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## Résumé

L'avancée et les ramifications des travaux portant sur le shugendō depuis sa « découverte » en tant qu'objet d'étude au XXe siècle font que ce courant du fait religieux japonais offre aux chercheurs en sciences humaines et sociales du XXIe siècle un vaste champ de recherche aux facettes paradoxales. Sa légitimité socioreligieuse s'appuyant à la fois sur une institutionnalisation forte, liée aux pouvoirs centraux, et sur une instrumentalisation des marges que sont les montagnes et leur univers, le shugendō se révèle en effet traversé de dynamiques contrastées qui, à chaque époque, font de son présent le creuset où tendances à l'extériorisation et à l'intériorisation participent conjointement à sa construction identitaire. De telles dynamiques montrent que ce que l'on nomme shugendō est un processus d'élaboration continue, dans lequel interfèrent constamment héritage et créativité.

Abordé ici dans sa contemporanéité, le shugendō est envisagé, selon cette vision dynamique, sous l'angle de trois problématiques doubles : le shugendō, expérience intime et référence culturelle médiatique ; la « spectacularisation » du shugendō et son usage du secret ; la remise en cause de l'interdit frappant les femmes et la question de la survie du shugendō.

Pour mettre en lumière les articulations de ces paires d'éléments apparemment antithétiques, les données de terrain actuelles sont replacées dans la double perspective de l'histoire et des débats, des conflits qui sont aujourd'hui au cœur de ces diverses facettes du shugendō. Dans cette optique, sont présentés les divers champs de tension dans lesquels se développent quelques éléments marquants de la culture shugen : dimension corporelle des pratiques d'ascèse, expérience intime et usage médiatique des parcours rituels (nyūbu ou mineiri) ; saitō goma et contribution à la vie des communautés locales ; renouveau du regard sur les ritualités du shugendō et défense de l'environnement ; rite religieux d'intronisation du grand supérieur de Honzan et spectacle ludique ; ondolement de Jinzen (Jinzen kanjō) élaboré entre secret et parade ; usage public du rituel secret du hashiramoto jinpihō associé au rite du feu hashiramoto goma ; interdit portant sur les femmes et promotion féminine dans le shugendō actuel.

L'examen des composantes et des discours en cours aujourd'hui à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur des organisations shugen montre que ces bipolarités, au premier abord antinomiques, forment un tissu de tensions qui, loin d'être un moteur de désintégration du shugendō, sont en réalité au nombre des forces qui, parce qu'elles imposent la recherche de solutions et de prises de position adaptées aux divers problèmes du moment, alimentent sa vitalité.

## TRANSFORMATION, RUPTURE AND CONTINUITY: ISSUES AND OPTIONS IN CONTEMPORARY SHUGENDŌ

Anne BOUCHY

*L'avancée et les ramifications des travaux portant sur le shugendō depuis sa « découverte » en tant qu'objet d'étude au XX<sup>e</sup> siècle font que ce courant du fait religieux japonais offre aux chercheurs en sciences humaines et sociales du XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle un vaste champ de recherche aux facettes paradoxales. Sa légitimité socioreligieuse s'appuyant à la fois sur une institutionnalisation forte, liée aux pouvoirs centraux, et sur une instrumentalisation des marges que sont les montagnes et leur univers, le shugendō se révèle en effet traversé de dynamiques contrastées qui, à chaque époque, font de son présent le creuset où tendances à l'extériorisation et à l'intériorisation participent conjointement à sa construction identitaire. De telles dynamiques montrent que ce que l'on nomme shugendō est un processus d'élaboration continue, dans lequel interfèrent constamment héritage et créativité.*

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*Pour mettre en lumière les articulations de ces paires d'éléments apparemment antithétiques, les données de terrain actuelles sont replacées dans la double perspective de l'histoire et des débats, des conflits qui sont aujourd'hui au cœur de ces diverses facettes du shugendō. Dans cette optique, sont présentés les divers champs de tension dans lesquels se développent quelques éléments marquants de la culture shugen : dimension corporelle des pratiques d'ascèse, expérience intime et usage médiatique des parcours rituels (nyūbu 入峰 ou mineiri 峰入り) ; saitō goma 柴・採燈護摩 et contribution à la vie des communautés locales ; renouveau du regard sur les ritualités du shugendō et défense de l'environnement ; rite religieux d'intronisation du grand supérieur de Honzan et spectacle ludique ; ondolement de Jinzen (Jinzen kanjō 深仙灌頂) élaboré entre secret et parade ; usage public du rituel secret du hashiramoto jinpihō 柱源神秘法 associé au rite du feu hashiramoto goma 柱源護摩 ; interdit portant sur les femmes et promotion féminine dans le shugendō actuel.*

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Since the first half of twentieth century numerous studies undertaken on Shugendō<sup>1</sup> have shed light on a certain number of paradoxical characteristics in this Japanese religious stream. One — and by no means the least — of them, is that, despite Shugendō's long history, it was not before the twentieth century that Japanese researchers “discovered” it as an object of study. Furthermore, this discovery was one of the results of its ban under the Meiji government.<sup>2</sup> Shugendō is also generally well known as having a dual image. It is renowned for its practices demanding intense bodily participation in a mountain setting, hence valorizing a distancing of the practitioner from the world. It is also known for its highly structured organizations, the main centers of which were, until Meiji, linked to central authorities and established in the heart of urban society. These organizations were structured on a national scale in a vast network having not only religious, but also major economic and political, functions in society.<sup>3</sup> Although both feared and sought after for their “powers,” Shugendō's adepts — *shugenja* 修験者, *shugen* 修験, *yamabushi* 山伏 — are sometimes categorized as marginal and dissident. At the same time, until the nineteenth century, the highest dignitaries of central Shugendō institutions benefited, through their kinship links and their role, from an eminent political position and the aura of imperial prestige. These multi-faceted and contrasting elements are the visible signs of an immense *ensemble* of complex phenomena that, apparently antinomic, are nevertheless founding elements of Shugendō and its legitimacy — a legitimacy that has never ceased being stamped with illegitimacy.<sup>4</sup>

Shugendō is, therefore, rightly included in the field of religious studies. Moreover, breakthrough field study findings since the 1980s have stimulated, Japanese researchers to point out that it should not be confined to a definition limiting it to one religious category (“popular,” “esoteric,” “Buddhist” or “Shintō” — categories

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1. For a complete bibliography of the Japanese works on Shugendō, see Miyake Hitoshi 宮家準. *Shugendō soshiki no kenkyū* 修験道組織の研究. Tōkyō: Shunjūsha 春秋社, 1999, and Miyake Hitoshi ed. *Shugendō jiten* 修験道辞典. Tōkyō: Tōkyōdō shuppan 東京堂出版, 1986, as well as the journal *Sangaku shugen* 山岳修験. Since 1985, this journal has edited a list of all of the books and articles related to Shugendō published the previous year.

2. See the introduction by Gorai 五來 in: Gyōchi 行智, *Konoha goromo* 木葉衣, *Suzukake goromo* 鈴懸衣, *Tōun rokuji* 踏雲録事. Ed. and commentary Gorai Shigeru 五來重. Tōyō bunko 東洋文庫 273. Tōkyō: Heibonsha 平凡社, 1975, pp. 3-44, and Gorai Shigeru. *Shugendō nyūmon* 修験道入門. Tōkyō: Kadokawa shoten 角川書店, 1980, pp. 7-18; Miyake Hitoshi. *Shugendō soshiki no kenkyū*. Tōkyō: 1999, pp. 5-54; Miyake in Gorai Shigeru. *Shugendō no shugyō to shūkyō minzoku* 修験道の修行と宗教民俗, Gorai Shigeru chosakushū 五來重著作集 5. Kyōto: Hōzōkan 法藏館, 2008, pp. 479-490; Anne Bouchy. “La cascade et l'écritoire: Dynamique de l'histoire du fait religieux et de l'ethnologie du Japon: le cas du shugendō.” *BEFEO* 87: 1 (2000): 341-366.

3. Miyake Hitoshi. *Shugendō soshiki no kenkyū*, cit.

4. For an analysis of the question of the legitimacy of Shugendō throughout history and, notably in the Honzan branch 本山派, the statutory and initiatic legitimacy conferred by the Jinzen water-pouring rite, *Jinzen kanjō* 深仙灌頂 (Fr. *ondoiment de Jinzen*), see Bouchy. “Du légitime et de l'illégitime dans le shugendō ou ‘Sang de buddha’, ‘sang des êtres des montagnes?’” In *Légitimités, légitimations: La construction de l'autorité au Japon*. Ed. Anne Bouchy, Guillaume Carré and François Lachaud. Coll. “Études thématiques” 16. Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2006, pp. 111-177.

which are in themselves controversial today) or to one particular aspect (e.g., rites, cults, practices, “school of thought” or hermeneutics). Such a categorization limits the understanding of these elements themselves, and obstructs the vision of the overall structure of Shugendō and the complexity of the socio-religious, historical, political and cultural backgrounds in which each of its components finds meaning and place. Freeing Shugendō from such categories leads us to question Shugendō itself in a new way. It also leads us to (re)investigate the other Japanese religious streams and their interconnectedness, the relationship between the secular and the religious, the statuses of “in the world” and “out of the world,” and the pertinence of Japanese or non-Japanese interpretative schemes concerning these domains.

