

Conflict Between Shugendō and the New Religions of Bakumatsu Japan

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The subject of this essay is the conflict that arose during the Bakumatsu period (mid-nineteenth century) between Shugendō and three newly emerging religious associations: Kurozumikyō, Tenrikyō, and Konkōkyō. It examines the background of Shugendō in the Tokugawa period, its practices and rituals, and then discusses the points of conflict with the New Religions, namely healing rituals and constructions of gender. The study concludes that the conflicts grew not only out of competition for followers and their material resources, but also from fundamentally irreconcilable rationales for religious practice and equally basic differences in constructions of gender, concepts of the person, and theology.

Examples of the Conflict

THE FOLLOWING INCIDENT is recorded in the early history of Kurozumikyō 黒住教:

One morning, a neighbor happened to look over towards the roof of Kurozumi Munetada's 黒住宗忠 (1780-1850) house and saw that it was on fire. Happily, not much damage was done, but upon climbing up to inspect the roof, the neighbor found a torch. He brought it down, showed it to the founder, and said, "What a close call. The roof was torched in seven places, but none of them really caught fire. Who would do such a frightful, unforgivable thing?" The founder took the torch,

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thanked the neighbor, and then began to contemplate the arsonist's state of mind. What if his house had burned? What if the neighbors' houses had been burned? Arson was a serious crime, subject to heavy punishment. How had the criminal come to hate the founder so much that he would do such a thing? And how bitter he must feel that he had failed. The founder began to pray that the criminal would have a change of heart. He cleansed the torch, purified it with salt, and offered it up on the altar. He decided to offer prayers daily for a period of three weeks in order to change the arsonist's heart.

On the evening of the last day of the three weeks of prayer, a stranger appeared at the door. He said, "About twenty days ago, as a result of confusion in my heart, I committed an unforgivable deed and set fire to your roof, but no matter how hard I tried to set it alight, it wouldn't catch fire. The roof is well-dried thatch, so it should have ignited right away, but though I tried in seven places, it was useless. I realized how precious your life is, and I became afraid, so I ran away, leaving the torch behind. Please forgive me." So saying, he apologized from the bottom of his heart.

The founder then explained his teaching to the arsonist, forgave him, and encouraged him to follow the way. The arsonist was moved to tears, and in time he became a stalwart follower.

The arsonist was a *shugenja* 修験者, one who performed *kitō* 祈禱, someone embittered by the increase in the founder's following. His income was threatened, and he was so resentful that at last he had tried to set fire to the founder's house.

(KŌMOTO 1960, pp. 1-4)



The following incidents are from Tenrikyō 天理教 history, the first having occurred in 1864 and the second in 1866:

In the first month of the year, the founder [Nakayama Miki 中山みき, 1798-1887] travelled to Ando village and stayed there for forty days. People from villages all around came in great numbers to receive her blessings. A physician from Namimatsu village named Furukawa Bungo appeared, bringing with him *shugenja* from the Kongō-in temple. They pushed their way into the founder's quarters and cursed her as a fox or a badger. In that instant, the founder's manner changed, and she addressed them severely, saying, "Ask whatever you wish."

Then Bungo put difficult questions to her one after another.

The founder replied to each one, enlightening him without difficulty. Bungo was frightened at this and bowed down before her. Then he went away.

(TENRIKYŌ KYŌKAI HONBU 1956, pp. 46–47)

One day in the autumn, several *yamabushi* 山伏 from Koizumi Fudō-in 小泉不動院 came to the founder's residence and demanded to see her. They interrogated her with difficult questions, but the founder was unruffled and answered them one by one. The *yamabushi* became angrier and more coarse in their speech, but the founder remained tranquil. Seeing that their inquisition was useless, they brandished their swords, and, climbing up on the altar, slashed two great drums placed there. Then they threw down the lamps, cut them to pieces, and cut the walls to shreds. Rampaging as they went, they proceeded to the house of Miki's follower, Yamanaka Chūshichi, two leagues to the southwest. They stomped in, threw down the *gohei* 御幣 from the altar, and beat Yamanaka on the head. Then they turned north and went to the Furuichi magistrate and filed a complaint. The result was an official investigation.

(TENRIKYŌ KYŌKAI HONBU 1956, pp. 46–47)



Similar events occurred in the early days of Konkōkyō 金光教 as well. On the twenty-fourth day of the third month, 1862, for example, two *yamabushi* of Renkō-in 蓮行院 came to Ono Shiemon, headman of Ōtani village, Okayama. They demanded that he order Kawate Bunjirō 川手文治郎 (1814–1883), the founder of Konkōkyō, to cease his rites for the deity Konjin 金神, who the *yamabushi* considered to be a malevolent deity. The headman reluctantly agreed.

As a member of the *hyakushō* 百姓 (farmer) class, Bunjirō was required by law to continue working the land unless he successfully petitioned for release from this obligation. As it was, the headman had been turning a blind eye to the fact that Bunjirō had quit farming and taken up the life of a full-time religious professional, worshipping before an altar to Konjin in his residence. The *yamabushi* were thus in a position to pressure Ono to stop Bunjirō's activities, as they could have had the headman punished if they had chosen to report him (KONKŌKYŌ HONBU KYŌCHŌ 1953, pp. 138–145).

In the hamlets adjacent to Kawate's village of Ōtani, there were no less than twenty-two *yamabushi* temples. The area was the stronghold of Kojima Goryūshugen 兎島五流修験, centered in a temple called Sonryū-in 尊龍院. Throughout the Tokugawa period this line of

Shugendō, affiliated with the Honzan-ha 本山派, or Tendai 天台, line of Shugendō, had had a virtual monopoly on popular religious rites in many regions of the Okayama *han*. It is hardly surprising that its yamabushi refused to stand idly by and allow an unauthorized upstart like Bunjirō to encroach on their turf.

On the day following Renkō-in's first petition to the headman, the yamabushi returned and demanded permission to confiscate and burn Bunjirō's altar equipment. The headman refused this request, but he allowed the altar goods to be taken from Bunjirō and stored in his own storeroom until a proper adjudication of the case could be made.

Actually, Renkō-in's formal request for Bunjirō's altar equipment followed a much stricter protocol than its attack eight days earlier on the altar of one of Bunjirō's disciples, Saitō Jū'emon, when it confiscated a new altar curtain, mirrors, metal *gohei*, and altar lamps without so much as a by-your-leave.

In the seventh month of 1862, the headman received another yamabushi complaint about Bunjirō, this time from a temple called Chikyō-in 智教院. Its representatives accused Bunjirō of witchcraft, saying that he had sent his helping spirit, a badger, to torment one of their followers. They had complained to Bunjirō about the matter directly, they said, but had received no satisfaction, and now wanted permission to seize Bunjirō in order to get to the heart of the matter. The headman refused to take up the case publicly.

No doubt wishing to put an end to these confrontations, Bunjirō acquired a yamabushi license from Sonryū-in through the good offices of one of his followers. However, the yamabushi used this connection to demand that Bunjirō make a monetary contribution to their Kyoto sect headquarters temple, Shōgo-in 聖護院. When Bunjirō refused, they confiscated his license, and no amount of negotiation could retrieve it. In none of these incidents did Bunjirō defend himself, nor did he retaliate or allow his followers to do so.

Introduction

In spite of stereotyped notions to the contrary, conflict has been a constant element of Japanese religious history. It has taken many forms, including doctrinal argument, military engagement (with other religious or secular forces), internecine schism, and struggles to command the loyalties of followers. There have also been a variety of clashes with civil administrations regarding such matters as the right to proselytize publicly, the propriety of such ritual forms as ecstatic

dance or shamanic trance, the freedom of the populace to assemble for participation in these observances, and the right of believers to disburse their personal or communal assets in support of their chosen group. Conflict relating to faith healing has been a prominent feature in the history of new religions.

