

Shugendo Lore¹

GORAI Shigeru

五来 重

Shugendo and its Lore

Most of what we know of Shugendo belongs to the realm of *denshō* 伝承, that is, “tradition” or miscellaneous lore. That is because Shugendo was a religion of practice rather than of theory, and one of mysteries as well—a religion of miracles and of faith. Practice (*shu* 修) and miracles (*gen* 験) require no theory, nor can mysteries or faith be recorded in written documents. Shugendo acquired theory and doctrine only after it had ceased to require dangerous, life-risking practices and had lost the spiritual power to work miracles.

All religions have to do with a return to the source. People believe that a religion’s power was fully potent in the time of its founder, and so the ideal and goal of a religion is to return to its founder. The documents and lore passed on by the founder’s disciples concern, for the most part, the founder’s words and deeds. Doctrine is simply a theoretical re-ordering of such material. Shugendo, however, had no founder in the usual sense, and it needed no body of doctrine. En no Gyōja 役行者 came to be considered the founder only after the process of formation of doctrine, and the establishment of settled religious groups, had set in. The miracle-filled life of “En no Ubasoku” in *Nihon ryōiki* (*kan* 1, no. 28) simply records the legend of one particularly powerful ascetic. An entry in *Shoku nihongi* (Monmu 3.5.24) acknowledges the historical fact of En no Gyōja’s

¹ Translated from GORAI 1981, pp. 3–26. The *denshō* of the title is hard to translate. “Lore,” however unscholarly it may sound, is the only word I could think of which is broad enough to cover its range as used in this article. I have adopted this translation in most instances below.

existence. Regarding his miracles, however, the entry dismisses them as legends in these words: "Popular tradition has it that Ozunu had demonic powers at his beck and call; that he had them draw his water and gather his firewood; and that if they failed to obey him, he would bind them with spells."

Of course, the legend of En no Gyōja does convey the Shugendo ideal which developed later; and as practice and wonder-working power declined, he was elevated to the status of founder. However, no record of his words or his teaching survives. Nor does anything resembling a Shugendo scripture exist. Shugendo is a natural religion (*shizen shūkyō* 自然宗教) which has no founder at all. Part of it fused with Buddhism, particularly Tendai and Shingon, and so came to resemble a high-class religion (*bunka shūkyō* 文化宗教); but that is all. At this stage doctrinal works began to be written, but still, Shugendo never turned into a "school" (*shugen-shū* 宗) or "sect" (*shugenha* 派). It remained what it had always been, a "way" (*shugen-dō* 道), no doubt because it retained its own identity as a natural religion. Therefore, to define the basic nature of Shugendo, one must examine it in that spirit. And the only material for such a study is Shugendo lore.

Not all Shugendo lore is oral. There are also important patterns of action, such as the few rituals of "entry-into-the-peak" (*nyūbu girei* 入峰儀礼) which survive here and there around Japan, or the Shugendo performing arts (*geinō* 芸能) such as rituals of worship (*saishi* 祭祀), spell-casting (*jujutsu* 呪術) or dance (*buyō* 舞踊). Oral traditions concern the use of costume or implements (*mochimono* 持物); mountain deities (*yama no kami* 山神), guardian spirits (*gohō* 護法 or *garan-shin* 伽藍神) and other supernatural entities. There is also the *jikkai shugyō* 十界修行 ("practice of the ten realms") which survives at Haguro-san 羽黒山. Direct knowledge of this practice, vital for the correct interpretation of documentary evidence, is important enough to have attracted scholars even from overseas. There are, too, attempts to reconstruct *nyūbu* rituals from the few documents, illustrated handscrolls (*emaki*) and oral traditions which survive. Thus, the value of such lore is coming at last to be recognized.

Shugendo, being a popular mystery religion, was hardly recorded in writing, and even oral traditions about it survive only by accident, as it were. The mountain was a mystic, sacred realm. Once the practitioners had left it, they faithfully kept the taboo against discussing it in the outside world. In the case of the *jikkai shugyō* of

Haguro, for example, one was allowed to join it only after swearing that one would never speak of it with outsiders. (Recently, of course, researchers have been allowed to write about the practice and to photograph it.) Thus, many rites and practices were surely kept secret until they sank into final oblivion. The mentality of Edo-period Shugendo encouraged this trend, and the century during which Shugendo lapsed after the Meiji Restoration did so still more. One cannot help remembering this every time one visits a former Shugendo site.

For example, very few clues survive concerning *nyūjō* 入定 (“entry into samādhi”) and *ishiko-zume* 石子詰 (“burying under stones”). Since the latter appears in the Noh play *Tanikō* 谷行, where it is described as a “strict rule of the yamabushi,” one would expect to find somewhere some record or tradition about it. However, there is nothing. The practices of *shashin* 捨身 (“abandoning the body”) and *kajō* 火定 (“fire-samādhi,” self-immolation by fire) must have been performed much more often than they were recorded. Only a few instances are noted in written sources. The last example of *shashin* is generally said to be that of the Ōmine yamabushi Hayashi Jitsukaga 林実利, who cast himself from the lip of the Nachi waterfall in 1884. However, it appears that over twenty people have done the same thing since then, and one easily imagines that many examples of *shashin* before Jitsukaga went likewise unrecorded. Again, yamabushi traditions and legends do no more than mention *ishiko-zume* as a punishment. No lore at all survives concerning most *nyūjō-zuka* 入定塚 (“entry-into-samādhi mounds”), which are the graves of persons subjected to *ishiko-zume*.

To approach the *nyūjō* or *ishiko-zume* issue at all, one must therefore gather all available clues and compare them with the configuration of the tomb of Kūkai (Kōbō Daishi 弘法大師) on Mt. Kōya; that of the tomb of Dōkō 道興 Daishi (Kūkai’s disciple Jichie 実慧) at Kanshin-ji 観心寺 in Kawachi; the Butsuryū-ji 仏隆寺 tomb of Kenne Hōshi 堅惠法師 at Murō-Akabane 室生赤壇; or the tomb of Shūen 修円 at Murō-ji 室生寺 itself. That is because the *nyūjō-zuka* of the Edo period are undoubtedly the direct descendants of these tombs. Moreover, since Shugendo lore goes back to the religion of the most archaic times, one should not neglect, either, such archaeological remains as piled-rock grave mounds.

Thus one must gather the dispersed fragments of a tradition which has already shifted, broken up and, so to speak, weathered away. One must then patiently reassemble these fragments again into the

whole, not rejecting the least shard of evidence. Such an effort will eventually make it possible to describe the lost past of Shugendo. When that time comes, it will at last be possible to read Shugendo texts which hitherto had remained obscure, and to restore to the light of day a surprising aspect of the religious and spiritual life of the Japanese people. This study of Shugendo will then make possible not the superficial understanding of Japan which is achieved by the methods of cultural anthropology, but a deep grasp of the fundamental spirit of the Japanese people.

The Japanese, whose culture among all the cultures on earth is supremely baffling, are now drawing more and more attention from the world at large; yet to my mind, our self-understanding is still very superficial. Sometimes we evaluate ourselves with Western eyes, and indulge in self-satisfaction because of our economic success. What we need, in order to deepen our understanding of our own, fundamental spiritual structure, as well as to avoid repeating the errors of the West, is an understanding of the Japanese (*nihonjin ron* 日本人論) from the standpoint of Shugendo. With this project in mind, I therefore propose the following, tentative set of headings under which to investigate and classify Shugendo lore.²

1. Origin lore (*engi* 縁起 *denshō*): information about a sacred place before its "opening"; the cult there; the deity and the deity's transformations; information on lay celebrants (*shisaisha* 司祭者) and "openers" (*kaisōsha* 開創者); origin legends of all kinds.

