

# Which Shrine Will Fulfil My Wishes? Selection Criteria in Shinto Spirituality<sup>1</sup>

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**Keywords:** Shinto spirituality (*shintōkei supirichuariti* 神道系スピリチュアリティ), wish fulfillment (*ganbō jōju* 願望成就), benefits (*goriyaku* 御利益), power spot (*pawāsupotto* パワースポット), shrine selection criteria (*jinja no sentei kijun* 神社の選定基準)

## *Author's Statement*

Spirituality is a worldwide religious phenomenon that has a deep relationship with Buddhism and other established religious traditions. This paper explores people's involvement with Shinto shrines as a form of spirituality in Japan.

## *Introduction*

“Which shrine should I visit?” This is a pressing question for people with a wish they want fulfilled. Shinto shrine visit instructional books that focus on wish fulfillment are a staple of the Japanese spirituality market, consistently published every year. Yagi Ryūhei’s 八木龍平 2016 hit, *Seikō shiteiru hito wa naze jinja ni iku no ka?* 成功している人は、なぜ神社に行くのか? (Why do successful people go to shrines?) sold over 270,000 copies, becoming a bestseller. The much-anticipated 2018 sequel was *Seikō shiteiru hito wa doko no jinja ni iku no ka?* 成功している人は、どこの神社に行くのか? (To which shrines do successful people go?) This article explores current criteria for choosing a shrine for wish fulfillment.

Books on religion (broadly conceived) fall into two main categories: those that discuss religion as culture, such as educational and academic books, and practical guides for religious or spiritual purposes. Yagi’s books are all the latter. As seen by his bestseller during a publishing slump, books on spirituality are gaining momentum in the latter

<sup>1</sup> This article is a translation of Omichi Haruka 大道晴香, “Negai o kanaeru ni wa ‘doko no jinja ni iku beki ka’: Shintōkei supirichuariti ni okeru jinja erabi no kijun ni tsuite” 願いを叶えるには「どこの神社に行くべきか—神道系スピリチュアリティにおける神社選びの基準について—. *Kokugakuin zasshi* 國學院雜誌 123(12) (2022), pp. 127–147. Translated by Dylan L. Toda.

market. Arimoto Yumiko 有元裕美子 notes that the spirituality market's value exceeded one trillion yen in 2011. Spirituality books surfaced in the publishing industry to solve the slump that started in the late 1990s, she says, with *Kōun o hikiyoseru supirichuaru bukku* 幸運を引きよせるスピリチュアル・ブック by Ehara Hiroyuki 江原啓之, released in 2001, becoming a hit that sold 700,000 copies.<sup>2</sup>

Many elements of existing religious traditions have entered the spirituality market, and their recontextualization has given rise to new meanings and functions. Shrines are at the core of Shinto spirituality, as they are one of the major religious resources in Japan. In the context of such spirituality, then, what meanings do shrines take on?

Instructional books on wish fulfillment may shed some light on this question. This paper refers to them as “wish fulfillment books.” They occupy a segment of the spiritual publishing market, covering everything from shrine visits to ancestral Buddhist offerings and positive thinking. Shrines, known for providing worldly benefits (*gense riyaku* 現世利益), seem well-matched for this genre. In the case of wish fulfillment books that deal with shrines, most of the authors are not Shinto clergy but participants in shrine religious beliefs and practices with unusual titles such as “Shintoist” (*shintōka* 神道家) or “Researcher of [*kenkyūka* 研究家] XXXX.” They typically produce, for example, writings on spirituality and self-help. As both are global cultural phenomena, wish fulfillment books represent the intersection of Shinto and psycho-spiritual cultures from outside Japan.<sup>3</sup>

This paper focuses on wish fulfillment books about shrines and delves into shrines' significance in spirituality by identifying visitation criteria. Each shrine's benefits are a key criterion, reminiscent of traditional *gankake* 願掛け, or deity vows. Despite being the same “benefits” criterion, when set in a spirituality context, meanings different from *gankake* can emerge, even potentially forming a new value system from traditional elements.

### ***1. Shrine-related Wish fulfillment Books: Publication Trends and Subjects of Analysis***

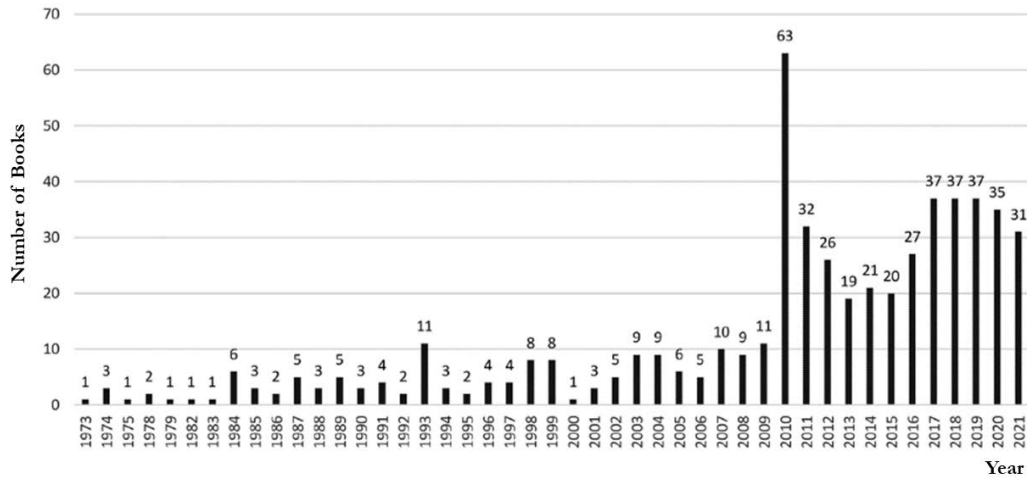
Before diving into the analysis, I want to first examine the historical publishing trends of wish fulfillment books. **Table 1** displays the yearly count of wish fulfillment books related to shrines, as held by the National Diet Library. I conducted a title search by searching for *goriyaku* 御利益/ご利益 (benefits) and *pawāsupotto* パワースポット (lit. “power spot”; a place of spiritual power), both words characteristic of wish fulfillment books, and also by searching for the words *kaiun* 開運 (good luck), *negai* 願い (wish), *ganbō* 願望 (wish), *kanau* 叶う (to fulfill), and *kanaeru* 叶える (to grant) each combined

<sup>2</sup> Arimoto, *Supirituaru shijō no kenkyū*, p.45, p.52.

<sup>3</sup> Regarding the joining of New Thought and shrine Shinto through the law of attraction, see Omichi, “Ganbō jōju bon.”