The subject of this essay is the conflict that arose during the Bakumatsu era (roughly 1830 to 1868) between Shugendō and three newly emerging religious associations: Kurozumikyō, Tenrikyō, and Konkōkyō. The antagonists of the New Religions in the incidents just mentioned were principally shugenja or yamabushi,¹ practitioners of Shugendō. In order to understand these confrontations, it is necessary to investigate the character of Shugendō in the early modern period, particularly in its final decades. The yamabushi played a variety of roles central to the conduct of individual, family, and communal religious life in this period. They held “parish” territories formalized to the extent that they could be legally bought, sold, and inherited. Many had charge of ordinary Buddhist temples or Shinto shrines in addition to their Shugendō temples. They were an established presence in the communities of virtually all areas of the country. Thus it is not to be expected that they would tolerate unauthorized competition from the New Religions, which after all lacked the legal sanction enjoyed by Shugendō.

The confrontation of Shugendō and the New Religions included aspects of economic threat, affront to established authority, and a basic incongruence of religious worldview. Yamabushi lost important revenues when their customary parishioners began to visit leaders of the New Religions for rites of healing and safe childbirth, and for general counsel. Who, the shugenja may have wondered, did these unordained, unauthorized upstarts think they were? Did they think that their prayers would be effective, untrained as they were in the performance of the proper rituals?

From the perspective of the newly emerging religious leaders, an attack by the yamabushi could only be understood as a *hōnan* 法難, a great persecution. Leaders and followers of these New Religions came under physical assault during these confrontations, and their lives were sometimes endangered. Furthermore, the new associations could not establish themselves if the communities in which they lived were against them. The yamabushi were, among other things, their neighbors, and the idea of provoking them to the point where they would commit arson, battery, or vandalism, must have been frighten-

¹ The terms are interchangeable.

ing. Conservative fellow villagers were more likely to side with established traditions than with newly arisen religious movements. This was all the more so when the deity in question was, as in Tenrikyō, elevated far beyond its status in popular understanding, or, as in *Kōnkōkyō*, transformed from what was previously an evil being. The yamabushi were in a position to mobilize sufficient communal sentiment against the New Religions to wipe them out.

Thus, the New Religions had to take these confrontations very seriously. That they did so is proven by the attention given to incidents of conflict in their separate official histories, whose records are our best source of information about the confrontation with Shugendō. In contrast, there are virtually no Shugendō documents relating to any of these incidents, suggesting that for Shugendō these incidents did not loom so large.²

Shugendō in the Tokugawa Period

Shugendō's history began with peripatetic mendicant ascetics training in the mountains, of whom En no Gyōja 役行者 (seventh century) is the most famous early example. From the mid- to late Heian period, Kumano 熊野 and Yoshino 吉野 became favored destinations for aristocratic and imperial pilgrimage, and groups of ascetics began to form around these two mountainous areas. These ascetics organized groups for pilgrimage to Kumano, which became the nuclei for provincial parishes. The Kumano temple began to cultivate the more powerful of these organizers, and the result was the formation of a "sect" called Honzan-ha, centered at the Kyoto temple of Shōgo-in, which had formed a special link with Kumano through the pilgrimages of Emperor Shirakawa.

Yoshino's ascetics had strong ties to Shingon 真言 Buddhism. Their cult center was Mt. Ōmine 大峰, midway between Yoshino and Kumano, and they were further linked to the Kyoto temple of Daigo Sanbō-in 醍醐三宝山. These Shingon-affiliated mountain ascetics formed a second "sect" of Shugendō practice called the Tōzan-ha 当山派 (MIYAKE 1978, pp. 32-36). From about the sixteenth century, En no Gyōja was promoted as the "founder" of Shugendō as a whole, and he became deified in legend, art, and drama (particularly *jōruri* 浄瑠璃 puppet theatre; MIYAKE 1985, p. 99).

Important changes in the character of Shugendō occurred early in

² It is possible that modern accounts of the New Religions' conflicts with Shugendō have enlarged upon the difficulties the New Religions had to overcome, in order to heighten the impression of a heroic struggle, but we cannot be certain that this was the case.

the Tokugawa period, partly as a result of the 1613 regulation requiring all yamabushi to become affiliated either with the Honzan or the Tōzan line.³ With the incorporation of the yamabushi into this sectarian framework their sphere of activity widened, and their links with the ordinary populace proliferated. As they gained more authority, however, they also became more secularized (WAKAMORI 1972, p. 246). Both lines of yamabushi were permitted to marry and eat meat (MURAKAMI 1978, p. 170). Yamabushi abandoned their former peripatetic mendicancy for a sedentary life in village society. There they became concerned principally with the performance of rituals for a regular clientele, organized into stable parish territories. The populace of these parishes was further organized into confraternities that worshipped specific deities and functioned as pilgrimage associations (MIYAKE 1981, pp. 28–31; MIYAMOTO 1984, pp. 20–21).⁴

Mountain asceticism has consistently provided the rationale for the power of the yamabushi and the effectiveness of their ritual. Through mountain asceticism, it is believed, the practitioner can become one with the objects of worship (Fudō 不動, Shōten 聖天, Zaō Gongen 藏王権現, and diverse mountain spirits) and acquire the powers symbolized by them and by the mountains themselves. The mountains represent an enclosed, sacred realm (*kekkaï* 結界) bounded off from the secular world. They are seen as the “landing pad” for deities when they descend to earth, and as the dwelling place of the ancestors, of the god of water, of the protective deities of birth and hunting, and of the *yama no kami* 山の神 (mountain god). Furthermore, in a Buddhist mode they can be regarded as “incarnating” the actual body of the cosmic Buddha, or as representing the Pure Land, the Diamond World, or the Womb World. Especially in connection with the notion of “mountain as Womb World,” the idea of “mountain as cosmic mother” emerges (MIYAKE 1975, pp. 281–86).

This much of the basic rationale for yamabushi practice has remained largely unchanged throughout the history of Shugendō. What changed is the interpretation of the primary goal or purpose of

³ The Haguro line of Shugendō managed, however, to maintain its independence from both the Honzan-ha and the Tozan-ha (MIYAKE 1978, p. 48).

⁴ MIYAMOTO identifies four distinct types of yamabushi in the Tokugawa period (1984, pp. 2–18). First, the homeless mendicant ascetics, who persisted to a small and increasingly minor extent; second, the peregrinating ascetics (*kaikoku hijiri*), who popularized mountain cult sites; third, the traveling representatives of mountain cult sites, who worked in conjunction with village yamabushi to organize pilgrimages to the sites they represented; fourth, the village yamabushi or shugenja, who lived settled lives in communities as described in the text above. To these four should be added the female shamans (*miko*, etc.), who were connected to the mountain cults either as independent practitioners or as partners with the male yamabushi.

yamabushi asceticism. In the Nara period yamabushi remained in mountain caves for extended periods chanting *darani* 陀羅尼 in a quest for individual salvation. By the late Kamakura period, however, personal salvation had become a more remote goal, no doubt because of the influence of the doctrine of the “latter days of the Dharma” (*mappō* 末法). In its place there developed an understanding of mountain asceticism as effective for *zange metsuzai* 懺悔滅罪 (destroying karmic hindrances through repentance). In the Muromachi period the rites for entering the mountains and practicing asceticism became standardized, contributing to a general formalization of the cult (MIYAKE 1978, pp. 39–44). Throughout these eras the primary goal of Shugendō asceticism focused on the individual ascetic and his acquisition of spiritual power, but with a growing tendency for the goal of salvation to become ever more distanced.