2. Lore about "openers" (*kaisōsha denshō*): their yin-yang (*onmyōdō* 陰陽道) or Buddhist character; En no Gyōja; the "opener" of each mountain; deity, celebrant and "opener" (the "three deities, three aspects," or *sanshin san'yō* 三神三容 pattern explained below); hunters (*kariudo* 狩人); the "opener's" followers; familiar or protective spirits (*gohō* 護法); "youths" (*dōji* 童子); etc.

3. Wonder-workers (*genja*, *genza*, or *keza* 験者): yamabushi lives; the biographies in *Honchō shinsen den* 本朝神仙伝 or *Honchō hokke genki* 本朝法華験記; Nichira 日羅; Hōdō 法道; Jōzō 淨蔵; Nichizō 日蔵; yamabushi powers and "contests of power" (*gen-kurabe* 験競); lore about *nyūjō* and *shashin*; lore about the Edo-period figures such as Tansei 彈誓, Enkū 円空 and others.

² The list as translated here is somewhat abridged. Many of these terms and names have been left untranslated, since "translation" would be useless without extensive annotation which cannot be provided here. The list is meant more to stimulate further research than to provide information.

4. Lore about sites of Shugendo practice (*Shugendō gyōba* 行場): *tainai kuguri* 胎内潜り (“passage through the womb”); special rocks such as *nozoki-iwa* 覗き岩, *gyōdō iwa* 行道岩 (or *byōdō iwa* 平等岩),³ *tobi-iwa* 飛岩, *tsuribune iwa* 釣船岩, *hari no mimi* 針の耳,⁴ *byōbu no yoko-gake* 屏風の横駈; *kusari gyōba* 鎖行場 (rocks to be climbed using chains); *ari no to watari* 蟻の戸渡り (“the ants’ passage”); *ten no nijū hachi shuku* 天の二十八宿 (“the twenty-eight constellations”); *sai-no-kawara* 賽河原; caves.

5. Mountain pilgrimages (*nyūbu shugyō*): *nyūbu* of each of the four seasons; rites of entering and leaving the mountain; “lodges” on the mountain (*buchū shuku* 峰中宿)—for example, the seventy-five *nabiki* 靡 of Ōmine or the twenty-eight *shuku* 宿 of Katsuragi—and the rites associated with them; retreats in caves (*kutsu-gomori* 窟籠り); *hashira-matsu* 柱松 rites; *bonten-taoshi* 梵天倒し; *oi-watashi* 笈渡し; *saitō* 柴燈 *goma* rites; *te-goma* 手護摩; flower-offering rites; *jikkai shugyō*; *shōkanjō* 正灌頂 initiation rites; *nyōhō-kyō* 如法經 practices; *misen zenjō jōsui*; “Lotus assemblies” (*reng-e* 蓮花会); *yama nenbutsu* 山念仏.

6. Lore about physical remains at Shugendo sites (*Shugendo iseki* 遺跡 *denshō*): ruins of temples, hermitages, residence halls, chapels housing an “eternal flame” (*fumetsu jōka dō* 不滅常火堂); ruins of shrines; paths; cliffs (*chigo otoshi* 稚児落し, *naishi otoshi* 内侍落し); marker or other stones such as *uba ishi* 姥石, *kekkaishi* 結界石, *nyonin kinzei* 女人禁制石, *shibari-ishi* 縛り石, *hotoke ishi*, *gohō ishi*, *kaifuki-iwa* 貝吹岩; *nyonin-dō* 女人堂; *bijo sugi* 美女杉; ponds; *sekibutsu* 石仏 or *sekitō* 石塔; *kajō nyūjō-zuka*; inscribed wooden tablets (*o-fuda* お札); old maps.

7. Sacred entities of the mountains (*sangaku reibutsu* 靈物 *denshō*): *yama no kami* (mountain deities); animal manifestations of the mountain deity, such as the boar, monkey, bear, deer, horse, wolf, *yama-inu*, hawk, kite, crow, dove, dragon, snake, etc.; deities' *kenzoku* 眷属 (“retainers”); *yamauba* (“mountain hags”) or other such mountain apparitions; *kawa-warō* 河童 (“river sprites”); *tengu* 天狗; *gohō*.

³ The name *Byōdō-iwa*, found on some mountains, is simply a corruption of *Gyōdō-iwa*. For example, the “*Byōdō-iwa*” of *Ibuki-yama*, mentioned in an inscription dated Kanbun 6 (1666) on the back of a *Kannon* sculpture by *Enkū*, is the *Ibuki-yama* “*Gyōdō-iwa*” mentioned in *Ōmi yochi shiryaku* 近江輿地志略.

⁴ Sites by this name exist at least on *Aso* and *Hiko-san*. Both involve a narrow hole or crack in a rock. When someone whose sins are heavy tries to pass through the hole, it becomes as fine as a “needle’s ear” (eye); whereas for one without sin, it widens to become as broad as an “elephant’s ear.” Elsewhere, the same sort of site is called *Oshiwake-iwa* (“push-through rock”) or *Tainai kuguri*.

8. Lore about the “other world” of the mountains (*sanchū takai* 山中他界 *denshō*) : *jigoku-dani* 地獄谷 (“hell valley”); *jigoku-ike* 池 (“hell pond”); *jigoku-hara* 原 (“hell plain”); *jigoku-ana* 穴 (“hell hole”); *sai-no-kawara*; *uba-dō* ; *Enma-dō* ; *Jūsan-butsu* 十三仏 (“Thirteen Buddhas”); *chi no ike* 血の池 (“blood pond”); *Ketsubon-kyō* 血盆經 ; shrines and tablets to ancestral spirits; names of areas in the mountains that suggest ideas of paradise and the home of the dead.

9. Lore on the Shugendo of the sea (*umi no shugen denshō*) : lore on “perimeter paths” (*heji* 辺路 *denshō*), such the *heji* of Shikoku, Kumano, Noto, and various islands; sacred fires; rocks and caves which were practice sites; Fudaraku traditions (*Fudaraku tokai* 補陀落渡海 , *umi no Kannon*, *Tokoyo* 常世 , *ryūgū* 龍宮 ; buddha-images made of driftwood logs; shining objects on the sea and the appearance of gods and buddhas, visitations from the morning star.

10. Folktales on mountain cult themes: tales of mountain deities, *yamauba*, *oni*, *tengu*, magic animals, *yamabushi*.

Origin and “Opening” Legends

Generally, the term *shaji engi* 社寺縁起 (“shrine and temple origin stories”) brings to mind stories associated with major temples and shrines. Actually, however, many origin tales of mountain-cult shrines and temples were in circulation by the time the middle ages (*chūsei* 中世) began. Documents like the various *Garan engi narabi ni ruki shizai chō* 伽藍縁起并流記資材帳 (“Account of the temple’s origins and register of its treasures”) associated with the great Nara temples were really no more than official reports by government-sponsored institutions. *Engi* written to encourage faith, and for the purposes of preaching, are a completely different sort of document.

There are really two kinds of *engi* : historical *engi* (*rekishiteki* 歴史的 *engi*) and narrative *engi* (*monogatari-teki* 物語的 *engi*). Hitherto, only the former—the official reports just mentioned—has been accorded any value. The latter, which appeals to the religious consciousness of the people, has been treated as little more than fantasy, and as such has been ignored by historians. However, the reason why the narrative *engi* contain so many miracle tales, or tales of *honji* 本地 deities, is that such tales corresponded to popular faith, and that most of these *engi* concerned shrines and temples associated with Shugendo mountains. Particularly numerous among them are accounts of the origins of these mountains. I have called such accounts

“esoteric engi” (*mikkyō* 密教 *engi*). The maṇḍalas and deities of Esoteric Buddhism figure prominently in them, and these deities are often assimilated to the native deities who figure in the earliest Japanese records.