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**Table 1. Shrine Wish Fulfillment Books: Publication Figures**



with *jinja* 神社 (shrine) and *kami sama* 神様/神さま (deity). Titles clearly not about spirituality practice were disregarded. The period covered is from 1945 to 2021. Changes in book counts here do not solely reflect wish fulfillment book trends—given the fluctuating market size—but do indicate shifts and general trends.

From 1973, when the first book appeared, there were slow years with a maximum of 3 books annually. Despite a small rise starting in the mid-1980s, the 1990s never saw more than 10 books a year, except for 1993. Around 2003, the book count consistently hit 5-10 annually, then soared to 63 in 2010. Book numbers dwindled before stabilizing near 20, then rebounded from 2016, staying in the high 30s since 2017. Could 2010 be considered a pivotal year, with a subsequent upsurge in book publishing or the establishment of a market?

The 2010 surge is clearly due to Japan’s “power spot” boom. The Japanese-English term “power spot,” used to describe a spiritual location, originated from the 1980s New Age movement, and gained popularity during the spirituality boom that began in the 2000s. Since around 2003, led by “Spiritual Sanctuary” (*Supirichuaru sankuchuari* スピリチュアル・サンクチュアリ) by Ehara Hiroyuki, a key figure in the spiritual boom, there has been a growing trend of interpreting existing sacred places, especially shrines, from a spirituality perspective and making pilgrimages to them. With this as a foundation, a 2009 TV program made Kiyomasa’s Well (Kiyomasa no ido 清正井) an overnight sensation as a power spot, sparking a nationwide trend of discovering such spots. They gained significance as tourist attractions, cementing themselves into popular culture.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> On the diachronic evolution of the power spot phenomenon, see the following: Suga, “Pawāsupotto to shite no jinja”; Okamoto, *Seichi junrei*; and Horie, *Poppu supirichuariti*.

Table 1's trends generally align with these developments. Power spots are not just shrines, but given the shrine and benefits focus of the power spot trend since the late 2000s,<sup>5</sup> it is clear the subsequent boom in shrine wish fulfillment books since the 2010s is an extension of the power spot phenomenon.

Tracing these books' history up through the present based on power spot scholarship would be quite laborious. This paper focuses on a synchronic cross-section—the “present state” post-2017—to set the stage for exploring the past in future research.

**Table 2** lists the books analyzed. Table 1 shows 177 shrine wish fulfillment books from 2017 to 2021. As this is simply a list of titles with specific keywords to grasp trends, I further refined it to 125 books focusing on practice and shrines. These 125 books can mainly be categorized into those emphasizing specific places like sacred site guides and those focusing on wish fulfillment techniques. As this study aims to uncover universal criteria for selecting shrines, I focused on thirty-one books that could shed light on this topic. Having connected with tourism culture due to its popularization, the power spot phenomenon is a cultural one with an extremely broad base covering consumers who value power spots along with other sites of tourist consumption and a core group that finds spiritual value in them. While location-focused books often target the former, books on wish fulfillment techniques, the subject of my analysis, are primarily aimed at the latter core audience.

Overall, the books in Table 2 indicate three criteria for shrine selection: (1) potential benefits, (2) compatibility, and (3) status as an *ujigami* 氏神 or *ubusuna* 産土 shrine. Following these, below I will go through the contours of the shrine landscape that appears in such books.

## ***2. Shrine Visit Selection Criteria: (1) Potential Benefits***

Choosing a shrine for wish fulfillment traditionally depends on the benefits of the enshrined deity. The remarkable power of deities, buddhas, and bodhisattvas, as detailed in guides like “Edo shinbutsu gankake chōhōki” 江戸神仏願懸重宝記; Guide to making vows to buddhas and kami in Edo) and histories of Japanese shrines and temples, has long captivated individuals, inspiring visits to particular sites for their specific benefits.

The same goes for interpretations of sacred sites (like power spots) in the context of spirituality. The benefits of the enshrined deity are a key when selecting a shrine. “Power spot” is a framework that focuses on functionality and is characterized by foregrounding the effects presumably derived from a visit.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, when established shrines are brought up in the context of power spots, the characteristics of the deities and the

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<sup>5</sup> Horie, *Poppu supirichuariti*, pp. 177–178.

<sup>6</sup> Omichi, “Pawāsopotto no mentariti,” p. 5.

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**Table 2. Shrine Wish Fulfillment Books Published Between 2017 and 2021 (Limited to Instructional Books on Techniques)**

