

Editors' Introduction

Royall TYLER and Paul L. SWANSON

"The Mountain is not merely something eternally sublime. It has a great historical and spiritual meaning for us. . . . From it came the Law, from it came the Gospel in the Sermon on the Mount. We may truly say that the highest religion is the Religion of the Mountain."

— spoken by General Smuts of South Africa as he unveiled the Mountain Club War Memorial on the summit of Table Mountain, 1923.

— quoted by Alan Paton in his final essay, published after his death in TIME magazine, 25 April 1988, p. 106.

Almost anyone can sense the mystic appeal of mountains. Mountains are, or transcribe in visible form, the lofty unknown. In principle accessible to humans, they are still a realm apart, purer than our daily world yet inhabited by awesome, elemental powers which may give life or kill. Knowledge comes from, or can be found in the mountains. In mountains dwell the uncomfortably potent spirits of the dead.

Intuitions like these are the common heritage of humanity, but perhaps no people have acted on them more fully than the Japanese. Mountain cults have been prominent in Japan since early times. In fact, mountains are a fundamental feature of the Japanese world. Religious fashions may come and go, but the mountains remain. For example, the popular cult of Atago-yama 愛宕山 near Kyoto survived the *shinbutsu-bunri* 神仏分離 ("separation of kami and buddhas") movement of the early Meiji period, even though the official identity and character of the mountain's deities changed completely. In an

earlier age, Kasuga-yama, which rises beside the Kasuga Shrine in Nara, presided in nearly every *Kasuga-mandara* painting over a constantly shifting array of "Shinto" and "Buddhist" deities. In a sense, no account of even the most elaborate mountain cult is more than an interminable footnote to the mountain's simple, numinous presence.

The central tradition of Japanese mountain religion is Shugendo. No doubt there were once pre-Shugendo mountain cults, just as there are post-Shugendo mountain cults (that of Mt. Fuji, for instance) which arose in the Edo period and after. However, it is probably fair to say that for many centuries, all mountain cults in Japan were dominated by Shugendo and, more concretely, by Shugendo adepts. Every mountain famous in song and story was then a Shugendo mountain; and so were hundreds, perhaps thousands of lesser peaks. The great ones included Hikosan 英彦山, Daisen 大山, Ōmine 大峰, Togakushi 戸隠, Hakusan 白山, Ontake 御嶽, Tateyama 立山, and the three peaks of Gassan 月山, Yudono 湯殿 and Haguro 羽黒, not to mention Fuji itself—towering presences in the intricate sacred geography of the Japanese islands. Each had its own religious history, its own set of deities, its own web of associations with other sacred sites, and its own community of Shugendo practitioners. Intensely idiosyncratic features of the cult—often linked with accidents of history or geography—were counterbalanced by patterns of thought, organization and action which recurred from mountain to mountain and which characterized Shugendo as a whole. These patterns included not only the complex conduct of the mountain cult proper, but a broader sort of "Shugendo culture" which played a significant part in the evolution of Japanese culture as a whole. The Shugendo contribution to the performing arts is now particularly well recognized.

The visitor to Japan may still come, unwarned, upon intriguing figures wearing tiny black caps and bright pom-poms, with conch shells at their waists and deerskin sit-upons flapping behind them, striding along a street or even stepping out of a bus—real yamabushi! The same visitor may even watch yamabushi performing an impressive *saitō goma* rite. One who wishes to learn more can, with any luck, join a yamabushi pilgrimage through the Ōmine or Katsuragi range, or elsewhere, and so participate in contemporary Shugendo. In short, Shugendo is alive even now.

The fact that Shugendo survived, even though it was frankly out-

lawed at the time of *shinbutsu bunri*, shows how deeply it is rooted in Japan. But seen in historical perspective, modern Shugendo is only a shadow of the past. Even in the Edo period, Shugendo was an old tree, no longer growing. In truth, Shugendo represents a phase of Japanese religion—in fact, of Japanese culture as a whole—which reached its peak long ago. Though now peripheral, in the middle and late Heian period, and into Kamakura times, it was definitely “mainstream.” Mountain pilgrimage and practice then engaged the interest and patronage of the greatest nobles in the land, clerical or lay; and Shugendo institutions commanded such material power that, for example, yamabushi forces played an important role in the late twelfth-century Genpei wars.