An early example of an “esoteric *engi*” is *Shira-yama no ki* 白山之記 (see SAKURAI 1975, pp. 291–304). The work dates from Chōkan 1 (1163). It relates the wonders performed by the “opener” Taichō and the miracles which occurred at Nanatsu-ike 七ツ池 on the summit of Haku-san; and sets forth a faith centered upon *mikkyō*, the Lotus Sutra and the *Daihannya-kyō* 大般若經. No doubt it also functioned once as a guide for the mountain pilgrim, giving an account of the upper, middle and main (lower) shrines, and of all the other shrines and chapels on the mountain. Another early *engi* is *Hakone-san engi narabini jo*, which bears the date Kenkyū 2 (1191). This “esoteric *engi*” relates the wonders performed by the mountain “opener” Mangan Shōnin 万卷上人, and also lists the *zazu* 座主 and *bettō* 別当 (head monks) of the mountain up through the late twelfth-century *bettō* Gyōjitsu 行実. In the late Kamakura period, it became the basis for the purely narrative, *otogi-zōshi*-like *engi emaki* known as *Hakone Gongen engi* (see GORAI 1980).

The best example of an “esoteric *engi*” is that of *Asama-yama engi* 朝熊山縁起 (“History of Mt. Asama”), which treats the Asama near Ise (see SAKURAI 1975, pp. 77–87). It dates from the late Kamakura or Nanbokuchō period, and the ideas in it correspond to those in the Ryōbu Shintō 兩部神道 treatise *Tenchi reiki ki* 天地麗氣記 (“Record of the noble spirit of heaven and earth”). The work gives a *mikkyō*-toned account of the relationship between the Myōjō Tenshi 明星天子 or Kokūzō Bosatsu 虚空蔵菩薩 of Asama, and Amaterasu Ōmikami and Kōbō Daishi. There is also the *Shozan* 諸山 *engi* (“Histories of the mountains”; SAKURAI 1975, pp. 89–139) now held by the Imperial Household Agency, which gives an esoteric account of the origins and sacred sites of Ōmine, Katsuragi 葛城, and Kasagi 笠置 (Ichidai-no-mine 一代峯). It appears to have been written in the late Kamakura period. The work emphasizes the prodigies associated with En no Gyōja and relates the histories of all the *shuku* of Ōmine and Katsuragi.

The most remarkable Shugendo *engi* of all is *Kongōbu-ji konryū shugyō engi* 金剛峰寺建立修行縁起 (“History of the building and practice of Kongōbu-ji,” that is, Kōya-san). This work was once considered a sort of biography of Kōbō Daishi, although having been written

130 years after Kōbō Daishi's death, it was held to be less reliable than earlier biographies. The work is rich in accounts of wonders and miracles, and in particular records a belief in Kōbō Daishi's *nyūjō* ("entry into samādhi"), as distinguished from *nyūmetsu* 入滅 (the "death" of a monk), which is the term used in the earlier biographies. This belief holds that Kōbō Daishi did not die, but instead entered eternal samādhi. Such a belief is characteristic of mountain religion.

It is in this account of the founding of Kōya-san that one first encounters hunters and mountain people (*sanmin* 山民, *sanjin* 山人). I therefore hold that this *engi* is fundamentally different from the earlier biographies written by Shingon monks in Kyoto; and that it is in fact an account of the origins of the Shugendo of Kōya-san, written by the *sanmin* (the *gyōnin* 行人 or "practitioner monks" of later times) who were responsible for the pre-Kōbō Daishi mountain cult of Kōya-san. The work was intended to stress that the figure who led Kōbō Daishi to the mountain and allowed him to build Kongōbu-ji belonged to the *sanmin*.

The first focus of a mountain cult is the mountain deity itself, while the second is the ancestor of the celebrants (*shisaisha* 司祭者) or hierophants (*shireisha* 司靈者) in charge of the deity's cult. In cases where a ranking Buddhist monk or adept came and made the mountain a place of Shugendo practice, this "opener" is deified and becomes a third focus of religious devotion. This is the pattern which I have termed "three deities, three aspects" (*sanshin san'yō*), and which I have described in detail elsewhere (see GORAI 1980). In this pattern, the mountain deity is the *nyotai shin* 女体神 ("female deity"), the original cult leader is the *zokutai shin* 俗体神 ("layman deity"), and the "opener" is the *hottai shin* 法体神 ("monk deity").

This theory explains why many Shugendo centers honor three mountains and three deities. In the case of the *engi* of Kōya-san, the mountain deity is the female deity Niutsuhime 丹生津比売; the cult leader is the layman deity Kōya Myōjin 高野明神 (or Kariba 狩場 Myōjin); and the "opener," the *hottai*, is Kōbō Daishi. At Kōya-san, the *nyotai* and *zokutai* deities are honored on Gosha-yama 御社山 (or Miyashiro-yama) which rises above the temple, and the *hottai* is honored in the Oku-no-in. This triad is then revered as eternal, omniscient, and omnipotent.

This pattern emerges from the analysis of many *engi* relating to sacred mountains. Seen in this light, the Kōbō Daishi cult at Kōya-san is not concerned with Kūkai as a historical individual. Instead, Kūkai

is the *hottai* deity of a mountain cult. Since this popular cult actually exists, one cannot reject it just because the deified Kōbō Daishi is not the historical Kūkai, or dismiss as mere superstition the belief in Kōbō Daishi's eternal samādhi. Some scholars would reject as well the hunter who figures in the *engi* story, but such a view ignores the religious realities. The fact that the word *kariudo* ("hunter") appears nowhere in Kūkai's own writings does not invalidate the hunter of *Kongōbu-ji konryū shugyō engi*. If no hunter, or hunters, had assisted Kūkai when he "opened" Kōya-san, no hunter should have suddenly appeared in a document which dates from so long after Kūkai's death.

Engi of Shugendo mountains all over the country speak either of the mountain having been opened by a hunter, or of a hunter having guided the monk who ended up being honored as the opener. In the case of Kumano Hongū 熊野本宮, for example, *Chōkan kanmon* 長寛勘文 of Chōkan 1 (1163) quotes a *Kumano Gongen go-suijaku engi* 熊野権現御垂迹縁起 as follows:⁵

In the *kanoe-tora* year, a dog-keeper named Kumanobe no Sen'yojō, a resident of southern Iwata-gawa 石多河 (present Toda-gawa 富田川), shot a boar one *jō* 丈 and five *shaku* 尺 long. He and his dogs then pursued the boar upstream along the Iwata river to Ōyu-gahara, where they found the boar lying dead under a yew tree. Kumanobe ate of the boar's flesh and spent the night under the tree; whereupon he saw [three] moon[s] at the top of the tree. He asked, "Why has the moon thus come down from the sky, to rest now upon the branches of this tree?" The moon[s] replied to the dog-keeper, "We are called Kumano Sansho Gongen 熊野三所権現 ["The Three Gongen Deities of Kumano"]. One shrine is named Shōjō Daibosatsu 証誠大菩薩, and the other two moons are named Ryōsho 両所 Gongen ["The Two Gongen Deities"].