During the Tokugawa period a major change in the rationale for yamabushi asceticism occurred, one that shifted the object of acquiring power away from personal salvation almost entirely. The goal became instead to benefit a non-ascetic clientele through rites of *kitō*, largely concerned with healing (MIYAKE 1975, pp. 297–98; 1981, p. 29). This change accompanied a growing tendency for yamabushi to focus more upon relations with their parishioners and clients than upon mountain asceticism. For example, a study of Tokugawa-period Shugendō on Sado Island found that most yamabushi traveled to a mountain cult site for ascetic practice only once or twice in a lifetime. They would take the tonsure at a local Shugendō temple and carry out a one-hundred-day period of asceticism there before going to the mountains, and it was this period of training in their home territory that was their basic qualification to practice rites as yamabushi. In some cases, years intervened between this basic certification and the trip to the mountain cult site (MIYAMOTO 1984, pp. 46, 122). When mountain ascesis was carried out in the Tokugawa period, it was mainly as a collective *mineiri* 峰入 (lit., entering the mountain); the previous, individualized forms of mountain asceticism seem to have died out almost completely (MIYAKE 1978, pp. 58–59). As yamabushi ascetic practice in the mountains diminished, the rationale for their ritual effectiveness on behalf of their clientele was inevitably undermined, rendering them vulnerable to the implicit claims by the New Religions that *their* rites and practices were superior.

Shugendō Practitioners in Tokugawa-Period Society

Tokugawa-period Shugendō practitioners formed a large and heterogeneous group, one that included both men and women, spanned a

range of social positions, and commanded a variety of economic resources. Estimates of their total number are exceedingly difficult to find, but one approximation endorsed by the prominent scholars Nakayama Tarō and Wakamori Tarō puts the total of (male) *sendatsu* 先達 at 170,000 in the mid-nineteenth century (cf. WAKAMORI 1972, p. 292). At the top of the economic spectrum were men who owned land,⁵ partook in village government, acted often as priests of non-Shugendō establishments like Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, operated *terakoya* 寺子屋 (temple schools), and in general were indistinguishable from the secular leaders of rural society known as *meibōka* 名望家, “local notables” (MIYAKE 1978, pp. 59, 65; MIYAMOTO 1984, p. 43). It is unlikely that this group depended upon the performance of Shugendō rites for an income; they probably saw the ascetic ideal of Shugendō as contributing to the order and morale of village life. By no means, however, did all shugenja acquire such wealth and status. Perhaps the majority were landless religious specialists who labored as tenant-farmers when not performing rites. This group was more dependent upon their income as ritualists than the first group, and many worked with female partners (*miko* 巫女) in rites of exorcism.⁶

Some shugenja were urban. In 1840 there were at least 188 shugenja in Edo, living mostly on income from the performance of rites for individual clients on an occasional basis; they seem not to have organized urban parishes (MIYAMOTO 1984, p. 46). Yamabushi at the lower end of the economic spectrum realized some income from the sale of medicines they manufactured. In some cases they could not be clearly distinguished from physicians in private practice (NEI 1976; KIBA 1972).⁷

The spectrum of female activity within Tokugawa-period Shugendō is even harder to clarify, as it has been much less thoroughly researched.⁸

⁵ MIYAMOTO (1984, pp. 126–31) cites data from Sado showing that about one in eight of the yamabushi on the island in the Tokugawa period owned at least .8 of an acre of paddy land.

⁶ MIYAMOTO (1984, pp. 43–44) discusses *shūmon aratame* records from the Kantō and Miyagi areas that categorize yamabushi as *mizunomi*, “water-drinking” (i.e., too poor to drink tea); as *shakuya*, “living in rented housing”; and as *kosaku*, “tenant-farmers.”

⁷ The well-known peregrinating medicine merchants of Toyama are thought to have originated as yamabushi; see NEI 1976; KIBA 1972.

⁸ For many years YANAGITA Kunio’s short study, “Miko no otto, shugen no tsuma” (1969) was the only widely available source on female practitioners of Shugendō. MIYAKE (1971, pp. 318–19) notes that, at least in the early Tokugawa period, more miko belonged to the Tōzan-ha than to the Honzan-ha, and that most were under the authority of the Tōzan-ha’s Edo headquarters, a temple called Hōkaku-ji. I have been unable to locate nationwide figures for the total number of miko, but KANDA 1992, pp. 14–17, has detailed, if fragmentary, figures for the northeast, emphasizing the Haguro line.

New studies by Kanda Yoriko have, however, brought important information to light on this subject. Kanda presents evidence of a general understanding in Haguro-sect Shugendō that there should be one miko per village (although there were sometimes several when a mentor miko had disciples in training). Miko were entered into such official documents as the *shūmon-aratame chō* 宗門改帳 as the wives (*nyōbō* or *kanai*) of the yamabushi with whom they were nominally paired. Scholars previously regarded this as having been the actual situation, but close examination of the relative ages of the shugenja and miko makes it clear that in many cases the relationship was a fiction, and that the women in question were the mothers or daughters (biological or adopted) of the men. In any case, the number of miko actually married to shugenja seems to have been considerably less than the total thus registered (KANDA 1987, pp. 108–12).

Some communities in the northeast regularly used the proceeds of special, untaxed fields for their miko's support. In some areas documents have been found that demonstrate the importance of these ritual practitioners: citing the necessity of a resident miko for the performance of customary village rites, these documents request permission to call in pinch-hitter miko from other villages until the petitioners could get one of their own. Miko performed certain rites independently of their male partners, such as *kitō*, *oshirasama asobi* お白様あそび, exorcism, purifications after funerals, and healing. With shugenja partners they performed *yudate kagura* 湯立神樂. They might perform *takusen* 託宣 either alone or with shugenja.⁹

In some cases particular *ie* were expected to produce miko each generation, so that to become a miko was to succeed to a position established within that *ie*, just as other women would succeed to the position of househead or the househead's wife. There are cases in which succession for five generations has been documented. Such *ie* could bear house-names (*yagō* 家号) such as *miko-ya* 巫女屋, signalling that they performed this function for the village. If such a household were unable to fill this position with a daughter of its own, it did so through adoption or through recruitment from another village (KANDA 1990, p. 144). Miko trained under female mentors, from whom they received rosaries, animal bones and fangs, esoteric transmissions, and characteristic names. The latter seem to have had a stereotypical

⁹ *Kitō*, a broad category of rites utilizing prayers, have as their object healing, safe childbirth, and other such benefits. *Oshirasama asobi* is an annual rite for the gods of the house (*ie no kami*, called *oshirasama* in the northeast), in which miko lift up the *oshirasama* of their client households and dance with them as they recite prayers. *Yudate kagura* is a sacred dance around a cauldron of boiling water, often performed in a state of possession. *Takusen* is the revelation of a deity's will through the miko, whom it possesses.

quality, and such names as Hidari 左, Asahi 朝日, Yoriki 寄木, and Sakaki 榊 were transmitted from mentor to disciple at the time of initiation (KANDA 1987). The training was costly unless undergone with a relative, and a woman desiring to receive it had to have access to money. Some miko were blind, like the *itako* イタコ. These miko were distinguished from their sighted sisters by the type of initiatory training and rites they underwent to qualify as independent practitioners.

Miko themselves held bounded territories called *dannaba* 檀那場 or *kasumiba* 霞場, which were not coterminous with the territories held by the shugenja to whom the miko were putatively attached. They controlled these territories independently of the shugenja, and could inherit them from their female mentors and bequeath them to miko disciples. Formal contracts were drawn up between mentor and disciple stipulating conditions for the transmission of the territory and setting fees to be paid to the mentor for training and for support after cession of the territory (KANDA 1990, p. 147). Miko made regular tours of their territories, performing rites at each household. Village women would also visit miko for informal counseling as well as formal ritual. Miko sometimes maintained rooms for women's rites, from which men were strictly excluded; the content of these rituals is not well understood.