Japanese religion was then intensely involved with ideas of sacred landscape, even as the literary tradition was defining its own, canonical understanding of poetic geography. *Honji-suijaku* 本地垂迹 syncretic faith, which links specific Japanese kami and places (including mountains) with the universal deities of the Buddhist pantheon, attained its classic form during this same period. Clearly, both mature Shugendo and mature *honji-suijaku* thought were expressions of a deeper intellectual trend—one integrated, in turn, with the *kenmitsu* 頭密 (“exoteric-esoteric”) Buddhism characteristic of Heian times. When, in the Kamakura and Muromachi periods, the creative energy of Japanese religion gradually shifted elsewhere, *kenmitsu* Buddhism broke up; *honji sui jaku* faith became conventional; and Shugendo, losing its aristocratic connections, settled down as an established aspect of popular religion. Several articles in this collection show what sort of detective work must be done, with one sort of materials or another, in order to piece together even a small facet of Shugendo’s vigorous past.

We offer the reader this collection of articles on Shugendo and Japanese mountain religion partly to acknowledge previous work on the subject, and partly to help stimulate further inquiry. Never an easy topic, Shugendo studies are particularly difficult for the non-Japanese researcher to pursue from abroad. Nonetheless, Shugendo has been introduced in three Western languages, thanks to Gaston Renondeau (1965), Hartmut O. Rotermund (1968), and H. Byron Earhart (1970); while closely related matters have been touched on in such works as those of Nelly Naumann (1963–1964) and Carmen Blacker (1975). A complete Western-language bibliography relevant to Shugendo studies would be far longer than this brief list and is

beyond the scope of this special issue (though we had originally hoped to provide one). Much more remains to be done. The topic can be approached in a great many ways, but there is a particular need to evaluate more discerningly the significance of Shugendo, in a broad sense, in Japanese religion and history. The complexity and elusiveness of the subject does not make this an easy project. There is also a great need, which non-Japanese scholars especially can help to meet, for a better understanding of Shugendo not just as a Japanese phenomenon, but as an aspect of the religion of Buddhist Asia.

The intellectual climate generated by the Meiji period, and the disrepute into which Shugendo then fell, did not encourage Japanese scholars to turn their attention quickly to Shugendo. Still, the publication of the *Shugendō shōsho* 修驗道章疏 volumes of *Nihon daizōkyō* 日本大藏經, originally in the second decade of this century (reprinted in 1985), made available the raw material for much future work. Heaps of other Shugendo documents, some published but most languishing in more or less tattered and endangered manuscripts, still await attention. Eventually, accounts of Shugendo began to appear. Important survey treatments include those of Murakami Toshio (1943), Wakamori Tarō (1972), Murayama Shūichi (1970), Miyake Hitoshi (1973, 1985a, 1985b), and Gorai Shigeru (1975–1984, 1980).

In the last ten years or fifteen years, Shugendo has begun to attract in Japan the attention it really deserves. Some of the major works and scholars have just been listed, yet anyone with even a slight acquaintance with this subject quickly realizes the vast amount of material waiting to be studied, and the variety and number of people, both public and private, who are involved in this work. There are not only many eminently qualified academic figures in this and related fields, but also innumerable local figures (such as Niko Ryōei of Nachi whose private writings on Kumano Shugendo—as yet unpublished—number over a hundred handwritten volumes) without any public or academic affiliation and whose vast knowledge of their specific local lore is matched only by their enthusiasm for the subject. This situation made it notably difficult to choose the “best” or even “representative” Japanese articles to translate for this collection. Many articles were considered and laid aside for a variety of reasons; some required too many illustrations, others were not conducive to translation into English, and still others (e.g. on Shugendo and Taoism) were beyond the expertise of the editors to render

into intelligible English. Our goal from the beginning was not only to provide representative articles by major figures in this area, but also to provide a balanced perspective and a variety of topics which would reflect the many-faceted nature of Shugendo and mountain religion in Japan. The choices have been made, leaving the editors with a renewed sense of the richness of the tradition and the vast amount of material which is still available for study.