Furthermore, as research has shown, in conjunction with their religious functions, practitioners of Shugendō — *shugen*, *yamabushi*, *shugenja*, *gyōja* 行者, *hōin* 法印, etc. — were active in multiple domains: the management of natural resources, communications, mines, and hydraulic networks; the military; mediations at all levels; the circulation of people and goods through pilgrimage; medicine and pharmacopeia; participation in general education; artistic creation, literature, theater and dance rituals, graphic arts, etc. Thus, it is clear today that Shugendō is in fact a complex tapestry interweaving its religious, symbolic and ritual elements with many others: social, economic, political, institutional, ideological, historical, geographical, technical, psychological and human. Failing to acknowledge the interdependence of all of these elements, or favoring one element above the rest, gives only a partial and biased vision of Shugendō. The growing body of knowledge about Shugendō has required that fieldwork be carried out conjointly with local and central archival, as well as with scholarly textual research, *and* with the interdisciplinary collaboration of all the disciplines concerned with the multidimensional realities of Shugendō.

In the twenty-first century, one of the preoccupations of all the approaches to Shugendō that take into account the totality of previous work is to prevent the decontextualization of what is being studied, in order to avoid the trap of the “folklorisation” of Shugendō or of the “nippologizing” (the tendency to use elements of “Nihonjinron”, theories concerning Japanese national or cultural identity) or, inversely, the “extreme-orientalizing” position. Instead, Shugendō should be brought to light as an *ensemble*. It merits examination in its fullest sense with utmost precision and clarity, considering all of its components as well as the internal and external dynamics that underlie its social temporal framework in each era. Facts, discourses, and representations enabling the understanding of the process of Shugendō’s *continuous elaboration* must be brought to the surface from both within Shugendō itself and the tapestry in which it exists. For this, a two-fold scientific attitude is required. Indeed, the advance of Japanese research in the domain of Shugendō and the requirements of contemporary social and human sciences drive the researcher towards both a commitment to extremely meticulous work on detailed points and to seeking the “bigger picture.” Thus, it is not only Shugendō as an object of research, but also this domain of studies itself and the practices of researchers which are marked as paradoxical and as having differing imperatives.

Considered in this light, the realities of contemporary Shugendō give rise to many questions. I will examine some of the conditions of the continuity of Shugendō

in the longstanding and diverse contexts in which this continuity is inscribed. By addressing this question through the actors, individuals and groups, and through the general understanding of “Shugen phenomena” in society, I will highlight some of the dynamics and logics that traverse and build Shugendō. In this way, I will address three two-fold core issues: Shugendō as *intimate experience* and mediatical<sup>5</sup> reference; the “spectacularization”<sup>6</sup> of Shugendō and the usage of secrecy; and the reconsideration of the ban on women and the question of the survival of Shugendō.

## Shugendō: Intimate Experience and Mediatical Cultural Reference

### *Intimate experience*

Looking at the experience of the actors of Shugendō — the “path (towards the acquisition) of powers by asceticism”<sup>7</sup> — firstly means listening to those who, in a group or according to personal initiative, go to the mountains, either within the framework of Shugen groups, at the instruction of their master, or on their own. The majority of ascetic practitioners (*yamabushi*, *gyōja*) that I have encountered are mostly those who practice in the west of Japan, from the regions of Kansai to Kyūshū. However, many of them also come from Kantō or Tōhoku for ritual journeys (*mineiri* 峰入り “entering the mountain” or *nyūbu* 入峰 “mountain-entry”) organised in the Ōmine 大峰 mountain range (*okugake* 奥駈 literally “deep [mountain] running”), notably by the Shugen organizations of Shōgoin 聖護院, Daigoji 醍醐寺, Kinbusenji 金峰山寺, or in the Katsuragi mountains 葛城山, today called Katsuragi shugyō 葛城修行. Participating in these various ritual journeys enabled me to meet men and women from all walks of life, illustrating the existence of a vast array of situations and experiences within Shugendō. In addition to prestigious mountains such as Ōmine, Kumano 熊野, Katsuragi, and to the north-east, Haguro 羽黒山, Ontake 御嶽山 and others, the places of ritual practice are countless. The cities of Ōsaka, Kyōto and Nara, for example, but also any agglomeration, large or small, are surrounded by mountains and hills where ritual circuits, waterfalls, and cult places are continuously visited by men and women, commonly called *gyōja*, who refer to Shugendō even if they may or may not be affiliated with one of its organizations. The deep motivation of such actions and the objectives envisaged by the actors are manifold, varying according to the individual and the time period. Likewise, the culturally marked interpretations of the practices in these places and the resulting experiences also vary. However, when the participants are asked why they come to

5. “Mediatical” is used here in the sense of the French adjective “médiatique.”

6. “Spectacularization” includes both performance (Fr. *spectacle*) and the spectacular (Fr. *spectaculaire*). Cf. *infra*.

7. I use the term “asceticism” in the first sense of *ascēsis* (Gr.): exercises and practices undertaken with the aim of attaining the mastery of a technique, an art, etc, that corresponds to the definition of *gyō* 行, *shugyō* 修行, given by the Shugen practitioners themselves. The “powers” *gen* 験 engender the *efficacy* (Fr. *efficace*), *reiken*, *reigen* 靈験, obtained through these practices.

these places, why they assume these ritual journeys of Shugendō — and not simply hike in the mountains — , why they voluntarily do such physically and mentally gruelling acts, their response is unanimous and can be summarized as follows:

To be confronted with myself while physically confronting the mountain; to make something new emerge in myself; and what allows me to do that is Shugen guidance, it is coming to such places respecting what Shugendō says and teaches.

For the masters or instructors, whether they be monk-*yamabushi* of large or small Shugen organizations or independent *gyōja*, the report is also unanimous. They say that they guide those who come seeking Shugen teaching first and foremost by showing them the external form (gestures, behavior, invocations, rituals, etc.), in other words, the formal apparatus of practice: “I introduce them (to Shugen) through its form (*katachi kara hairu* 形から入る), through its ritual etiquette (*sabō* 作法).”

The masters lead them to discover, *by and for themselves*, the interior space of the acts, their own intimate experience. Expressing in a concrete manner the importance of the relationship between external forms and interior attitude, some say that their disciples “are one hundred percent *yamabushi* when they are in costume and are involved in Shugen rites.”

Finally, all of them, masters or simple practitioners alike, recognize that it is through the *affinity* that they sense, or eventually arrive at, between their body, their interior feelings and a particular mountain, waterfall or place of practice, that they have chosen this particular one among many others and that they will continue to revisit it.

The cornerstone of this initiative is, without a doubt, the corporal dimension put forth as essential and “total.” And yet, this encounter of corporalities — that of the practitioner and that of the place — is experienced as an *intimate* and privileged relation between individual interiority and the interiority of the places and their material elements. This intimate *intra-natural* relation is the essential condition for the emergence of the expected interiorized experience; experience that I have called *subtle*.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, those who devote themselves to these practices affirm: “What I know, I have learned by (and in) my own body,” “I know it because I have *experienced* it.”

All of these declarations express in modern terms the meaning of the discourse and the numerous exegeses about mountain-entry traditionally advocated by Shugendō. Today, it is well known that, in Shugen teaching and in a number of texts of secret transmission,<sup>9</sup> the mountain and the body of the Shugen practitioner are presented as *being* the Ten Realms of the Other World (*Jikkai* 十界). The mountain journey *is* the place of ritual death and rebirth, of the gestation of a new being in the matrix of the universe, as well as the place of the fusion of the *yamabushi* with the

8. See the definitions for the terms *intra-natural* and *subtle* used in this context, in Bouchy. “Des expériences *autres* du monde. Appréhender le vécu des oracles dans la société japonaise.” *Archives de sciences sociales des religions* 145 (2009): 51-72.

9. Notably all those that have been compiled in *Shugendō shōso* 修験道章疏 I, II, III, *Nihon daizōkyō*, 1916-1920 [SS — see abbreviations in the Bibliography].

venerated entities, as the rocks, the trees, the waters, and the winds *are* none other than the body, the voice, and the teachings of the buddhas and deities. The summits and the valleys travelled *are* the mandalas where, on a circuit of walks, retreats, trials and oral transmissions, the adept achieves *by himself* the ultimate realization, *sokushin sokubutsu* 即身即佛. Physically completing the ritual course is tantamount to achieving the corresponding interiority. The appearance of things and behaviors is the analogical image of what is *also really* happening in the interiority of the person and in the heart of the universe. These two interiorities are put in touch with one another through ritual practices in which committed bodies confront the materiality of the world. This is a constant fundamental of Shugendō practice, that, adapted to individual contemporary demands, continues to be seen as a major objective.