This is how the text relates the first appearance of Kumano Sansho Gongen. No doubt there was originally an *engi* for each of the three Kumano sites, and this is the one for Hongū. In the story, the Hongū mountain deity took the form of a boar and led the hunter to the foot of a yew. Presumably, Kumanobe no Sen'yojō was the first celebrant to honor this deity, so that in this case the *zokutai* is a hunter. This hunter probably also founded the priestly house of Kumano-no-miyatsuko 熊野国造, and his descendants no doubt

⁵ Translator's note: Since *tsuki* in the original could be singular or plural, one cannot be sure whether the hunter saw one moon or three; but despite the hunter's question about why the moon had come down from the sky, the text suggests three moons.

formed the *sanjin* community of Kumano Hongū. It is not clear who brought Buddhism to this mountain and thus established Shugendo there, but there may have existed a Buddhist *hijiri* 聖 (the *hottai* deity) who was identified with Amida (the *honji* of Kumano Hongū) and who was known as Shōjō Daibosatsu.

In the case of *Kongōbu-ji konryū shugyō engi*, the hunter (that is, the *sanjin*) who led Kōbō Daishi to Kōya-san is identified as both “the dog-keeper of the Southern Mountains” (*nanzan no inukai* 南山の犬飼) and as Sannō 山王 (“Mountain King”). He is the *zokutai*. The *nyotai* is called Sannō Niū Daimyōjin:

In Uchi county of Yamato province he [Kōbō Daishi] met a hunter, red in color and eight *shaku* tall, wearing a bluish robe and high clogs. He was armed with a bow and arrows, and had with him one large and one small black dog. When he saw [Kōbō Daishi] pass by he questioned him. [Kōbō Daishi] hesitantly asked him who he was. The hunter replied, “I am the dog-keeper of the Southern Mountains, and I rule a vast stretch of these mountains. In my domain there is a remote plateau where many wonders occur. . . . [Kōbō Daishi] met there a *sanmin* who told him, “Southward from here there is a level depression in the mountains; peaks surround it on three sides, and access to it is from the southeast. . . . The next morning [Kōbō Daishi] set off with that *sanjin* and shortly reached the said level depression. Looking about him, [he saw that], indeed, the place was suitable for building a capital city. The *sanjin* then told [Kōbō Daishi] in confidence, “I am the Mountain King of this mountain. I shall give this land to you and so increase its power and good fortune. That I, taming the mountain’s waters and taming the deer to man, should have met a bodhisattva [means that] my virtue is accomplished. . . . When [Kōbō Daishi] climbed ten *chō* higher he found a depression ten *chō* broad. This is the site of the shrine of Sannō Niū Daimyōjin. It is now called Amano-miya 天野宮.

One sees here the image of Kariba Myōjin as it was painted in the Kamakura period and after. Even now, on Kōya-san, there is a *Myōjin-kō* 明神講 (religious confraternity) whose annually-appointed head prays the year through, after fasting and purification, to images of Niu-tsu-hime and Kariba Myōjin which have been transmitted secretly within the *kō*. This practice is believed to qualify the practitioner for the post of Hōin kengyō 法印檢校, as a substitute for Kōbō Daishi himself, and it is therefore performed scrupulously. This is a further example which suggests that in a mountain cult the “three deities and three aspects” are fundamentally one.

Gosha-yama 御社山, which rises above the temple itself on Kōya-san, and where Niu-tzuhime-no-kami and Kariba Myōjin are enshrined, was, even before the middle ages, under the care of the *gyōnin*, that is of the Shugendō practitioners of Kongōbu-ji. This right of stewardship is preserved even now by the temples on the mountain which belong to the *gyōnin* line (*gyōnin-gata* 行人方). These temples have also kept the right of stewardship over the Oku-no-in where Kōbō Daishi is enshrined. It is only natural that in *Kongōbu-ji konryū shugyō engi*, the *gyōnin* should have stressed that it was they who built (*konryū*) Kongōbu-ji and they too who perform mountain practices (*shugyō*) there.

To the *engi* of Shugendo mountains are everywhere added what one might call “prehistories of the mountain” (*kaisōzen ki* 開創前記): stories of hunters, immortals or gods, or of visitations from Buddhas of the past or from holy sages of one sort or another. Such passages, however fantastic they appear, should be understood as speaking of the cult rendered to the mountain by the local *sanjin* before the “opening” of the mountain ever took place. That the *sanjin* around Kōya-san supported this mountain’s cult is shown by a tradition that the residents of the Ategawa 阿弔川 estate, believed to have been the first estate developed by Kōya-san, served on Kōya-san as *geshu* 花衆 (“flower men”), in other words as yamabushi. In *Kōya shunjū hennen shūroku*, this estate appears under the date Tengyō 4 (941), in an entry which suggests that local residents were appointed from Kyoto as servants, guards, flower-gatherers, etc., under the supervision of the *zasu* and the scholar-monks. Traditions to this effect survive in the area even today. There is said to survive a flower basket which was once used by the villagers for sending, annually, flowering branches of *shikimi* to Kōya-san. At least in a purely formal sense, the villagers served as *geshu* for Kōya-san until the first years of the Meiji period.

Since these are the sort of people who wrote the *engi* I have been discussing, it is no wonder that the work fails to impress historians. No doubt it was written so long after Kūkai’s death because it took that long for the *gyōnin*, who were essential in many ways for the running of the temple complex on the mountain, to affirm their own existence and importance. Actually, this *sanjin* community may well have performed Kūkai’s funeral as well, and in so doing adopted their own form of tomb, the *nyūjō-zuka*. As I noted above, the *nyūjō-zuka* form can be seen as well in the tombs of Jichie, Kenne, and

Shūen. This idea of *nyūjō* expresses the *sanjin* community's faith in Kōbō Daishi's immortality, which first surfaced in *Kongōbu-ji konryū shugyō engi*, once the *sanjin* community had consolidated its economic and religious position. It is interesting that *Kongōbu-ji konryū shugyō engi* belongs to the period when monks deeply interested in mountain religion appeared even among the scholar-monks of Kyoto. Some of them—men like Shōbō (Rigen Daishi), Kengen, Jōsū, Ningai and Saikō—even rose to be *zasu* of Kōya-san.

Shugendo lore of this sort became more complex when it was adopted by the Shingon and Tendai scholar-monks themselves. It also came to be distorted by Shingon and Tendai doctrine. However, the *gyōnin* and *dōshu* 堂衆 (that is, the *geshu*) continued to resist the scholar-monks, as the history of every Shugendo mountain makes clear. That is how Shugendo lore came to be preserved at all, in one form or another.

Lore on Shugendo Practice Sites and Nyūbu Rites

Shugendo activity ceased for some time after it was banned following the Meiji Restoration, and much Shugendo lore was lost. Only documents like *Kinpusen sōsōki* or *Shōbodaisan engi* (reprinted in the *Shugendō shōso* volumes of the *Nihon daizōkyō*) afford even a tiny glimpse of *nyūbu* rites and practices at the *shuku*, such as they existed before the middle ages. *Kinpusen sōsōki* records entries through the Heian period, but it was probably compiled in late Kamakura times. *Shōbodaisan engi* is dated Bunki 3 (1503), and therefore provides precious information on practices current in the Muromachi period. It also contains a variant version of *Kumano Gongen go-suijaku engi*, a *Kumano-san kengyō Raigon ki* 熊野山檢校頼巖記 dated Kanji 3 (1089), and a *Kinpusen hon-engi* 金峰山本縁起; and it notes the names and dwelling-places of the Hachi Dai Kongō Dōji 八大金剛童子 ("Eight Great Vajra Minions"). Part of the text duplicates the *Shozan engi* which now belongs to the Imperial Household Agency, and which is also a precious document on Kinpusen traditions. While describing what corresponds to the present "seventy-five *nabiki*" (that is, seventy-five *shuku*) as the "one hundred and twenty-one sites," it actually lists only eight-eight such sites, the rest having sunk into oblivion. Again, *Shugen buchū hiden*, which was printed in Genroku 7 (1694), lists the practice sites of Kinpusen with their histories, and records their "secret songs." It therefore shows what sort of infor-

mation was publicly available in the Edo period. Apparently, the “secret songs” of Kinpusen (*buchū hika*) were learned by sendatsu and novice yamabushi from elsewhere in Japan, on the occasion of the Kinpusen *nyūbu*, and carried by them back to their home areas. There, the songs were sung as *utagura* in association with *kagura* 神楽 offerings. Six such songs, including some not recorded in *Buchū hidden* 峰中秘伝, were part of the *utagura* of the Mikawa Hana-Matsuri 三河花祭 (*yamabushi kagura* 山伏神楽). For example:

shide kake to	Seeking out <i>shide-kake</i> where the sacred
tōte tazunete	streamers hang, I arrive and see not
kite mireba	streamers but the heaven of the gods.
shide de wa nakute	
kami no bonten	

This song is absent from *Buchū hidden*; nor do the Ōmine sendatsu of Shōgoin know it any longer. Therefore, it appears to have been transmitted to Mikawa before the Edo period.