Outline of Articles

Much of the recent interest in Shugendo is due to the labors of Miyake Hitoshi and Gorai Shigeru. The major enterprises of these two scholars stand out like twin mountains, each as different from the other, and as complementary, as the Kongōkai and Taizōkai mandalas which Shugendo thought so often projects onto sacred peaks. To Miyake's set of mighty tomes, written by a single scholar thoroughly conscious of religious studies as a contemporary research field, corresponds the still more massive, collective enterprise presided over by Gorai, who has sought to explore through Shugendo the fundamental genius of the Japanese people. But despite their labors, and those of others who might have deserved mention here as well, there is much more to do, as Gorai himself makes plain in his article included here.

For these reasons we begin this special issue with translations of works by Miyake and Gorai. Miyake's article on Shugendo ritual is based on the concluding summary chapter of his classic study *Shugendō girei no kenkyū*, the first of his many major works (originally published in 1970, with an expanded edition reprinted in 1985). The current article was supplemented by the editors during translation (with Miyake's support and approval) with details from the main body of *Shugendō girei no kenkyū*, since the chapter assumes an acquaintance with material earlier in the book which would probably not be available to the English reader. It provides a theoretical framework, definitions, and explanations of Shugendo rituals by one of the most eminent Japanese scholars in the field of religious studies today.

Gorai Shigeru's article on Shugendo lore is a good example of his encyclopedic knowledge of the subject and missionary zeal in proclaiming its importance for understanding Japanese religion and culture. The mass of detail presented here also illustrates the kind of

practically inaccessible minutiae facing the researcher in this field. The two articles by Miyake and Gorai also illustrate the very different approaches taken by these scholars.

Royall Tyler's study of Kōfuku-ji and Shugendo casts new light on the subject by focussing on an often ignored aspect of Shugendo. It is assumed by many that Shugendo is a religion of the "masses," a "popular" religion without the sophistication of the more "urbane" traditions. Tyler shows, however, that Shugendo was a religion of the aristocracy as much as of the "common" people, and that such a distinction is neither appropriate nor useful. Kōfuku-ji, the Fujiwara clan temple and the head of the scholastic Hossō school, was as much involved in Shugendo and mountain religion as other religious organizations. In any case, his results should cause us to re-examine our assumptions concerning the role of Shugendo in Japanese history.

Wakamori Tarō's article on *hashiramatsu* provides another glimpse at a Shugendo ritual as it was practiced at Togakushi in Nagano. It provides the background to a religious ritual which is still performed in many places throughout Japan. Sawa Ryūken's article on Shugendo art was chosen not only for its discussion of various Shugendo-related art forms, but also because it illustrates (along with Gorai's article) the kind of detective work required to sort out the information that is available in the field of Shugendo studies.

H. Byron Earhart has contributed an advance look at his continuing research on Mt. Fuji, one of the most well-known symbols of Japan itself. Mt. Fuji is of interest not only as the most famous mountain of Japan, but also as an illustration of an area where, unlike Kumano and Haguro, direct Shugendo influence has almost disappeared and been replaced by mountain beliefs and practices of its own. Earhart traces this process and outlines the unique developments surrounding this "holy peak."

In the last article in this collection Susan Tyler examines an important aspect of Shugendo in her study of *honji-suijaku* faith. The syncretistic nature of Shugendo is perhaps its most important element. The fact that Buddhism and Shinto (and other traditions) were not considered separate, but were part and parcel of mainstream religious activities for much of Japanese history, is a topic gaining increasing attention. This study serves as a worthy closing to our special issue.

A few editorial comments: It is always difficult to decide where to draw the line with regard to italicising and addition of diacritical marks. We have decided to use many terms as English words; thus we use Shugendo (as in Shinto), not Shugendō. Terms which have entered the English language are used as such: e.g. mandala, mudra, sutra, matsuri, nenbutsu. Shugendo terms which appear often in many articles are also treated as English words: e.g. yamabushi, shugenja, sendatsu, matsuri, kami. Other, less common words, are given in italics with diacritical marks: e.g. *mikkyō*, *bettō*, *nyūbu*, *hashiramatsu*. We have also deviated somewhat from the standard JJRS style for references. The great number of Japanese references (and the usually obvious meaning of their titles) has led us to refrain from giving the English translation for titles (usually given in square brackets after the *kanji*). We have also listed references to classical words by title (e.g. *Chūyūki*), not the modern editor, to make references in the articles more accessible.

Finally, we would like to thank Miyagi Tainen of Shōgō-in for his advice and permission to use their Kumano mandala for the frontispiece to this issue, and the Kyoto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan for providing the negative for its reproduction.

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