

# Sketching as a Research Tool for Understanding Sacred Places

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## INTRODUCTION

Sketching has been an important traditional tool employed over time by those interested in place. Military personnel, botanists, civil engineers, topographers, and architects are some of those who habitually employ field sketches in the conduct of their work. Geographers too make good use of this tool. The series of sketches made by the Swedish geographer Sven Hedin while he travelled 1,049 Swedish miles, or 6,520 English miles, across Asia and later incorporated into his report on his expedition is a classic example (Hedin). Even with the advent of photography, and most recently digital cameras, sketching remains a convenient, economical, and effective means to record, explore and communicate the character of place.

On the excitement of seeing/drawing, Frederick Franck states (Franck, p.8):

What really happens when seeing and drawing become SEEING/DRAWING is that awareness and attention become constant and undivided, become contemplation. SEEING/DRAWING is not a self-indulgence, a “pleasant hobby,” but a discipline of awareness, of UNWAVERING ATTENTION to a world which is fully alive. It is not the pursuit of happiness, but stopping the pursuit and experiencing the awareness, the happiness, of being ALL THERE. It is a discipline that costs nothing, that needs no gadgets. All I carry is a pen in my pocket, a sketch book under my arm. This eye is my lens. This eye is the lens of the heart, open to the world. My hand follows its seeing.

My love of sketching has developed simultaneously with my academic interests. For over thirty years I have recorded landscapes, be they rural settlements, cities, distinctive landmarks, plants, not to mention natural features like mountains, plains, rivers, beaches etc., with pen and brush. As a geographer, I strive to capture the sense of place using a combination of Oriental and Western techniques.

While a variety of places, functioning diversely in human existence, manifest certain distinctiveness, perhaps the distinctiveness is nowhere as explicit and as clearly expressed as it is among “religious places.” Among those places which may be termed “religious places,” holy places of pilgrimage have been of particular interest to me as a subject of research as well as a subject for painting. Starting with this 1972 sketch of Ryozen-ji, the first temple of the Shikoku pilgrimage (Fig. 1), I have sketched and painted numerous sacred centres around the world over the last thirty years. In this paper, from the perspective of a painter/geographer, sketching will be explored as a tool to be used in the examination of pilgrimage places. Sketches remain inherently private and personal thus the following comments are personal rather than analytical.



Fig.1. Ryozen-ji, Shikoku, Japan.

### SKETCHING AS A RECORDING TOOL

Over the centuries, artists have recorded their responses to the natural world around them, often travelling to exotic lands for inspiration. Landscapes that excite artists also excite geographers. A common point of intersection for the path of the artist with the path of the geographer is the sacred place. As I travel, the desire to paint the landscape precedes even the launch of the academic inquiry into its intrinsic nature.



Some places on the earth proclaim their sacred character. At Machu Picchu, the lost city of the Inca in Peru, I felt a sense of renewal and enjoyed capturing the human creativity and cultural transience of the past (Fig. 2). As I stood on the Inca Pass approaching Machu Picchu, the spiritual energy of the mountain engulfed me. I found it difficult to put my feelings into words, either Japanese or English. But, as usual, I painted the scene. Viewing Huayna Picchu (“Young Mountain”) peak in the early morning as it emerged from the mist was breathtaking. To me, a single painting is often a better tool to capture the sacred quality of a place than is a long verbal description.

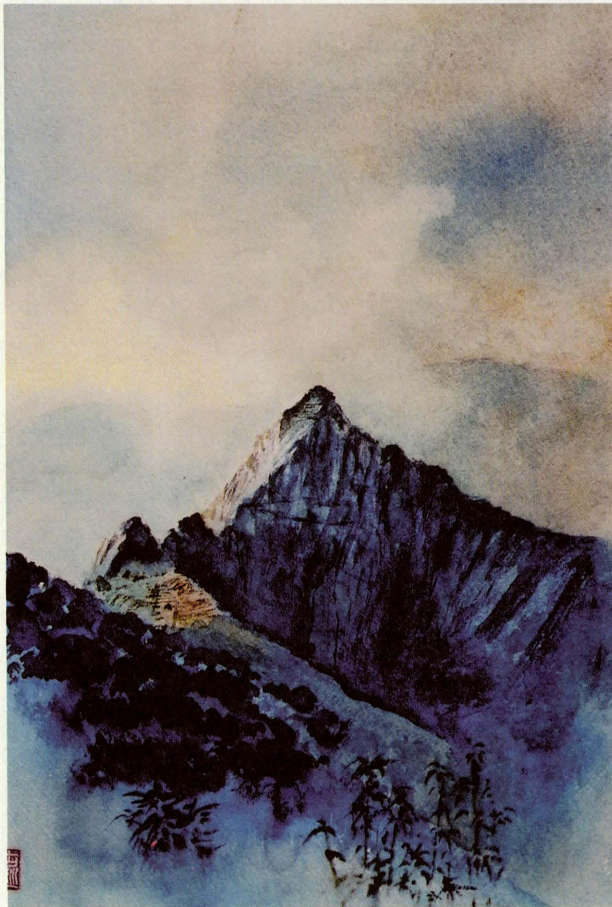


Fig. 2. Macchu Picchu from the Inca Pass, Peru.



Peripheral location is often a geographic characteristic of sacred places. This spatial characteristic suggested by Victor Turner in relation to the liminality of pilgrimage was questioned by David Sopher as a fixed rule (Sopher), however, it provided an agenda for discussion. Peripherality is seldom absolute ---- it depends upon the geographic scale implied.

Pilgrimage places are sometimes located in remote, often politically sensitive, areas perhaps close to the border. Badrinath together with Kedarnath, Yamnotri and Gangotri, four of the most sacred sites in the Himalayan region of India, are examples. Among them, Badrinath is probably the most famous of Garhwal's Hindu pilgrimage sites (Fig. 3). It is the northern dham established by the southern saint Shankara in the 9th century. Along with Puri in Orissa, Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu, and Dwarka in Gujarat, it forms a compass-point for India's sacred geography. Badrinath is located on the west bank of the Alaknanda River 297 kilometres from Rishikesh (not to be confused with its namesake, the capital of Jammu and Kashmir), not far from the overpowering Nilkanth peak.



Fig.3. Road Leading to Badrinath Temple, India.



In 1976, when the border conflict between India and Tibet was tense, inspired by my friend Surrinder Bhadwaj, author of the book *Hindu Places of Pilgrimage in India: a Study in Cultural Geography*, I visited Badrinath located close to the Tibetan border. Badri, as it is known, is situated at an elevation of 3,123 metres and is accessible only when the road is clear of snow between mid-May and late-October. Because Badri is accessible by road, it now attracts growing numbers of pilgrims and secular tourists every year. But in 1976, the pilgrimage path was traversed by two main categories of people: pilgrims and soldiers. Photography was discouraged and so was overt sketching. But I was able to translate my glimpse of the scene onto paper later in the safety of the hotel room. I painted several pictures and this one is my impression of the road leading to the temple via Tapt Kund hot spring which is located across the river.

