borrowing from other museums. Types of museums mentioned include art museums, National Museums, other temple museums, and city museums:

*There was a discussion of lending a statue that had been lent in the past to Zentsuuji Temple or to the Okayama Digital Museum (Saidaiji).*

*Other museums ask us to lend our items to them and we lend to National Museums and from September to next year we'll lend to Kanazawa Bunko in Yokohama and in March we'll lend to Osaka's new Abeno Harukasu Art Museum (Todaiji).*

*Now it's common to have inter-museum borrowing and lending and the greater majority is between art museums and the temple (Ninnaji).*

Ten out of the 30 responses mentioned holding or entrusting objects as an aspect of the relationship between the temple museum and traditional museum. Holding or entrusting was separated from lending or borrowing because of the timeframe and nature of the agreement between institutions. The entrusting relationship that temples and outside museums have was established, as we saw in the literature, early on in the history of museums in Japan (Robson, 2010). Many temples talked about continuing this practice, even with their own on-site museums, whether to spread their collection around to minimize the risks of losing everything to a catastrophic event, to save space, or to care for the object in a better-equipped facility. Representative quotes include:

*More than that, handling is difficult and there are several objects that Nara National Museum is taking for us (Shitennoji).*

*We have in total probably 10,000 items, but we don't have them all here at once. We spread them across other museums and temples (Ninnaji).*

*We don't accept objects from outside (lend only). We entrust objects to National Museums like Tokyo, Kyoto and Nara, so during special events we'll ask for them to be returned and then give them back promptly (Tofukuji).*

Two out of the 30 responses related to research as a significant part of the temple museum relationship with traditional museums: *Sometimes there are curators or scholars come and take x-rays of items, read the scrolls, and such.*

Finally, three responses did not fall into the aforementioned categories and were coded as “other:”

*In the situation where there is an object that requires special handling we'll ask someone from the National Museum to help (Shitennoji).*

*We have art handlers take care of the transport of items we lend and borrow (Toji).*

*It's a business relationship, not quite like the relationship we have with Shoukokuji (head branch of temple) which is more hierarchical. For example, we need an appraisal done we will send it off to Kyoto National Museum (Ginkakuji).*

Answers to the question “Are the statues in your temple museum *kaigen*? Why or why not?” were coded into three emergent categories: 1) Yes; 2) No; and 3) Circumstances. Participants gave more than one answer to the question, resulting in 15 code-able responses.

The purpose of this question was to begin to understand the curatorial intent within the temple museum in regards to worship. Asking whether a statue is *kaigen* is asking whether the priests have imbued the Buddha statue with a spirit and, as we see in the data, because it is common to remove the spirit (*hakken*) when transporting an object, at some point when the statues were moved into the temple museum, a choice is made to either let them remain without a spirit or complete the *kaigen* ceremony again. Choosing to do this denotes an intention of worship within the temple museum and as there is a visible split between the *kaigen* practice of temple museums, here emerges an interesting tension (See Figures 15 and 16).

Seven of the 15 responses said that Buddha statues within the temple museum were *kaigen*. Representative quotes include:

*Most of the time, I think the spirits are present (kaigen). Here especially, [inside the main hall] that is the case. In Koya-san<sup>7</sup>'s Reihoukan (Sacred Treasure Hall) Museum all of the statues are kaigen (Saidaiji).*

*Everything within the Honden (main hall) and the Houjou buildings have their souls intact (Tofukuji).*

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<sup>7</sup> *Koya-san* or Koya Mountain, is the location of the headquarters of the Shingon sect of Buddhism and the burial grounds of Kobo Daishi, the sect's founder. The temple museum there, called *Reihoukan*, translates to “Sacred Treasure Hall” (Koyasan, 2014).

*All the Buddhas in the museum are kaigen. There's one saisenbako (money box) in the museum for all of the Buddha statues. The presence of the saisenbako implies that the Buddhas within that space are kaigen (Todaiji).*

Three of the 15 responses said that the Buddha statues within the temple museum were not *kaigen*. One participant in particular was very adamant about prayer (See Figure 17) being inappropriate within the museum, while the other two were more ambivalent on this point. Comments in this category include:

*All of the statues in the museum are hakken, their spirits are removed and they are in cases so I don't think it's appropriate to pray. People that come for tourism purposes only, we don't show our statues as objects of worship. We only show our objects of worship to worshippers. There are museums within temples that show statues as objects of worship, we are not one of those types (Nyoirinji).*

*The statues in the museums are hakken....so there is no saisenbako (donation box) (Zentsuuj).*

Five of the 15 responses explained particular circumstances surrounding the *kaigen* and *hakken* process. These comments include:

*We only hakken when we move things around. When we move the statue we ask the spirit to 'please bear with it' (Saidaiji).*

*When the statues are moved within the temple grounds, they are not hakken. If the location changes we hakken if we loan the object to Nara National Museum for example that's a different story. But when it's moved to the Reihoukan (museum) here it's still an object of religious worship so nothing has changed. The meaning behind the movement between the temple and the National Museum is different (it's going to be a art piece) (Taimadera).*

*We hakken during the cleaning. During the opening (Spring and Fall) the monks and staff come and do the kaigen ceremony. When the exhibition is finished, the statues undergo hakken (Toji).*



Figure 14: Priests inside Todaiji Temple Museum performing ceremony in front of *kaigen* statues  
(Photo courtesy of Asahi Newspaper, 2013)



Figure 15: Saisenbako (donation boxes) placed in front of scrolls at Taimadera Temple Museum indicating that worship is intended

Responses within “Differences” were coded into one of four emergent categories:

1) Spiritual difference; 2) Administrative difference; 3) Collection difference; and 4) Display difference. Participants gave more than one answer to the question, resulting in 29 code-able responses.

Ten of the 29 responses focused on a spiritual difference in the temple museum as compared to a traditional one. Several participants responded that their museum, being on the grounds of the temple, serves a spiritual purpose or involves a spiritual factor, an interesting response given that the majority of participants when asked the purpose of the temple museum did not refer to spiritual intent. The temple community and larger Buddhist community, according to participants, connect in some deeper or more complex way to the objects in the temple collection. Details about what this connection is were unclear. Representative quotes include:

*I think museums exist for the sole purpose of scientific observation but the temple exists for a spiritual factor and within that you have a museum. In my opinion the temple museum has more complexity in its interpretation (Shitennoji).*

*If there was a National Museum that was separated from the temple itself, there is not religious value. With the temple museum on the temple grounds there is still an element of religious value. When people that come to hear about the ‘jiden’ (legends) of the temple will have a different interpretation than that of a researcher. There’s not that belief attached. Visitors value the temple teachings. That’s the main difference. It’s easy for people to study the subject and it’s easy to just research. If they go back and describe it to the people around them and the interpretation that the researcher had could be completely different from the temple community interpretation. A museum doesn’t have the religious community and backing that the temple museum does (Zentsuuj).*

Ten of the 29 responses focused on administrative differences between the temple and traditional museum. Many participants pointed out that the temple museum has limited funding and cannot spend over their budget like a museum that receives its funding from the government and others mentioned that priests (*See Figure 18*) were the

ultimate decision-makers in temple museum administration. This falls in line with responses given to the earlier question “who manages the temple museum” where, even with hired curators on staff, the priests were described as having the final say on decision regarding collection display and management.