Once when I was on a *nyūbu* in the Ōmine mountains, the yamabushi had just gone round the Byōdō-iwa (once known as Gyōdō-iwa) on the *ura-gyōba* 裏行場 of Sanjō-ga-take 山上ヶ嶽. They then headed toward the mountaintop Zaōdō, intoning this poem as they went:

Byōdō-iwa	Byōdō-iwa rock: around it I go, to find that
megurite mireba	the very life I cast away
akotaki no	is Fudō and Kurikara.
sutsuru inochi mo	(The meaning of <i>akotaki</i> is unclear.)
Fudō Kurikara	

Just then the sendatsu remarked to me, “This spot is called Motten-kake, though I really don’t know why.” This tiny fragment of tradition was unexpectedly helpful. Assuming that *motten* is a corruption of *motoyui* 元結, then *motten-kake* is no doubt connected to the *shide-kake* of the “secret song” quoted above, and also to the *shime-kake* 注連掛 and the *Chūren-ji* 注連寺 of Yudono-san 湯殿山. When I took part in the *aki-mine* 秋峰 practice (the *jikkai shugyō*) of Haguro-san, I myself wore the *shime-kesa* 注連袈裟 (or *yū-shide*) of twisted paper (*koyori* 紙縊), which is worn by novice yamabushi. Numerous *shime-kesa* like it hang in the branches of the trees around the Go-shintai-iwa 御神体石 at Yudono-san. The yamabushi presumably wore it during the *nyūbu*, and while on the mountain they prayed for the protection of the Hachidai Kongō Dōji in a formula which included the words: *O-shime ni Hachidai Kongō Dōji ichi-ichi raihai* おしめに八大金剛童子一々礼拝 (“On my *shime-kesa* I worship one by one the Six

Great Vajra Minions”). The novice yamabushi on Haku-san apparently wore the same *shime-kesa*, for a Shugendo document at Nagataki 長滝 Haku-san Jinja in Mino mentions *yū-shide* in connection with a document from Miwa Shintō (in medieval times, Miwa Shugendo). Therefore, at both Miwa and Haku-san, yamabushi on a *nyūbu* apparently wore a *shime-kesa* made of mulberry cords (*yū-himo*) round their necks.

All this suggests that on Ōmine, too, novices performed the *nyūbu* wearing *shime-kesa* of twisted paper (*koyori*, *motoyui*), and that when the practice of the Sanjō-ga-take *ura-gyōba* was over, they hung these *kesa* nearby, on a tree. Consequently, it seems likely that an ancient mountain-cult custom of making the *nyūbu* pilgrimage wearing *motoyui*, *shime* or *shide* hanging from the shoulders as *tasuki* cords, fused with the Buddhist wearing of the *kesa* until these cords became the *yui-gesa* 結袈裟 characteristic of the yamabushi. The wearing of accessories very like Buddhist *kesa* by sendatsu (the highest-ranking members of a yamabushi group) contrasts with the wearing by novices (the lowest-ranking members of the same group) of accessories which still recall the *shime* characteristic of pre-Buddhist practices. Thus, fragments of lore preserved outside Ōmine can serve to solve a puzzle related to the Ōmine *nyūbu* itself.

Even today, the oral tradition of Ōmine preserves songs not found in *Buchū hiden*. For example, the “secret song” of the Kane-no-torii at Yoshino is as follows:

yoshino naru	Pressing my hand against the Kane-no-torii
kane no torii ni	in Yoshino, I am filled with joy as I enter
te o kakete	Amida’s Pure Land.
mida no jōdo ni	
iru zo ureshiki	

The pilgrims sing it as they turn around a pillar of the torii, rubbing the pillar with their hands. *Buchū hiden* has the following:

Kane-no-torii: it is known as Nehan-mon 涅槃門 or again as Ōjō-mon 往生門 . . . This is the first gate through which all the Buddhas pass on the way to their attainment of perfect enlightenment. This is never, never to be revealed. . . The secret song is:

mina hito wa	All people everywhere are born from the
a-ji yori idete	Sanskrit letter A and return to it again;
a-ji ni iri	the letter A is our original dwelling.
a-ji koso moto no	
sumika narikeri	

Likewise, the present “secret song” for the Kakure-tō 隠れ塔 (Kenuke-tō 気抜塔) too is missing from *Buchū hiden*:

yoshino naru	Deep in the mountains at Yoshino, the
miyama no oku no	Kakure-tō is the dwelling place of original
kakure-tō	emptiness.
honrai kū no	
sumika narikeri	

The present “secret song” for the Kanekake-iwa is:

kanekake to	Seeking out the Kanekake rock, I arrive there
tōte tazunete	and see, there below me, the Nine caves.
kite mireba	
kuketsu no hora o	
shita ni koso mire	

In contrast, *Buchū hiden* gives the song as follows:

kanekake to	Seeking out the Kanekake rock, I am filled
tazune-mukaeba	with joy to find the Nine-Grade Pure Land
koekura no	Land of the mossy rocks/caves.
kuhon no jōdo ni	
au zo ureshiki	

and

kanekake ni	Scaling the Kanekake rock, I find no <i>kane</i>
noborite mireba	(“metal”) there, but joy fills my heart as I
kane mo nashi	encounter Amida.
kokoro no mida ni	
au zo ureshiki	

Thus, the present version is clearly somewhat corrupt. The Mikawa Hanamatsuri *utagura* version is:

kanekake to	Seeking out the Kanekake rock, I arrive there
tōte tazunete	and see that it is not <i>kane</i> ,
kite mireba	but the torii of the gods.
kane de wa nakute	
kami no torii zo	

Therefore, the Kanekake-iwa was once thought of as the gateway into the mountaintop world of the gods, later imagined as Amida’s pure land.

The religious ideas and meanings connected with these practice sites on the *nyūbu* route are difficult to grasp or to reconstruct. The “secret song” sung by the present-day yamabushi as they climb the chain up the Kanekake-iwa corresponds to a tradition that below this rock there are nine caves; that a Zaō Gongen known as Anano-Zaō (“Zaō-in-the-cave”) is honored there; and that these caves are

the nine grades (*kuhon* 九品) of the Pure Land of Bliss. The “nine grades of the pure land” of *Buchū hiden* is, in the present version, “nine caves”; and in *Buchū hiden* the place is also referred to as “the eastern gate of the land of bliss.” At Seburi-yama 背振山 too, in Kyushu, Jōgūtōmon-ji 上宮東門寺 is said to derive its name from this same conception of “the eastern gate of the land of bliss.” This interpretation is based upon the conception, common in the Shugendō tradition, of the “twin oceans of the perfect nature” (*sō-enshōkai setsu* 双円性海説), and is therefore continuous with left-handed esotericism (Tachikawa-ryū 立川流). As *Buchū hiden* puts it in connection with the *kuketsu no hora* 九穴の洞 mentioned in the present “secret song” for Kanekake-iwa:

The nine-grade pure land is the Womb Realm (Taizōkai). The mother is Daishō Fudō Myōō 大聖不動明王. Because it is the Womb Realm, one remains there nine months (*kugetsu* 九月); and so it is called the nine-grade pure land. Therefore the vagina (*shōkai* 生海, literally “birth-sea”) is called the eastern gate of the land of bliss. The moment of implantation of the seed is called “the eastern gate.” The moment of birth is called “the western gate.” The opening of the gate of the womb is called “the western gate of the land of bliss.” All the Buddhas of the ten directions are born through this gate. There is nothing in the way of the Buddha (*buppō* 仏法) or the way of the world (*sehō* 世法) which does not thus follow the pattern of yin and yang.