No.	Title	Author	Publisher	Month and Year of Publication
1	Jinja to otera: Kaiun: Shishisonson ni tsutaetai shiawase o te ni suru shaji kigan no kihon chishiki 神社とお寺：開運：子々孫々に伝えたい幸せを手にする社寺祈願の基本知識	Shigenobu Hidetoshi 重信秀年	Antorekkusu アントレックス	2017.03
2	Kaiun shitakereba kono jinja ni asa, hitori de omairi shinasai. 開運したければこの神社に朝、一人で参りしなさい。	Nagasaki Yōji 長崎洋二	Kawade Shobō Shinsha 河出書房新社	2017.04
3	Kami sama dōzo yoroshiku onegamōshiagemasu: Kaitei shinpan 神さまどうぞよろしくお願ひ申し上げます 改訂新版	Shibayama Hisako 柴山壽子	Goma Shobō Shinsha ごま書房新社	2017.04
4	Kami sama ni aisareru 'okiyome' gaido: Wa no kaiun BOOK 神様に愛される「お清め」ガイド：和の開運 BOOK	Nakai Yōka 中井耀香, superv.	Takarajimasha 宝島社	2017.04
5	Okane to kōun ga dondon maikomu! Kami sama ni negai o kanaete morau hōhō お金と幸運がどンドン舞い込む！神様に願いを叶えてもらう方法	Sugoi! Kamisama Kenkyūkai すごい！神様研究会	Takarajimasha 宝島社	2017.08
6	'Jinja bukkaku' de kaiun suru hōhō: Okane ga maikomu! Negai ga kanau! 「神社仏閣」で開運する方法：お金が舞い込む！願ひが叶う！	Sugoi! Kamisama Kenkyūkai すごい！神様研究会	Takarajimasha 宝島社	2017.12
7	Kami sama to tsunagaru: Hyaku no kaiun kami sama meguri 神さまとつながる：100の開運神様めぐり	Shiratori Utako 白鳥詩子	Mikasa Shobō 三笠書房	2017.12
8	Kami sama ni mikata sarete seikō suru! Jinja de kaiun BOOK 神様に味方されて成功する！神社で開運 BOOK		Takarajimasha 宝島社	2018.01
9	Mijikana jinja ga jitsu wa sugoi! Negai ga kanau kami sama mairi 身近な神社が実はすごい！願ひが叶う神様参り	Masayo まさよ	Nagaoka Shoten 永岡書店	2018.01
10	Chōkaiun! Kami sama ga anata no seikō o atoshi shite kureru jinja sanpaihō 超開運！ 神さまがあなたの成功を後押ししてくれる神社参拝法	Yamada Masaharu 山田雅晴	Bungeisha 文芸社	2018.10
11	Kami sama ga oshiete kureta kin'un no hanashi: Chokuseitsu kiite wakatta kaiun arekore 神様が教えてくれた金運のはなし：直接きいてわかった開運あれこれ	Sakurai Shikiko 桜井識子	Gentōsha 幻冬舎	2018.02
12	Okane to kōun ni michiafureru! Kami sama ga daishikyū negai o kanaete kureru hōhō お金と幸運に満ちあふれる！ 神様が大変急願いを叶えてくれる方法	Sugoi! Kamisama Kenkyūkai すごい！神様研究会	Takarajimasha 宝島社	2018.08
13	Kami sama to yaru sugoi untore: Sanjūkyū no kaiun torēningu de jinsei ga kawaru! 神様とやるすごい運トレ：39の開運トレーニングで人生が変わる！	Aishinkakura Yūhan 愛新覚羅ゆうはん	Nihon Bungeisha 日本文芸社	2018.08
14	Anata no negai ga kanarazu kanau 'Kami sama musubi' no tsukurikata: 'Nenki mairi' de kyōun o hikiyoseru! あなたの願ひが必ず叶う「神さま結び」の作り方：「年季参り」で強運を引き寄せる！	Masayo まさよ	Takarajimasha 宝島社	2018.11
15	Jinja de kaiun taishitsu ni naru! Kami sama ga negai o kanaetakunaru 'kami musubi' no hōhō: Goshinki o toriire tara, tsugi tsugi to ikoto ga okoridasu! 神社で開運体質になる！神さまが願いを叶えたくなる「神結び」の方法：ご神氣を取り入れたら、次々といいいことが起こります！	Shiratori Utako 白鳥詩子	Gakken Purasu 学研プラス	2018.11
16	Inori kata ga kyūwari: Negai ga kanau jinja-mairi nyūmon 祈り方が9割：願ひが叶う神社参り入門	Kitagawa Tatsuya 北川達也	COBOL	2018.12
17	Kami sama ni aisareru hontō ni negai ga kanau omairi 神さまに愛される本当に願ひが叶うお参り	Hashimoto Kyōmei 橋本京明	Tatsumi Shuppan 辰巳出版	2018.12
18	Kami sama ga yorokobu omairi no shikata: Supirichuaru tenjōin ga oshieru kaiun, enmusubi, kin'un appu no hōsoku 神様がよろこぶお参りの仕方：スピリチュアル添乗員が教える開運・縁結び・金運アップの法則	Gotō Miko 五斗美湖	Kosumikku Shuppan コスミック出版	2018.12
19	Kojiki kaiunhō: Nihon saiko no sho kara no shin no messēji o shireba, kami-sama wa anata o tasukerareru! 古事記開運法：日本最古の書からの真のメッセージを知れば、神様はあなたを助けられる！	Tachibana Daikai 立花大敬	KADOKAWA	2019.01
20	Negatibu demo kaiun suru jinja sanpai: Kami sama pawā no itadakkikata ネガティブでも開運する神社参拝：神様パワーのいただき方	MACO and Yagi Ryūhei 八木龍平	Nihon Bungeisha 日本文芸社	2019.11
21	Kami sama ni aisarete chōkaiun suru: Kando no jinja mairi 神さまに愛されて超開運する 感動の神社参り	Hazuki Kōei はづき虹映	Kōbunsha 光文社	2019.12
22	"Izumo no Kami sama" Hiden kaifu: Izumo zoku to yamato zoku no in'nen o toki hanatsu!: Tamafuri de kaiun kakusei no ishiki jigen ni tsunagaru <出雲の神様> 秘伝開封：イズモ族とヤマト族の因縁を解き放つ！：魂振りで開運覚醒の意識次元に繋がる	Haga Hikaru 羽賀ヒカル	Hikaru Rando ヒカルランド	2020.01
23	Teituka, kami sama tte nani?: Yabai hodo negai ga kanaidasu!! ていうか、神さまってなに？：やばいほど願ひが叶います！！	Arakawa Yūji 荒川祐二	KADOKAWA	2020.02
24	Hitsuki shinji to pawā supotto 日月神示とパワースポット	Nakaya Shin'ichi 中矢伸一	Seirindō 青林堂	2020.02
25	Kaiun ni musubitsuku kami sama no ofuda: Jinja betsu ofuda no goriyaku 開運に結びつく神様のおふだ：神社別おふだのごりやく	Sakurai Shikiko 桜井識子	Hāto Shuppan ハート出版	2020.08
26	Kaiun to pawāsupotto no otoku waza besuto serekushon: Kamisama ni sukareru kotsu kara, osusume no pawāsupo made zenbu iri! 開運とパワースポットのお得技ベストセレクション：神さまに好かれるコツから、オススメのパワスポまで全部入り！	Shin'yūsha 晋遊舎	Shin'yūsha 晋遊舎	2020.09
27	Kami-sama to tsunagaru shiawase wākubukku: Kanzukai-san ga oshieru 'negai' no kanaekata 神さまとつながる幸せワークブック：神使いさんが教える「願ひ」の叶え方	Masayo まさよ	Makino Shuppan マキノ出版	2020.11
28	Jūnikagetsu no kaiun jinja karendā: 12ヶ月の開運神社カレンダー	Shiratori Utako 白鳥詩子	Nihon Bungeisha 日本文芸社	2020.12
29	Ryūjin-sama kara aisareru hōhō: Un ga hirakeru! Negai ga kanau! 龍神さまから愛される方法：運がひらける！願ひが叶う！	Shōryū 昇龍	Rongu Serāzu ロングセラーズ	2021.04
30	Jinja bukkaku pawāsupotto de kami sama to kontakuto shitekimashita: Shinsōban 神社仏閣パワースポットで神さまとコンタクトしてきました 新装版	Sakurai Shikiko 桜井識子	Hāto Shuppan ハート出版	2021.11
31	Anata no kami sama to tsunagaru gojūroku-nichi kaiunchō あなたの神様とつながる56日開運帖	Hashimoto Kyōmei 橋本京明	Daiwa Shobō 大和書房	2021.11

benefits associated with those deities are important, although in some cases, such as Kiyomasa's Well in the Meiji Jingū Gyoen 明治神宮御苑, the constructed sacredness and effects are different than those assumed by the people running the site. "Wishes in line with the deity's specialty have a higher chance of success"<sup>7</sup> {No. 3 in Table 2} (hereinafter, all numbers in {} indicate book numbers in Table 2), "Each deity has their own specialty"<sup>8</sup> {8}, "The enshrined deities also have their specialties and non-specialties," "Knowing the deity's specialty before visiting will increase the effectiveness"<sup>9</sup> {26}—the standard phrase "the deity's specialty" (*tokui bun'ya* 得意分野) that appears frequently in wish fulfillment books is based on the benefits that serve as a shrine selection criterion.