Comments in this category include:

*It's [the temple museum] not for the purpose of profit, it's just for the purpose of showing objects. So being in the red is a natural effect (Tofukuji).*

*This is where temple administration differs from the administration of an institution on the municipal, prefectural and national level that can over-spend and be in the red while still spending. We on the other hand cannot be gregarious with our spending or be making constant improvements, we have to think about balanced spending and how to frugally maintain what we have (Nyoirinji).*

*The museum is only one facet of the temple. Ultimately we [museum staff] are the staff of Todaiji so we give advice but don't make the final decisions. That's the difference between us and a private Art Museum. For us, the priests are the ones who decide, not the curators (Todaiji).*

Six of the 29 responses mentioned a collection difference between temple museums and traditional museums. Participants noted that temple collections remain somewhat static without any collection plan or goal towards building it in any way and others noted that objects were not borrowed from other institutions but only lent. In the earlier question regarding the nature of the temple museum collections, specific objects within the collection were focused on rather than collecting practices or lack thereof. It is unclear whether the temple museum continues to accumulate objects in their collection as they did up until this point (via gifts and donations) or if they stopped receiving new objects at some point in their history. Comments in this category include:

*Temple museums display what they have inside and museums bring things from the outside in. Museums are always changing and growing and the temple museums are representing themselves only (Ninnaji).*



Figure 16: Couple praying at Shitennoji Temple



Figure 17: Priests at Tofukuji Temple

*Art and natural history museums collect and exhibit a lot of things and Tofukuji only exhibits treasures from the temple and we don't take anything from outside (Tofukuji).*

*It's a museum of the things that the temple has collected over the years, not the museum's collection. Museum is something that serves as a window to what the temple has collected over the years (Todaiji).*

Three of the 29 responses focused on a difference in display practices at the temple museum compared to a traditional one. Many pointed out the difference between the use of glass cases in a traditional museum and lack of them at the temple due to their status as religious icons. These responses include:

*How do Western museums approach that same situation? How do occidental museums deal with religious icons? Items within Western museums are held in glass cases to preserve them, but anything on an actual temple ground are not held in glass cases (Todaiji).*

Responses given within “Challenges” were coded into one of five emergent categories: 1) Resources; 2) Space and infrastructure; 3) Traditional ways and preservation; 4) Collection maintenance; and 5) Other. Participants gave more than one answer to the question, resulting in 30 code-able responses.

Ten of the 30 responses to talked about resources, or lack thereof, being a challenge. Resources mentioned by participants were: funding, exhibit materials and staff. Comments include the following:

*We want to change the exhibit over more, but feel that we don't have anything that would serve as good material to work with (Saidaiji).*

*Staff is few and the houmotsukan (museum) staff is only 4 or 5 people. Sometimes there are people that come from other areas of Shitennoji to help. There's not that many people that work for the temple museum alone. There are lots of things we don't have enough of (Shitennoji).*

*So if we don't increase the revenue, there's no point. Even if we want to show people things, we have to prioritize the running of the temple over that of the museum (Nyoirinji).*

Eight of the 30 responses spoke about space and infrastructure as being a unique challenge. Comments include:

*It's ideal to have the Buddha above the visitor eye level but the ones we have are quite short and we are limited in how we can display them. In our museum, we have poor security so people could steal things easily but if the opportunity to increase our system arose, we would definitely want to make those changes (Taimadera).*

*It's not that big, right? The exhibition space is not that big, and shuffling through the storage is challenging (Todaiji).*

Six of the 30 responses mentioned challenges having to do with traditional ways and preservation. One participant mentioned that the continued use of ancient sacred objects in ceremonies brought up concerns about its long-term preservation, while others mentioned difficulties stemming from the government's requirements in regards to the care of national treasures, such as keeping a statue behind glass while the priests would have visitors view them directly to receive better spiritual merit. In one response, the participant explicitly said that this divergence of values was the most difficult aspect of temple museum management, though the absence of consistency in how statues are displayed (behind glass, not behind glass, *kaigen*, *hakken*) would lead one to argue otherwise. Representative quotes include:

*However, at Toji, even now, Kukai's 1200 year old items are still used for ceremonies. Those items are locked up in a safe and taken out three times a week for ceremonies. Every year, the top Shingon [sect] people will come together and choose one person to represent their whole sect and when that happens the special items are relocated. It's a problem, but if we have a replica people get upset that the item is not where it's supposed to be (Toji).*

*The government maintains and checks in on the object to make sure their money is being spent properly. Because it's a national treasure, even though it belongs to the temple it also belongs to the country so issues arise from that on occasion (Shitennoji).*

*But for the temple, it's difficult to put a Buddha statue behind glass you're not supposed to see the Buddha indirectly with the glass between you...As far as the priests go, there's a movement of thought that it's better to look upon the Buddha directly. But there's a command from the Agency for Cultural Affairs not to do that, and to keep the items behind glass...So the thought process of cultural heritage management and religious adoration is the diverging point I think this is the most difficult aspect of temple museums (Todaiji).*

Five of the 30 responses mentioned challenges having to do with the maintenance of their collection. The common plight of the museologist is mentioned in several comments which point out that showing objects contributes to their deterioration and also puts them at higher risk of being stolen. Comments in this category include:

*Mostly they [temple staff] feel like it [the museum] costs money and as far as funding goes...there is the feeling that we want to show things. There are a lot of paper objects that need to be protected especially. Through showing the items they deteriorate. It's a dilemma (Ninnaji).*

*The main problems we have are the devaluation of our collection, thieves and light damage. If we take out the same item over and over we get discoloration. When we switch out the items it protects them from that (Taimadera).*

*In a modern museum we can turn on an air conditioner to regulate the temperature when it gets hot, but before that equipment was included in the museum, the objects were left to the elements since Kamakura era and they've survived this far. Now that environmental controls are being introduced, I wonder how that will affect the objects (Toji).*

Finally, one of the 30 responses did not fall into the above-mentioned categories and was thus coded as "other:"

*Our stance towards having religiosity being subtle part of the temple museum: if you have a church and right next to a church museum trying to sell the church it would be strange (Ninnaji).*

### **What is the role of the museum within the Buddhist Temple?**

Three interview questions were asked to form a foundation for understanding what the role of the museum is within the Buddhist Temple: “How has the addition of a museum changed the temple experience? Has it affected the spiritual quality of the temple?” and “What do you think about visitors interpreting the Buddha as art versus as a religious icon?”

Responses to the question “How has the addition of a museum changed the temple experience? Has it affected the spiritual quality of the temple?” were coded into eight emergent categories: 1) Visitor-related changes; 2) Societal and religious changes; 3) Space and object interpretation changes; 4) Reactions to temple museum; 5) Temple collection visibility; 6) Collection management; 7) Finances; and 8) Other. Participants gave more than one answer to the question, resulting in 48 code-able responses.