These Tokugawa-period data show that, while miko normally functioned in conjunction with and under the control of shugenja, as their "wives," they nevertheless had a surprising degree of freedom within that framework to pursue independent religious activity. This activity allowed women to assume highly professionalized roles, and provided them with considerable status, economic reward, and autonomy (KANDA 1992).

Shugendō Ritual in the Tokugawa Period

Both female and male practitioners of Shugendō performed a wide variety of communal and individual rites in the Tokugawa period. These rites were concerned with pregnancy, childbirth, and childrearing; with the location of lost articles, the healing of people and livestock, and the banishing of the malevolent influence of Konjin; and with funerals and periodic memorial rites for the ancestors. They conducted rites of passage such as *shichigosan harai* 七五三派い, divination rituals of many kinds, and rites of increase of fortune. They formed and managed confraternities for pilgrimage to such sacred mountains as Fuji and Ontake; these pilgrimages then became occasions for the performance of various rites. They also presided at many rites punctu-

ating the agricultural cycle, and at such village rituals as *hoshi matsuri* 星祭り,¹⁰ *tsukimachi* 月待, and *himachi* 日待.¹¹ Performance of this broad spectrum of ritual put Shugendō at the center of religious life in village society, giving yamabushi and miko prominent, professionalized roles that brought them into frequent intimate contact with the populace (MIYAMOTO 1984, p. 124; MIYAKE 1981, p. 41; MIYAKE 1978, pp. 60-61; 63; WAKAMORI 1972, p. 261).

The ritual services most sought from the yamabushi were healing rites, performed by them in combination with a miko. Illness was thought to be caused by a spirit or spirits invading the body, so that cures must logically include an exorcism of those spirits. Exorcism could take several forms. If the offending spirit was of an easily banished kind, the yamabushi might attempt to vanquish it without the aid of a medium, bombarding it with *sūtra*, mantra, or *darani* recitation, or threatening it with boiling water, swords, needles, or burning chopsticks. If the spirit's identity was unknown, however, or if it was regarded as highly malevolent, a miko's aid became essential. The miko first entered a state of trance. The spirit then "incarnated" in her and spoke through her, enabling the yamabushi to identify it, to reveal the reasons it afflicted the client, and discover what it required as compensation for leaving the client in peace. This ritual form is called *kaji-kitō* 加持祈禱, *yose kaji* 寄せ加持, or *kuchi-yose kitō* 口寄せ祈禱 (causing [the spirit] to enter [the miko and speak through her] mouth). A spirit's "reasons" for afflicting the client typically involved the client's negligence in ritual performance; the price of its departure was usually the client's promise to perform further, compensatory ritual. The spirits would possess people either because of their own bad karma (hence the effectiveness of preaching the *sūtras* to them [*kyōge* 教化]) or because they were simply "possessing spirits" (*tatari-gami* 祟り神) by nature (MIYAKE 1975, p. 329; MIYAKE 1978, pp. 64-65; MIYAMOTO 1984, pp. 20-21).

¹⁰ Also known as *hoshiku*, this ritual, widely performed during the Tokugawa period, probably developed under the influence of *onmyōdō* 陰陽術. Its purpose was to predict a client's fortune for the coming year according to astrological factors, on the basis of the individual's "birth star" (one of the seven stars of the Big Dipper). The shugenja's role was to unite himself with the North Star to attract auspicious astrological influence and nullify the influence of stars likely to exert a negative influence on the client (MIYAKE 1986, p. 345).

¹¹ *Tsukimachi*, "waiting for the moon," and *himachi*, "waiting for the sun," were paired communal rites presided over by yamabushi, generally conducted at yamabushi temples but also in individual households. Beginning with purifications and followed by offerings, *sūtra* recitation, and prayers for well-being, prosperity, and the avoidance of misfortune, these occasions generally included a communal meal. These rites were appropriated by some of the New Religions and, as discussed later in this article, given interpretations strikingly different from those in the Shugendō tradition (MIYAKE 1986, p. 320).

Although the yamabushi-miko rites of healing enjoyed widespread popularity, they exacted a heavy economic price from the peasantry. The biography of Tenrikyō's founder, Nakayama Miki, describes the performance of Shugendō healing ritual as follows:

When *yose kaji* was performed, not only was it necessary to gather all the neighbors together, but it was also required that they be provided with saké and a meal. In addition, a gift of rice had to be made to all, so that in total each performance of the rite cost about 400 *me* 目.

(TENRIKYŌ KYŌKAI HONBU 1956, p. 3)

Performance of the healing ritual was thus a communal event, requiring the sponsoring family to play host to all and sundry. This custom seems to have prevailed in Okayama at the time of the founding of Kurozumikyō and Konkōkyō as well. There the yamabushi, locally known as *hōin* 法院 or *norikura* のりくら, worked with female partners known as *heidai* 幣台 to perform exorcistic healing. The rite required the construction of an altar to the myriad *kami* and extensive offerings in the presence of family and relations, and the entire process extended over a period of three days and two nights (UKANCHŌ BUNKAZAI HOGO INKAI 1980, pp. 218–19). There can be little doubt that ritual on such a scale was beyond the means of most.

Shugendō's Tokugawa-Period History of Religious Conflict

Shugendō's conflict with the New Religions in the nineteenth century followed a longer history of confrontations between rival lines of shugenja, between yamabushi and Buddhist temples, and between Shugendō and Yoshida 吉田 Shinto. Some of these disagreements were so intransigent as to require shogunal adjudication. One internal struggle between the Honzan-ha and the Tōzan-ha in 1603 concerned which of two routes through the mountains should be regarded as the orthodox path. Serious economic repercussions attended a decision on such a matter, since pilgrims' inns and other services could be severely damaged if it emerged that they were incorrectly located in sacred geography. The Honzan and Tōzan lines clashed again in 1612 over which had the right to perform *shichigosan harai*, an important rite of passage for children and a significant source of revenue (WAKAMORI 1972, pp. 269–77). Throughout most of the Tokugawa period the Honzan line was the stronger of the two; it maintained tightly organized territories and reacted forcefully against any intrusion. But late in the period the Tōzan line gained power through

bakufu support and began to poach on Honzan territory, incursions that occasioned significant conflict (personal communication from Miyake).

The following is one example from Sado Island of a clashing between Shugendō and Buddhism. In 1799 a temple and its twenty-seven sub-temples challenged Shugendō by prohibiting its parishioners from accepting yamabushi customary ritual. Instead, parishioners were directed to engage temple priests for these services, so that the revenue could be directed to necessary repairs on the temples. The result of this confrontation is not clear, but since the yamabushi seem to have regained control in fairly short order, any victory the temple may have enjoyed must have been short-lived (MIYAMOTO 1984, p. 133).

By far the most widespread challenge to Tokugawa-period Shugendō came from Yoshida Shinto. Yoshida Shinto clashed with Shugendō in many areas with increasing frequency from the end of the eighteenth and into the nineteenth century over control of the miko and their considerable economic resources. Shugendō's vulnerability to this challenge was an index of its decline at the end of the Tokugawa period, as were its various confrontations with the New Religions. That the issue was women is no accident—it was precisely attitudes towards women, the feminine, and sexuality that formed the basis for movements of revitalization within Shugendō itself (such as the Fuji cults), and for the new religious movements that threatened Shugendō's authority at the end of the period. The earlier clashes with Yoshida Shinto foreshadowed these developments.