Outside Shugendō, such ritual practices are known more for their excess and sometimes the caricatures that they generate. Indeed, the most spectacular Shugen practices — *saitō goma* 柴・採燈護摩 and walking on fire, exorcisms, extreme asceticism, etc. — put into practice in the most ostentatious manner are often denounced as being used with suspect aims — control over people, fame, financial gain, etc. — and as a possible source of damage to others. This parallel phenomenon is delicate because it raises the question of the limits of, and the rights of interference with, individual choices. Yet today, both within Japan and abroad, such activities provoke confusion about what Shugendō truly is. This is not, however, peculiar, nor limited to one particular time period, past or present. The caricatural figures of sycophantic and violent *yamabushi* or of monstrous *yamabushi-tengu* 天狗 diffused in ancient times through literature, painted scrolls and legends, are certainly exaggerated representations of a reality that must not be taken literally. But these representations may be clarified through the real facts that they stigmatize. We can also refer here to the often scandalous image of the *yamabushi* reflected in the popular writings of the Edo period. These stories portray the *shugenja* — shown as *nise shugen* 偽修驗 (fake *shugen*), who were, in fact, the object of prosecution by national and regional legislation — as those who, in order to attract spectators and their donations, use the simulacrum of self-immolation by fire, *kajō* 火定, in a great spectacle-ritual imitating a real form of “corporal abandonment” (ritual suicide) *shashin* 捨身.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, the excesses achieve legitimacy only through contrast. In other words, the excesses allude to behavioral and corporal practices of great significance to Shugendō. It is, in fact, these practices that are valorized *a contrario* by such excesses.

### *Shugendō as mediatic cultural reference*

If the possibility of an intimate, interiorized experience through bodily practices undoubtedly constitutes an attractive feature of Shugendō for a certain number of people who become adepts today, we can also observe a contrasting phenomenon on an entirely different level: the frequent use of Shugendō in a very formal manner to give publicity to an event or a region.

10. For example, in *Nansō satomi hakkenden* 南総里見八犬伝 by Kyokutei Bakin 曲亭馬琴 Iwanami bunko 岩波文庫. Tōkyō: Iwanami shoten, 1971, vol. 2, pp. 121-127.

To highlight just one example among many, in the community of Sasaguri 篠栗 (Fukuoka prefecture 福岡縣), where we have been conducting field work along with Japanese ethnologists<sup>11</sup> since 2004, several temples not affiliated with Shugendō organise, for one of their annual rites, a *saitō goma* 柴燈護摩. This grand outdoor fire rite, a feature of Shugendō, is generally followed by all of the participants walking over red-hot coals. As the responsables of the concerned temples are not adepts of Shugendō themselves, they call upon either monk-*yamabushi* from another temple in the same community who are affiliated with Shugendō, or *yamabushi* from outside. In some cases, the temple monks dressed as *yamabushi* perform the fire ritual with or without the aid of *yamabushi* affiliated to a Shugen organization in the region. The crowds that gather on such occasions attest to the adequacy of this “borrowed” ritual to the participants expectations. The grand form of *saitō goma* is used here by the monks in order to gather people, and their offerings, while also contributing to the fame of their own temple. For the followers, this ritual form is an additional aspect that reinforces the expected ritual efficacy of all fire rites, because of the prestige of Shugendō, even though the meaning of the rite itself is not necessarily understood. Moreover, they do not see the introduction of such a rite as being problematic, despite its being foreign to the Buddhist branch to which the temple is affiliated.

Many Shugen temple heads having a sufficiently large group of disciples and followers who have become *yamabushi* in order to perform *saitō goma*, have heavy annual schedules for performing fire rites for other temples. Traveling to other temples in order to perform rites upon request is neither exceptional nor new. This model can be found in the temples placed at the head of the great Shugen organizations. The superiors and the monk-*yamabushi* assisted by *yamabushi* of confraternities belonging to their branch of Shugen carry out the *saitō goma* ritual in grand style not only in their affiliated temples, but also in other temples and now more recently in Shintō shrines. Shōgoin, for example, performs *saitō goma* in some twenty other temples and shrines each year.

Exporting *saitō goma* outside of its usual context, however, is not limited to this type of display that preserves its religious ritual character. Indeed, it is not uncommon for temples or smaller Shugen organizations, upon request, to offer their services to contribute to the development or revitalization of a local, regional or urban community (*mura/machi/chiiki-okoshi*, *-kasseika* 村・町・地域おこし、活性化), in order to attract visitors and tourists. For this purpose, a new annual rite of *saitō goma* is sometimes entirely fabricated, without necessarily being linked to local religious festivals.

In Kyūshū, twenty years ago, the head monk-*yamabushi* (also a high official of the Shugendō of Mount Hōman 寶満山) of Hongyōin 本行院 in Fukuoka (a *betsuin* 別院 of Miidera 三井寺 in Kyūshū) “invented” the *tradition* of an annual *saitō goma* in Hoshino-mura 星野村 (Fukuoka prefecture) for the benefit of the local community.

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11. In the framework of a Franco-Japanese collaboration between the EFEO and Keiō University for the ethnological research program “Between ‘outside’ and ‘inside’: sociocultural dynamics in Japan/Nihon shakai ni okeru uchi to soto no rikigaku” 日本社会における内と外の力學.

Since this date, he has gone to Hoshino every year on the second Sunday in March with a group of disciples to carry out a grand fire rite followed by walking on red-hot coals. Hundreds of visitors flock to the site, attracted by municipal publicity from the local temple, Fukurakuji 福樂寺. According to the superior of Hongyōin, who considers the *saitō goma* fire rite to be at the heart of the teaching he transmits to his *yamabushi* disciples, this is a form of asceticism, *gyō*, like any other. However, the economic importance of this practice should not be minimized as it seems that all of the actors involved find some advantage in this *new tradition* that has been going on for twenty years. Due to the festive and impressive nature of *saitō goma*, the Shugendō contribution guarantees a large crowd and also significant income.

The mediational value of Shugendō plays a determining role in the heart of very complex local dynamics between different powers and conflicting positions. This can be conjugated with another tendency that goes against what happened in the Meiji Restoration and continued until the second half of the twentieth century (and endures today in some bastions opposed to the Shintō-Buddhist rapprochement). In many shrines formerly managed by a local Shugen organization broken up during Meiji period, the Shugendo rituals were appropriated and reformulated by Shintō priests following the Meiji policy of the “separation of the gods and the buddhas,”<sup>12</sup> but today there has been a renewed recognition of the Shugendō origin of the rites. The Shugen form and content had been eradicated at that time as much as possible, and a large part of these rituals’ meanings disappeared with them. Nevertheless, it is the Shugen filiation that has recently been brought to the forefront.

Particularly illustrative of this point is the case of Mount Hiko 彦山 in Kyūshū, a large Shugen center known for its long history and the severity with which the Shugen organization was dismantled in the Meiji period. Thanks to many studies, field data and archaeological research, this long history is no longer questioned, even though the mountain has continued to be managed by priests of the Hikosan Jingū 英彦山神宮 shrine since Meiji. Here, as in other places, under different names, annual rites have partially replaced ancient Shugen rituals that were formerly held over the course of several months. The most important of these rites, *matsue* 松會 (“assembly, or ceremony, of the pine tree”), intricately linked Shugen New Year celebrations, the *yamabushi*’s Spring mountain-entry of Mount Hiko and the propitiatory cults of the local agricultural population. This grand *matsue* has today been reduced to three of its elements, the *ondasai* 御田祭 (“rice field festival”) in March and the *goshinkō matsuri* 御神幸祭 (the “festival of the procession of the gods”) in

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12. Concerning this thematic see Murata Yasuho 村田安穂, *Shinbutsu bunri no chihōteki tenkai* 神佛分離の地方的展開, Tōkyō: Yoshikawa kōbunkan 吉川弘文館, 1999; Bouchy. “Et le culte sera-t-il shintō ou bouddhique?”, *Cipango* 11 (2003): 45-98; Id. “Shinbutsu shūgō no keifu” 神佛習合の系譜, *Shūkyō kenkyū* 宗教研究, *Tokushū-gō: Shinbutsu shūgō to modaniti* 特集号——神佛習合とモダニティ 81/353 [Special Issue: “Shinbutsu Shūgō and Modernity”] (2007.9): 49-72; Miyake (all works so far quoted) and “Kingendai no sangaku shūkyō to Shugendō. Shinbutsu bunrirei to shintō shirei e no taiō o chūshin ni” 近現代の山岳宗教と修験道——神佛分離令と神道指令への対応を中心に (special issue: Kingendai no Shintō, Nihon bunka 近現代の神道・日本文化), *Meiji seitoku kinen gakkai kiyō* 明治聖徳記念學會紀要. 43, 42-61 (2006.11).