Ten of the 48 responses to the question “How has the addition of a museum changed the temple experience?” focused on visitorship to the temple, visitor behavior and visitor motives. Within these responses, there were inconsistencies in the ways participants interpreted visitor behavior. For example, while some assumed that more people see the temple objects as art rather than religious pieces, and thus separated tourists from worshippers, others maintained a feeling of ambiguity when it came to this, saying that practitioners can be tourists and vice versa. Participants also mentioned that tourists are necessary and desired, but worshippers are prioritized. The ambiguity though in defining who is a tourist and who is a worshipper makes prioritizing one group over difficult. Comments in this category include:

*There are more people that come to see the Buddhist related items as art rather than religious pieces, but there are people who worship and there are people who copy the sutras as well (Taimadera).*

*On one hand we're saying get as many visitors as possible, but on the other hand the money mainly goes to prioritizing the worshippers (Shitennoji).*

*Tourists and Buddhists are separate. Tourists are the main visitors to the temple, but you'll never know because from tourists there can be born more practitioners and some practitioners could be more like tourists (Ninnaji).*

Ten of the 48 responses focused on external social factors and changes that have affected the temple experience. Within these responses, participants mentioned an increased interest in spiritual spots and “enthusiasts” in Japan and that, due to this social trend, the temple museums design their exhibits to cater to that movement. Others said that the temple museum and how it exhibits is responding to the needs of the public, instead of the public responding to the message of the exhibit. Because maintaining visitorship is one of the main goals of the temple museum, constantly changing to meet visitor expectations and needs is necessary. Others mentioned that new technologies, such as the internet, that allow people to see more information makes the temple collection more accessible and the temple had to respond to requests to see those items.

Comments in this category include:

*At the time it was made, it didn't make much of a difference. But in recent years there's been an increased interest in spiritual spots and enthusiasts I've noticed a difference in how people relate themselves with the temple. They pay close attention to what exhibitions are particularly enjoyed by those enthusiasts and base their exhibitions on that to some extent. There's an external transformation rather than an internal one. The way we exhibit needs to be responsive to the needs of the public. There are times when the exhibition doesn't adapt to the needs of the viewer or there's an exhibition completely unrelated to or beyond the visitor, but they're not as effective. It has to be an adaptation to what the audience wants. Rather than the viewership being changed with the temple museum being created, it's more that the temple museum is in a constant flux of change with the viewership, based on what they need (Ninnaji).*

*Probably the people who want to see the objects in temple collections have increased. There's the Internet too, and information is more available. The temple collection, like the Chujo-hime<sup>8</sup>'s (Princess Chujo) razor, is suddenly information available to everyone. But before recently, people probably weren't aware. Now there's Wikipedia. Now it's a matter of whether or not you can see the items. And that turned into the monks wanting to show the items (Taimadera).*

Nine of the 48 responses focused on space and object interpretation changes affecting the temple experience. Within these responses there emerges again the issue of tourist versus worshipper and how the temple and the temple museum functions for these two categories of visitors. The main message of these responses is that the space and object interpretation is dependent on the person's individual convictions, but the observation that visitorship is increasingly tourists and therefore the spiritual quality of the temple is decreasing poses an interesting scenario: increase in tourist-based visitorship indicates a decrease in worship-based visitorship which in turn can be attributed to a change in Japanese religiosity. Comments include the following:

*The sacredness of a place is based on its function. The temple's function is to serve as a spiritual place. Tourists come to see the temple and see it as a tourist spot. Worshippers come and see it as a place of ancestral worship (Shitennoji).*

*Tourists make up more and more of our visitor base and so it is possible that the spiritual quality of the temple may be decreasing. Pretty much temple museums used to be storage and were kura (storehouses) but when they were renovated into newer buildings they took on a museum quality. The Zentsuuji museum is separated from the main temple grounds in order to maintain that difference (Zentsuuji).*

Five of the 48 responses mentioned specific reactions visitors had to the temple museum. Comments include the following:

*The most common response we hear is "I'm glad I came" or "I'm glad I went in". Usually, they're surprised that they're able to enter this part of the temple (Saidaiji).*

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<sup>8</sup> *Chujo-hime*, or Princess Chujo, sometimes referred to as the Japanese Cinderella, was the daughter of court noble Fujiwara no Toyonari and became a nun at Taimadera Temple and is said to have woven the mandala tapestry in the main hall.

*Local people can consider it [the collections] something to take pride in (Shitennoji).*

*We have a lot of treasures and people didn't know that. When we take them out little by little, people realize "Oh, Tofukuji has amazing stuff." Since we weren't displaying it, it became an essentially useless possession (Tofukuji).*

Five of the 48 responses talk about changes in the visibility of temple collection.

Comments in this category include:

*I wasn't around before the museum was here but the changes I would imagine were that things that couldn't be seen before can be seen now and that the temple has become really quite open and opportunities to see what lies within has increased and its really great but to a certain extend there should be a secretive part to the temple. But there are still many inaccessible treasures of Shitennoji (Shitennoji).*

*In the beginning the museum was for the sole purpose of storage but that was a waste so we decided to expand its purpose to include exhibits. Before, a storage space was a storage space without any exhibition functions. But then multi-purpose buildings like one that can store and exhibit became popular (Tofukuji).*

*People who wanted to see the items now get to see them. It's as simple as that (Taimadera).*

Five of the 48 responses focused on how temple collection management has changed. One comment made a comparison between Japanese and American museum goals regarding education, saying that public education through museums is a relatively new concept in Japan. How this relates to the temple museum's approaches or (lack thereof) to public education was left unclear. Other participants noted changes with the addition of the temple museum are a strengthened sense of obligation to protect the items.

Comments include:

*Americans see museums as a facility for education. That way of thinking is not common in Japan. It wasn't a topic in the National Museum scene until these last ten years. The element of education in museums didn't exist until the past ten years. There was only the function of managing and studying the objects (Todaiji).*

*There's been a firm sense of obligation towards the protection of items for the next generation. Another big factor involved with a museum on the temple, is that you can protect from fire and other damage that effect the items (Toji).*

Two of the 48 responses mentioned financial changes:

*The belief in Buddhism has decreased little by little and finances have been tight. Since we've become a business essentially, we have to be able to explain to the government what we have in the way of treasures and the biggest thing to increase visitorship is by having a cultural treasure. It becomes easier to get funding from the government when you have your collections organized (Zentsuuji).*

*The tourists are [financially] necessary (Taimadera).*

Finally, two of the 48 responses did not fall under the above-mentioned categories and were thus coded as “other.” Comments include:

*Something we're thinking about whether more or less information is better on the signs we put out. It's better for the monks themselves to explain them to patrons and it's an opportunity for them to serve their function versus signs (Zentsuuji).*

*Within the temple grounds that never change that creates that peace of mind and there is a small space that is new where they can spend a little time, it makes it easier for the patrons to enjoy that peace of mind they get in the familiar temple (Saidaiji).*

Responses to the question “What do you think about visitors interpreting the Buddha as art versus as a religious icon?” were coded into three emergent categories: 1) Depends on curatorial intent; 2) Depends on individual feeling; and 3) Depends on atmosphere. Participants gave more than one answer to the question, resulting in 30 code-able responses.