However, Ōmine Shugendō treats this “eastern gate of the land of bliss” as a *kakekotoba* in the song, and turns it into the entrance into the pure land of Kinpusen, which is found on Sanjō-ga-take. Since Kanekake is the gate to the world of the buddhas and deities of Sanjō-ga-take, the “secret song” calls it *kami no torii*. Furthermore, “Kanekake” has yet another meaning. There hangs from this fifteen meter-high rock an iron chain which is probably the original reason for the name Kanekake (“hung with metal”). However, Kanekake is also the first practice-site on the way into Sanjō-ga-take, and so is a test of the novice’s strength and courage. On Ishizuchi-yama 石鎚山 (Shikoku), a similar chain is called *kokoromi no kusari* (“the testing chain”) for that reason. Thus, “torii of the gods” or “eastern gate of the land of bliss” are equally suitable for a spot which marks the entrance into a sacred realm.

The interpretation of a single “secret song” thus requires one to gather together all sorts of lore, and inevitably involves a certain

degree of conjecture. One who makes this effort cannot trust even a book like *Buchū hiden*, though it was published three hundred years ago. The difficulty is compounded by the fact that one must compare locally collected lore with lore which has diffused from Ōmine to other parts of the country.

Another “secret song” involves O-kame-ishi (“Turtle Rock”), the site which follows Kanekake-iwa on the *ura-gyōba* route of Sanjō-ga-take. A great rock bulges from the earth there like the back of a tortoise. The site is understood as being the “Bosatsu-mon” (Bodhi-sattva Gate), one of the “Four Gates” of Ōmine (*Ōmine shimon* 大峰四門).⁶ Since the rock is impossible to miss, present-day yamabushi pilgrims always pause at it, perform a ceremony and sing the “secret song.” However, neither *Buchū hiden* nor *Konoha-goromo* 木葉衣 mention it at all. The “secret song” shows that the rock was considered taboo:

o-kame ishi	Turtle Rock: tread it not, strike it not.
fumu na tatau na	Make a detour around it, you who are new
tsue tsuku na	to this path.
yokete tōre yo	
tabi no shinkyaku	

According to the sendatsu, O-kame-ishi continues below ground all the way to Kumano. The terms *yōgō-ishi* 影向石 (“rock where the god appeared”) or *gohō-ishi* 護法石 (“rock of the protector spirit”) are no longer associated with it, but they must have been in the past—perhaps the deity who appeared there was Kumano Gongen. At first glance, the rock reminds one of the legendary island of Hōrai, which is supported on the back of a turtle, or of the fabled longevity of the tortoise. However, in this case these associations are implausible. O-kame-ishi probably has to do with the idea, widespread in Shugendo, that mountain rocks are directly connected with the ocean and with the rise and fall of the tides. This belief ties together the mountain-god cult of Shugendo and the sea-god cult of the coast.

The Gyōdō-iwa (“Path-of-practice rock”) so prominent in Shugendo traditions turns out to be a *meguri-ishi* (a rock which the practitioner must clamber around). The clue, as I realized recently, is provided by Saigyō’s *kotobagaki* (prose introduction) to poem no. 1370 in *Sankashū*, a poem which Saigyō wrote on Shikoku. I have already men-

⁶ The others are the Hosshin-mon, which is Kane-no-torii in the village of Yoshino; the Shugyō-mon at the entrance to Kinpu Jinja; and the Nehan-mon, which is before the Zaō-dō in Yoshino.

tioned the Gyōdō-iwa on Sanjō-ga-take. Saigyō's text made it clear to me that this was a site (*gyōdō-dokoro*) for the *meguri-gyōdō* practice of Shugendo. Saigyō wrote:

I went up to the *gyōdō-dokoro* of Mandara-ji. The climb is extremely difficult, being almost vertical. On the mountaintop here, [Kōbō] Daishi buried sutra texts which he had copied. Outside the [practitioner's] hut there is built a platform (*dan* 壇) one *jō* high. [Kōbō Daishi] is supposed to have climbed onto this platform daily and to have performed *gyōdō*. The platform is built in two steps, so that one can perform a *meguri-gyōdō* [around it].

The remains of this platform are still there, beyond the Zenjō-in 禅定院 on Gahaishi-san 我拜師山. Saigyō's text makes clear the nature of the *gyōdō* practice and suggests that many similar *gyōdō* sites must have existed. In fact, the pilgrimage roads (*heji*) around Shikoku and the Kumano peninsula appear to be extended *meguri-gyōdō* routes.

Other fragmentary evidence, both written and oral, shows that the famous *nozoki no gyō* 覗きの行 of Ōmine represents a survival from an earlier *shashin gyō* 捨身行 ("practice of abandonment of the body"). The *shashin gyō* consisted of casting oneself from a precipice for the purpose of "abolishing sins" (*metsuzai* 滅罪) and "attaining buddhahood" (*jōbutsu* 成仏). Thus, the *nozoki* practice is a rite which mimics death, followed by rebirth with a new body and mind. As *Buchū jusshu shugyō sahō* shows, it also functioned as a *gō no hakari* 業の秤 ("weighing of karma") practice. Its indoor version is to be seen in the *jikkai shugyō* of Haguro-san. I discovered that such a practice had existed all over Japan when, in 1976, I took part in the *nyūbu* of Ryōzen 靈山 and heard that there exists on the mountain a rock which used to be named Tsuribune-iwa 釣舟岩. Rocks by this name turn out to exist also on Kinka-zan 金華山, on Kurikoma-yama 栗駒山, and on the *oku-gyōba* route of Hōmanzan 宝満山 in Kyushu. Almost all over Japan, therefore, the *nozoki no gyō* was known as *tsuribune no gyō*.

Lore Involving Former Shugendo Structures

On mountains where Shugendo once thrived, the temples, chapels, and residence halls of long ago have often been replaced by meadows or cryptomeria forests. The past seems to have vanished without a trace. Of course, times change, and the *shinbutsu bunri* movement of

the early Meiji period surely did its work. No one can turn back history. On the other hand, humans are constantly seeking lost records and artifacts of the past; and the more the past has to teach them, the more worthwhile the effort is. In the case of Shugendo, the effort is highly significant for the sort of reasons I have already explained.

The destruction associated with the Meiji Restoration often left little at former Shugendo sites beyond stone walls, foundation stones, or the remains of old roads. A happy exception is Kubote-san 求菩提山 in Buzen, where I was recently amazed to find the Shugendo relics well cared for. For this, special thanks are due to a devoted local resident named Shigematsu Toshio. However, a deeper reason for the good condition of Kubote-san is, no doubt, the rich variety of physical remains, documents and other lore which survive there. On most former Shugendo mountains which once boasted “three shrines and three temples” (*sankyū san'in* 三宮三院), the shrines alone survive, while the temples are gone. Kubote-san still has its Upper Shrine (Kami-no-miya 上宮) and its Middle Shrine (Naka-no-miya); and below the Middle Shrine there survive a number of the residence halls (*bō* 坊) where the yamabushi once lived. These are a particularly precious relic of the past.