April, both preceded by the “taking of sea water” (*oshioi tori* お潮井採り) at the end of February (formerly at the end of the first month of the solar-lunar calendar). Water drawn from the sea and taken to Mount Hiko is used to purify the cultic site where the rituals of the New Year take place. Following in the footsteps of the ten or so *yamabushi* who were in charge until Meiji, today, five incumbents of the shrine carry out the ritual journey of about sixty kilometers on foot — using different routes on each leg of the journey — to draw sea water at night in the bay called *Uba ga futokoro* 姥ヶ懐 (the “Mother’s Breast”). This small beach, located at the mouth of the Harai (“purification”) River 祓川 (in the village of Kutsuo 沓尾, Yukuhashi 行橋市), has emblematic rock formations: a cave and rocks in the form of the female and male sexual organs. In 2005, a road construction project on the coast, aiming to serve Kutsuo port, threatened to pave the beach over with concrete. The local population, moved by this threat of destruction of a part of their natural environment, rallied together and formed associative groups to find a way to prevent the project. The annual rite carried out by the priests of the shrine and its long history rooted in the Shugen of Mount Hiko proved to be a major asset in the site’s defense.

Two and a half years of struggle and work brought about several results at different levels. Firstly, organized by several activists in the area, the local population undertook intensive research that led them not only to the (re)discovery of the “taking of sea water” rite, and by extension the Shugen of Mount Hiko, but also to the discovery of the flora, fauna and history of the region situated between the mountain and the coast. In addition to the tangible victory of saving and protecting one portion of the “Breast of the Mother” bay, there was a renewed interest in Shugendō and the emergence of a sociability surrounding the ritual journey linking mountains, countryside, and sea. Interestingly, this rite of “the taking of sea water” fulfilled a similar role for the Shugen of Mount Hiko: the *yamabushi* who went to draw water stopped in all of the villages they passed through on their way. They were welcomed by the inhabitants, who celebrated their passage and offered them food and drink (*settaiza* 接待座) in thanks for the rituals and other services that the Shugen people of Mount Hiko had performed throughout the previous year. Thus this ritual was also a feast and a moment of intense conviviality among the inhabitants of the two valleys between the mountain and the sea.

The renewed interest and collective will to protect this little ritual bay has developed into the veritable rediscovery of the tradition and culture of Shugen, of which the driving force was the rite of the taking of sea water. Out of this effort grew a sociocultural network linking the people of the shrine, Shugendō, the municipality, residents and specialists of studies on Shugendō. In 2008, the conjunction of all these elements was symbolized by the publication of a very informative map<sup>13</sup> integrating all of the parameters (Photo 1), where the Shugen heritage is represented together with elements of contemporary Shintō, flora, fauna and the historical heritage of the region.

13. The map of the route of the drawing of water of Mount Hiko, *Hikosan oshioi tori ruto mappu* 英彦山お潮井採りルートマップ.

The taking of sea water ritual has reemerged from the action to save the bay, and symbolizes the value attributed to the tradition and history of Shugendō. It is clear that the Shintō context alone could not provide the historical depth necessary to legitimate a change in the initial public works project. The sociocultural weight of Shugendō required public and private officials to accept the cultural and historical status of this little bay, which could no longer be considered insignificant enough to be paved over without consequence. In return, these places are now regularly visited and the “taking of water” route is recognized for its cultural, tourist, and recreational value, used throughout the year by groups and solitary walkers. It represents a source of potential income for the municipality and the inhabitants of the surrounding area.

As with the case of *saitō goma* contributing to local animation and prosperity, the role of Mount Hiko Shugendō in environmental protection proves that Shugendō is recognized as having a cultural and mediatical value. The modalities of this utilization of Shugendō are, without a doubt, proper to the present time. But, if considered to be a cultural, economic, and political instrumentalization of the Shugen heritage, this phenomenon can be likened to other historical forms of the usage of networks and multiple cultural elements of Shugendō employed by different powers and social groups. Most striking is also that such actions contribute, on a national scale, to a significant and recent rapprochement of Shintō shrines and Shugendō.

The rupture of the post-Meiji period and the resentment left over from its ravages has more recently been transformed into a desire for reconciliation, which corresponds to a shift of generations and mentalities. Beneath this lies the will, not for a simple return, which would hardly be possible or envisageable, but for a renewal of the pre-Meiji situation, where cults of gods and buddhas were assimilated in different ways within local contexts. This former fusion of cults and practices is considered again today in the mindset of modern conciliation and under original forms corresponding to the sensitivities of our time. As the synthetic religious current *par excellence*, Shugendō is particularly concerned by these re-creations. It is in this context that we must understand the present actions taken by such organizations as Shōgojin, which perform *saitō goma* at the festivals of various Shintō shrines.

### **At the Intersection of the two Tendencies: The Contemporary Development of Local Shugen Groups**

The contemporary valorization of Shugendō as a mediatical reference must be linked to the emergence in the last twenty years of small local Shugen groups all over the country. Whether it be through the rebuilding of ancient structures that disappeared during Meiji or through new organizations somehow inheriting bygone associations, these groups gather tens, hundreds or even thousands of disciples and followers.

Such is the case, for example, with Kumano Shugen, set up in Nachi 那智山 by the present assistant head monk (*fukujūshoku* 副住職) of Seigantoji 青岸渡寺. Shugendō has a long history at Nachi, on which the anti-Shugendō policies of the

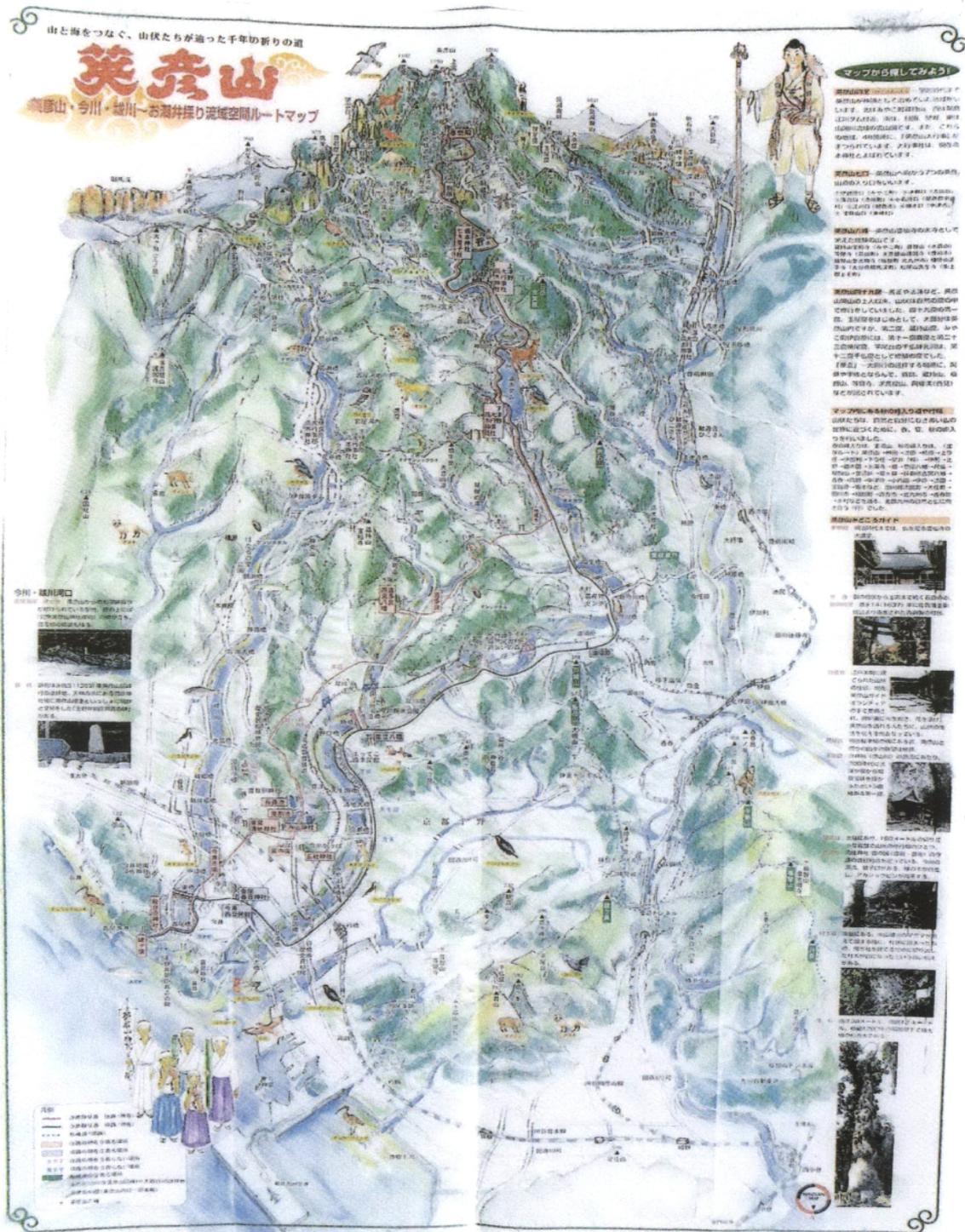


Photo 1: Map of the route of the “taking of water” of Mount Hiko (oshioi tori お潮井採り)



Photo 2: *Haru no mine-iri* of Kumano Shugen: departure from Sonaezaki 備崎 (Hongū), April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