Power spot visits and *gankake* are similar; they both focus on gaining divine blessings. However, how the deities' benefits are perceived is qualitatively different. First, the effects-focused power spot framework highlights efficiency and loss avoidance. I have previously pointed this out,<sup>10</sup> and a similar trend can be seen in the subjects of this analysis.

For example, consider *Kaiun to pawāsupotto no otoku waza besuto serekushon* 開運とパワースポットのお得技ベストセレクション (Good luck and power spots: Beneficial techniques best selection) {26}, 177th in the "Otoku waza besuto serekushon" お得技ベストセレクション (Beneficial techniques best selection) mook series published by Shin'yūsha 晋遊舎. The series introduces techniques and tips beneficial in daily life. Other mooks in the series cover retirement and storage, for example. In other words, therein shrine wish fulfillment techniques coexist with non-religious beneficial ones. *Kaiun to pawāsupotto no otoku waza besuto serekushon* states, "Choose a deity that suits your purpose" and "The ironclad rule is to choose a shrine that enshrines a deity suitable for the fulfillment of your wish."<sup>11</sup> This reflects a savvy consumer approach, striving to choose widely among abundant products/information to avoid loss. Highlighting "benefit" (*toku* 得), this mook is the most obvious example, but expressions emphasizing the certainty and efficiency of benefit acquisition—"You can expect great cost-effectiveness"<sup>12</sup> {2}, "You can definitely obtain benefits and do so much faster"<sup>13</sup> {3}, "If you simply visit the shrine, the effect will certainly be small . . . what a waste"<sup>14</sup> {15}—can be found throughout the wish fulfillment books.

<sup>7</sup> Shibayama, *Kami sama dōzo*, p. 66.

<sup>8</sup> Takarajimasha, *Kami sama ni mikata*, p. 42. (Ancient Shinto numerologist Nakai Yōka 中井耀香 is the supervisor for that page.)

<sup>9</sup> Shin'yūsha, *Kaiun to pawāsupotto*, p. 10. (Researcher of Shinto Akatsuki Reika 暁玲華 was the supervisor for that page.)

<sup>10</sup> Omichi, "Pawāsupotto no mentariti."

<sup>11</sup> Shin'yūsha, *Kaiun to pawāsupotto*, p. 10.

<sup>12</sup> Nagasaki, *Kaiun shitakereba*, p. 34.

<sup>13</sup> Shibayama, *Kami sama dōzo*, p. 57.

<sup>14</sup> Shiratori, *Jinja de kaiun*, p. 5.

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Market-driven religious representations are governed by consumer demand and thought patterns, with unsupported forms of expressions facing extinction. Therefore, staple expressions in commodified religious representations are cognitive frameworks that fit popular religious sensibilities, naturally reflecting societal norms. When an enshrined deity's benefits are addressed in the context of spirituality, which is inseparable from the market economy, it is not an indication of simply their re-presentation with a new label. Rather, it means these benefits are being embedded in the logic of contemporary religiosity that is undergirded by today's societal system: the efficient maximization of gains and the minimization of loss as well as individuals' product choices and the self-responsibility accompanying the results of such selection. In this respect, even though shrine visits are primarily for obtaining benefits, a divide exists between *gankake* and power spots.

However, it is premature to dismiss shrine visits discussed in wish fulfillment books as a self-centered utilitarian practice; while there is certainly an orientation toward pursuing benefits, wish fulfillment books emphasize not the benefits themselves, but rather the nature of the communication between the deity and the shrine visitor that is connected by the latter's choosing certain benefits. The texts reviewed here emphasize the importance of understanding a deity's historically associated benefits as a foundation for fostering a positive relationship with them. The below passages from *Kami sama to tsunagaru hyaku no kaiun jinja meguri* 神さまとつながる100の開運神社めぐり (Tour of 100 good luck shrines that connect you with deities) {7} by "shrine luck consultant" (*jinja kaiun konsarutanto* 神社開運コンサルタント) Shiratori Utako 白鳥詩子 and Arakawa Yūji's 荒川祐二 *Teiuka, kami sama tte nani? Yabai hodo negai ga kanaidasu!!* ていうか、神さまってなに?—やばいほど願いが叶い出す!! (I mean, what's a deity, anyway? Wishes start coming true like crazy!) {23}, a novelized version of experiences interacting with deities, exemplify this.

We bring our heart-mind to the life the deity has lived, reflect on the history of the deity and the shrine, including how they came to be enshrined there. Then try saying, "It was hard in those days, wasn't it? But because of that, now, today, I am able to receive your benefits. Thank you so much."

I feel like this is the moment when the deity decides, "Okay, let's bestow benefits on this child!"<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Shiratori, *Kami-sama to tsunagaru*, p. 29.



Japan is home to countless deities, each offering different benefits. So, knowing what kind of deities there are in Japan and where they are enshrined, you visit them according to their benefits. That alone will drastically change the prayer energy you all give off.

This is because you don't pray blindly, knowing nothing about the deity, but you pray with all your heart to the deity you love. We deities are happy with that sentiment and return great energy to you.<sup>16</sup>

Even {26}, which recommends researching “the deity’s specialty” to “increase the effectiveness,” highlights the importance of having reverence on top of this foundation: “It is desirable not only to know the deity well, but also to be able to have respect for them.”<sup>17</sup>

Wish fulfillment can seem selfish, being desire-driven. Yet, books promoting shrine visits for this purpose usually highlight reverence and thankfulness towards deities. Moreover, selfish, unchecked desire is often frowned upon, with many viewing a shift from self-interest to altruism as the key to wish fulfillment.<sup>18</sup>

For example, Kitagawa Tatsuya 北川達也, in *Inorikata ga kyūwari: Negai ga kanau jinja mairi nyūmon* 祈り方が9割—願いが叶う神社参り入門 (Prayer is 90%: An introduction to shrine visits that make wishes come true) {16} divides wishes into two categories. He proposes that the essence of prayer converts *impure wishes* for oneself into *pure wishes* for everyone that reach the divine: “When I want to make my wish come true, I pray not for me but for everyone.”<sup>19</sup> There are standard reframing techniques in wish fulfillment books’ discursive space. For instance, rather than selfishly wishing “I want to get into this university,” instead impart “I and my family will be happy if I get into this university,” thereby pleasing the deity<sup>20</sup> {9}. And in the case of Yagi Ryūhei, he shifts the fulfillment of one’s own desire into altruism (fulfilling the deity’s desire) by understanding the enshrined deity’s benefits as its “mission”<sup>21</sup> {20}.