Ten of the 30 responses to the question “What do you think about visitors interpreting the Buddha as art versus as a religious icon?” mentioned curatorial intent of priests and staff in showing Buddha statues. Comments ranged from feeling that the Buddha is intended to be worshipped in the museum (implied by the presence of the

donation box), that the objects in the museum are not meant to be worshipped, and that whether or not they are worshipped is not a concern. One participant in particular (seen below) said that objects of worship are only shown to worshippers, but again not being able to differentiate from a worshipper and a tourist leaves this a difficult task. What it does indicate however, is that visitors to the museum are seen as tourists (therefore there are no objects of worship) and visitors to the main temple are worshippers (therefore there are objects of worship). This separation of museum for tourist and temple for worshipper falls in line with earlier comments that the main visitorship to the museum (and temple in some cases) are tourists and that the attraction of the museum seems to cater to those visitors. Representative quotes include:

*The Buddha statues in the Houmotsuden (museum) are hakken (spirits removed) and in glass cases so I don't think it's appropriate to pray. People that come for tourism purposes only, we don't show our statues as objects of worship. We only show our objects of worship to worshippers (Nyoirinji).*

*The presence of the saisenbako (donation box) implies that the Buddhas within that space are kaigen (spirits intact). Whether or not the Buddha statue is regarded as an art piece or not is a big issue (Todaiji).*

Ten of the 30 responses stated that interpretation is based on the feeling of the individual. Again, within these responses ambiguity is embraced in so far as how visitors interpret Buddhist objects in the temple museum. Some said it does not matter, some said the statue is a vessel, and others said that behavior in front of the Buddha statue varies from person to person. In all responses, it seemed that participants were not particular about how visitors interpret or behave (within reason) in the temple museum. Comments include:

*It's the interpretation of the individual (how you behave in front of a statue). There are a wide variety of people that have different ways of behaving in front of the Buddha. People who put their hands together, people who put money in the*

*box, people who just look on. It's a problem of whether the person has a feeling of awe/reverence towards the object or not. If a religious person looks upon a Buddha, they will put their hands together, if a regular person comes in, they'll see it like a stuffed animal (Saidaiji).*

*The issue is in the eye of the beholder (issue being how they interpret the piece religiously or secularly) In the end, the statue is imbued with whatever meaning that the visitor gives it. It's a vessel (Shitennoji).*

*The priests pray in front of statues whether or not the spirit is there I think it's up to the persons feeling. I don't think it matters (Ninnaji).*

Ten of the 30 responses mentioned the atmosphere as having to do with object interpretation. Several participants mentioned a change in atmosphere that inspires reverence from visitors and often times this atmosphere is something curated, for example removing one's shoes, having a slightly darkened gallery space, or the planned architecture of the museum in the case of Todaiji's Museum to mimic a temple hall. Here there is more inconsistency in participant opinion, some seeing the museum as an extension of the temple while others keep the two separate. Comments in this category include:

*The image someone has of a statue within a temple versus within a museum is based on the feeling that they go into the space with: it's different. There is more of a feeling of reverence when entering a temple, right? It's an issue of reacting to that atmosphere (Saidaiji).*

*As far as Nara National goes, they generally acknowledge the religiosity of the object. But when it comes to regular art museums they don't approve and the object becomes an art piece which people gaze upon aesthetically and here we have a saisenbako (money box) and people pray. Even if it's moved to the Reihoukan (museum), people can see the museum as an extension of the temple, it's that kind of facility. The museum at Koya-san is large but it also has a certain feel to it, also there you take off your shoes. In a regular museum, you wouldn't take off your shoes. The atmosphere that creates is totally different. It creates an austere feeling. We might be a small and humble temple but the act of taking you're your shoes you can get that 'austere' feeling (Taimadera).*

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

**Emergence of the Temple Museum**

Based on the responses in this study, temple museums emerged through a desire to protect the temple collection. The upgrade from *kura* storehouse to temple museum allowed for increased security, more effective storage of the collection and the possibility for exhibition. For the temples whose collection was largely stored by National Museums or elsewhere off-site, one motivating factor was the ability to take those objects back and show them “in their natural environment” (Todaiji). Surely the Todaiji Museum, located at one of Japan’s largest and most popular site-seeing temples, would find financial value in creating their own museum to store and exhibit the temple’s collection even if, as our respondent at Ninnaji would say, “most temples would not like to admit to financial motives” (Ninnaji).

For temples that are further removed from the tourist way and who receive most of their visitorship during annual events, such as Saidaiji, the museum is a way to “add another feature” for visitors and to make the experience more interesting and leave the visitor feeling satisfied. Ginkakuji Temple notes as well that maintaining visitorship requires having attractions and Taimadera agrees that the addition of the museum allows the temple to cater to various visitor types.

Challenges while making the upgrade from *kura* storehouse to temple museum included finding funding for the project, not having sufficient space in the end for both collection storage and exhibition and controlling temperature and other environmental factors within a concrete building, but most interestingly at this juncture emerges a tension between preservation theory and traditional Buddhist thought.

Within the interviews, many participants noted that in the absence of humidity and temperature controls systems they were leaving things to nature and while on the subject of collection management several stated that they were unsure how preservation methods would affect collections long term. It is still unclear what kind of traditional preservation (such as the bamboo charcoal used by Ginkakuji to control humidity) or cleaning methods are used in the temple museum and how widespread these practices are or what value they have.

### **Nature of the Temple Museum**

#### **Collections**

Over the centuries, temples acquired a myriad of objects related to their practice (scrolls, statues, religious implements), the history of the temple (rhino statues in the case of Saidaiji), items donated by significant patrons (emperors, princesses, and other famous figures), gifts from temples overseas during visits, and other random objects (art made by priests). As many respondents mentioned, the temple collection is not made up of items purchased or acquired intentionally, and the museum is simply a place that exhibits the items of interest that the temple has happened to come into possession of during the course of its history. In some cases, this includes rare and unique items that are designated by the government as National Treasures and which receive protection in the form of funding and conservation support. Participants also mentioned that a main difference between temple and traditional museums is that the temple museum does not actively collect. It is unclear however, whether this is simply restating the fact that the temple never intentionally collected or that the processes through which the temple

accumulated its collection (through gifts and donations) stopped at some point in its history.

Amongst the 10 temple museums examined, there are a variety of exhibition schedules. Some change their exhibits four times a year, others twice, while still others have a permanent exhibit that rarely changes at all. Some focus exhibits on topics that seem to be popular with visitors and others design the exhibits to be attractive to particular patron families. One thing said consistently about collection management at the temple museum however is that portions of their collection are entrusted to off-site museums to ensure that in the event of a fire or major theft that their most precious items would not all be taken at once. This denotes a network of mutually beneficial relationships between temple museums and traditional museums (including National Museum).

This relationship between temple museum and traditional museum is defined further by respondents to include assistance with conservation, research, and handling. In other words, it seems that the traditional museum (in many cases the National Museum) offers support in the areas where the temple museum management lacks resources, be it space or conservation and handling expertise in exchange for the ability to display and profit from the temple objects they hold.

### **Intended Institutional Goals**

Just as the Buddhist temple in Japan has been doing for centuries with *kaicho* and *mushiboshi*, both events where sacred objects are publicly unveiled, modern-day exhibitions of the temple collection are a way to draw in visitors and raise funds for operations. Kornicki (1994) and Hur (2009) write that *kaicho* was a religious event turned

secular entertainment and one could certainly make the same assumption with temple museum exhibitions, as museums are typically 'secular' institutions. Though if we hold that religiosity in Japan is not so easily defined by activity or behavior, we should consider the temple museum and its exhibitions as a contested and ambiguous space, as Suzuki (2007) and Reader (1991) would no doubt agree.