I didn't realize it then, but the technique I was using was "memory painting," a technique that can be honed through practice. In 1995, I joined a group of watercolour painters from Canada on an expedition to Northern Ireland. An exercise we routinely practised was to observe a scene for a few minutes without any type of recording and then, later in the day, paint the scene from memory. To me the most fascinating outcome was the realization that while each of us had observed exactly the same landscape from exactly the same point, we invariably produced ten very different paintings. Variations in composition, tonal value, perspectives, and the use of colour were expected. Unexpected were the extreme differences in the physical features that each of us recalled from the scene. There were profound differences in the mood and atmosphere of each of the ten paintings suggesting that sacred places are viewed and experienced differently by those who encounter them. This brings up the issue of analysing and accurately describing the character of sacred places as viewed and experienced by thousand of pilgrims.

At certain sacred places taking photos and also painting are prohibited. Generally Moslem sites follow this practice. While one could take pictures with concealed cameras, many researchers prefer to respect this religious prohibition. In 1999, I visited Mashhad in northeastern Iran. Mashhad became a Sh'ah (Shi'ite) pilgrimage centre early in the 800s when Emm Rez, the 8th grandson of the Prophet Mohammed, was buried there after he was believed to have been poisoned. I wanted to capture the sacred landscape by brush, but my request to paint the Holy Shrine of Emm Rez was politely declined by the authorities. My solution was to paint from outside the sacred compound. I sought for an appropriate vantage point from the ground from which I could capture the sacred complex, but could not find one. Instead I painted from the rooftop of the hotel in which I was staying, eliminating the corners of nearby



buildings and electric poles (Fig. 4). The capability of the artist to capture the distinctive features of given sacred places by eliminating obtrusive features is an advantage not enjoyed by the photographer.



Fig. 4. Holy Shrine of Emm Rez, Mashhad, Iran.

Sketching along the pilgrimage path requires a constant search for landscape markers dotted along the passage. I have enjoyed the search for road-side shrines, road signs, pilgrim hotels, and magnificent vistas along many different pilgrimage paths. In 1985, I walked along Camino de Santiago from the French border to Santiago de Compostela in Spain (Fig. 5). Regardless of whether the pilgrimage target is a single sacred centre or multiple sites, pilgrimage paths are dotted with places of religious significance. Sketching provides a means to appreciate the notion of the stages of pilgrimage as a holistic entity comprising the main focus or foci as well as the multitude of sacred topographical features along the route over which the pilgrimage as a process takes place.



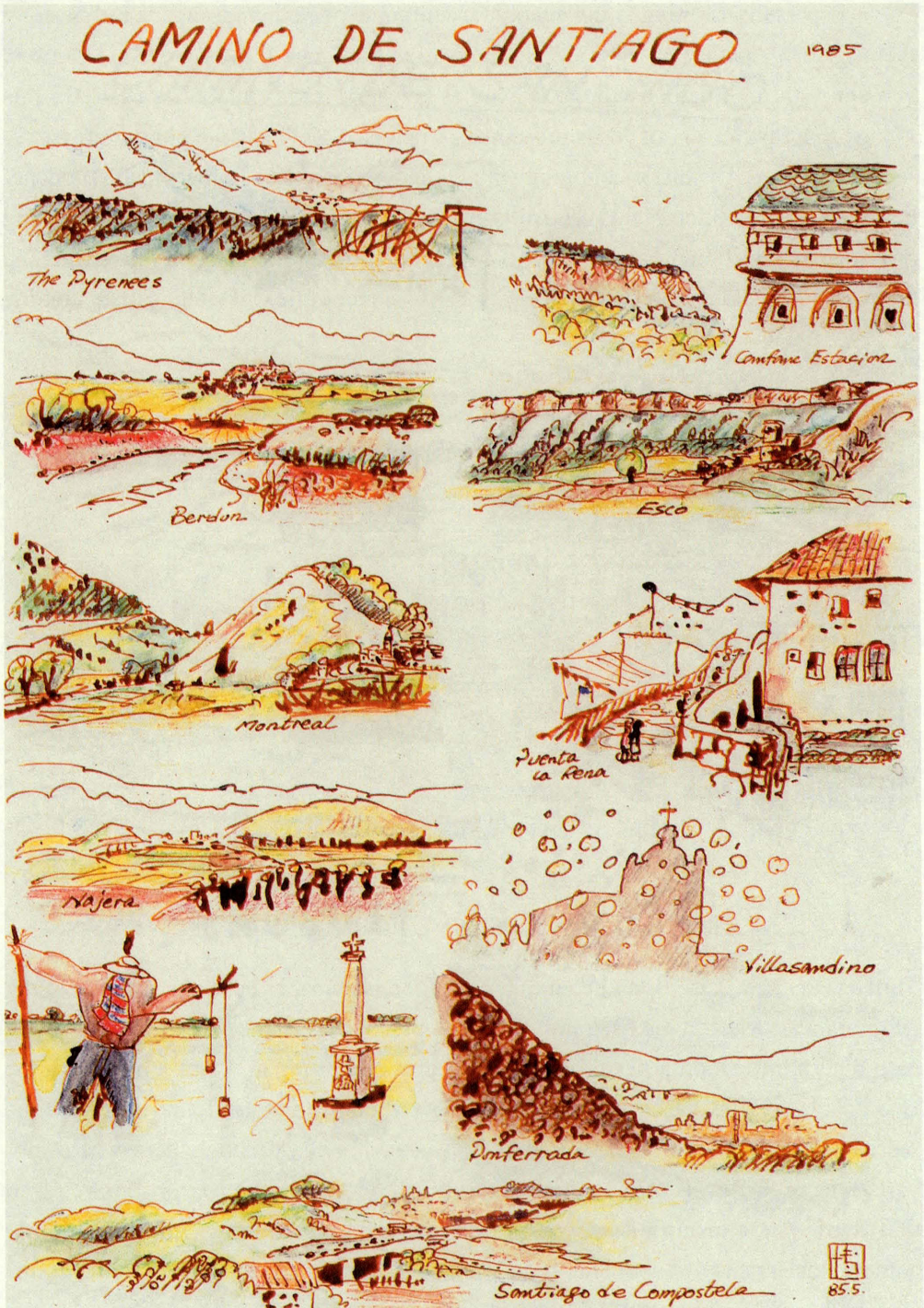


Fig. 5. Landscapes along Camino de Santiago, Spain.