Meiji period unfortunately took a great toll. When the father of the assistant head monk became head of Seigantoji, there was almost nothing left of the traditional ritual heritage and the Shugen archives of Nachi, which had been for the most part destroyed or lost. The three main objectives of his life were to rebuild the temple, to restore the popularity of Seigantoji as the beginning point of the Western pilgrimage of the Thirty Three Kannon (*Saigoku sanjūsan Kannon reijō* 西国三十三所観音霊場) and to revive Nachi Shugen. He would only accomplish the first two. In order to fulfill his father's vow of rebuilding the Shugen of Nachi, the *fukujūshoku* started a solitary mountain-entry first in 1987 in the Ōmine mountain range where he contributed to reopening access ways to the *okugake* from the south, and then in 1991 in the Nachi mountain, in the Katsuragi mountains and to all the summits in the country that had once been places of Shugendō practice. A group of about twenty men quickly became his close disciples and formed the central core of the Shugen group of Nachi that is known as Kumano Shugen 熊野修験 to this day. Organized in short one to three-day periods (generally on a weekend so as to facilitate the participation of those who work) throughout the year, the activities are mainly centered around mountain treks while reciting ritual *sūtra* at every traditional Shugendō cultic place. This revival of Nachi Shugen was covered by local media all throughout its development and attracted the attention of many who now join in its various activities each year. I participated in the springtime mountain-entry, *haru no mineiri* 春の峰入り, on April 15, 2006, from Hongū 本宮 to Mount Tamaki

玉置山 in the cold and driving rain, on a course with a series of extremely arduous climbs. With the exception of the *fukujūshoku*, carrying the title of *daidōshi* 大導師, the 131 participants were all laypeople, men and women (30%) from a variety of professional and individual backgrounds. Those who had come the furthest were from Tōhoku and Hiroshima. The youngest participant was nine and the oldest seventy. For many of them, this was the first experience of a Shugen mountain-entry and they had wanted to come because the person who had invited them (for the most part, one of the *yamabushi* from Kumano Shugen whom they had met at their workplace and in whom they trusted completely) presented the expedition as something unique. Without giving them any further information, he told them “You will see for yourselves.” Those who had come for the second time said that they wanted to renew the experience and see certain Shugen members again, notably the *daidōshi*, whose charisma is certainly one of the major assets of these encounters. Despite difficult conditions, all admitted that it was “a very rich experience and very different from a simple mountain walk.” Impeccable logistical assistance guaranteed the management and the transport by car before and after the mountain-entry. The entire route was followed and filmed by a group of journalists and the ritual was the subject of articles in the local press. On April 28, 2007, a *saitō goma* was held at Ōyunohara 大齋原 in Hongū to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the rebuilding of Kumano Shugen. Several hundred people participated and some two hundred then climbed to Mount Tamaki. In 2008, four hundred members gathered. One hundred of them participated in the *okugake* on April 19<sup>th</sup>.

Kumano Shugen, although anchored in one of the most venerable places of Shugendō, quotes as legitimating authority not the no-longer existent Nachi tradition, but the modernism of its approach: “We do not possess the tradition of mountain-entry as do Shugen organizations like Shōgoin or Kinbusenji. But we propose something ‘extra’ that is missing from a simple hike. By providing the occasion to come into direct contact with nature and the *subtle* world of the mountain, we wish to render possible a discovery of a sense of gratitude (*kansha no imi* 感謝の意味), that goes along with becoming aware of ecology. Everyone is welcome. We aim for a religious revolution, an open Shugendō, that is in accordance with our times” (Takagi Ryōei 高木亮英, April 2008).

A widened Shugen framework swathed in history and tradition, publicity that attracts volunteers, lack of formalization, free participation, focus on activities accessible to anyone, immersion in exceptional natural spaces that are difficult to reach alone, all converging towards the possibility of an individual experience: this is the cluster of elements that underlie the popularity of such Shugen organizations of which Kumano Shugen is just one example. Many other groups in various parts of the country could be mentioned and in certain cases what draws and mobilizes the participants is, inversely, the formality of Shugen practices recomposed according to modern criteria. In any case, the existence of smaller Shugen groups contributes a great deal to the diffusion of the image of a Shugendō that is renewed and closer to ordinary society. This visibility helps to valorize Shugendō according to utilitarian and media-oriented goals, and this, in a cyclical dynamic, nourishes the appeal for individuals to engage in Shugen practices.

Initially the search for intimate and interiorized experience by means of the body may seem to conflict with the media coverage of the exterior aspects of Shugendō. But if the second tendency is considered in light of the first's underlying logic, then, these two orientations reveal themselves as complementary. For Shugen masters, whether it be the type of intervention or instrumentalization of Shugendō, it always presents an opportunity for desiring individuals to further their knowledge about Shugendō and themselves. Out of the convergence of these two tendencies emerges a dynamic that is beneficial to the contemporary construction of Shugendō. In this way, Shugendō finds itself at the heart of important questions of our time: the construction and concept of the person, the meaning of physical efforts in our societies, the elaboration of cultural values, the relationship with nature, environmental politics, as well as cultural and natural heritage-making as both a national and international process (Fr. *patrimonialisation*).

### “Spectacularization” of Shugendō and the Usage of Secrecy

#### “Spectacularization”

The history of Shugendō illustrates how secrecy has always been an essential element of its practices, rites, teaching, and transmission. It has been one of the causes of the over-shadowing, until the contemporary period, of the existence of this stream in the Japanese religious panorama. Yet, it is also certain that “*yamabushi* have always loved shows and everything spectacular!” as one of them recently told me. The solemn processions organized at the moment of the mountain-entry manifest this taste for the spectacular, even in periods when Shugendō was officially prohibited during Meiji period. Until Meiji, the most important of these processions comprised tens of thousands of *yamabushi* who had come from all over the country for the nomination of the Shōgoin *monzeki* 門跡.

In his diary *Zaikyō nikki* 在京日記,<sup>14</sup> Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 tells how, from the 16<sup>th</sup> of the 7<sup>th</sup> month of 1758 (Hōreki 寶曆 7), the capital was invaded by *yamabushi* who had come from all regions to participate in the celebrations for the “Ōmine entrance” (*Ōmine iri* 大峰入) of the new Shōgoin no miya 聖護院の宮 scheduled for the 25<sup>th</sup>. It was the first time in forty-some years that such an event had taken place and all of the population gathered along the way of this highly colorful event. The procession crossed through the town center towards the Imperial Palace, then finally turned south to reach Uji 宇治. Five days later it would reach Yoshino 吉野. In two lines, thousands of *yamabushi* on foot preceded and followed the palanquin of the prince, while hundreds of *daisendatsu* 大先達 of the provinces dressed as warriors came on horseback extending over 1300 meters (12 *chō* 町), all wearing their parade costume. The procession was so long that some onlookers lost interest, despite the unusual and colorful nature of the show. Indeed, stretching

14. Motoori Norinaga. 本居宣長. Ōno Susumu 大野晉, Ōkubo Tadashi 大久保正, ed. *Motoori Norinaga zenshū*, 本居宣長全集, vol. 16. Tōkyō: Chikuma shobō 筑摩書房, (1968) 1993.

for eight kilometers (2 *ri* 里), it started at 8 o'clock in the morning and ended after 5 o'clock in the evening.

Similar, but less grandiose versions of this procession took place where regional Shugen organizations of some importance, crossed through large and small communities of their followers as they processed for the mountain-entry. The procession of the *yamabushi* of Mount Hōman (寶滿山修驗, Fukuoka 福岡) and of Mount Hiko are well known, thanks to painted scrolls of the Edo and Meiji periods representing their springtime mountain-entry.<sup>15</sup> Tens, or sometimes more than a hundred *yamabushi* of Mount Hōman paraded in grand style, notably in the streets of Hakata 博多 and Fukuoka, where people hurried along their route. The event was also a city fair.<sup>16</sup>

Contrary to secret rituals hidden from the public eye, in every parade, the status and the role of each participant — for the mountain-entry or for associated events — were shown openly and signified through the costume (type and color of clothing, the color of pompoms or their stole), the wearing or absence of hair, the presence of ritual instruments (conch, axe, halberd, *oi* 笈 [portable altar-box]), the place in the procession, and the means of locomotion (on foot, horse, or in a palanquin). The procession is a political and cultural instrument that allowed with efficacy each Shugen organization to become visible to the outside world, to affirm internal hierarchy and to display the rights and privileges of passage. Today, such solemn *yamabushi* processions can be seen during grand annual events and on the occasion of the mountain-entries of Shōgoin and Mount Haguro, for example.

On June 2, 2000, the inhabitants of Kyōto had the opportunity to see one of these solemn processions where four hundred *yamabushi* paraded between Shōgoin and the imperial palace during the 1300<sup>th</sup> death anniversary celebrations of En no Gyōja 役行者 (Jinben daibosatsu 神變大菩薩). The highest dignitary (*monshu* 門主), was in a palanquin and his future successor rode before him on horseback. The introduction of the horse was quite an appreciated novelty in regards to other processions of Shōgoin. It nevertheless hearkened back to the tradition of ancient parades.