The purpose of the museum, respondents agree, is to protect the collection. Showing the collection is a recent addition to the space and programs for visitors are limited to tours upon request and the occasional lecture. Interviewees expressed a hope that the museum would attract visitors, create fans of the temple and share the temple's history. The ability to increase revenue (including receiving government support) and attract visitors were both listed as a secondary purpose of the temple museum. What sets temple museums apart from traditional ones is the amount of influence that priests have in the decision making process of the temple museum. Which organizations will be lent objects to and which objects will be exhibited and how, even in cases where a curator or other qualified employee is employed to manage the temple museum, are decisions that inevitably pass through the priests.

Reader (1991) would caution us to not limit religiosity to behavior, such as placing a coin or joining hands in prayer. One respondent in this study noted that appreciating the Buddha as art, taking photographs, or praying is all a form of worship and another said that distinctions from worshipper and tourist are not easily made. Other respondents held different views and found worshippers and tourists to be very different demographics served by the temple and that worship within the temple museum was inappropriate.

Study results suggest that regardless of the curatorial intent of the temple museum's staff, shown in this study through *kaigen* or *hakken* status, it is felt that visitor interpretation of Buddha statues within the museum space is a personal matter. Respondents note that each person's interpretation can be influenced by the atmosphere (taking off one's shoes) or implication (donation box), but that ultimately the way in which a person sees the statue is their own.

### **Unique Challenges**

On one hand, it is clear the temples are making efforts to preserve their collections. Zentsuuji Temple expressed an opinion that sealing something away does not allow it to develop value (for example, patina) and items often increase in aesthetic value with age. Todaiji Temple mentions a divergence between the accepted practice of museums putting objects behind glass and the movement of thought amongst priests that it is best to look upon the Buddha directly. In the case of Todaiji however, statues within the temple museum are all *kaigen* (imbued with a spirit) and are accompanied by a *saisenbako* (donation box), therefore the priests intend that they be worshipped by visitors. Priests themselves, at Todaiji Museum, maintain daily ceremonies within the temple museum before visiting hours. In other temple museums where statues are *hakken* (without a spirit), perhaps being behind glass is not as much an issue.

One participant mentioned the preservation difficulties associated with the continued use of ceremonial artifacts and the strong feeling against replicas brings up another important aspect of the study: the issue of Buddhist merit making. The principle that viewing the Buddha directly without a glass case and using original ceremonial

objects instead of replicas both offer more spiritual merit for the individual is the source of this divergence of values.

### **Role of the Temple Museum in the Temple**

The inclusion of the museum in the temple grounds has benefited the temple in attracting visitors, sharing the temple's history through its collection, giving them a reason to linger and to return, and build a stronger relationship with the temple. The visitors the temple museums attract are largely tourists, according to respondents, which based on Shitennoji Temple's interpretation means visitors that are not visiting the temple for religious purposes. "Tourists come to the temple and see a tourist spot. Worshippers come and see it as a place of ancestral worship" (Shitennoji Temple). The data also suggest, however, that the distinction between tourist and worshipper is a grey area.

Earlier we recognized the ambiguity of Japanese religiosity<sup>9</sup> within temple visitor behavior (Reader, 1991) and priest curatorial intent. This phenomenon appears throughout several aspects of this study, but especially within the final interview questions regarding temple experience, spiritual quality of the temple, and object interpretation. Study results indicate that temple museums believe the interaction between visitors and temple museum objects has more complexity than in a traditional museum due to its unique spiritual factor. Respondents seem to agree that visitors have changed, whether this is because or independent of the addition of a museum is unclear. Visitors seem to see Buddhist related items as art rather than religious pieces and the increase of tourists is decreasing the spiritual quality of the temple, are statements made by

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<sup>9</sup> In personal communication with Professor Kyoko Tokuno, Senior Lecturer in Comparative Religion at the University of Washington, she notes that in the scholarship of Hayao Kawai explains Japanese religious behavior as having less to do with ethics (religious or secular) but instead aesthetics. While the Western paradigm of religion and secular are categories independent of each other, Kawai argues that there is not a clear distinction.

respondents. Others point out the rise in spiritual spots and religious enthusiasts in recent years. Clearly there is an interest in Buddhist objects and the temple museums, how much religiosity is involved will remain unclear without a separate study on visitor interpretation.

The business of running temples, some with vast grounds and several buildings on site which are in constant need of maintenance and repair, requires an income in order to survive. In addition to protecting their collection, the addition of a museum on the grounds attracts visitors, generates income, creates ‘fans’, shares the history of the temple and increases the chance of acquiring government funding. Though using the sacred objects of the temple to attract visitors and generate income is nothing new to temples, the museum adds another layer of commodification by remaining a permanent display. While earlier display practices of *kaicho* and *degaicho* offered visitors a brief glimpse of an otherwise secret sacred object for the purpose of gaining spiritual merit, the museum brings out much of the sacred objects for permanent display, depleting the spiritual quality of ‘secrecy’.

This does not necessarily mean that temples and people are becoming less spiritual or less religious, but that the temple and its visitors are changing and the ambiguous grey area that is so prevalent in Japanese religion is more present than ever. Once again, the phenomenon of *honne* (one’s true feelings) and *tatemae* (one’s public opinion) in Japanese communication plays a role in how the interview participants may have responded to the questions. Being interviewed by an foreign student from an abroad institution, and pressed with dichotomous questions, participants were likely to be

expressing a *tatemaie* opinion, one left purposefully ambiguous so as not to take a strong stance either way.

### **Implications**

In the absence of any Western scholarship on the Japanese Buddhist temple museum, this study aimed to fill in a gap in the literature and create a foundation for understanding these unique institutions. In the literature, the changing interpretation of sacred objects was traced back to the late 1880s when Buddhist objects were listed as exhibition material in the Vienna Exhibition catalogue (McDermott, 2006) and with the addition of this study, it is clear that today with the increase of temple museums and their popularity with visitors (worshipper, tourist and everyone in between alike), that Buddhist objects are treated by temples as exhibition material to be enjoyed by temple-goers.

Study results on the emergence, nature and role of the temple museum have provided a framework for understanding how these unique institutions view themselves, their purpose and their visitorship. It has demonstrated the uncomfortable financial situation of these institutions due to societal changes in religious behavior and their struggle to maintain visitorship through the commodification of their sacred objects.

Further research can be done in the area of visitor interpretation within these ambiguous spaces. It is clear that the priests and curators that manage the temple museum have varying opinions on what behavior constitutes a tourist versus a worshipper. A study concentrating on how visitors think of themselves, as tourist or worshipper or somewhere in between and what that means for them when experiencing the temple museum could

follow this initial overview in order to better understand this grey area and help temple museum staff understand its visitorship.

This study has explored very briefly how temple museum collections are managed, and within this study a few interesting statements were made. At Ginkakuji, humidity control is done traditionally with *take no sumi*. Looking further into traditional forms of collection management and other ways temples are working within a small budget while preserving their collections is an area that needs further research. This study did not address what a “qualified” staff person means in the context of caring for temple collections, though many participants referred to them. A comment made by a participant curator brings to light that the practices of temple staff, unaware of the potential effects of cleaning chemicals, light or insect damage on the collection, did serious damage to pieces over the years. Here is an opportunity for temple museum curators and “qualified” individuals in the field of temple collections could communicate amongst each other and create a set of best practices for these institutions. With the increase of temple museums and their strong inter-museum relationships there seems to be a great opportunity to decide upon and share best practices between these organizations.