Especially exciting is the encounter with unexpected landscape features along the pilgrimage path. For example, on the way to Santiago de Compostela, I came in contact with the Spanish village of Xavier (Fig. 6). It was at Xavier castle in this village that the Society of Jesus missionary Francisco Xavier, a well known figure in Japan, was born. The historical figure who existed in my mind as a mere name suddenly became a more familiar reality. The pilgrim road is an outdoor classroom and sketching provides an additional opportunity to appreciate human history and intensifies the enjoyment of field research. Discovery is a by-product of field sketching and painting.

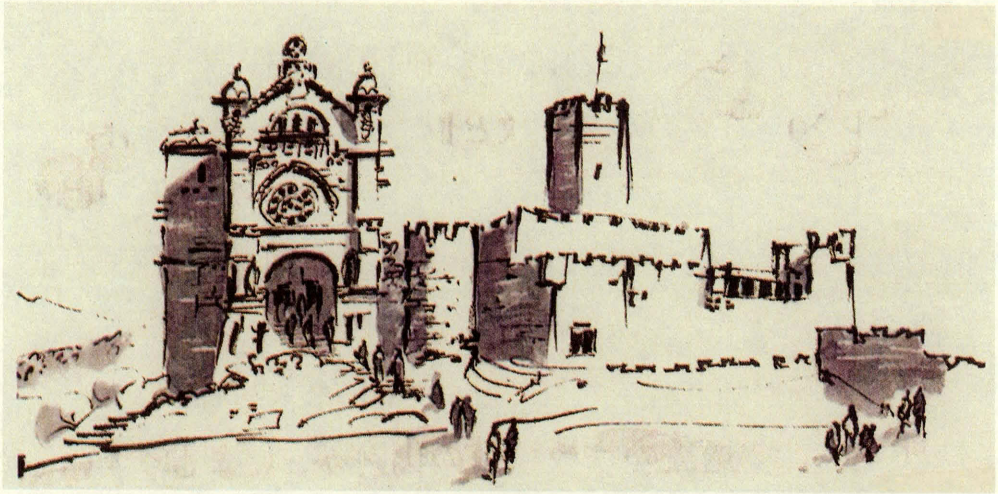


Fig. 6. Xavier Castle, Xavier, Spain.

### SKETCHING AS AN AVENUE FOR EXPLORATION

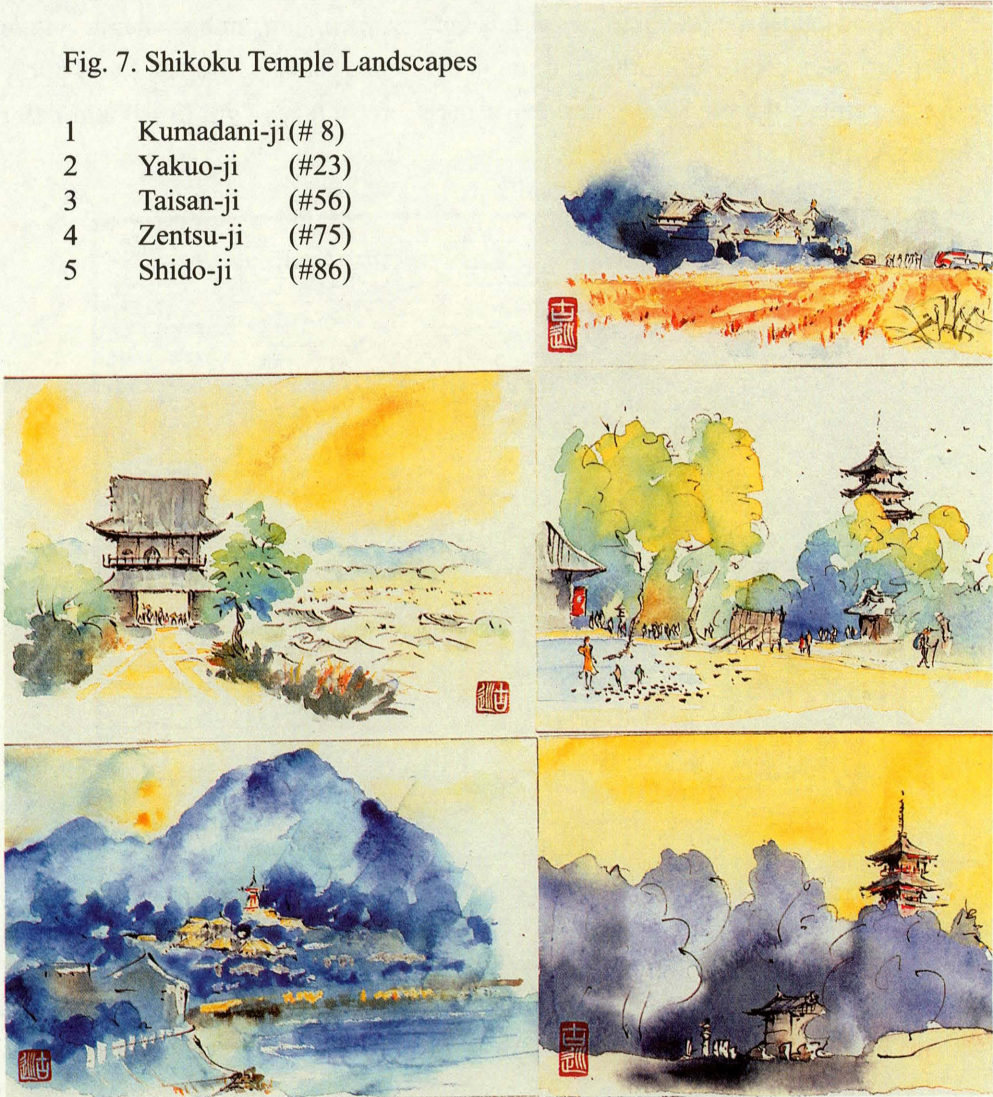
Thirty years ago, as a young geographer living in Canada, I chose as the focus of my geographical research the Shikoku 88 sacred places and walked the 1,385 kilometre path over a three month period. Although I grew up in Japan, I was a novice to the Buddhist landscape. Fascinated with the variety of built structures found at each of the sacred places, I fervently recorded them in my sketchbook. Although there were minor variations in the forms of the structures from one temple to the next, I soon realized that there was a group of structures that occurred repeatedly within the temple compounds. The landscape, “the typical association of concrete geographic features (Wagner, p.9),” of the sacred places is at the same time an essential aspect of the character of the pilgrimage and an expression of this character. The assemblage of landscape markers is one geographic expression of pilgrimage centres. I chose 36 categories of landscape markers and inventoried the 88 sites with respect to these



features (Tanaka 1977). The five sketches included here were made when I revisited the Shikoku temples in 1999 with Professor Yoritomi and a group of graduate students from the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (Fig. 7).

Fig. 7. Shikoku Temple Landscapes

- 1 Kumadani-ji (# 8)
- 2 Yakuo-ji (#23)
- 3 Taisan-ji (#56)
- 4 Zentsu-ji (#75)
- 5 Shido-ji (#86)



One of the questions which came to mind as I was carrying out this research was “which of the landscape markers prevalent today were in existence several centuries ago?”