Note that by being embedded in the context of spirituality, the enshrined deity’s established benefits acquire two different meanings: pursuing self-interest and venerating an other being, the deity. Desires are distinguished as good or bad based on self-centeredness, then the self’s desires are validated by making them “wishes for the people around oneself and the enshrined deity” or “gratitude and respect for the deity.” The

<sup>16</sup> Arakawa, *Tēiuka*, p. 170.

<sup>17</sup> Shin’yūsha, *Kaiun to pawāsupotto*, p. 10.

<sup>18</sup> Omichi, “Pawāsupotto no mentariti,” pp. 78–81.

<sup>19</sup> Kitagawa, *Inorikata ga kyūwari*, pp. 262–278.

<sup>20</sup> Masayo, *Mijikana jinja*, p. 49.

<sup>21</sup> MACO & Yagi, *Negatibu demo kaiun suru*, pp. 43–44.



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justification of one's own desires through the existence of others is a typical logic in wish fulfillment books.<sup>22</sup> This notion of “others for oneself” is partly reflected in the benefits-related discourse.

### **3. Shrine Visit Selection Criteria: (2) Compatibility**

Shrine selection greatly depends on benefits, but not any shrine will suffice. Spirituality, rooted in the individual, requires personal compatibility with the shrine, which takes precedence over benefits. In essence, the more compatible the shrine, the more likely wish fulfillment. Here, the motivation—seeking efficiency and certainty—mirrors that for benefits. How is this compatibility determined? The most popular way is the “feeling” (*kankaku* 感覚) one gets when visiting.

Creating a universal standard seems challenging due to this guidepost's highly personal and vague nature, but standard patterns do appear in the feelings discussed by authors of wish fulfillment books based on their experiences.

First, the psychological feeling. If a shrine and its deity resonate with someone, a positive emotional reaction occurs. Most authors referencing compatibility mention this. The following passage by Shibayama Hisako 柴山壽子 {3}, a direction-based fortune telling (*hōigaku* 方位学) expert, provides a straightforward example.

In fact, it is often much faster and more reliable to ask for benefits at a shrine that is on your wavelength and compatible with you, even if it is a lesser-known one. . . .

So, how can you find a shrine that is compatible with you?

The answer is simple.

If you visit a shrine a few times and somehow feel that you like it or would like to come back, it means the shrine is on the same wavelength as you.

The important thing at this time is to as much as possible “feel” by relying on your feeling and intuition, not thinking with your head or logic.<sup>23</sup>

Unlike Shibayama, who values each individual's feeling, *Kaiun shitakereba kono jinja ni asa, hitori de omairishinasai*. 開運したければこの神社に朝、一人でお参り下さい。(If you want good luck, visit this shrine alone in the morning.) {2} by Nagasaki Yōji 長崎洋二 somewhat universalizes the author's own feelings as a guide. Tourism and hospitality

<sup>22</sup> Regarding this point, see also Omichi, “Ganbō jōju bon.”

<sup>23</sup> Shibayama, *Kami sama dōzo*, p. 57.

management researcher Nagasaki, who touts spirituality's integration with reproducible academic research, lists three guideposts, including psychological feeling.

So, how to determine which shrine precincts (*shin'iki* 神域) are compatible with oneself? Bringing together my feelings and multiple information sources, I recommend the following three decision-making patterns.

- Wanting to stay there forever (feels like a good fit)
- Experiencing a strange calm when taking a deep breath (repose of the soul/refreshing)
- Encounters with various living things (butterflies, birds, dogs, cats, etc.) (agreement with nature)<sup>24</sup>

In addition, although not universalized, Nagasaki also includes examples of incompatibility. He says he visited a certain shrine after hearing from three different acquaintances that “the energy there is amazing!” but “all three times I went I was attacked by a migraine,” and came to the conclusion that “the energy itself is amazing, but this was a pattern of” the shrine “not suiting me at that time.”<sup>25</sup> He also uses physical feelings, like migraines, as indicators to determine compatibility {9}.

Perhaps authors of wish fulfillment books, regularly interacting with deities, can judge compatibility. However, for an average reader, this is challenging due to the subjective nature of feelings. Therefore, an objective indicator, such as observing specific phenomena in the shrine precincts, is needed, as detailed in {8} below.

Observe the events encountered while visiting the shrine to find a compatible shrine. You feel calm and relaxed when you go to a certain shrine and are blessed with clear skies. You encounter phenomena that seem to be good, such as the smell of nice flowers or chickens in the shrine precincts aligned in a row for some reason. This is because the shrine and you are compatible.<sup>26</sup>

Although each phenomenon is trivial and could easily be overlooked, the author understands them as good omens; they “seem to be good.” There are typical good omens in wish fulfillment books: not only pleasant weather {21}, fragrant scents {9, 14}, and

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<sup>24</sup> Nagasaki, *Kaiun shitakereba*, pp. 27–28.

<sup>25</sup> Nagasaki, *Kaiun shitakereba*, p. 27.

<sup>26</sup> Takarajimasha, *Kami-sama ni mikata sarete*, p. 47.

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animal encounters {2, 26}, but also tree leaves rustling {9, 21, 26} and wind {18, 21, 26}. These are “signs of welcome” from deities, helping determine a shrine’s compatibility.

Moreover, being able to visit a shrine on a particular day signals a welcome from the deity enshrined there {8, 26}. Meaning is created based on the idea that it is unusual to be able to visit a shrine. For example: “Right when I visit a shrine, it ended up raining heavily’ ‘The taxi lost its way, and I couldn’t make it to the shrine in time’—In such cases of bad phenomena, perhaps the stars aren’t aligned yet. But there’s always a chance things might get better in the future. Right now, it’s just not meant to be”<sup>27</sup> {8}. On the other hand, being able to visit a shrine is often interpreted as being “called” by the enshrined deity: “Common sayings are, ‘Where you feel like going, there is a connection.’ Or, ‘I am being called.’ I think that going to a place where you feel like going is a sign that the shrine and you are in love, or that your energies match”<sup>28</sup> {20}.

