



Storehouses of value: materiality of belonging in Japanese Buddhist temples

a virtual lecture by **Paulina Kolata**

What, how, and why people “store” at local Buddhist temples? Can biographies of things deposited at a local temple tell a story of a community? How do people’s individual material histories become matters of communal concern? While walking a fine line between memory and abandonment, we will discover and map out the material and affective networks of community preservation in Japan’s depopulating regions. We will travel to rural Hiroshima Prefecture to imagine Japanese Buddhist temple communities as storehouses of value and consider Buddhist institutions’ role as anchors of people’s belonging in contemporary Japan. By stepping into the shoes of a local Buddhist priest at Myōkoji temple, we will walk down the corridors of donated artwork, photo albums, plane propellers, Buddhist altars, people’s ashes, and entire households to reveal physical, karmic, and emotional connections people strive to maintain and, in turn, make sense of the anticipated decline in their communities.



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online



Paulina Kolata obtained her PhD in 2019 from The University of Manchester. She is a Postdoctoral Research Associate at Manchester Metropolitan University and an Early Career Research Fellow at The University of Manchester. Her doctoral work investigated the religious, economic, and social impact of depopulation and demographic ageing in Buddhist temple communities in regional Japan. Currently she is developing a book manuscript based on her doctoral research.

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