Comparison of the “contemporary” temple landscapes with sketches made by priest Jakuhon some 400 years ago provided an answer to this question at least with respect to the temple compounds as they appeared in the seventeenth century (Fig. 8). I think it is likely that Jakuhon faithfully recorded all the prevalent landscape markers at each site as he visited the temples and included them in his sketches published in



Shikoku Reijo-ki. To carry out a valid comparison of the landscape captured by Jakuhon with the landscape I observed, the seventeenth century landscape was “reconstructed” within the aforementioned framework employed in the identification of the present landscape. The findings of this inquiry, focussing on the dynamic nature of the pilgrimage centre as expressed through landscape changes, are one result of my desire to capture the physical complex of the sacred places with brush and paint (Shimazaki 1997).

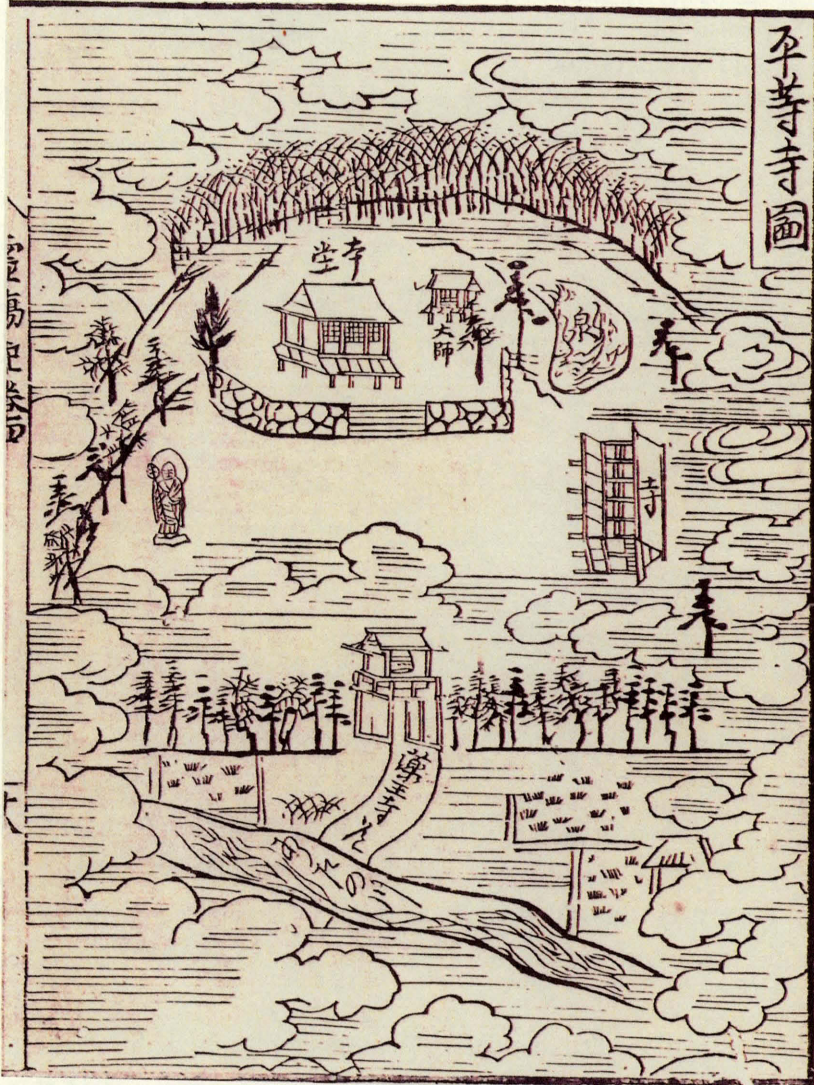


Fig.8. Jakuhon's Sketch of Byodo-ji.



Research into the Shikoku 88 sacred places triggered my interest in the notion that the religious landscape expresses in some degree the ideology and world-view of its makers. Focussing on the temple landscapes found in the Kyoto-Nara region, I explored the expression of religion as a dynamic process. In Japan, as in other parts of the Buddhist religious realm, Buddhism underwent transformations that are registered in various aspects of the landscape (Fig. 9). Changes expressed in the religious use of the temple in the site characteristics, orientation, structures and their spatial arrangement, and the use of land in gardens have shown that Buddhism has constantly influenced the characteristics of the landscape and thus inspired the Japanese religious consciousness (Tanaka 1984; Shimazaki 1992).

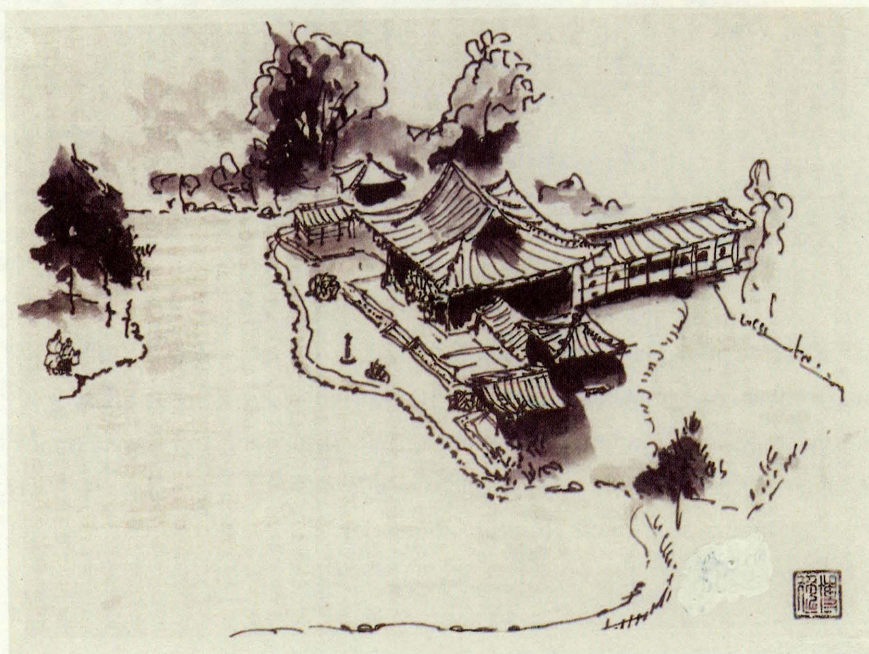


Fig.9. Byodo-in, Uji, Japan.

As I walked along the Shikoku pilgrimage route, I encountered numerous collections of 88 stone markers representing the 88 sacred places, some contained within a single temple compound and some spread out over several kilometres. As I sketched these markers, my curiosity was aroused and miniature pilgrimages, both within and outside the Shikoku pilgrimage, eventually became a subject of study. In 1981, when I was a visiting professor at Kwansei Gakuin University, I had an opportunity to explore the Kabutoyama miniature pilgrimage located close to the campus (Tanaka 1983). Here the 88 stone markers are placed on the hill on the south



side of the compound of Kanno-ji with Kabutoyama rising behind the temple (Fig. 10).