There is, though, a method to mechanically calculate compatibility, disregarding one’s own physicality. While my analysis omits *Kaiun! Sā, michibikareyō! Kami sama techō* 開運！さあ導かれよう！ 神さま手帖 (Good luck! Let’s be guided! Deities handbook) due to its location focus, it serves as an illustration. According to the author, a healer known as “yuji,” the most frequent questions during individual client sessions are “related to shrines and power spots that are compatible with oneself.”<sup>29</sup> He devised the book for finding out compatible shrines without attending such sessions. It has twelve sections of questions to diagnose one’s “soul type.” The section with the most applicable items indicates the suitable shrine. Although there are other similar examples, this type of manualized diagnostic method that excludes individual physicality is not very popular in wish fulfillment books. Considering that spirituality values the individual’s heart-mind and feeling, it is natural that a guidepost mediated by the self and based on visiting a shrine’s grounds is preferred over a mechanical indicator set by others.

A similar tendency emerges in the relationship between wish fulfillment book authors and readers. Most books of this genre discussing shrine visits include shrine recommendations from the author, whose experience as an influencer serves as a guide for locating a compatible shrine. However, these are mere suggestions, with the caveat that they are compatible with *the author*.

For example, in *Negai ga kanau: Kami sama mairi* (Wishes come true: Visiting deities) {9}, self-identified “soul counselor” Masayo まさよ introduces shrines in various places by describing her own experiences in the chapter “Full of Shrines’ Mysteriousness! A Nohohon Shrine Travelogue,” and details her reverence for Ayashi’s Suwa Jinja 諏訪神社

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<sup>27</sup> Takarajimasha, *Kami-sama ni mikata sarete*, p. 47.

<sup>28</sup> MACO & Yagi, *Negatibu demo kaiun*, p. 33.

<sup>29</sup> yuji, *Kaiun!*, p. 4.

(Sendai City, Miyagi Prefecture) in “Miracles Happen! Visiting Suwa Jinja in Ayashi.” She deeply reveres this shrine and often mentions it as a special place. Also, this book includes stories of people who have actually visited the shrine and had their wishes fulfilled, and it carries out a shrine visit for the reader through photographs.

Clearly, Masayo is actively sharing with readers her perception that Ayashi’s Suwa Jinja is a special shrine where wishes come true. However, that is not to say that she absolutely views it as such. She offers the following observations about shrine compatibility.

I believe there is no right or wrong when it comes to feelings about the good or bad vibes of a shrine.

Therefore, stop looking for the right answer in someone’s words—“that shrine has good vibrations” or “that shrine has bad vibrations.” Rather, you should rely on your own feeling when you are at that shrine to make a decision. . . .

Just because you don’t want to go to a shrine that others have praised as very nice doesn’t mean that you will be punished, that your feeling is not right, or that the deities will not protect you. So don’t worry.<sup>30</sup>

Hence, the perception of Ayashi’s Suwa Jinja as a wish-granting entity is presented to the readers essentially as an extension of the author’s perspective, not transcending the realm of a “personally compatible shrine.” The testimonies of those whose wishes were fulfilled do not serve as a guarantee of wish fulfillment but are positioned as individual experiences. The author’s approach of relativizing her own experiences hints at a value system that affirms the pursuit of individuality.

The Kiyomasa Well, catalyst of the power spot boom, became a sacred pilgrimage overnight after its introduction on TV by palmist entertainer Shimada Shūhei 島田秀平.<sup>31</sup> Its popularity through mass media became a point of reference for people when selecting wish-fulfilling shrines. However, while the general public equates spirituality with other consumer values, core followers prioritize personal affinity, cautioning against over-glorifying media-promoted famous shrines {2, 3, 8, 9, 21}. Yet, this core also relies on media and shares influencer-recommended shrines. Thus, contradictorily, power spots embody both mass consumption and the pursuit of individuality.

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<sup>30</sup> Masayo, *Mijikana jinja*, p. 29.

<sup>31</sup> Yamato, “Zasshi kiji.”

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### **4. Shrine Visit Selection Criteria (3): Status as an Ujigami or Ubusuna Shrine**

The pursuit of individuality when choosing a shrine goes beyond compatibility; it includes a unique category: “shrines special to me.” These are *ujigami* or *ubusuna* shrines connected to one’s birthplace or residence. They’re often cited in wish-granting books as places for wish fulfillment {3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 15, 23, 26}.

Shrines typically fall into two categories: those associated with family or local ties (*ujigami* or *ubusuna* shrines), and those personally revered (*sūkei jinja* 崇敬神社). Wish fulfillment-focused spirituality also tends to see these as distinct. A good example is the classification by the ancient Shinto numerologist Nakai Yōka 中井耀香. She proposes visiting three kinds of shrines for good fortune: “(1) the *ujigami* shrine of the area in which your family is located,” (2) “my own shrine,” and “(3) a famous shrine that you would like to visit”<sup>32</sup> {6}. “(2) My own shrine” is a “shrine compatible with you,” so she is ultimately presenting two types of shrines: (1) *ujigami* shrines and (2) (3) revered shrines.

Nakai’s {8} also discusses a similar division, mentioning the *ubusunagami* 産土神 of one’s birthplace and “my own shrine,” a wish-fulfilling shrine special for oneself. She explains that both are shrines connected to the visitor: “Regardless of a shrine’s fame, visiting holds little significance without personal connection.”

Connections vary in their formation. An automatic bond exists when born or living in an *ujigami* or *ubusunagami* shrine’s area—a passive, inherent link. Conversely, a bond with a personally revered shrine is cultivated through the visitor’s efforts—an active, acquired link. The first type of shrine is a familiar, close presence, while the second involves more distance. Nakai asserts that individuals inherit the divided spirit (*wakemitama* 分け御霊) of their *ubusunagami* at birth, which returns to the shrine upon death.<sup>33</sup> Hence, the *ubusunagami* is an “ally since birth,” and visiting its shrine can fulfill wishes due to an inherent bond. The phrase “since birth” illustrates this innate relationship. The power of *ujigami* and *ubusuna* shrines to grant wishes is unique and distinct from revered shrines due to the nature of the worshipper’s relationship with the shrine and deity.

When highlighting *ujigami* or *ubusuna* shrines for wish fulfillment, the focus lies on the innate connection with the deity from birth or arrival, unlike revered shrines. Intriguingly, the relationship’s passive protection and closeness/familiarity also are held to facilitate wish fulfillment. The phrases “Even if you guys don’t say anything . . . they have been protecting you” in {23} and “they always know you well” in {3} illustrate these two characteristics:

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<sup>32</sup> Sugoi! Kamisama Kenkyūkai, ‘*Jinja bukkaku*,’ p. 8.

<sup>33</sup> Takarajimasha, *Kami-sama ni mikata*, p. 46.