In parallel to this urban *mise en scène*, other modes of “spectacularization” have also been put into place. From ancient times, Shugen organizations have marked all grand annual events in their communities by ritual solemnities, often associated with dance, theater and singing performances. Due to the ban on Shugendō from Meiji down to the end of World War II, many of these events have been maintained all over the country as annual rites that are part of a national cultural heritage, often outside of their original Shugen setting.<sup>17</sup> But contemporary Shugendō continues

15. See, for example, the Edo-period *Hōman shugendō Katsuragi mine-iri no zu* 寶滿修驗道葛城峯入り之圖, *Hikosan daigongen matsue sairei emaki* 彦山大権現松會祭禮繪卷.

16. See Nakano Hatayoshi 中野幡能. *Chikuzen no kuni Hōmanzan shinkōshi no kenkyū* 筑前國寶滿山信仰史の研究. Fukuoka 福岡: Dazaifu Tenmangū bunka kenkyūjo 太宰府天満宮文化研究所, 1980, p.374 et sq.; Id. ed. *Hikosan to Kyūshū no shugendō* 英彦山と九州の修驗道. SSKS, 1977, pp. 206-249; Mori Hiroko 森弘子. *Hōmanzan rekishi sanpo* 寶滿山歴史散歩. Fukuoka 福岡: Ashi shobō 葦書房, 1981; Id. *Hōmanzan no kankyō rekishigakuteki kenkyū* 寶滿山の環境歴史學的研究. Tōkyō: Iwata shoin 岩田書院, 2008.

17. See, notably, Gorai Shigeru 五來重, ed. *Shugendō no bijutsu, geinō, bungaku* 修驗道の美術・藝能・文學 1 and 2. SSKS, 1980, 1981; Kanda Yoriko 神田より子. “Shugendō no girei to geinō:



Photo 3: “Impromptu Dialogue under the fall of Cherry Blossom petals at Shōgoin”  
*Shōgoin sakura fubuki tamasaka no mondō* 聖護院櫻吹雪偶然之問答

to be creative in this domain, by maintaining or recomposing such ancient rituals. Particularly noteworthy are the recent festivities of April 3, 2008, marking the accession to office (*shinzan shiki* 晉山式) of the 52<sup>nd</sup> highest dignitary (*monshu* 門主) of Shōgoin and the Honzan branch of Shugendō. This event confirms doubly, by the accompanying ceremony and entertainments, the consistency of such a tendency. Announced by the press and personal invitation, the ritual was attended by eight hundred people and broadcast by the media.

The religious ceremony was followed by a reception at the Miyako Hotel in Kyōto. Two shows, theater and then dance, were given on the stage in the hall. The first was the dance of Kumano Gongen 熊野權現舞, in which two members of the Sasama *kagura* 笹間神樂 from Hanamaki 花巻 [Iwate prefecture 岩手縣] twirled the mask and body of a *shishi* 獅子 (“lion”) incarnating Kumano Gongen. Heir of a long local tradition of *yamabushi kagura* interrupted during Meiji, the group illustrated its virtuosity in performing dances it had restored in 2006.

The auspicious spectacle was preceded by a scenic creation entitled “*Impromptu dialogue under the fall of cherry blossom petals at Shōgoin*” (*Shōgoin sakura fubuki*

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Ennen o chūshin ni” 修験道の儀礼と藝能——延年を中心に. *Sangaku shugen* 山岳修験 31 (2003): 1-19; *Sangaku shugen* 32 (2003), *Shugen to geinō tokushū* 修験と藝能特集 [special issue “*Shugendō and Performing Arts*”].

*tamasaka no mondō* 聖護院櫻吹雪偶然之問答). The scenography recreates, in digest form, the dialogue of the *yamabushi* (*yamabushi mondō* 山伏問答) in the Kabuki play *Kanjinchō* 勸進帳, adapting it to the ceremony of the day and relating the text to Shōgoin and the Honzan branch. This part of *Kanjinchō* itself refers to the ritual dialogue that the *yamabushi* exchange before the *saitō goma* rite, of which the contents refer to the Shugen teaching glossed over in ancient documents.<sup>18</sup> This “*Impromptu Dialogue*” was composed for this occasion by the 52<sup>nd</sup> *monshu* himself, who, standing before a magnificent display of freshly cut pine trees and bamboo, played the role of the inquisitor *yamabushi*, facing the intruder played by the famous Kabuki actor, Ichikawa Danjūrō 市川團十郎, wearing the black and yellow costume (here striped) of Benkei 辨慶 at the barrier of Ataka 安宅の關. In response to the *monshu* enquiring about his identity and the reason for his coming, the *yamabushi* declares that he is “Ichikawa Danjūrō of the Kabuki theater of Edo, twelfth descendant of the house of Narita 成田屋” and that he has come to congratulate the 52<sup>nd</sup> *monshu*. The *monshu* exclaims that it is unthinkable that someone as famous as “Danjūrō, celebrated in Kabuki theater, known the world over for having played in the Paris Opera”<sup>19</sup> would have come expressly for the occasion. In order to prove that he is indeed Danjūrō and not a *fake yamabushi*, he has to be able to respond to his adversary’s questions about the origins of Shugen, on the staff, the baton, the sword, the rite of nine letters (*kuji* 九字), the costume, the sandals, etc. Satisfied with his answers, finally the *monshu* warmly welcomes Danjūrō.

These ostentatious performances, which were, according to those responsible at Shōgoin, very costly due to the expense of the decor, the fee for Ichikawa Danjūrō, and so on, proved to be a skillful blend of tradition and innovation, placing the festive pomp of the ritual event — the accession to office of the new *monshu* — both in the continuity and creativity of Shugen. Through such largely mediatized events, contemporary Shugendō conveys to the public the image of a religious stream able to associate entertaining performance with rites that are as austere and important for the future of the Honzan branch as the accession rite of a new *monshu*. In this way, Shugendō proves its capacity to render itself original, attractive and capable of renewing its image. It also shows that it has the economic and social capacity to shoulder such financially burdensome undertakings, which gather figures from not only the religious community but also from the political, economic and entertainment worlds. Beyond its anecdotal side, this type of *mise en spectacle* represents just one aspect of a tendency developing in Shugendō today. For in reality, it is in elements the very opposite of publicity that the “spectacularization” of contemporary Shugendō mainly manifests itself nowadays.

18. For example, *Shugen sanjūsan tsūki* 修驗三十三通記 in SS II.

19. Ichikawa Danjūrō acted in *Kajinchō* given at the Opera Garnier in Paris on March 25, 2007 playing the other role, of Togashi Saemon 富樫左衛門, who questions Benkei. We can note the counterpoint of the reference to the international dimension, in this case of the world of French entertainment, as an element for the valorization of Danjūrō, and then of all the play.

*Secrecy supported by the spectacular*

Formerly, all Shugen rituals performed in the mountain remained secret. Today, for example, at the end of the “Autumn Peak” (*Aki no mine* 秋の峰) of Mount Haguro, all *yamabushi* take a vow of silence, which, if broken, brings down a curse on the offender and all his relatives. In ancient Shugen, one of the most secret rites was, without a doubt, the Jinzen “water-pouring” consecration rite (Fr. *ondoiment*) (*Jinzen kanjō* 深仙灌頂)<sup>20</sup> which confers ultimate legitimacy, notably in the Honzan branch. Utmost secrecy resides in the “water-pouring” rite itself and in the transmission of *mudrā* (manual signs, *in* 印) and *mantra* (*myō* 明), never to be divulged outside of the circle of the initiated members.

Without going back over an analysis of the rite itself, of which the genealogy and the history are complex,<sup>21</sup> let us simply state that it took place in the oratory of Jinzen (Jinzen Gyōjadō 深仙行者堂), the 38<sup>th</sup> stage of the ritual journey through the Ōmine mountains, at the conjunction of two mandalas, Kongōkai 金剛界 (Vajra Realm) and Taizōkai 胎藏界 (Womb Realm), represented by the northern and southern parts of the mountain range. Until the end of the Edo period, there were two sorts of Jinzen “water-pouring” rite in the Honzan branch. One took place only between master and disciple. This most intimate ritual was performed during the annual *okugake*, each time there was one or several *yamabushi* of a rank necessary for its accomplishment. The other rite legitimated the new Honzan group *monshu*, who had to participate in the mountain-entry and go to Jinzen before assuming his office. Every Honzan *monshu* had thus to be consecrated by two kinds of “water-pouring” rite, the Buddhist (Tendai) transmission *denbō kanjō* 傳法灌頂 (“Transmission

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20. The term *kanjō* 灌頂, literally “running water, running stream” (*kan su/sosogu* 灌) “on the top of the head” (*itadaki ni* 頂), is the translation of the Sanskrit *abhiṣeka*. Bernard Frank, in his work *Dieux et Bouddhas au Japon* (Paris: Éditions Odile Jacob, 2000, p.145 *et sq.*) translates *kanjō* with the French term “*aspersion*” meaning “sprinkling” or “spraying.” I prefer the French term “*ondoiment*” and the English compound term “water-pouring rite” because both evoke the image of a liquid poured from a vase that runs down from the top of the head, which is precisely the case in this ritual. “Besprinkling,” “sprinkling,” or “spraying” correspond rather to *shasui* written 灑水 or 洒水, a rite where water is not directly poured from a vase, but projected using a stick or baton, *sanjō* 散杖, that has first been dipped in water held over a recipient. For comparison, the Dictionary of Christianity (*Iwanami Kirisutokyō jiten* 岩波キリスト教辭典, Ōnuki Takashi 大貫隆 et al. ed., Tōkyō, Iwanami shoten 岩波書店, 2002) offers the term *kansui* 灌水 as a translation for “sprinkling” or “spraying.” “Unction” (Fr. *onction*) or “anointment” are not suitable as they refer to anointing (the forehead) with holy oils (Jp. *toyū* 塗油). Finally, the term “consecration” is also used to translate *kanjō*. This is not the translation of the characters but does designate the function of this rite. (See Bouchy “Du légitime et de l’illégitime dans le shugendō ou ‘Sang de buddha,’ ‘sang des êtres des montagnes’?,” *Légitimités, légitimations*. Paris: EFEQ, 2006, pp. 147-167).