Finally, the phenomenon of the Japanese Buddhist temple museum as explored in this study leaves us in many ways with more questions than answers. The *honne* and *tatemae* divide in Japanese communication and the approach taken in this research with dichotomous questions, lends to the ambiguous and inconsistent answers often given regarding visitor object interpretation with temple museum spaces, curatorial intent, and museum purpose. In addition, with both the religiosity of Japan being notoriously ambiguous (Reader, 1991) and the museum space being ‘neither wholly secular nor

sacred' (Suzuki, 2007), it is no wonder that the results of this study seem unclear. The larger complexities surrounding Japanese religious behavior, psychology and each individual temple's nature (including its sect, patronage, geography and history) require more intensive study to truly get to the heart of what these institutions are.

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Figure 18: Sign in Taimadera Temple Garden pointing towards the *Houmotsuden* (Temple Museum)

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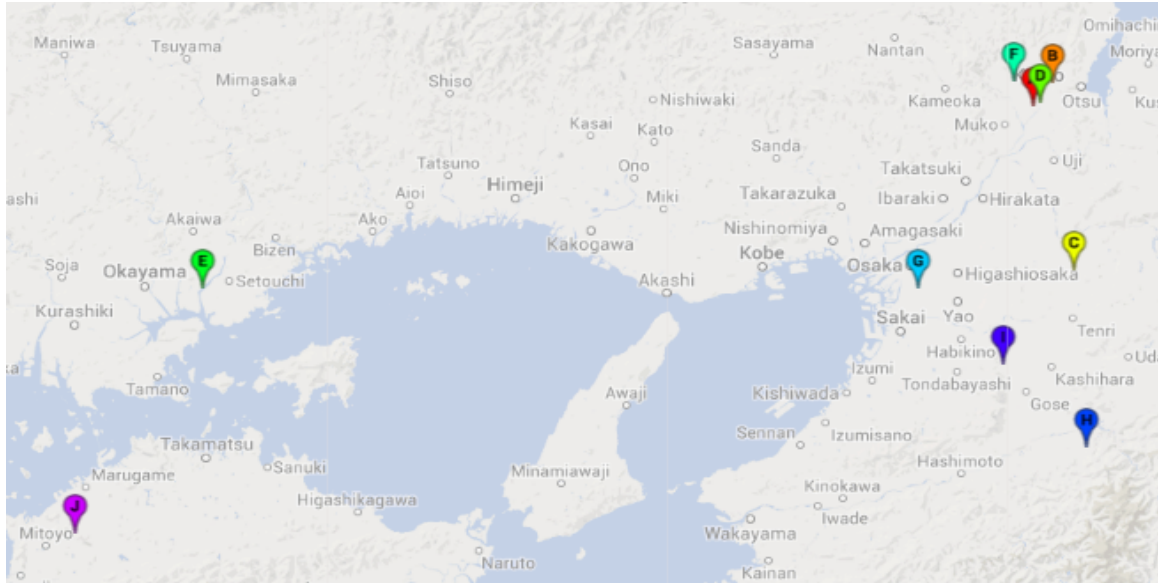
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## GLOSSARY

Japanese	English
<i>bakufu</i> (幕府)	shogunate
<i>degaicho</i> (出開帳)	outside unveiling
<i>eyou</i> (会陽)	annual festival at Saidaiji Temple also known as ‘hadaka matsuri’)
<i>fundoshi</i> (褌)	loincloth
<i>hadaka matsuri</i> (裸祭り)	naked festival (annual festival at Saidaiji Temple also known as ‘eyou’)
<i>hakken</i> (撥遣)	process of removing the spirit from a Buddha statue
<i>hakubutsukan</i> (博物館)	hall of myriad objects or ‘museum’
<i>hibutsu</i> (秘仏)	secret Buddha
<i>hime / hime-sama</i> (姫)	princess
<i>honne</i> (本音)	true feeling
<i>houmotsuden</i> (宝物殿)	treasure house
<i>houmotsukan</i> (宝物館)	treasure museum
<i>houzoukan</i> (宝蔵館)	treasure house museum
<i>igaicho</i> (居開帳)	local unveiling
<i>kaicho</i> (開帳)	unveiling
<i>kaigen</i> (開眼)	eye-opening (ceremony imbuing Buddha statue with a spirit)
<i>kura</i> (倉)	storehouse
<i>makimono</i> (巻物)	scroll
<i>mushiboshi</i> (虫干し)	airing
<i>saisenbako</i> (賽銭箱)	donation box
<i>shinbutsu bunri</i> (神仏分離)	separation of Shinto from Buddhism
<i>tatemaie</i> (建前)	public stance

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Map of Participating Temples with Legend



	Toji (Kyoto)		Ninna-ji (Kyoto)
	Ginkakuji (Kyoto)		Shitteno-ji (Osaka)
	Todaiji (Nara)		Nyoirin-ji (Yoshino/Nara)
	Tofukuji (Kyoto)		Tamia-dera (Nara)
	Saidaiji (Okayama)		Zentsuu-ji (Kagawa)

## APPENDIX B: Information on Participating Temples

## Ginkakuji Temple (銀閣寺)

Address: 2 Ginkakujicho, Sakyo Ward, Kyoto, Kyoto Prefecture

Website: [http://www.shokoku-ji.jp/g\\_about.html#](http://www.shokoku-ji.jp/g_about.html#)

History: This Zen temple, originally a retirement villa and garden, was established by Ashikaga Yoshimasa, 8<sup>th</sup> shogun of the Ashikaga Shogunate, in 1490 (Ginkakuji, 2014).

## Ninnaji Temple (仁和寺)

Address: 33 Omuroouchi, Ukyo Ward, Kyoto

Website: [www.ninnaji.or.jp](http://www.ninnaji.or.jp)

History: Head of the Omuro school of the Shingon Sect of Buddhism, Ninnaji Temple was founded by Emperor Uda in 888. The temple was destroyed in 1467 during the Onin War and rebuilt 150 years later by Kakushin Hosshinno, son of Emperor Go-Yosei. Several of the structures on the grounds are Important Cultural Properties, with the Golden Hall designated as a National Treasure (Ninnaji, 2014).

## Nyoirinji Temple (如意輪寺)

Address: 624 Kozeki, Mobara, Chiba

Website: [www1.ocn.ne.jp/~nyoirin/index.html](http://www1.ocn.ne.jp/~nyoirin/index.html)

History: Nyoirinji Temple, established in 900, is known as one of the temples where Emperor Godaigo prayed for the prosperity of his country and descendents. His mausoleum is also on the temple grounds (Nyoirinji, 2014).

## Saidaiji Temple (西大寺)

Address: No. 8 Okayama, Higashi-ku, Saidaijinaka Third Street

Website: [www.saidaiji.jp](http://www.saidaiji.jp)

History: Founded in 751, Saidaiji is home to the Eyou festival, a designated Intangible Cultural Asset and one of Japan's three rarest festivals, where thousands of men adorn traditional *fundoshi* loincloths and struggle for two holy sticks (Saidaiji, 2014).

## Shitennoji Temple (四天王寺)

Address: 1-11-18 Shitennoji, Tennoji Ward, Osaka

Website: [www.shitennoji.or.jp](http://www.shitennoji.or.jp)

History: Shitennoji, constructed in 593, is the first Buddhist temple in Japan built by Prince Shotoku. The temple had four institutions, *Shika-in*, an Institution of Religion and Education, a Welfare Institution, a Hospital and a Pharmacy (Shitennoji, 2014).