Figure 10. Kanno-ji, Kabutoyama, Nishinomiya, Japan.

Small scale pilgrimages at sacred centres occur in many forms. Within the Hindu pilgrimage centre of Varanasi (Benares or Banara) in India, there is an 80 kilometre circular pilgrimage to 108 sites dotted along a route originating and ending on the bank of the Ganges River and extending beyond the outskirts of the city. This is a sketch of the 43rd stop on this pilgrimage (Fig. 11).



Fig.11. Road-side Shrine, Varanasi, India.



In the Catholic context, the 14 Stations of the Cross, each a representation of Christ's sufferings on His way to Calvary, can be found sometimes within church compounds and other times nearby the pilgrimage centre. The Stations of the Cross depicted here are in Copacabana, Bolivia and are an example of the latter situation (Fig.12). The Stations of the Cross are visited in imitation of pilgrims visiting those places in the Holy Land made sacred by the sufferings of Christ. A comprehensive study of pilgrimages of various geographic scales in the global context is needed.

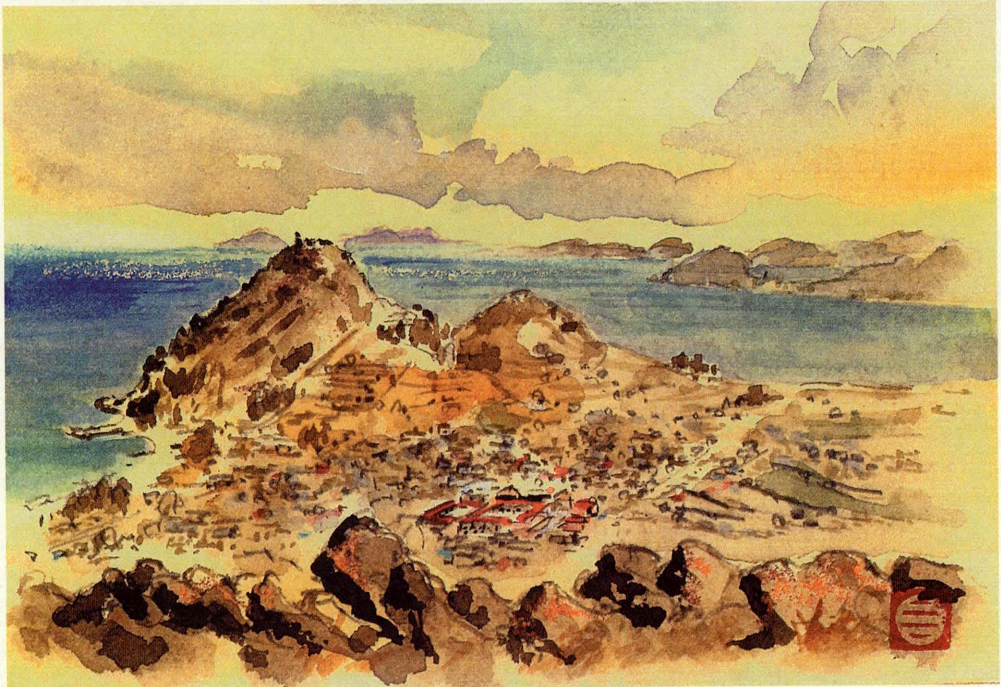


Fig.12. Copacabana, Bolivia.

A field observer can capture the sight of a pilgrimage centre only at a particular moment in the dynamic history of the given sacred place. One painting I made, that of the sacred centre at Amritsar, became considerably more valuable to me after the site was severely damaged (Fig. 13). Amritsar, named after the sacred tank or “pool of nectar” that formed the city’s heart, is the largest city in the state of Punjab in India and the focal point of Sikhism. An awe-inspiring monument to the faith, Amritsar’s Golden Temple attracts many Sikhs who try to make a pilgrimage here at least once in their lifetime.

Several years after this 1980 painting was made, Sikh extremists under the leadership of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale occupied the temple, establishing a base for the movement for a separate Sikh state. Having transformed the temple into a war-



ready headquarters, Bhindranwale and his troops put up a three-day fight against government forces dispatched by Indira Gandhi. Bhindranwale was killed. Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards five months later. In 1988, a smaller militant group emerged and again occupied the temple, only to be thwarted by local police. These events triggered my curiosity about the history of the Golden Temple. I wondered if conflict had always been an integral part of the evolution of this pilgrimage centre.

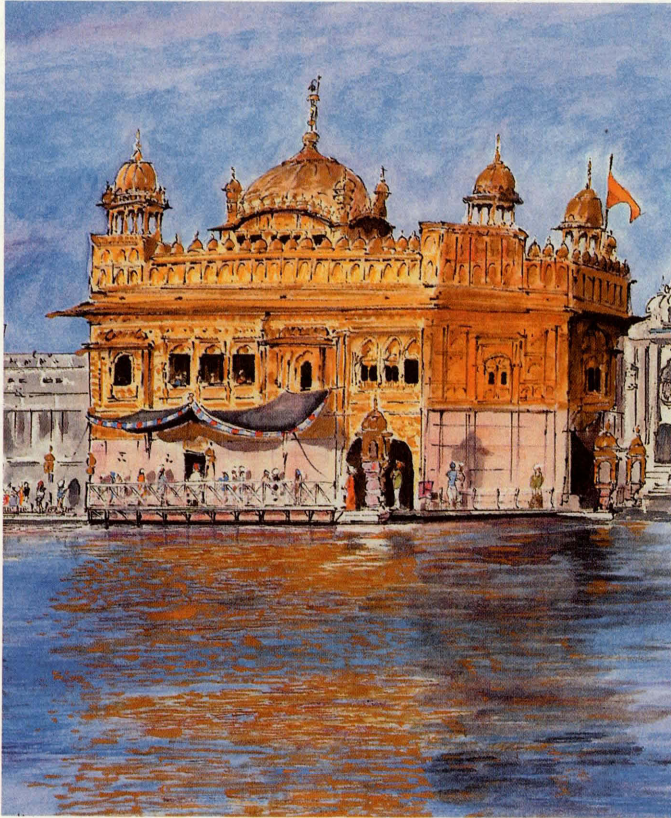


Fig. 13. Golden Temple, Amritser, India.

