

# The decorative usage of small-scale statues of Bodhisattva Jizō and others in the temple territory

関連キーワード: Japanese Buddhism, Jizō, Temple Buddhism, Folk religion, Communication through symbols

## 研究内容

・ Bodhisattva Jizō is one of the most popular Bodhisattvas in Japan. His statues can be found in sanctuaries, at the crossroads, and, of course, in Buddhist temples. However, apart from highly venerated statues of Bodhisattva Jizō, there are those that are not supposed to be veneration objects. These statues are rather taken from abandoned graves, or purchased by temple priests just because they are “pretty”. These statues are placed in temple gardens for decorative or communicative purposes - to make the temple territory look brighter, to transmit a message to the visitors (“don’t litter here”, “don’t waste water”, “thank you for coming”), or sometimes even to show the way towards something important. Although these statues most often depict Jizō, there are other kinds of statues that might be used for similar effect (Bodhisattva Kannon, Hotei, Daruma, unidentifiable small monks etc.) My objective is to research these cases and document the physical and metaphorical place of these statues in the temple territories.



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Finding a Place for Jizō: A Study of Jizō Statuary in the Buddhist Temples of Sendai, Japanese Journal of Religious Studies 46/2、南山宗教文化研究所  
To the Brighter Side. New Tendencies in Erecting Statues of Bodhisattva Jizō in Japanese Buddhist Temples, Nowa Polityka Wschodnia

## 地域・産学官連携の可能性、事業化のイメージ 他

・ Communication through symbols and physical objects, like statues, posters etc. is an important part of community life. In Buddhist temples, this way of communicating with visitors has been used for many centuries, however, researchers usually concentrate on the religious meanings of statues. By concentrating on the other meanings behind the usage of popular and beloved characters, like Jizō, we can learn from the practice and adapt it to make other public spaces more pleasant and easy-to-use.

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