## Taimadera Temple (當麻寺)

Address: 1263 Taima, Katsuragi, Nara

Website: [www.taimadera.org](http://www.taimadera.org)

History: Built in 612 by Prince Maroko, brother of Prince Shotoku, serves as the head temple of the Hosso sect. The principal image of worship is a mandala painting depicting the teachings of Buddha, which legend has it, was woven in one night by Princess Chujo using threads made from lotus (Taimadera, 2014).

Todaiji Temple (東大寺)

Address: 406-1 Zoshicho, Nara

Website: [www.todaiji.or.jp](http://www.todaiji.or.jp)

History: Founded by Emperor Shomu in the early 8<sup>th</sup> century, Todaiji is the headquarters of the Kegon school of Buddhism and is a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site.

This complex houses the world's largest bronze statue of the Buddha Vairocana (Todaiji, 2014).

Tofukuji Temple (東福寺)

Address: 15-778 Honmachi, Higashiyama-ku, Kyoto

Website: [www.tofukuji.jp](http://www.tofukuji.jp)

History: Founded by imperial chancellor Kujo Michiie in 1236 Tofukuji is known as one of the five great Zen temples of Kyoto. Its main gate is the oldest *sanmon* in the country and is a designated National Treasure (Tofukuji, 2014).

Toji Temple (東寺)

Address: 1 Kujocho, Minami-ku, Kyoto

Website: <http://www.toji.or.jp/>

History: Founded in 796 by Emperor Kammu and recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, this temple is often associated with Kobo Daishi, founder of the Shingon sect of Buddhism (Toji, 2014).

Zentsuji Temple (善通寺)

Address: 3-3-1 Zentsuji-cho, Zentsuji-shi, Kagawa

Website: [www.zentsuji.com](http://www.zentsuji.com)

History: Zentsuji Temple, built by Shingon sect founder Kobo Daishi in 813, is one of the 88 Sacred Temples of Shikoku Island. The pilgrimage to these 88 temples traces the route where the young Kobo Daishi was trained. Together with Toji Temple, this is one of the three holy sites linked to Kobo Daishi (Zentsuji, 2014).

## APPENDIX C: English version of introductory letter given to interviewees

This is a letter verifying that Elisa Law is a 2<sup>nd</sup> year graduate student in the Museology master's program at the University of Washington. Second year students in this program are required to complete a thesis project or paper on a topic of their choosing, that contributes to the museum field.

Due to its lack of Western scholarship, Ms. Law has chosen to pursue the topic of Japanese temple museums. She has proposed an initial exploratory study of these institutions with the purpose of understanding their emergence, the nature of their collections, their management and public programs, and their impact on the temple-goer experience.

This initial exploratory study will be achieved by traveling to and observing ten participating temple museums and interviewing staff (with audio recording for reference and translation purposes). Ms. Law will then return to the University of Washington to process the data collected, and narrow the focus of the study.

If necessary, Ms. Law will return to Japan in December to do any further research.

As her advising committee, we hereby verify that Ms. Law's research has been approved by the Museology department and the IRB (Institutional Review Board) at the University of Washington.

## APPENDIX D: Japanese version of introductory letter given to interviewees



ご担当者様

等紹介状は Ms. Elisa Law (エリサ ロー) が アメリカ合衆国ワシントン州立大学博物館学部の大学院生であることを立証することともに、ロー氏の研究にご協力をご依頼するものです。

ロー氏はワシントン州立大学の修士号を取得するために博物館学の分野に貢献する論文あるいはそれに同等なプロジェクトを提出する必要があります。

日本の寺院に付属する博物館の研究は、西洋において不足しており、ロー氏はこの論点の学問をより深めるために寺院の博物館に訪問したいと考えております。

- ① 博物館の設立・展示品の収集の過程
- ② 管理方法や公共への貢献およびこれらが檀家にいかなる影響を与えるかの2点を特に研究の対象としています。

このような研究を始めるための前段階として、今回は本研究に賛同していただいている十カ所の寺院に属している博物館を訪問し、寺院博物館のスタッフにインタビュー（参考：本訳のために録音する場合もあります）したいと考えています。その後、ワシントン州立大学に戻って、収集したデータを検証し研究の焦点を定める予定です。

必要があれば ロー氏は12月にも日本へ再訪するかもしれません。

ロー氏の研究は博物館学部とワシントン州立大学の倫理委員会によって承認されています。よろしくお願いたします。

Dr. Jessica Luke

担当教官 ジェシカ ルーク

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Luke", written over a large, stylized "E" shape.

質問予定項目 抜粋

- ・博物館設立の歴史（設立のきっかけ、設立するまでの過程、苦労等）
- ・博物館の目的
- ・どのような収蔵物があるか？
- ・どのようなスタッフが運営しているか？（博物館専任のスタッフなのかなど）
- ・他の一般的な博物館との違い（独特な試みがあるか）
- ・博物館があることによって、寺院に訪れた人々にどのような影響があるかと考えるか？

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www.museum.washington.edu

## APPENDIX E: Interview Guide

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- When did this temple museum open?
- What was the driving force behind the building of a museum? Who decided?
- Were there any challenges to the building of the museum?
- What is the nature of the collections held in the museum?
- How are the temple collections managed? By whom?
- What is the purpose of the museum?
- Are there any programs for visitors?
- How are the temple collections managed?
- What are some unique challenges that the museum temple faces?
- What kind of relationship does the temple museum have with other museums?
- What kind of relationship do the temple priests have with the museum?
- How has the addition of a museum changed the dynamic of the temple experience, in your opinion?

## PHONE COLD-CALL SCRIPT:

- Hello, my name is Elisa Law and I'm an American student at the University of Washington. Is there someone I could talk to about conducting a research project at the museum at your temple?
- This September, I am traveling to Japan to do research for my Master's thesis. This research is focusing on Japanese temple museums.
- To conduct the research, I would like to find 10 temple museums that would not mind participating in a brief interview.
- In the interview, I would be asking questions relating to the emergence of the museum, the collections held, the administration, and any public programs that the museum has.
- I have identified this temple as having a museum, via a Japanese museum search engine. Do you feel that this temple museum would be appropriate for this research and would like to participate in a brief interview?
- Interviewees should be museum staff or someone knowledgeable of the museum, who works in the temple.

- (If yes, get email or fax number to send letter of verification) Great, thank you. Would it be possible to get an email address contact for the museum or the interviewee? I would like to make an appointment by the end of August.
- (If no) Thank you for speaking with me. Sorry for taking your time.