My reading provided a resounding yes in answer to this question. The nearly 400 years of the temple's existence has been marked by incessant destruction and desecration by outsiders. A series of destructive Mughal invasions followed the 1601 completion of the temple. In response to Mughal control of the temple starting in 1740, two Sikhs gained entry to the temple and assassinated the Mughal leader. In 1757, following a brief period of Sikh sovereignty in the area, Ahmad Shah Abdali plundered the temple. The struggle continued and, in the battle of Ghallughara, Ahmad Shah Abdali again took the temple, and this time, blew it up. Later, under British rule, the



Sikhs reclaimed the temple and rebuilt it, beautifying it with marble, copper, and gold leaf. Subsequently, with little respect for the most basic tenets of Sikhism, the British assumed management of the temple and it was not until the 1920s that the practice of pure Sikhism was restored. Sketching on site provides ample opportunity to contemplate the scene and expand the imagination as one really sees what is there and begins to question why things are as they are. For me, sketching is a delightful tool for field exploration.

Painting the mosques and minarets of pilgrimage sites in Iran makes one aware of how differently colour is used in the man-made environment of the sacred places of varying religious traditions. The blue tiles of the dome of Masjed-e Emm in Esfahn against the backdrop of a brilliant sky over the dominantly ochre-coloured landscape captures the attention of pilgrims at a distance and must make a profound impression on them (Fig. 14). To the best of my knowledge, despite the fact that the need was identified by Paul Fickeler many years ago (Fickeler), we still lack in geography, a comprehensive inquiry into the chromatic characteristics of pilgrimage sites and the impact of colour on pilgrims' experience.



Fig. 14. Esfahn, Iran.



On my first visit to the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico in 1974, the Basilica was tilting severely. Mexico city is constructed on a former lake bed and in the industrial area around the Basilica the constant extraction of the ground water for industrial use had caused the ground to become unstable. This instability made the Basilica particularly vulnerable to earth tremors. The site of the original Basilica at the base of Tepeyac Hill is closely associated with sightings of the Virgin Mary and this association took precedence over its geological shortcomings when the decision was made in the mid-1970s to build a new and much larger Basilica beside the original structure (Fig. 15). The relationship between geology and pilgrimage places is an interesting and largely unexplored domain. In Japan, straight lines characterize the 33 temple Saikoku Pilgrimage route. On examination, these straight sections, for example Kumano kodo (Nakaheji) from Seiganto-ji to Tanabe as well as Yamanobe no Michi from Asuka to Kyoto via Nara, are found to coincide with the fault line. In Malaysia there is a marked association of pilgrimage centres with limestone caves as evidenced, for example, by the Buddhist pilgrimage centre of Perak and the Hindu centre at Batu Cave.

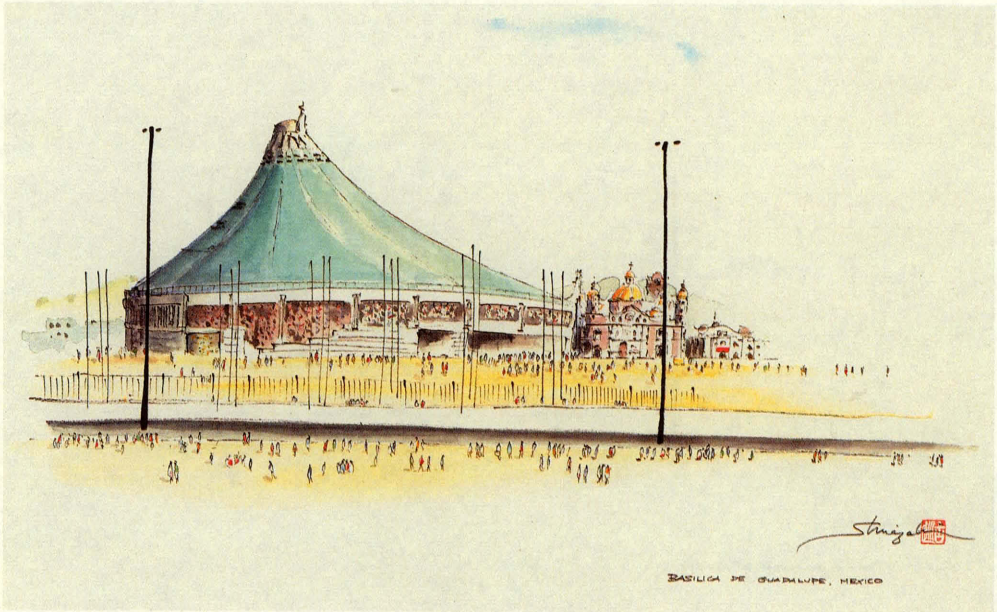


Fig.15. Basilica de Guadalupe, Mexico.



## SKETCHING AS A REPORTING MEDIUM

The practice of sketching is a useful tool for the construction of schematic representations. For example, as part of the foundation for my geographic argument that the Shikoku pilgrimage places have a shared core of landscape features, some of which are associated with repetitive ritual behaviour, I constructed this schematic diagram of a representative Shikoku sacred place (Fig. 16).



- |               |           |                 |                |                 |                  |
|---------------|-----------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. Daishidō   | 7. Tōrō   | 13. Ishidan     | 19. Hōkyōintō  | 25. Settaisho   | 31. Tsuyadō      |
| 2. Kuri       | 8. Mon    | 14. Dō          | 20. Ishidatami | 26. Hyakudoishi | 32. Jishikoku    |
| 3. Chōzubach  | 9. Meihyō | 15. Hōnōsekihyō | 21. Haka       | 27. Torii       | 33. Komainu      |
| 4. Kōro       | 10. Shōrō | 16. Kuyōtō      | 22. Gorintō    | 28. Mizu        | 34. Dōkutsu      |
| 5. Rōsokutate | 11. Jizō  | 17. Dōhyō       | 23. Zō         | 29. Tō          | 35. Shintokaikan |
| 6. Hondō      | 12. Hei   | 18. Yashiro     | 24. Shokubutsu | 30. Ishi        | 36. Soseki       |

Fig.16. A Model of the Physical Setting of the Shikoku Pilgrimage Places Showing the Relative Positions of the 36 Landscape Units.

The enhancement of schematic diagrams through the integration of artistic representations is another way that I have found the practice of sketching to be useful



in the reporting of findings. For example, with regard to the Shikoku pilgrimage, I have incorporated sketches of the twelve types of honzon found within the 88 temples and Kobo Daishi together with the idea of Shikoku as a Buddhist dojo comprising four sections and five sekisho into a schematic diagram showing the relative locations of the 88 sacred places along the 1,385 kilometre circular route (Fig.17). Within this spatial construct, the conduct of the pilgrimage is flexible. Temple visitation can be undertaken from any point, in either a clockwise or counter-clockwise direction, and can include all or only a portion of the 88 sites.