As the control of the Yoshida house was extended, shrine priests began to perform *kitō*, *goma*, *hoshi matsuri*, divination, and other rites characteristic of Shugendō (MURAKAMI 1978, pp. 171–72). A conflict arose as early as the mid-seventeenth century concerning the term *miko*. In addition to its Shugendō usage, this word was employed in a shrine context to denote female religionists who performed sacred dance (*kagura* 神樂) before the kami. The Yoshida house sought to prevent women who did not possess a Yoshida license from using the title. If shamans working with yamabushi wished also to perform *kagura* and other functions at shrines, they were to pay for a Yoshida license; anyone who did not do so was to stop performing at shrines, cease using the title *miko*, and call herself *moriko* or some other term instead. This amounted to a Yoshida attempt to make women pay for a ratification of the status quo, since Shugendō-affiliated *miko* had customarily functioned at shrines much as yamabushi often served as shrine priests.

It appears that the Yoshida house was not opposed to the activities of the yamabushi-affiliated miko per se; it rather sought to control a portion of the income that they gained at shrines. Yoshida was not uniformly successful in this attempt, however. Both the Honzan and Tōzan lines on Sado protested in the 1820s, with the former losing and the latter winning (YANAGITA 1969, pp. 284–86; MIYAMOTO 1984, p. 132). Meanwhile, in the northeast, a mixed situation of compliance and noncompliance prevailed (KANDA 1992, pp. 72–73).

Pervasive Features of Shugendō's Conflicts with Bakumatsu New Religions

THE CENTRALITY OF HEALING

Healing had a special prominence in the Bakumatsu New Religions, as it did in the Shugendō of this era. We have seen that Shugendō healing rites could be protracted, elaborate, and expensive social occasions involving an entire community. By contrast, healing in the New Religions tended to be individualized and either gratis, relatively inexpensive, or, at the least, free of the communal expenses incurred in yamabushi *kitō*. The shugenja thus stood to lose both revenue and status from the increasing popularity of healing rites among the New Religions.

Healing was not, however, the sole basis for the conflict between the two, but was instead only the most prominent manifestation of a basic difference in worldview. In each case we can identify a fundamental difference in constructions of gender and sexuality, in the nature of deity, in concepts of the person, in the meaning of self-cultivation or ascetic training, and in rationales for the efficacy of ritual. Each of the conflicts between Shugendō and the New Religions mentioned below brings out a particular aspect of these complex differences, and it is thus important to examine each case individually. The religions in question were at rather different stages in their development when their respective confrontations with Shugendō occurred, and the significance of the conflicts differed accordingly.

It was largely because of faith healing that the new religious movements of this period spread through Japanese society. Their founders attained local fame through their reputations as healers, although healing played different and distinctive roles in the life of each.

Kurozumi Munetada, a priest at the *han* shrine in Okayama, had no thought of creating a new religious teaching until on the winter solstice of 1814 he himself was unexpectedly cured of tuberculosis in a mystical experience of union with the sun and the powers of life it

represented to him. His cures of others began with his own household, and extended throughout western Japan as he traveled about proselytizing. More cures occurred at private audiences and communal meetings, which converts flocked to from as far away as Osaka to be healed by his touch. After 1846 disciples were authorized to preach and heal in his name, and the healing rite they practiced, known as *majinai* まじない, helped spread the religion throughout western Japan. Healings that have continued since that time provide a powerful magnet of conversion.

Healing played a different role in the life of Tenrikyō's founder Nakayama Miki, who was possessed by a previously unknown deity when she was asked to substitute for a yamabushi's usual female miko partner in a rite to cure Miki's son in 1838. It was only after a hiatus of ten years that Miki began to offer rites (called *obiayurushi* 帯屋許し) to local women for safe childbirth. It was through these rites that she first gained prominence, and it was they that brought her into conflict with local secular and religious healers.

Konkōkyō's founder, Kawate Bunjirō, later known by the religious title Konkō Daijin 金光大神, did not experience a dramatic healing himself, and did not use healing as his sole practice during his early mission (begun in 1858). However, the frequent messages he transmitted to followers in consultations (*toritsugi* 取次) became known as the source of physical cures. Many converts were gained in this way during a serious outbreak of measles in 1862, and it was at that time that the founder's first confrontations with yamabushi healers occurred.

CONSTRUCTIONS OF GENDER

Shugendō's ritual structure depends upon a particular understanding of asceticism in combination with a distinctive construction of gender. The effectiveness of (male) yamabushi rites derives, as we have seen, from the shugenja's assimilation of the various powers of the mountains and the mountains' divinities through extended periods of asceticism *in* the mountains. Women have been rigorously excluded from the mountains and thus from the opportunity to cultivate spiritual power on the same basis as men. The common form of healing rites in the Tokugawa period, in which miko and yamabushi collaborated in *kitō*, rested upon a construction of gender in which masculinity was marked by rigidity, rationality, and activity, and femininity by the converse traits of malleability, intuition, and passivity. The miko's role required that her being be temporarily pushed aside or penetrated by the spirit at the command of the yamabushi, whose male being was too rigid to be penetrated in this way. The yamabushi actively directed his intelligence to the interrogation of the spirit, while the miko's own

being was rendered temporarily passive, given over to the spirit that was interacting with the yamabushi. The yamabushi could only communicate with these spirits through the miko's mediation, and in that sense the two were complementary; the miko's malleability, passivity, and inarticulate intelligence provided the necessary conditions for the yamabushi's opposite qualities to come into effect. The two were thus functionally interdependent within the logic of the ritual.

The construction of gender in Shugendō thus reveals a complex combination of attitudes in which femininity was both elevated and idealized and at the same time denigrated and stigmatized. The innovations introduced by the New Religions Tenrikyō, Kurozumikyō, and Konkōkyō, and by Shugendō renewal movements like the Fuji cults, were concerned in part with emphasizing the positive aspects of this construction while simultaneously downplaying traditional beliefs in the pollution of the female body and of sexuality. A direct outgrowth of this innovation was the creation of new roles for women and a widening of their scope of social activity. The result was the recognition of women as authentic religious teachers, something that could hardly have happened in Shugendō itself. The opposition of Shugendō traditionalists to this development, based on their desire to maintain the tradition's dominant masculinist ethos, was responsible in part for the confrontation between Shugendō and the new religious movements. Let us now consider the respective ways in which the New Religions confronted Shugendō's constructions of gender and sexuality.

Tenrikyō's Clash with Shugendō

The standard biographies of Nakayama Miki all record that she was raised in a family deeply devoted to the Jōdo school of Buddhism, and that she herself was very devout.¹² Significant as this early religious influence may have been, however, it is also necessary to point out that in the years immediately preceding Miki's first revelations she was heavily involved in Shugendō, and that Shugendō had a more proximate and equally weighty influence upon her (see, e.g., MIYAKE 1987, pp. 78–79).

¹² Miki's religious devotion was apparent even in her childhood, and prior to marriage she memorized Buddhist hymns and expressed the desire to become a nun. Her father, who led the family in twice-daily prayers before the Buddhist altar, had received an esoteric transmission (*gojū sōden* 五重相伝) in the Jōdo school (SHIMAZONO 1977, p. 214). After a miscarriage at nineteen, Miki participated in a seven-day retreat at her natal family's temple, also receiving the *gojū sōden* (TAGAMI 1971, p. 23). The extent of Miki's religious concern and knowledge was thus considerably greater than that of the average peasant woman of her time.