## APPENDIX F: Inter-Rater Reliability

Question 1: Inspiration for Building Museum (*Emergence*)**CODES**

Experience  
 Protect Collection  
 Show Collection  
 Attract Visitors  
 Outliers

**RESPONSES**

1. “During Hadaka Matsuri a lot people come to the temple but after that, not so much. The reason we made the exhibition space is because we wanted people to come, and not just during Hadaka Matsuri. (4:00)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

2. “One reason was to show the statues and things to people and another was to prevent theft and protect the objects.” (Ninnaji)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

3. “The reason museums are made is because people come from far away to only ring a bell and light some incense, it makes the time that they stay on the grounds limited. By adding another feature, it offers a reason to return. I believe that the longer a visitor stays at the temple, it will build a familiarity and intimacy between the visitor and the temple.” (Saidaji - 31:00)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

4. “The idea that people could come directly to the temple itself to see the items in their natural environment was the driving force behind the establishment of the temple museum.” (Todaiji - 2:45)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

5. “Probably another reason was to teach people about Buddhism and for the patrons – we have a lot of makimono and things and to keep them in one place to be seen.” (Ninnaji - 6:00)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

Question 2: Challenges to Building the Museum (*Emergence*)**CODES:**

Space and Amenities  
 Collection Management  
 Funding  
 Tradition

**RESPONSES:**

1. “Within a concrete building, if the power is cut off, there is a dramatic change within the environment and can be catastrophic to the items in the kura. That’s scary. There’s always a chance of an earthquake.” (Zentsuji - 27:30)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

2. “The second floor is the exhibition space and the third floor is the storage space. Even though we have all these items we only have the two floors to work with and we have to split those floors into different functions. Also making the museum accessible (with slopes/ramps) to people with needs is a difficulty, right now we only have stairs” (Toji)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

3. “That’s one of the main difficulties of temple museums is that you have the opposing forces of the government saying ‘you can’t maintain objects in that manner’ and the monks want them to be directly viewed.” (Todaiji - 10:30)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

4. “The funding was difficult to start and thinking about whether or not they could sustain themselves year to year after construction and we wanted top of the line when we built. We took donations” (Ninnaji - 15:15)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

5. In our museum, we have poor security so people could steal things easily but if the opportunity to increase our system arose, we would definitely want to make those changes (Taimadera - 21:00)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

Question 3: What is the purpose of the museum? (*Nature*)

**CODES:**

Visitor Experience

Finances

Protect Objects

Share Temple Story/History

Show Objects

Outliers

**RESPONSES:**

1. The main mission of the temple is for people to come here and then feel fulfilled when they leave. It's nothing to do with money. (Saidaiji - 30:10)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

2. First of all, the reason is the five towered pavilion has fallen and been rebuilt 8 times because of war and other things. There is a history of how its fallen and been rebuilt....The fact that its been rebuilt so many times and it weakens our stance as a connection to the Prince Shotoku Taishi. The museum protects our temple's identity as connected to Prince Shotoku Taishi. (Shitennoji)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

3. There hasn't been many people who have expressed gratitude that the museum was there. It serves more of a purpose of storage. (Ninnaji - 20:25)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

4. People have figured out that in order for the future to be able to view these items like we are now, we need to find a way to manage those items (Ginkakuji - 35:40)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

5. If people go into the temple museum in order to see the statues, for example, they will also see the mandala and become interested in that. The museum expands the visitors interests, not their religious interests perse. (Toji -19:50)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

Question 4: Temple Museum Unique Challenges or  
Difference Between Temple Museum and Traditional Museum (Nature)

**CODES:**

Spiritual Difference  
Collection Difference  
Display Difference  
Administrative Difference  
Visitorship / Visitor Experience Difference  
Unique Challenges

**RESPONSES:**

1. I think museums exist for the sole purpose of scientific observation but with the temple which exists for a spiritual factor and within that you have a museum. In my opinion the temple museum has more complexity in its interpretation (Shitennoji - 20:20)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

2. That's a difference between temple museums and regular museums. From a marketing standpoint or for advertising, [if you have a commercial for Starbucks, you want it to become engrained in the viewer and you would think the same for the TM] Isn't that strange that we don't have any sort of religious motive within it. (Ninnaji – 10:10)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

3. The museum at Koya mountain is large but it also has a certain feel to it, also there you take off your shoes. In a regular museum, you wouldn't take off your shoes. The atmosphere that creates is totally different. It creates an austere feeling (be on your best behavior) We might be a small and humble temple but the act of taking you're your shoes you can get that 'austere' feeling (Taimadera - 11:00)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Within the sect, the lower temples in the hierarchy will support the revenue of the higher ones but Nyoirinji is the lowest in the hierarchy and depends solely on parishioners for support. (Nyoirinji - 24:50)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

5. But for the temple, it's difficult to put a Buddha statue behind glass you're not supposed to see the Buddha indirectly with the glass between you. There's a principle behind that, if you go to the main temple, that's how it is. (without obstruction). If you go to Hokkedou (in grounds of Todaiji) or even Kofukuji, they are displayed without cases but on stands. As far as the priests go, there's a movement of thought that it's better to look upon the Buddha directly. (Todaiji - 10:12)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

Question 5: How has addition of temple museum  
changed the temple experience (*Role of Museum in Temple Museum*)

**CODES:**

Reaction  
 Visitorship & Visitor Behavior  
 Societal & Religious Changes  
 Temple Collection Visibility  
 Finances  
 Object Management  
 Space & Object Interpretation  
 Visitor Motives  
 Outliers

**RESPONSES:**

1. Tourists and worshippers have motives are different and for us priests we want to pay more attention to/cherish those who come to worship. Korean and Chinese visitors come a lot and their manners are bad and we want tourists and their important, for the temple, the worshippers are prioritized. (Shitennoji - 55:00)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

2. There are people who come to the temple museum to see a certain object so they go, and others want to worship so they go (Ninnaji - 17:40)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

3. At the time it was made, it didn't make much a difference. But in recent years there's been an increase interest in spiritual spots and enthusiasts I've noticed a difference in how people relate themselves with the temple. They pay close attention to what exhibitions are particularly enjoyed by those maniacs and base their exhibitions on that to some extent. (Ninnaji - 37:00)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

4. We have a lot of treasures and people didn't know that. When we take them out little by little, people realize "Oh, Tofukuji has amazing stuff". Since we weren't displaying it, it became an essentially useless possession (Tofukuji - 19:00)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Another big factor involved with a museum on the temple, is that you can protect from fire and other damage that effect the items (Toji - 52:10)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

Question 6: Who manages the collection and how? (Nature)**CODES:**

Who (Priests, Curators, Qualified Staff)  
 Object Display  
 Object Storage  
 Object Maintenance  
 Object Borrowing/Lending  
 Marketing/Advertising  
 Outliers

**RESPONSES**

1. Staff are required to have some qualification to work. If there's a situation where qualifications are necessary for some maintenance of the collection, we'll call someone in. (Shitennoji, 18:00)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

2. There are people who are regulars and members of old families who have come Shitennoji for a long time. When we exhibit a certain object or plan for it. There's a lineage based obligation that we tap into in order to draw visitors from all over. (Shitennoji - 39:00)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Do you mean with the air conditioning and that sort of thing. We don't have that sort of system, we leave it to nature. In the exhibit space, there isn't a protective system for each item. But in the storage we have temperature controls that keep the room at a consistent temperature but we don't separate object types. (Ninnaji - 7:30)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Depending on the theme, the layout and items change. There are times we exhibit small things, other times large things, things that need cases, things that are dangerous. (Tofukuji - 17:15)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Temple museums are generally private ones. There are ways to avoid the expenditure, ways to use money and ways not to use money. This is where temple administration differs from the administration of an institution on the municipal, prefectural and national level who can over-spend expenses and be in the red while still spending. We on the other hand cannot be gregarious with our spending or making constant improvements, we have to think about balanced spending and how to frugally maintain what we have (Nyoirinji - 21:45)

CODE: \_\_\_\_\_