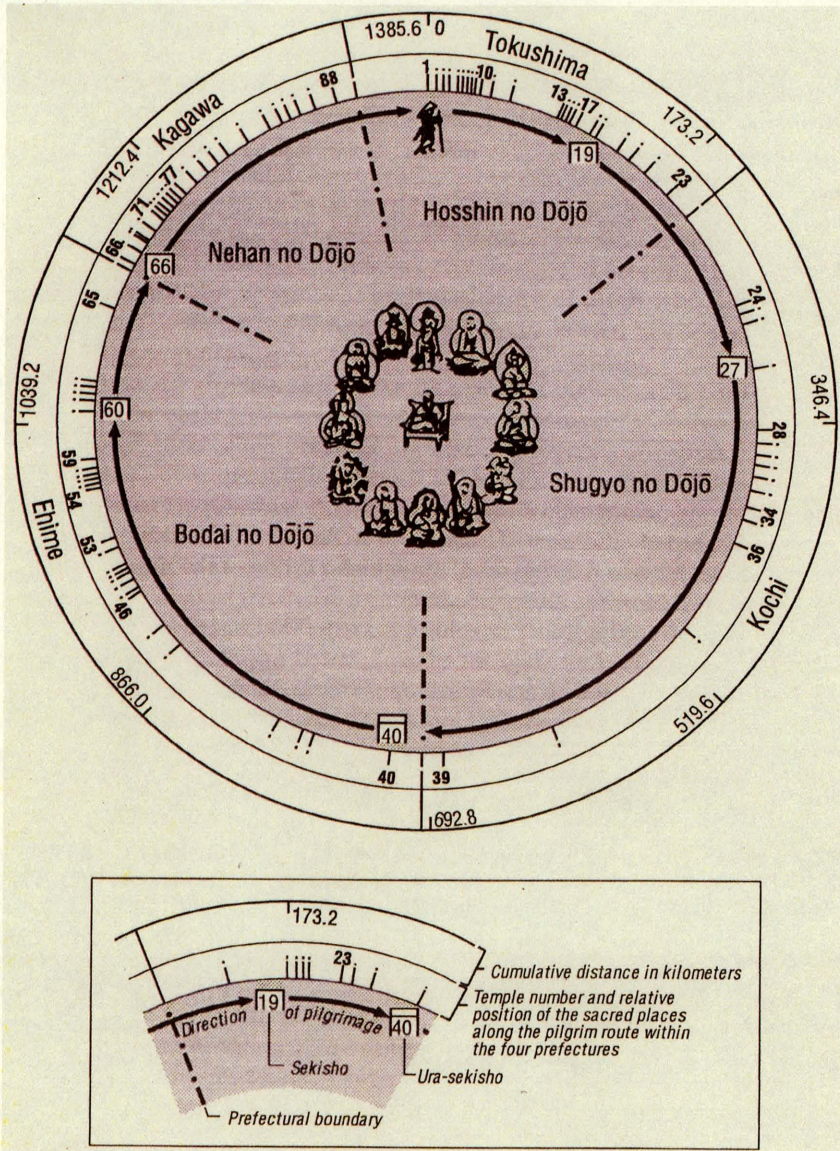


Fig.17. The Shikoku Pilgrimage as a Spatial Symbolic System.



Sketching and painting require exploration of the surrounding area in order to fully capture the characteristic nature of each site. Through such exploration one often discovers the historical past, not readily visible at first glance, registered in the landscape. This is a sketch of Gyanavapi (“Well of Wisdom”) Mosque in Varanasi viewed from the back (Fig. 18). It was built by the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb in 1669 from the rubble of a Hindu temple he destroyed. The mosque, now under police supervision, is open only at prayer times, a precaution against Hindu threats to destroy it. For the residents of this Hindu dominant city of Varanasi, such concrete historical testimony serves as a constant reminder of past religious conflict. From the front, to the visitor the mosque appears to stand tranquilly. It is only from the back that the visitor can immediately appreciate the collision of religious powers. It is this conflict which I tried to show here.

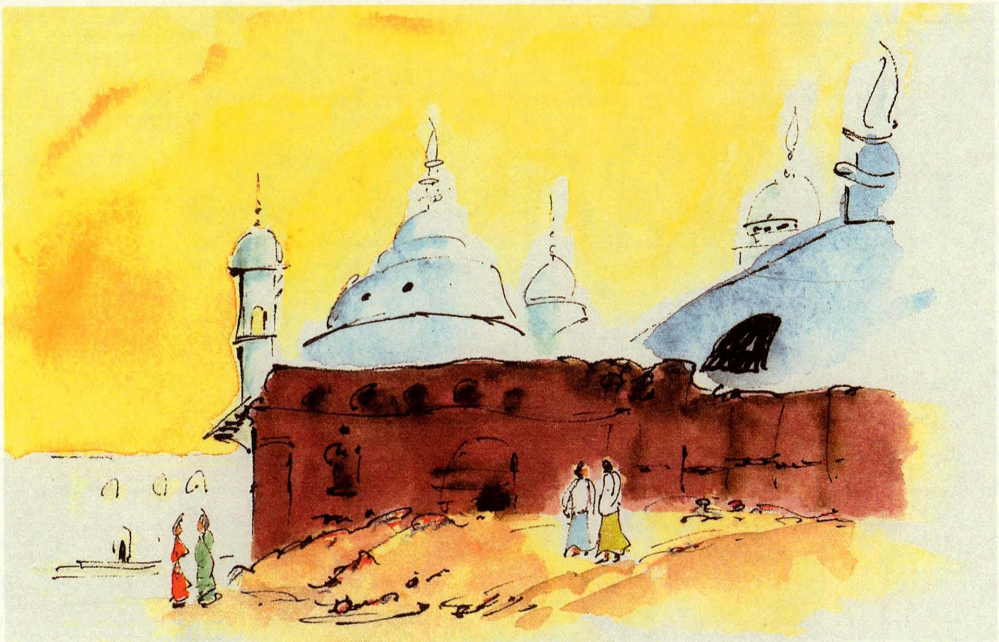


Fig. 18. Gyanavapi Mosque, Varanasi, India.

Sketching techniques allow the observer to reveal even the historical facts buried beneath the visible topography. Some religious traditions avoid the reuse of sacred sites, while others deliberately seek out the sacred centres of the defeated people as the sites for the construction of their own places of worship. Cholula, an example of the latter, was an important sacred centre in ancient Mexico. Today, with its 37 churches with their 365 cupolas, it is a Catholic religious centre. In this picture, against the backdrop of the volcano Popocatepetl, we see Nuestra Senora de los Remedios (Our



Lady of the Remedies), a church built by the Spaniards in the mid-16th century (Fig. 19). It was constructed on top of the Great Pyramid, once the centerpiece of first Toltec and later Aztec pilgrimage centres at Cholula. When I visited Cholula in 1980, excavation of the Great Pyramid was underway and entry into a portion of the Pyramid was possible. It would not have been difficult to sketch a “dissected view” of the sacred centres, showing one on top of the other, to illustrate the repetitive use of particular geographical sites by various religious traditions.



Fig. 19. Nuestra Señora de los Remedios, Cholula, Mexico.