If you cannot find a “my own deity,” please cherish the deity of your local shrine, the so-called *ujigami*, and the deity of the shrine of the land where you were born and raised, the *ubusunagami*.

Even if you guys don’t say anything, they have been protecting the area where you live and your family for a long time. If you ever find yourself lost or in doubt, you can rely on your *ujigami* and *ubusunagami*.<sup>34</sup>

It is said that, especially in the case of *ujigami* and *ubusunagami*, if you bring your hands together to pay your respects on a daily basis, benefits will appear within the same day at the earliest, or within three months at the latest. This means that deities can take immediate action because they always know you well.<sup>35</sup>

In this way, in the context of spirituality as well, *ujigami* and *ubusunagami* are viewed as the closest, both emotionally and physically. The existence of close, familiar shrines, in turn, brings to the fore the existence of shrines that are not. Notably, in spirituality, *ujigami* and *ubusuna* shrines link the shrine visitor with other shrines throughout Japan. For example, the first step in {26}'s shrine/temple visit instructions (that will “set oneself apart from others”) is to go to the “*ujigami* shrine of where you live” because “if you visit other shrines after visiting your *ujigami*, the *ujigami* will say in advance, “My parishioner is coming, so take care of them!” thereby making it “easier to receive blessings.”<sup>36</sup> The idea is that there is a network of shrines across the country, with *ujigami* and *ubusuna* shrines serving as nodes.

This is easy to understand from a passage by Hazuki Kōei はづき虹映, a writer on spiritual matters, in *Kami sama ni aisarete chōkaiun suru: Kandō no jinja mairi* 神さまに愛されて超開運する 感動の神社参り (Be loved by the deities for super-good luck: Moving visits to shrines) {21}. In Chapter 1, Section 4, “All Shrines are Connected by a Network,” he first says, “I cannot recommend rushing to the super major shrines like Ise Jingū 伊勢神宮 if you really want good fortune. It’s like going to see the president of Toyota without an appointment,”<sup>37</sup> and then explains the shrine network as follows:

The first step is to visit the *chinju* 鎮守 (tutelary) shrine of the area where you now live. This is an outpost shrine that registers your residence

<sup>34</sup> Arakawa, *Teiuka*, p. 196.

<sup>35</sup> Shibayama, *Kami sama dōzo*, p. 92.

<sup>36</sup> Shin'yūsha, *Kaiun to pawāsupotto*, p. 21.

<sup>37</sup> Hazuki, *Kami sama ni aisarete*, pp. 35–36.

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certificate (*jūminhyō* 住民票) in the shrine network. In the Toyota example mentioned earlier, it would be a nearby dealer or sales office. First, you must become friendly with the deity of that shrine. If you do not start by becoming acquainted with the deity of the *chinju* shrine, you will never be able to meet the deities of the major shrines.

Unless the deity recognizes you and gives you special treatment, saying, “I hear you. Welcome. Please come this way . . . ,” there’s no way you’ll be able to connect with the deity and get your wish heard at a popular shrine that attracts millions of visitors a year.”<sup>38</sup>

The definitions of *ujigami* and *ubusuna* shrines differ among authors. Hazuki identifies a shrine that enshrines the local deity as a *chinju* shrine, while a shrine that honors the deity of one’s birthplace an *ubusuna* shrine. He says that by connecting to the shrine network through these, one will be welcomed at any shrine in the country. The network’s structure is hierarchical and vertically divided, evident in the corporate model metaphor with the president at the top. Hierarchical distinctions stem from shrines’ perceived scopes of responsibility. *Ujigami* and *ubusunagami* shrines form the base, covering smaller groups and areas, topped by “super major shrines like Ise Jingū” that cover wider areas and ranges of people. This universal structure organically connects individual shrines, integrating *ujigami* and *ubusuna* shrines with deterritorialized “revered shrines.” At the same time, it is reminiscent of the old shrine ranking (*shakaku* 社格) system.

A network concept that incorporates the old shrine ranks is found in *Chōkaiun! Kami sama ga anata no seikō o atooshi shite kureru jinja sanpaihō* 超開運！ 神さまがあなたの成功を後押ししてくれる神社参拝法 (Super good luck! How to visit shrines to have the deities boost your success”) {10}, a book by Yamada Masaharu 山田雅晴, an ancient Shintoist and Shinto teacher. The “*ubusuna* good luck method” advocated therein is a method of shrine worship based on the *ubusunagami* of one’s birthplace. It gives preference to visiting the shrines of that deity and the *chinjugami* 鎮守神 of one’s residence. Yamada enthusiastically recommends visiting shrines while “expanding the number of shrines with which you are connected” out from one’s *ubusuna* and *chinju* shrines. After stating, “The *sōchinju* 総鎮守 (supreme tutelary shrines) and old provinces’ *ichinomiya* 一の宮 oversee the *ubusuna* and *chinju* shrines,”<sup>39</sup> he notes that the respected *ichinomiya* (“the highest ranked shrines in the old provinces”), serve as a “backup,” making it “easier for the *ubusuna* and *chinju* deities to do their work.”<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Hazuki, *Kami sama ni aisarete*, pp. 37–38.

<sup>39</sup> Yamada, *Chōkaiun!*, p. 29.

<sup>40</sup> Yamada, *Chōkaiun!*, p. 59.



Shiratori Utako also stresses the importance of *ichinomiya* shrines, encouraging visits to them along with *ujigami* and *ubusuna* ones. She notes that although shrine rankings are obsolete, forming geographical ties is best achieved by “greeting the deity of the *ichinomiya* shrine of the area that will take care (is taking care) of you”<sup>41</sup> {7, 12}. She also highlights the links between shrines and their head shrine, or *sōhonsba* 総本社, from where deities are invited to the former.

Shiratori’s “deity network” expands out based on three foundational shrines: those of one’s *ujigami* (ancestral deity), *ubusuna jinja* (birthplace deity), and *tochigami* 土地神 (residence deity). This aids in gaining protection from numerous deities and fulfilling wishes.<sup>42</sup> Upon visiting the three shrines, a visit to their deities’ head shrines and the *ichinomiya* of one’s area is in order.

Like her *ichinomiya* explanation, Shiratori doesn’t speculate why a head shrine visit may facilitate wish fulfillment. She just states, “As they [the deities] are typically split from the spirit of the head shrine, [the head shrine] seems to possess unique powers.”<sup>43</sup> Despite head shrines’ supreme unifying role as sources of divided spirits (*bunrei* 分霊) in the country, instead of a vertical structure, Shiratori’s focus on divided spirits suggests a horizontally-connected structure.