The Tanba area in which Miki lived was much influenced by the Shugendō tradition. There was a Tanba Shingon temple called Uchiyama Eikyū-ji 内山永救寺, that had attached to it a Shugendō temple-shrine complex named Isonokami Jingū 石上神宮. Eikyū-ji and Isonokami Jingū particularly promoted the cult of the Ten Kings (*jūō* 十王). Eikyū-ji enshrined a mandala of Tenriō 天理王, one of the Ten Kings, depicted as a savior and a controller of the sun, moon, and stars. Tenriō was also understood to be an incarnation (*suijaku* 垂迹) of Amida. Beginning around 1828, Miki began to frequent Eikyū-ji and Isonokami Jingū in connection with healing and praying to Kōbō Daishi. She also started making barefoot visits to pray at her local tutelary shrine for one-hundred-day periods. In her first revelation Miki named Tenriō as the source of her religious inspiration (MURAKAMI 1988, pp. 194–98; MIYAKE 1986, p. 24). Miki came under the influence of a high-ranking shugenja named Ichibei 市兵衛,¹³ attached to the Eikyū-ji. Ichibei, a landowner who served as headman of neighboring Nagataki-mura, was one of twelve *sendatsu* of Ōmine-zan. Locally famed for his healing, he practiced asceticism at Ōmine several times each year and held high rank in the Tōzan sect. He also manufactured materials for divination (*zeichiku* 筮竹) and was well versed in the texts of Chinese medicine. He had given over part of his house to Shugendō training; Miki trained there under his tutelage, making a forty-nine-day retreat and receiving instruction on the Ten Kings and shamanistic healing (MURAKAMI 1963, p. 106; MURAKAMI 1988, pp. 198–202; HAMADA 1990, p. 25).

When Miki's son became ill, she engaged Ichibei and his *miko* partner, Soyo, to perform nine *yose kaji* rites over the course of a year. On the last of these occasions Soyo was unavailable, so Miki took her place. When she entered a state of possession, however, she astounded the assembled community in general and Zenbei, her husband, in particular, by announcing in the voice of a male deity, "I wish to take Miki as a shrine within which to dwell" (*Miki o kami no yashiro ni morai uketai* みきを神の社に貰い受けたい) (TENRIKYŌ KYŌKAI HONBU 1956, pp. 1–4). The god announced himself as Tenriō no Mikoto 天理王命, the True God (*jitsu no kami* 実の神), the Original God (*moto no kami* 元の神), and the Heavenly Shogun (*ten no shōgun* 天の將軍), come down from the heavens to save all humanity.

The yamabushi Ichibei was unable to rid Miki of this spirit. She remained in a state of possession for three days, sometimes sitting quietly, holding *gohei* (wands topped with paper streamers, representing

¹³ After the Meiji Restoration, Ichibei (1794–1870) took the surname of Nakano (MURAKAMI 1963, p. 106).

the perch onto which a deity descends to the human world), at other times delivering oracles in an awesome voice as her hands and body trembled violently. The possession was so intense that at times the god seemed to be dragging her about the floor, leaving her skin raw and bleeding (MURAKAMI 1988, p. 203).

Miki remained in this state until Zenbei finally acceded to the god's demand. Although the full meaning of his command that Miki become his "shrine" was not initially clear, the deity was asking that she be released from all the demands of her current position as female head of the Nakayama household and as Zenbei's wife. This would mean that Miki would no longer act as wife and mother but would take up a new position as a full-time servant of Tenriō, precluding all further sexual relations between her and her husband. It was to Zenbei that the demand was addressed, and with a house full of young children and a headman's duties to perform, it is not surprising that he did not immediately agree. Only when all imaginable measures to exorcise this spirit had failed did Zenbei capitulate, ending Miki's initial possession. Tenrikyō dates its founding from the day Zenbei gave in (SHIMAZONO 1977, p. 210).

Miki's spirit possession involved a major transformation of Shugendō's shamanic motifs, and it had significant implications for the construction of gender. It absorbed both the yamabushi and miko roles into itself, leaving the male no authority to control the experience. Ichibei's repeated efforts to vanquish the spirit possessing Miki constituted a battle between his power and Miki's ability to withstand that power. Miki won out in the battle with Ichibei, partly by assuming the persona of a male deity and acting as its mouthpiece. The males on the losing side, including Ichibei and Zenbei, were humiliatingly "feminized" as a result of their defeat.

The Okayama Context of Shugendō: Kojima Goryūshugen

It will be helpful to preface a discussion of Shugendō's confrontations with Kurozumikyō and Konkōkyō with remarks about the character of Shugendō in Okayama, the area where these two New Religions were founded.¹⁴ Okayama Shugendō placed a special emphasis on *himachi* rites and the cult of Konjin, and it was these practices, as well as healing, that were the causes of the confrontations.

¹⁴ Although the subject is not directly relevant to the topic of this paper, religious conflict in Okayama occurred frequently throughout the Tokugawa period, principally pitting Buddhist temples against such powerful shrines as the Kibitsu Jinja and the Kibitsuuhiko Jinja (OKAYAMA KENSHI HENSAN INKAI 1985: KINSEI II [vol. 7], pp. 718–21).

As mentioned earlier, Okayama was the stronghold of Kojima Goryū Shugen 児島五流修験, named for the five main temples of the Shugendō line located on Kojima peninsula and in the old city of Kojima near present-day Kurashiki. Originating in the Muromachi period and centered at the Kurashiki temple of Sonryū-in, Kojima Goryūshugen was drawn into the Honzan sect during the Tokugawa period. As a result of this connection, Mt Ōmine was added as a site for Okayama yamabushi asceticism to the local mountains Hōki Daisen 伯耆大山 (in present-day Shimane Prefecture) and Ushiroyama 後山 in eastern Mimasaka. The yamabushi of Kojima Goryūshugen were expected to climb Hōki Daisen at least once, and also to undergo spring training at Katsuragi-san and autumn training at Ōmine. During the Tokugawa period, however, yamabushi unable to travel to Ōmine commonly substituted training at Ushiroyama. Kojima Goryūshugen divided up the Okayama *han* into numerous parish territories called *kasumi* or *kesashita* 袈裟下, each headed by a leader titled *nen-gyōji* 年行事. Yamabushi performed rites of healing and rites of passage much like Shugendō in other parts of the country, and presided over a complex calendar of annual rites relating to agriculture. At the end of the Tokugawa period many yamabushi in Okayama were educated, cultured men, running *terakoya* or Confucian academies, manufacturing and distributing medicines, and sometimes practicing as physicians. There is some evidence of conflict between Kojima Goryūshugen and the Tōzan line, when the latter tried to establish a foothold in Okayama at the end of the period (NAKAYAMA 1988; MIYAKE 1986, pp. 21–22, 460–61; KAMOGATA CHŌSHI HENSAN IINKAI 1991; KANBAYASHI 1988).

Although figures are rare and the evidence is fragmentary, it appears that Shugendō reached its height in Okayama in the 1750s; it then declined slowly until 1780, after which it suffered a rapid ebb. From the 1850s the yamabushi temples experienced a severe loss of revenue and supporters, in addition to which they were called upon in the middle of this decade to give up their bells to be melted down for cannon in coastal fortifications against a possible return of Admiral Perry. Buddhist temples faced the same demand, but they could better afford to comply. The decline in the land holdings and economic assets of Shugendō was particularly severe in the Tōzan sect, which did not have stable parish organizations (OKAYAMA KENSHI HENSAN IINKAI 1985, vol. 7, pp. 617–23).¹⁵ Thus by the time of the

¹⁵ There are no figures readily available on the total number of Shugendō establishments in Okayama during the Tokugawa period. Nevertheless, a listing of those in Bitchū, one of the three *kuni* composing the present-day prefecture, totals thirty-one. Assuming that an equivalent number existed in Bizen and Mimasaka, the total would be between ninety and one hundred (NAKAYAMA 1967, pp. 187).

founding of Kurozumikyō (1814) and Konkōkyō (1858), Shugendō was already well past its prime.