21. Miyake Hitoshi. *Shugendō girei no kenkyū* 修験道儀礼の研究. Tōkyō: Shunjūsha, 1970, 1985, revised and expanded, 1999; Id. *Shugendō shisō no kenkyū* 修験道思想の研究. Tōkyō: Shunjūsha, 1985, revised and expanded, 1999; Id. *Ōmine Shugendō no kenkyū* 大峰修験道の研究. Tōkyō: Kōsei shuppansha 佼成出版社, 1988; and Miyake 1999. See analyze of the Jinzen water-pouring (*Jinzen kanjō*) rite in Bouchy, *ibid*, pp. 111-177.

water-pouring”), also called *ajari kanjō* 阿闍梨灌頂 (“Ajari water-pouring”), and the Shugen “water-pouring” rite of Jinzen. This second form of *Jinzen kanjō* thus occurred only once in a *monshu* generation. It was celebrated with particular splendor, due to the social rank of the beneficiary and to the number of participants in the mountain-entry, as shown in the previously-cited diary entry of Motoori Norinaga, which nevertheless only describes the most public portion of the ceremony. Also called *monzeki*, the last *monshu* of a princely family, Yūnin 雄仁, was consecrated in 1839. After him, the Jinzen water-pouring rite took place only periodically, in 1849, 1886, 1922, 1968 for the consecration of the new superior, and also in 1950 and 1981. The last was performed in 1998, as part of the celebrations of the 1300<sup>th</sup> death anniversary of En no Gyōja.

Since the twentieth century, because of the rarity of its occurrence, the Jinzen water-pouring rite has been seen and constructed as an exceptional event, as was the consecration of the princely superior in olden times. For Shōgoin, it is an occasion to promote its activities and to attract candidates for the rite — necessarily the *yamabushi* registered at Shōgoin with sufficient qualifications. The number of candidates increased down to the penultimate performance of this rite (73 consecrated people in 1950, 261 in 1965, 408 in 1981, 291 in 1998). The increasing number of candidates and the will to “create the event,” as the present Shōgoin leaders have expressed it, have led to an expansion of the ceremonial pomp organized at night in a spectacular manner. Since 1981, it has taken place at Zenki 前鬼, the ancient *yamabushi* village halfway (840 m) up the mountain (at ten kilometers from the road running along the Kamikitayama 上北山 and Shimokitayama 下北山 valley below), and no longer at Jinzen (1500m), which is about four kilometers above Zenki on the mountain summit and accessible only by a very steep rocky path. In fact, today, a double sense of “spectacularization” of the Jinzen water-pouring rite can be noted: the demonstration of the impressive means and logistical plans required for its realization, and the *mise en scène* of the ritual itself. This has become a grand ceremony with several hundred *yamabushi* taking part. Indeed, the water-pouring consecration rite now requires heavy organization, as well as considerable cost for the organizers and participants, and it has become the object of great media coverage. Professional journalists document not only the most public parts of the events, but also in its most secret sequences.

Some figures from September 1981 (concerning only the Jinzen water-pouring rite and not the mountain-entry of four and five days which the two groups of participants accomplished before the rite itself) will shed light on the scale of the endeavor during that year. It must also be noted that this was an historic moment, because of the presence of women for the first time in the history of the Honzan group. This further reinforced the exceptional nature of the event.

One year of logistical preparation;

Eleven days from the first set up to the cleaning up after the rite;

“Recipients” (*jusha* 受者): 408, of whom 65 were women;

*Jinzen kanjō* rite: over three days (September 5, 7, 8), one day and one night for each group;

Water (drawn at Jinzen) used for the “water pouring” rite: 27 liters;

Number of seals applied to the official ritual documents (attestation, initiation lineage): 7,400;



Photo 4: Ascent towards the *Gyōjadō* at Nakatsugawa for the Katsuragi *kanjō*, (water-pouring rite), 3 am, September 9, 2002.

Cost per individual to participate: ¥100,000 (1981 value);  
 Number of people having a function or duty during the rite: 107;  
 Number of meals prepared at Zenki: 1,720;  
 Weight of material brought to Zenki: 3,500 kg;  
 Vehicles: 31 (23 buses and eight trucks and cars);  
 Total cost of the operation: ¥40,800,000.

(figures communicated by the Shōgoin)

The operational basis is the same for the Katsuragi water-pouring rite (Katsuragi *kanjō* 葛城灌頂), performed by Shōgoin in the *Gyōjadō* at Nakatsugawa 中津川行者堂 (Kokawa 粉川, Wakayama prefecture 和歌山縣). This hall, in terms of the ritual journey through the Katsuragi mountains, is equivalent to that of Jinzen in the Ōmine mountains, in that it constitutes the central point. Even though this rite had been practiced by the Honzan group until the end of the medieval period as a consecration of equal importance to that of Jinzen, the tradition was lost within Shōgoin during the Edo period. It was not reestablished until 1968, the date from which women have been authorized to participate. Since 1968, it has only occurred twice, in 1984 and 2002. For all of these reasons, the Katsuragi rite has the prestige of being exceptional. Different from the Jinzen water-pouring rite, the necessary conditions for its accomplishment are less severe, in terms both of the qualifications of the *yamabushi* and a shorter mountain-entry (three days) that is less of a physical challenge. This results in a great number of women participating. Nevertheless, as

with that of Jinzen, the central part of the Katsuragi water-pouring rite is shrouded in a certain secrecy that should not be violated. During September 7, 8 and 9, 2002, the Katsuragi water-pouring rite at which I participated had 370 participants (254 men and 116 women), all of whom were consecrated.

Beyond the formal, symbolic and interpretative differences of these two *kanjō* rites performed at Jinzen and Katsuragi, the Shōgoin strategy remains the same. The aim is, on the one hand, to adapt the event's logistics to the times and, on the other hand, to shroud the secret rituality in such a way as to capture the imagination and provoke emotion. The major elements of this framework are as follows:

For the overall consecration rite (at Jinzen and Katsuragi):

The rarity of its occurrence — resulting in a great number of candidates.

This great number imposes the organization of separate groups managed with authority, the need for individual obedience, and the importance of the time allotted to the central rite.

Exemplary involvement of the organizers at all levels.

The physical progression to the place of the ritual as an interior progression.

An efficient tripartite structure: long and active preliminaries, condensed and interiorized central rite, open and festive finale.

Media coverage by the press, television and radio.

For the central water-pouring rite itself (Jinzen and Katsuragi *kanjō*):

The choice of the ritual space-time — at night, in the mountain.

The creation of a ritual space using devices to transfigure the place — candles, paper lanterns and lit torches, white stretched screens, white tents, partitioning of areas where the participant can only advance with a guide.

Long waiting periods at night.

Deprivation of sleep, food, and freedom of movement.

Slowness and silence between two ritual sequences.

Blindfolding the eyes when accessing the place of transmission.

Solemnity of the attitudes of the officiants.

The fact that within the crowd of participants, each benefits from the attention and personal teaching of the high members of the Shugen organization.

Unusual gestures.

Secret teaching and its explanations.

The final regrouping of all of the participants for a *saitō goma* whose flames soar up into the night sky and burn until dawn.

Everything combines to turn the central ritual into a true *happening*, despite the fact that in itself, it is quite simple (flower-throwing [*tōge* 投華], water poured on the forehead [*kanjō* 灌頂], transmission of *mudrā* and *mantra* [*inmyō* 印明], and the delivery of the certificate testifying that the person's name has been added to the initiatory lineage [*kechimyaku* 血脈]). This ritual was essential until Meiji, because it legitimated not only the highest Shugen dignitaries but also all of the ritual activities of the *yamabushi*, since their social status depended on it. It remains formally as such for monk-*yamabushi* and for all those who are engaged in activities as religious specialists. It is far less so for the laity not involved in specialist religious activities. But, for anyone involved, it is what *surrounds* the rite that becomes the object of narrative upon one's return, either out of respect for the prohibition of divulging secrets, or simply because it is the spectacular aspects that are mainly remem-

bered. And yet, this formal set-up also allows for an intense personal experience. Some cry or claim to be “transported.” All admit to having experienced something unforgettable. It is clear that the efficacy of the set-up relies on the ritual *mise en scène* elaborated by the Shugen organizers, but equally on the fact that all of the participants are also the main actors. This is the case not only during the rite, but also in the future. Indeed, from then on, they feel responsible for keeping the *secret* shared among their fellow initiates.