My ancestral deity is Susanoo-no-mikoto-sama 須佐之男命様. This deity, Susanoo, is enshrined at Yasaka Jinja 八坂神社 in Kyoto, and at about 2,300 shrines across Japan as well. I feel that this means that if I cherish and visit Susanoo-sama on a regular basis, my prayers are shared with other Susanoo-sama shrines throughout Japan. For example, when I wanted to hold a seminar in Nagoya, but didn’t know anyone in the area, I was able to connect with a parishioner of the Susanoo shrine located there and hold it. This was a benefit of the deity network.<sup>44</sup>

The importance placed on *ujigami* and *ubusuna* shrines in the wish fulfillment books mentioned above, as well as the conception, relying on the old shrine ranking and deity invitation systems, of a network that branches off of these shrines, are all examples of the use of existing religious tradition resources and the creation of meaning when constructing a new shrine landscape in the context of spirituality. In evaluating this phenomenon, we should take into account the point made by Horie Norichika 堀江宗

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<sup>41</sup> Shiratori, *Jinja de kaiun*, pp. 92–93.

<sup>42</sup> Shiratori, “Shiratori Utako-san,” pp. 40–41.

<sup>43</sup> Shiratori, *Jinja de kaiun*, p. 91.

<sup>44</sup> Shiratori, “Shiratori Utako-san,” pp. 40–41.

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正, who explores the power spot phenomenon through research on shrine visitors. Noting that those “who are aware of ‘power spots’ are more likely to say that ‘gratitude to the deities is more important than benefits’ or that ‘the atmosphere is just wonderful,’” he points out that previous studies criticizing consumer culture magazines’ “deviations from original (authentic) deity religious beliefs and practices (*jingi shinkō* 神祇信仰)” fail to take into account the reality of visitors who are sincere about Shinto, which is close to the form of reverence considered authentic by the Shinto shrines themselves.<sup>45</sup> Relatedly, Horie writes,

Ehara [Hiroyuki] and Shimada [Shūhei] suggest readers visit their area’s *ujigami* or *ubusunagami* shrine before going to a power spot. It is unclear if readers heed the advice, but labeling these suggested power spot visits as deviant, overlooking their effort to stay within a Shinto framework, is one-sided.<sup>46</sup>

The website of the Association of Shinto Shrines (Jinja Honchō 神社本庁) states that shrines throughout Japan “can be divided into two major groups, *ujigami* shrines and revered shrines, with Ise Jingū, which enshrines Amaterasu Ōmikami 天照大御神, the imperial ancestor, as an entity in its own class.”<sup>47</sup> It then goes on to say, “*Ujigami* are the most close and familiar deities. When visiting shrines, we should first visit the *ujigami*.”<sup>48</sup> The distinction between *ujigami* shrines and revered shrines and the characterization of the *ujigami* as the most familiar and first deity to be visited correspond to the pattern in the wish fulfillment books. The creation of an order that uses the old shrine ranking system and head shrines/branch shrines can also be seen as an “effort to stay within a Shinto framework.”

Regardless of whether importance is attached to *ujigami* shrines and *ubusuna* shrines, or gratitude and respect for enshrined deities, shrines are arranged with an eye to wish fulfillment, and behind this is a mindset seeking efficient, surefire benefits. Hence, the significance of this shrine landscape differs from what the Association of Shinto Shrines or the shrines may conceive. However, this suggests that when wish fulfillment and benefits are less prioritized, the shrine landscape shared with people who run shrines might come to the foreground. I said that wish fulfillment books generally focus more on the worshiper-deity interaction sparked by benefits, not on what those benefits are.

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<sup>45</sup> Horie, *Poppu supirichuariti*, pp. 182–183.

<sup>46</sup> Horie, *Poppu supirichuariti*, p. 183.

<sup>47</sup> “Ujigami to sūkei jinja ni tsuite.” [https://www.jinjahoncho.or.jp/omairi/jinja\\_no\\_namae/ujigami](https://www.jinjahoncho.or.jp/omairi/jinja_no_namae/ujigami)

<sup>48</sup> “Kakuchi no jinja.” <https://www.jinjahoncho.or.jp/shinto/eachjinja>

Visitors “who are aware of ‘power spots’” being “more likely to say that ‘gratitude to the deities is more important than benefits’” can perhaps be seen as wish fulfillment taking a back seat as spirituality deepens.

### **Conclusion**

This study elucidated the selection criteria for shrines in wish fulfillment books to understand their significance in spirituality. I identified three criteria for selecting a shrine to visit: (1) potential benefits, (2) compatibility, and (3) status as an *ujigami* or *ubusuna* shrine. As I have run out of space, I will conclude by highlighting issues to be addressed.

First, compatibility and status as an *ujigami* or *ubusuna* shrine were already presented in the 2000s by Ehara Hiroyuki, the driving force behind the power spot and spirituality trends. At the very least, in *Ima, iku beki supirichuaru sankuchuari* 今、いくべき聖地 (Spiritual sanctuaries you should go to now), published at the end of 2007 when the trend, led by Ehara’s “Deity Travelogue (*Kami kikō* 神紀行) series, of visiting sacred places was showing signs of catching on, we find a discourse that is familiar to today’s wish fulfillment books: He writes, “What’s your first impression like? Do you feel comfortable in the precincts of that shrine? Would you like to come back? . . . If you can find a shrine you like”<sup>49</sup> and “If you want to find ‘your spiritual grounds’ in the true sense of the phrase, there are places you should visit first. Your *ubusunagami* and *ujigami*.”<sup>50</sup> The connection between Ehara’s ideas as an influencer and the contemporary spiritual marketplace awaits further study.

With that said, Ehara’s ideas did not appear from nowhere; they were shaped by previous domestic and international discourses. Fukami Tōshū 深見東州, founder of the Shinto new religion World Mate and wish fulfillment book author since the 1980s, promotes acquiring good luck via a shrine network centered on one’s *ubusuna* shrine. His model likens the shrines throughout Japan to a corporation; Ise Jingū is the “president,” *ichinomiya* shrines are “section chiefs and general managers,” and *ubusuna* shrines are “contact persons.” This anticipates the shrine network idea.<sup>51</sup>

In this paper, I identified how shrines are arranged while engaging in a synchronic cross-section analysis that captures current Shinto spirituality. Using this as a starting point, it is now necessary to trace into the past the genealogy of shrine interpretations in the context of spirituality.

(Translated by Dylan L. Toda)

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<sup>49</sup> Ehara, *Ima, iku beki*, p. 75.

<sup>50</sup> Ehara, *Ima, iku beki*, p. 72.

<sup>51</sup> Fukami, *Shunji ni*, p. 40.

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