As mentioned above, two practices distinctive of Okayama Shugendō that were particularly significant in its confrontations with Kurozumikyō and Konkōkyō were *himachi* and the cult of Konjin. *Himachi* was a New Year's rite performed on the twenty-third day of the first lunar month. Widely observed in village communities during the Tokugawa period, it represents one form of the sun worship that has taken on so many forms in the course of Japanese religious history. It is unclear whether *himachi* in Okayama had always been a principally Shugendō phenomenon, or whether the yamabushi co-opted a previously existing communal ritual and gave it a Shugendō interpretation. In any case, in Okayama Shugendō it involves gathering a community for an all-night vigil, climaxed at dawn by a great bonfire in which the individual prayers of those assembled, written on prayer sticks, are burned and conveyed to the other world by fire. Its basic purpose is to promote communal prosperity (MIYAKE 1962).

Konjin is a deity originally transmitted to Japan by Taoist *onmyōji* 陰陽師 during the Heian period. He is the guardian deity of the northeast, and has the quality of metal. Originally associated with calendrical lore and the folk concept of auspicious days, he was feared as a malevolent *tatari* spirit. Konjin's vengeance was particularly feared if some transgression was committed against him on the occasions of travel, construction, moving house, or marriage. Great care, for example, was taken that construction did not begin on a day when Konjin occupied the dominant direction. If Konjin's wrath was incurred, it was believed capable of killing seven members of the offending family. Yamabushi performed *kitō* to keep Konjin away (*Konjin yoke* 金神除け) or to entrap him temporarily (*Konjin fūji* 金神封じ) so that his *tatari* might be avoided. Cults of Konjin are especially widespread in western Japan. Rites concerning Konjin became a staple of Shugendō in Okayama (MIYAKE 1986, p. 137).

KUROZUMIKYŌ

As we have seen above, Shugendō's confrontation with Kurozumikyō derived from shugenja fears that their livelihood, based on income from the performance of healing rites, would be jeopardized by the popularization of healing as conducted by Kurozumi and his followers. Undergirding this confrontation were basic differences of worldview, expressed in the contrast between Shugendō's *himachi* and Kurozumi's *nippai* 日拜, the rite of daily sun worship on which the sect's healing is based. *Himachi*, as performed in Okayama Shugendō, relies on the yamabushi's magical power and ritual technique (ultimately

based on the power of his asceticism) to convey the community's desire for well-being to spirits in another world. The community remains passive, dependent upon the yamabushi's mediation. The rationale for the rite is not explicitly articulated on the occasion and thus remains weak. In contrast, *nippai*, which involves daily worship of the rising sun through recitation of the Great Purification Prayer (*ōharai norito* 大祓い祝詞), is an exercise of self-cultivation; by absorbing the vitality of the sun, symbol of the sun goddess Amaterasu, the worshipper nurtures the "divided spirit" (*bunshin* 分神) that comes from the sun goddess and that unites the human and the divine. *Nippai* has both individual and collective forms, but it requires no priestly mediation. The rationale for the ritual is strong and frequently articulated: by strengthening the unity of the human and the divine, it produces joy (*yōki* 陽気), health, and well-being.

The prose and poetry of Kurozumi Munetada, collected in the *Kurozumikyō kyōtensho* 黒住教教典抄 [The sacred texts of Kurozumikyō, hereafter abbreviated as *KK*], make it clear that *himachi* was a customary observance of the Imamura-gū domain shrine to which Kurozumi was attached until 1846. An 1834 list of Kurozumi's most stalwart followers, for example, records the membership of "the *himachi* group of such-and-such a place." This indicates that collective *himachi* rites were held at Okayama shrines, much as they were at Shugendō temples, and that Kurozumi may have converted groups of people as *himachi* groups, only later to preach to them the greater importance of *nippai* (*KK*, pp. 72-73, 327-57). We can conclude also that the weak rationale of *himachi* allowed for multiple forms of the ritual (Shinto, Shugendō, etc.), and made it possible for a magical rite to be transformed into a type of self-cultivation. In fact, *himachi* was co-opted by another New Religion, Nyoraikyō 如来教, at around the same time and turned into a rite to pacify the myriad spirits. In present-day Okayama Shugendō the interpretation of *himachi* has shifted again, and it is now understood as a rite to assuage the spirits of the war dead (KANDA 1993, pp. 68, 77; MIYAKE 1962).

Majinai, Kurozumi's healing, represents the inversion of *nippai*. In it the sun's vital essence, absorbed during *nippai*, is blown out upon the patient. In an 1828 letter to his disciple Ishio Kansuke, Kurozumi relates a cure he worked on someone previously being treated by a famous physician. After receiving Kurozumi's *majinai* the patient threw away the medicine prescribed by the physician, and news spread all around that Kurozumi could work miracles (*KK*, pp. 136-37). Such events must have left many disgruntled doctors and shugenja in their wake. We do not know precisely when Kurozumi's confrontation with Shugendō occurred, but letters to Ishio in 1823, while the latter

accompanied the daimyō on *sankin kōtai* 参勤交代, report that local doctors and *norikura* had become alarmed at the speed with which the new religion was spreading and were doing everything they could to obstruct it. They complained to their followers and clients about Kurozumi, who confessed himself powerless to stop them from coming to him. Kurozumi reported to Ishio that some followers had been lost as a result, but *not as many as before*, indicating that the 1823 clash was not the first (*KK*, pp. 90–91).

KONKŌKYŌ

Before experiencing his religious revelations, Kawate Bunjirō suffered a series of misfortunes that drove him to try virtually every religious practice known in his day in an attempt to change his circumstances. Among the measures he tried were Shugendō healing rites, Shikoku pilgrimage, rites to appease Konjin, *hadaka mairi* 裸参り, prayers to the local tutelary god, acupuncture, purifications, and marathon recitations of the *Heart Sūtra*. He eventually focused exclusively on Konjin when the deity spoke to him through the medium of his brother, who was ill from the deity's *tatari*. Bunjirō, ordered to serve Konjin alone, began to develop a concept of the deity radically opposed to that prevailing in Okayama Shugendō (*KONKŌKYŌ HONBU KYŌCHŌ* 1983, pp. 3–14).

Bunjirō came to believe that the universe is ruled by a single, benevolent deity, initially called Konjin but now known principally as Tenchi Kane no Kami 天地金の神, who protects and nurtures all humanity. The original view of the deity as evil is merely the result of humanity's failure to know him and receive his blessings. Thus the world is not, as Shugendō would have it, driven by a plethora of willful, malevolent spirits that humanity must placate. Humanity's relation to the divine is, ideally, one of reciprocity and mutual enhancement—magical apotropaic rites have no place. Bunjirō constantly denied the effectiveness of yamabushi ritual and its associated geomancy, calendrical lore, and divination. Surrounded as he was by so many yamabushi temples, Bunjirō was certain to come into conflict with Shugendō, and it was this very conflict which forged the final character of Konkōkyō (*MURAKAMI* 1963, pp. 174–80).

Conclusion: Shugendō and Nyōnin Kekkai 女人結界

One constant theme in the respective confrontations between Shugendō and the New Religions was a changing understanding of the path of spiritual progress, in which the ascetic ideal of the former was

replaced by the emphasis on self-cultivation in the latter. The elevation of self-cultivation in the New Religions was accompanied by a strong, positive evaluation of women, the feminine, and sexuality. This difference of orientation was not a matter of armed struggle, like the incidents described at the beginning of this essay, but it was an equally irreconcilable difference, and thus a “conflict” in another sense of the word. The struggles between Shugendō and Yoshida Shinto over *miko*, examined above, make it clear that control of women and the feminine could provide the occasion for prolonged confrontation.