I first noticed the *sankyū san'in* pattern associated with Shugendo mountains in connection with the “Sanbaba” 三馬場 (three “riding ground” sites) of Haku-san. With respect to Mino-no-baba (the “Mino riding ground”), for example, Itoshiro Chūkyo 石徹白中居 Jinja was considered the Middle Shrine, while the Lower Shrine was Nagataki Haku-san Jinja—where the Lower Temple (*gein* 下院), Chōryū-ji 長滝寺, survives. Pilgrims from the Mino side passed these two on their way to the Upper Shrine. However, from the standpoint of the Kuzuryū-gawa route via Echizen-no-baba, Itoshiro Chūkyo Jinja had to be the Lower Shrine, while Heisen-ji 平泉寺 Haku-san Jinja was the Middle Shrine. Later, however, the Echizen pilgrims, seeking the shortest possible distance, probably began crossing the middle slopes of Santō-san 三頭山 and climbing via Ushikubi 牛首 in Shiramine-mura 白峰村 of Kaga, so that Itoshiro Chūkyo Jinja retained its significance only as the Middle Shrine for Mino-no-baba. If so, then not only was there a time when Echizen and Mino both considered Itoshiro Chūkyo Jinja their Middle Shrine, but Taichō himself, in “opening” Haku-san, must have passed over Bessan 別山 to reach the Upper Shrine (Oku-no-in) on Ōgozen-no-mine 大御前峰.

Various puzzles become clear if one applies this theoretical *sankyū san'in* pattern to other Shugendo remains elsewhere. It has been said that the *chūkyō* 中居 (“middle station”) of Itoshiro Chūkyō Jinja is probably like the *chūgo* 中語 at Tate-yama 立山: a place between the realm of gods and the realm of humans, where oracles were delivered. However, Taichō too, the Haku-san “opener,” may then have used this spot as his *chūkyō*, that is, the place where he purified himself and did various preparatory practices before proceeding to the summit. If so, then Itoshiro Chūkyō Jinja may actually enshrine Taichō as the *hottai* deity of the mountain. In this case, the shrine originally honored not the Three Deities of Haku-san (*Haku-san sansho*) but Kokūzō Bosatsu, for Kokūzō is Taichō's *honji-butsumi*. Taichō no doubt practiced the *Kokūzō gumonji no hō* 求聞持法 which was translated by Zenmui Sanzō 善無畏三藏 (Śubhākarasiṃha) in Ch'angan in 717, brought to Japan the following year by Dōji 道慈 of Daian-ji 大安寺, and widely adopted by mountain practitioners at Yoshino and elsewhere. Thus, this transmission could be connected with Taichō's opening of Haku-san in 719, and could also be the reason why the *engi* of many temples—for example, Anjo-ji 安居寺 in Etchū—claim that Zenmui Sanzō once lived there.

Since physical remains, too, have thus changed with the passage of time, one must reconstruct their past by examining the site itself and by gathering lore related to it. For example, the position of Yoshino itself has varied greatly. The first “Yoshino” was Hiso 比曾 (in Ōyodo-chō 大淀町, Yoshino), across Takatori-yama 高取山 from Asuka 飛鳥. This was the site of Yoshino-dera 吉野寺 (also known as Hiso-dera 比蘇寺, Genkō-ji 現光寺 or Seson-ji 世尊寺). However, the Kinpusen “Yoshino” was above Miyataki 宮滝, where Emperors Tenmu and Jitō had their Yoshino palace. In other words, it was Aone-ga-mine 青根ヶ峰 (859 m.), where Kinpu Jinja now stands. The present “Oku-no-senbon” 奥之千本, a level space where one now finds Saigyō-an 西行庵 and the spot known as Kokeshimizu 苔清水, was a part of it. Moreover, the place names Aizen 愛染 and Hōtō 宝塔, found in the same area, are associated with the former site of Anzen-ji, the Middle Hall of Kinpusen. Aizen is the site of Anzen-ji itself. At Hōtō, the foundation of the temple's pagoda is still visible. According to the late Nakai Zenryū 中井禅隆, the resident priest of Kizō-in 喜藏院 in Yoshino, it was still standing after the Meiji Restoration, and simply collapsed later.

My fieldwork at Yoshino taught me that the “opening” of a

Shugendo mountain normally began with establishing the Middle Shrine or Middle Hall. This was true at Haku-san, where the process began with the *chūkyō*, that is, with the Middle Shrine on the Kaga side. The Upper and Lower Shrines associated with the *sanbaba* came later. At Kōya-san, too, the “opening” began with the Middle Shrine (the Amano-sha) then continued with the establishment of the Upper Shrine (the Amano Shisha 四社 Myōjin shrine of Kongōbu-ji) and various Lower Shrines in the villages around the base of the mountain (Niu 丹生 Myōjin shrines). Yoshino itself began with Kinshō 金精 Myōjin (Kinpu Jinja), the Middle Shrine, and with Anzen-ji (Zaō-dō), the Middle Hall. Then came the Zaōdō on Sanjō-ga-take and the Zaō-dō below the mountain—the present Kinpusen-ji. Everywhere, however, the Middle Shrine and Middle Hall were the first to be abandoned. As a result, the “opening” of the mountain appears to have begun either from its summit or from its base.

At Aizen, one finds the remains of extensive residence halls. The same is true at Amano on Kōya-san, at Kaga-no-baba (a Middle Shrine) on Haku-san, and at Ashikura-ji 芦峯寺 (Chūgū-ji 中宮寺) on Tate-yama. In the case of Aizen, the village of Kisa-dani 喜佐谷, on the way from Miyataki to Aizen, is said to have been the original yamabushi community. Above Aizen stretches a level space known as Hiro-sengen 広千軒,⁷ now a cryptomeria wood. Here too there seem to have been many residence halls, and there is also a cemetery. At nearby Iwakura, there are *bō* even now, but in the past there were so many that the place was called Iwakura-sengen. Fujiwara no Michinaga stayed the night there when he made his pilgrimage to Kinpusen in 1007; he went on to bury sutras at Aizen. The remains of other clusters of residence halls survive in many places. *Taiheiki* for Genkō 3 (1333) (*kan* 7, “Yoshino-jō ikusa no koto” 吉野城軍事) describes the troops of Nikaidō Michimori sweeping down from “Aizen Hōtō,” uttering sharp battle cries and setting fire to every building along the way.

There was a large yamabushi community at Torisumi 鳥栖, too, about a kilometer away. This is probably where the young Kūkai stayed, and where many Shingon-affiliated yamabushi lived after him. Perhaps this is where Shōbō, together with his disciples Kangen and Jōsū, performed the *Buju kanjō* 峯授灌頂 (“initiation into the mysteries of the peak”) in Shōtai 3 (900). This was the beginning of the

⁷ Translator’s note: *Sengen* means literally “a thousand houses.”

Daigo-ji line of Shugendo. Later on, Torisumi Hōkaku-ji 鳳閣寺 became the *sō-furegashira* 総触頭 of Tōzan Shugendo.