Watercolour is an effective medium with which to capture the overall atmosphere and mood of place. The watercolour tradition in Britain, in particular, has stimulated a network of interacting experiments, trials, and explorations that were made possible by the very nature and status of the medium (The Royal Academy of Arts). For me, watercolour provides the ideal vehicle for capturing the atmosphere of a place. In this picture, I have tried to convey the mood of a pilgrimage site in Sri Lanka (Fig.20). Adam's Peak (2,243 metres) located in the centre of the island is a well known sacred centre shared by four religious traditions. Buddhists call the mountain Sri Pada (sacred footprint) and believe Gautama Buddha once visited here. Hindus called the peak Shivan Adipatham (creative dance of Shiva) and believe Lord Shiva's footprint is preserved here. Moslems claim it is the place where Adam first set foot on earth. Roman Catholics believe the footprint in the boulder at the summit of the mountain is that of the Saint Thomas. There are two routes to the top. Generally, pilgrims will start their ascent of the mountain shortly after midnight in order to be at the peak by sunrise. Soon after the sun is up, most of the pilgrims descend the hill in order to avoid the scorching heat. In this picture, the lamps lighting the path and the stream of torches carried by ascending pilgrims lead to the top of the mountain. Painting provides a unique avenue for recollecting one's experience. This picture brings back the sensations I felt as I participated in this romantic moonlight pilgrimage.

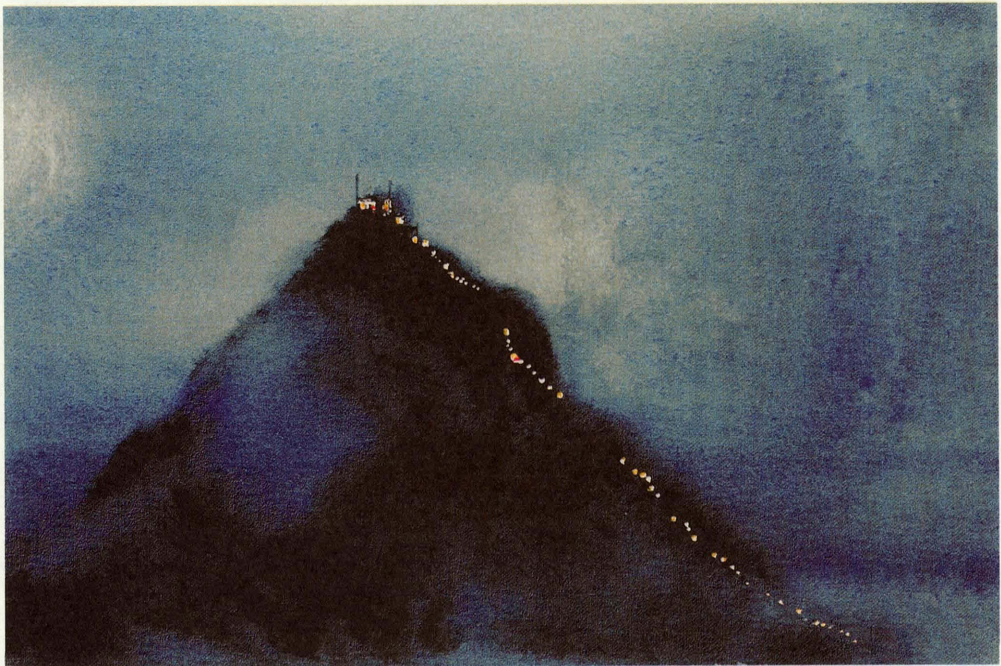


Fig. 20. Adam's Peak, Sri Lanka.



## EPILOGUE

Scholastic endeavour presupposes acute observation; the researcher must look intently at the subject matter in order to see what is there. The artist Frederick Franck observed "We do a lot of looking: we look through lenses, telescopes, television tubes... Our looking is perfected every day - but we see less and less (Franck, p.3)." For social scientists who are interested in the imprint of human activity at certain locations, sketching/painting provides a unique and convenient tool to record, explore, and report the character of the human use of place. In this paper, using one category of place, sacred places associated with pilgrimage, as an example, my experience in the use of sketching as an academic tool has been reviewed.

The way of seeing is a way of knowing. Sketching provides yet another academic avenue for understanding man's interaction with the living environment. It is a convenient tool available to almost anyone with a little practice. For me painting is the discipline through which I constantly rediscover the world.

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#### List of Sketches/Paintings

- 1 Shimazaki, Hiroshi (1972). Ryozen-ji, Shikoku, Japan. 9 x 13cm. From Owari no nai Junrei (Unending Pilgrimage). CUC [View and Vision], 6, 1998, 44.
- 2 Shimazaki, Hiroshi (1998). Machu Picchu from the Inca Pass, Peru. 34 x 25cm.
- 3 Shimazaki, Hiroshi (1976). Road Leading to Badrinath Temple, India. 9 x 13cm.
- 4 Shimazaki, Hiroshi (1999). Holy Shrine of Emm Rez, Mashhad, Iran. 36 x 51cm.
- 5 Shimazaki, Hiroshi (1985). Landscapes along Camino de Santiago, Spain. Each 9 x 13cm. From Owari no nai Junrei (Unending Pilgrimage). CUC [View and Vision], 6, 1998, 46.
- 6 Shimazaki, Hiroshi (1985). Xavier Castle, Xavier, Spain. 9 x 13cm. From Owari no nai Junrei (Unending Pilgrimage). CUC [View and Vision], 6, 1998, 46.
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【要旨】

聖地理解へのスケッチの活用

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スケッチは、これまで地理学者により研究の重要な道具だてのひとつとして利用されてきた。写真機、そして近年のデジタルカメラの出現をもって、それが場所の特性を記録、探究、報告するための、手軽で経済性にまさる有効な手段であることには変わりがない。地理学的調査にともなう過去35年間の描画歴にふまえ、聖地に的を絞って、ここにその個人的経験を分かちたい。野外観察における記録の道具としてのスケッチは、ある特定の時点と視角から見た聖地の立地状況、景観標識、巡礼者の行動、その地の雰囲気などといったある選択された側面の記載を余儀なくする。かくしてスケッチは、場所の性格をとらえる体系的方法を提供してくれる。研究者は野外調査の際、写真を撮れないという事態に度々遭遇する。野外スケッチやメモリーペインティング(現場での頭中への即時的描写にもとづく後時のスケッチ)の実践は、聖性を脳裏に納めるという臨場調査行為の格好な助けとなる。スケッチはまた、想像力を助長し問題提起をうながす道をも与えてくれる。さらにそれは、芸術的表現を通じて聖地の持つ意味や性格を伝えようとする他者の意図をよりよく理解する手だてにもなる。様々なスケッチの手法は、記述される情報の伝達理解へのいくつかの選択を与えてくれる。