The cultic rationale for yamabushi asceticism depends in part upon the motif of a union of opposites, in which the male ascetic absorbs the feminine powers of the mountain as represented by the *yama no kami* and the mountain-as-cosmic-mother. Mountain ascetic training makes explicit the idea that the yamabushi enters the mountain as womb, to be reborn at the conclusion of training. The male ascetics’ time in the mountains represents an embrace by a greater mother in a sexualized union, which is why deities like Shōten are depicted in the form of an embracing male-female pair. This symbolic complex of ideas can only work if human females are excluded, which is accomplished by creating a boundary at the mountain’s foot beyond which women may not go. This makes an enclosure of the mountain peak that is defined by the absence of women: a *nyonin kekkai*, a “world closed to women.” Unlike the erotophobia of Buddhist monasticism, however, this exclusion does not stigmatize sexuality in either sex. Indeed, a positive value attaches to the yamabushi returning from the mountains to a human wife, newly and intensely eroticized, a source of fertility (MIYAKE 1992, p. 158).

Because the ascetic training on which yamabushi prowess is based excludes women in such fundamental terms, masculinism is an essential feature of Shugendō, and it is virtually impossible that a woman could be recognized as an authentic teacher. The matter is quite different in the three New Religions discussed here, which make self-cultivation (often including explicit rejection of asceticism) the basis of spiritual progress and stature. In these religions, self-cultivation is the nurturance of that which constitutes the basis of unity between the human and the divine, identified as *kokoro*, *bunshin*, *yōki*, and so on. The apparent distinctions among humans relating to sex and class are treated as irrelevant to the ultimate unity of the human and the divine. The idea of their irrelevance is underscored by explicit denial of ideas about the supposed pollution of menstruation, pregnancy, and childbirth. This denial sets the stage for positive statements of the equality of the sexes, occasional elevations of the feminine, and the

appearance of women as religious teachers and leaders (MORIKAWA 1982). Masculinism is thus not essential to these religions, and this is a basic difference between them and Shugendō. That the potency of Shugendō masculinism had pretty well spent itself by the time of the founding of these three New Religions is indicated by the appearance of revival movements within Shugendō itself, movements that startlingly reversed the tradition's masculinist ethos, made a sacrament of sex, and upheld a devotional reverence for the feminine.

The cult of Mt. Fuji as a sacred mountain has been a feature of Japanese religions since ancient times, and the deities of the mountain have generally been regarded as female. Although human females were prohibited from climbing Fuji, many did so anyway, and there were cave-cults, probably led by female shamans. Caves were taken to symbolize wombs; the cults centered on human fertility and safe childbirth, and featured representations of the genitals of both sexes (MIYATA 1983, pp. 92–93). In the sixteenth century the Fuji cult developed into a distinctive religion under the influence of Kakugyō Tōbutsu 角行藤仏 (1541–1646), an ascetic who practiced in the caves on Fuji, and in this context various ero-positive ideas, symbols, and mythic motifs received systematic articulation for the first time. Kakugyō was active as a healer during a 1620 epidemic in Edo, and his following increased as a result of his fame in that capacity (TYLER 1984, pp. 101–109).

Kakugyō spoke of sex as uniting the sun and the moon, resulting in the creation of a sacred jewel (*magatama* 曲玉), which is at once a child and the female cosmic deity Sengen 浅間 Bosatsu (bodhisattva), the representation of Mt. Fuji. He also celebrated menstruation, which has a cosmic significance in connection with lunar cycles, and proclaimed that it was a grievous error to regard menstrual blood (called by him “flower water”) as polluted. He expressly told women that they should not refrain from attending meetings of his devotees because of menstruation. Pregnancy delights the gods, and comprises neither a source of pollution nor a reason to refrain from approaching the kami. Lactation represents the postpartum transformation of menstruation; if milk does not flow smoothly, Kakugyō advised, women should drink water collected from the vulva-shaped sacred stones associated with the cult. He praised sites on Fuji where such stones were found, likening them to the Heavenly Rock Cave (*ame no iwato* 天の岩戸) of ancient myth, and frequently recommended worship there (NIHON SHISŌ TAIKEI 1971, pp. 428, 436, 448, 449, 459). There were many female followers of his cult (MIYATA 1978, p. 141).

During the Tokugawa period the cult of Fuji developed into a significant movement—eventually known as Maruyamakyō 丸山教—

under the leadership of Itō Rokurōhei 伊藤六郎兵衛 (1671–1733), also known as Jikigyō Miroku 食行身祿. Jikigyō equated Fuji with a great womb and deified the mouth of the volcano as a cosmic vulva, to which he attached the name of the deity Ōanamuchi no mikoto 大穴牟遲命. He attacked the practice of prohibiting women from climbing sacred mountains. Like Kakugyō, he glorified fecundity in all its forms. Both Kakugyō and Jikigyō saw plant life in anthropomorphic terms, following the contemporary idea that rice and other grain plants have male and female forms. Both of them also followed the contemporary usage of agrarian society in speaking of sex between women and men as *wagō* 和合, “harmony,” meaning also “concord” or “unity.” They placed a high positive value on sex and consistently denied the notion that it is polluted or detrimental to spirituality. For them, sex was very much at the heart of the religious life [*NIHON SHISŌ TAIKEI* 1971, pp. 494–96].

Eventually the Fuji cult developed an elaborate ideology of heterosexuality, linking it to the anticipated millennium. Sex is the uniting of yin and yang, representing completion and the potent conjunction of opposites that can bring in the new world. The advent of Maitreya’s world requires the reversal of conventional pollution notions about female sexuality. Because women’s nature belongs to water, which flows down, and because men’s belongs to fire, which rises, women-on-top is the correct posture for sex. In all things, women should take on men’s nature, and men should take on women’s, in order to hasten the millennium. Thus, women should wear men’s clothes, sit cross-legged, wear loin cloths, and not be preoccupied with etiquette; men should wear women’s clothes, sit with their knees together, take care of children, and mind their manners. Particular days of the menstrual cycle were identified as best for conception, and menstrual blood and childbirth were viewed as precious (MIYATA 1978, pp. 150–57).



This study of conflict between Shugendō and the New Religions in Bakumatsu Japan has shown that what may have initially appeared to be a straightforward contest for followers and their material resources was in fact quite a complex confrontation. The conflicts we have examined here occurred in the context of Shugendō’s longer history of conflict with Buddhism, Yoshida Shinto, and renewal movements within its own tradition. Shugendō’s clashes with the New Religions grew out of fundamentally irreconcilable rationales for religious practice (asceticism versus self-cultivation) and equally basic differences in

constructions of gender, concepts of the person, and theology. Although the present study lacks the scope to fully explore the reasons for the rise of religions of self-cultivation and the decline of Shugendō's ascetic ideal, we can mention as probable factors the declining prominence of ascetic practice within the sedentary Shugendō of the Tokugawa period and the popularization of Neo-Confucian thought, as filtered through the spiritualist interpretation of Yi Toeggye 李退溪 and later institutionalized in Shingaku 心学. Village headmen at the end of the period actively promoted Shingaku and similar philosophies in an effort to stem the tide of social breakdown, and in so doing, gave comfort to the New Religions and their view of the world. Changing evaluations of women and the feminine in both the New Religions and Shugendō created a popular basis for the (slow) acceptance of female social participation after the Meiji Restoration. The New Religions' positive stance in this regard was both a salutary change from the previous gender construction of Shugendō, and also provided an ambivalent, shifting ground for the ideologies of sex complementarity authorized later by the Meiji state.

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