The site of the Daikōdō 大講堂 (“great lecture hall”) of Anzen-ji presents an interesting problem which I do not pretend to have solved. If, as I believe, the Daikōdō was the heart of a Shugendo temple, this one should have been situated on the level ground at either Kokeshimizu or Hōtō; but both sites seemed a little constricted. At any rate, Shugendo temples had neither a Kondō 金堂 (“golden hall”) nor a Hondō 本堂 (“main hall”). The building corresponding to either of these was the mountain deity’s shrine itself, for which the Daikōdō—or so I believe—was the Haiden 拜殿 (“worship hall”). It was called the *nagatoko* 長床 (“long house”), and in most cases was a long, narrow building. The foundation stones of a good example are visible at Heisen-ji Haku-san Jinja in Echizen. Moreover, the vast Haiden of Nagataki Haku-san Jinja surely imitates an earlier Daikōdō; and one sees next to it, on old maps, a Honji-dō 本地堂 which was perhaps a forerunner of the shrine’s Hondō. There were, however, places with both a Haiden and a Kōdō. There, the building where the priest recited *norito* for the mountain deity, and the building where the *yamabushi* gathered, were presumably separate.

After *shinbutsu bunri*, the Daikōdō of many Shugendo mountains became a shrine hall: a Haiden at Iwaki-san Jinja, Hiko-san Jinja and Nagataki Haku-san Jinja, and at Dewa Jinja on Haguro-san a combination Shinden 神殿 /Haiden where the innermost sanctuary enshrines the deities of Haguro San-zan and Kumano. Elsewhere, however, as at the Okusha 奥社 of Togakushi or at Heisen-ji Haku-san Jinja, there is nothing left but foundation stones. The *yamabushi* used to gather at the Daikōdō for religious or other assemblies, whenever they heard the call of the conch shell, the bell and the wooden clappers (*itagi* 板木).

An important feature of any Shugendo mountain was the *kekkaï* 結界 (“restricted zone”). At first, this boundary might not be crossed by any unclean person, but later the “restricted zone” became exclusively a *nyonin* 女人 *kekkaï*, closed only to women. The *nyonin kekkaï* of Ōmine still survives as an area measuring some four kilometers north-south and three kilometers east-west, and centered on Sanjō-ga-take. The last time I myself climbed Sanjō-ga-take, in 1969, the *nyonin kekkaï* began at Aizen, some thirty kilometers before the summit. The next year, however, the whole area up to Takahara-no-tsuji 高原辻 was opened up to all visitors. Since Aizen, where the

old *kekkaï* had begun, was the Middle Shrine, the earlier boundary had clearly acknowledged the sacredness of the realm beyond it. At Haku-san, too, the Heian-period *Shira-yama no ki* clearly specifies that women were not allowed beyond Itoshiro Chūkyo Jinja (SAKURAI 1975, p. 300).

At Kōya-san, the *nyonin kekkaï* is explained by saying that the presence of women would have distracted the monks from their studies. The real reason for it, however, was that Kōya-san was a Shugendo mountain. Therefore, the *kekkaï* now marked by the Nyonin-dō 女人堂 (“women’s hall”) and the Daimon 大門 (“great gate”) presumably represents a shrinking of the original boundary. Earlier, the *kekkaï* must have begun further away at Amano, the Middle Shrine; which would be why the Kōya *hijiri* kept their wives and children at Amano. Later, the boundary apparently came to be marked by the Oshiage-iwa 押上岩 (“lifted-up rock”). Legend has it that when Kōbō Daishi’s mother stepped onto the mountain itself, in violation of the *kekkaï*, she immediately began to menstruate and fire rained from the heavens; while at the same time, Kōbō Daishi lifted up this rock before her to bar her advance.

Another example of a shrinking *kekkaï* can be found at Togakushi. According to *Kenkō-ji ruki*, dated Chōroku 2 (1458), in Kōhei 1 (1058) the *kekkaï* reached to the spot known as Fushigami 伏拝 near Hōkō-in 宝光院. Among the *san’in* (Three Halls) of Togakushi, Hōkō-in corresponds to the Lower Hall. In the Kamakura period, however, the boundary was moved up to the Middle Shrine, where the remains of the Nyonin-dō can still be seen beside the path. Then, in the Edo period, women were allowed all the way up to the Oku-sha at Koshimizu-hara 越水原. Since such changes in the *kekkaï* boundary may be connected with fluctuations in the vigor of the Shugendo communities, they deserve careful study. *Kekkaï-ishi* (“boundary stones”) and their lore are important in this regard. So are the probably related *uba-ishi* (“old woman stones”) and *shibari-ishi* (“binding stones”).

Another Shugendo tradition which died out long ago is that of the Jōka-dō 常火堂 (“pure fire hall”), where there burned an eternal, sacred flame. The link between Shugendo and sacred fire deserves further study, for fire is an important theme in Japanese religion. I discovered only in 1973, from an old Haguro-san map which was part of a Shugendo exhibition, that a Jōka-dō had once stood on the mountain. Going straight the site itself, I found the building’s

remains at the Oku-no-in. The fire was believed to have been lit either by the Haguro-san "opener," Hiruko-no-ōji 蜂子皇子, or by his successor, Kōshun Ajari 弘俊阿闍梨. It was tended by the *jōka bettō* 常火別当 ("warden of the sacred flame") who resided at Hijiri-no-bō 聖之坊. At Haguro-san, the word *hijiri* often designates specifically Hiruko-no-ōji or Kōshun, but in this case it had a broader meaning. In fact, it clearly designated the so-called *matsu-hijiri* 松聖 ("torch *hijiri*") of the mountain. Thus, Hijiri-no-bō was the residence of the *matsu-hijiri* charged with lighting the sacred flame. No doubt the practice which qualified one to act as *matsu-hijiri*, and the proper method of lighting the flame, can still be seen in the *matsu-uchi* 松撃 ("torch-lighting") or *matsu-hijiri gyōji* (in Shinto terminology, *shōrei-sai* 松例祭) which is still performed at Haguro-san on the last day of the year.

Other, still-surviving examples of sacred fires include the *kiezu no hi* 消えずの火 ("ever-burning flame") in the Reika-dō 靈火堂 at the summit of Mt. Misen 弥山 on Itsukushima 宮嶋; and the fire by the same name at Kobu 古峯 Jinja, formerly a building used by the Shugendo of Nikkō 日光. Water boiled over these flames is believed to avert disasters and to summon good fortune. However, there are many sites where the fire no longer burns, even though the Jōka-dō itself still exists. An example is the Jōka-dō at the Oku-no-in of Yamadera Ryūshaku-ji 山寺立石寺. An old monk of the temple told me that the warden of the Jōka-dō served at the same time as the *nyōhō-kyō hijiri* 如法經聖 (*hijiri* in charge of the ritual copying of the *Lotus Sutra*). This precious clue shows that the *hijiri* who lit the sacred fire had to have abolished all sins thanks to *Lotus Sutra* practices, and to be as pure as a kami or buddha. At Hōki Daisen in the Edo period, two *nyōhō shugyōsha* used to climb Misen and bring down pure water with which to copy the sutra. No doubt they were connected with both pure water and pure fire.

Concluding Remarks

Thus, the different kinds of Shugendo lore are vital materials for research on Shugendo. Hitherto, scholars have tended to work with either documents or artifacts. However, studies of Shugendo rites and observances have recently been increasing, which is a sign that the value of this lore is beginning to be recognized. Still, oral traditions continue to be neglected, since investigators have not known

exactly how to use them. Yet to one who has grasped the right approach, the least hint from a yamabushi or from someone versed in local lore can become a valuable clue.

Although unknown Shugendo documents undoubtedly remain to be discovered, there is a limit to the information they can provide. Moreover, many passages, even in documents which have been pored over repeatedly by researchers, remain exceedingly difficult to understand. To interpret them correctly, one has no choice but to rely on the collection and analysis of the kind of materials I have examined here. I can only hope that this approach to Shugendo studies will flourish in years to come, and that future scholars will go far beyond what I myself have been able to do.

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