We can see the reverse logic of *spectacularization* in the case of another rite of secret tradition, the *hashiramoto jinpibō* 柱源神祕法 associated with the fire rite, *hashiramoto goma* 柱源護摩, that is transmitted in Shōgoin today.<sup>22</sup> This ritual consists of the interiorization of esoteric cosmology and ontology with the aid of symbolic manipulations and mental evocations. Originally reserved for individual practice and transmitted as esoteric teaching from master to disciple, today it is performed several times a year by leading members of Shōgoin in public rites at the request of temples, local groups or individuals. The first official public performance of this rite was made in India in 1983 by the present 52<sup>nd</sup> *monshu* of Shōgoin. The reasons for its use are circumstantial: whereas *saitō goma* demands a significant number of *yamabushi* and a large quantity of wood, the *hashiramoto*, which was originally performed during mountain-entry, requires a small number of miniaturized and portable ritual instruments and there is only one officiant. The trip is done easily and at a low cost. Thanks to these purely material reasons, the rite, previously inaccessible to the laity, has now been rendered public. “Feasible anywhere and at any time, it is a very Shugen-like rite of fire!” declare people of Shōgoin.

In the Jinzen and Katsuragi water-pouring rites and the *hashiramoto* ritual, tradition and innovation are cleverly interwoven. Tradition serves as a backdrop, as a ritual, conceptual and institutional framework, and legitimizes the creation, which, in turn vivifies and actualizes the rituals, transforming and perpetuating them. Both as a heritage of ancient Shugen practices and as a contemporary mode of sociability, the *mise en spectacle* plays an essential role in this process. On one hand, the *spectacularization* attracts the outsider’s attention and crowds of participants at the distant sites where the secret and solemn interior consecration rite takes place. On the other hand, public performance draws the *hashiramoto* ritual out of its interior and private framework. In both cases, this *mise en spectacle* leads to the visibility of rites that had been hidden and accomplishes a two-fold result. Firstly, Shugen rituals, whose inaccessibility was an essential value, are put on display. For the Shugen organizations’ authorities, herein lies a risk of banalizing and losing control over the secrecy considered as an instrument of power. But secondly, the media coverage reinforces the attraction to the secrecy, assembling a great number of candidates for the transmission of the arcane. Paradoxically, *spectacularization* contributes to the reinforcement of the use of secrecy, the prestige of its holders and the development of lay interest in Shugendō and its less accessible transmissions. It could be said that the whole allows for the perpetuation of these secret traditions that would

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22. Miyake Hitoshi, *Shugendō shisō no kenkyū*, 1999. And also according to my own investigation at Shōgoin.

otherwise risk disappearing had they not the object of transmission. According to the director of a film about the Mount Haguro mountain-entry, it seems that this very logic has led Shugen authorities at Shōzen'in 正善院 to allow the audio-visual diffusion of a part of the secret contents of the *Aki no mine*.<sup>23</sup>

Understood in this way, this *mise en scène* of the secret rituals is not, as one might initially conclude, a “vulgarization” of Shugendō, nor a loss of identity, but rather what necessarily underlines its existence today.

## Reconsideration of the Ban of Women and the Question of the Survival of Shugendō

### *The prohibition and the facts*

If the importance of the relationship to the body and the natural universe are fundamental elements of the definition of Shugendō, there is also another element of which the present opinion is not always favorable: the ban on the presence of women in the mountains.<sup>24</sup> I will only treat the contemporary facts here without delving into the historical details of this ban which has known distinct periods, notably with the passage from the notion of “a zone of exclusion of women” (*nyonin kekkai* 女人結界) concerning space, to that of the “ban on women” (*nyonin kinsei* 女人禁制), concerning women themselves.

Today, certain peaks considered to be places of ascesis remain exclusively reserved for men. These summits are either closed to women permanently (as is the case with Sanjōgadake 山上岳 at Ōmine), or only temporarily closed during the ritual season of the mountain-entry in the summer (on July 1, the ascension by women is prohibited on the Mount Ishizuchi 石鎚山 in Shikoku). If the majority of Shugen organizations authorize the participation of women in the mountain-entry practices during times and spaces outside of the prohibition, some of them continue to keep women from integrating into the group of male *yamabushi* (as at Kizōin 喜藏院 in Yoshino, for example, which excludes them during northern part of the *okugake* and accepts them only for the southern part).

Shōgoin was one of the first to allow the participation of women. As early as 1963, women could go as far as the northern foot of the Ōmine range in the procession of the Honzan *yamabushi* doing the *okugake*. Following the shortening of the exclusion zone to Gobanzeki 五番關 (1970), Shōgoin from 1972 admitted women first up to this point, and then in 1974 integrated them into the *okugake*,

23. Kitamura Minao 北村皆雄. *Shugen: Hagurosan Aki no mine* 修験——羽黒山秋の峰. DVD. Tōkyō: VF vidual fōkuroa ヴィジュアルフォークロア, 2005.

24. For an overview on the question and a presentation of a bibliography concerning the subject, see Suzuki Masataka 鈴木正崇. *Nyonin kinsei* 女人禁制. *Rekishi bunka raiburari* 歴史文化ライブラリー 138. Tōkyō: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 2002; Id. “Sangaku shinkō to jendā” 山岳信仰とジェンダー *Sangaku shugen*, Bessatsu: Nihon ni okeru sangaku shinkō to shugendō 別冊・日本における山岳信仰と修験道 (2007.11): 39-54.; Id. “Mountain Worship and Gender.” *Sangaku shugen*, Special Issue: *Mountain religion and Shugendō in Japan* (2007.11): 57-83.



Photo 5: *Shōgoin okugake*, the mountain-entry in Ōmine, Jinzen. September 2005 (82 participants, 59 men, 23 women). (photograph: P. Simon)

with the exception of the practices at Sanjōgadake. Since this date, thanks to the opening of a forest road from Dorogawa 洞川, women can join the group of men coming from Sanjōgadake at the 58<sup>th</sup> stage, Gyōja-gaeri 行者還り, and continue on with them southward. In 1981, women finally gained access for the first time to the Jinzen water-pouring rite at the end of the *okugake*.

Numbers show that, in recent years, women represent about 20% of the participants of the *Shōgoin okugake*. In 1975, when women were accepted for the second time, there were five women including myself who did all the journey after having joined the men's group at Gyōja-gaeri. According to the data communicated by the *Shōgoin*, since 1982, there have been between six and twenty women present at each *okugake* (recently, in 2000, 18 women or 21% of the 84 participants; in 2004, for the revival of the complete *okugake* both north and south parts walking, 18 women or 23% of the 79 participants for the north part, but only 6 women and 36 men for the hard south part; in 2006, 29 women out of 96 participants, or 26%; in 2007, 15 women out of 83 participants, 18%; in 2009, 16 women or 29% of the 55 participants). For the annual springtime mountain-entry of Mount Katsuragi under the leadership of *Shōgoin*, the number of women has been over ten since 1964 and female participation continues to increase (in 1975, 22 women or 19% of the 114 participants; in 1982, 32 women or 21% of the 152 participants; in 1997, 22 women or 28% of the 77 participants; in 2006, 20 women out of 74 participants, 25%; in 2007, 23 women out of 81 participants, 28%; in 2008, 33 women out of 80 participants, 41%; in 2009, 39 women out of 91 participants, 43%). Whereas the

number of participants is globally decreasing, the number of women is increasing. The percentage is about the same for the Jinzen water-pouring rite, which, with the participation of women, has grown considerably (in 1950 and 1965, there were respectively 73 and 261 male-only participants; the first participation of women in 1981 saw 65 women, or 16%, out of 408 participants; in 1998, 77 women, or 26.4%, of 291 participants). The feminine presence is especially remarkable in the Katsuragi water-pouring rite because of its constant increase. When the rite was restored in 1968, 76 women represented 20% of the 369 participants, then in 1984, 110 women, or 22% of the 504 participants, and in 2002, 116 women, or 46% of the 370 participants.

Clearly, the participation of women in the different mountain-entry rituals and other rites that occur there constitutes a historic phenomenon that seems positive for contemporary Shugendō. Faced with these facts, from 1997, the larger Shugen organizations have begun to reconsider the ban on the female ascent of Sanjōgadake. However, the present situation is complex. In one regard, over the last decade debates about opening it to women have been disturbed by women's "commando" type acts on Sanjōgadake. In another regard, the management of the summit depends on complex historic regulations that involve numerous actors. Sanjōgadake — its territory, the buildings including Sanjō Zaōdō 山上藏王堂, also called Ōminesan-ji 大峰山寺, and all activities happening there — is managed by the very conservative tripartite organization of Ōminesanji. This is composed of three entities: the five "guardian temples" (*gojiin* 護持院) of Yoshino and Dorogawa,<sup>25</sup> groups of followers in Yoshino and Dorogawa, and eight *yamabushi* confraternities in Ōsaka and Sakai (*Yashima yakkō* 八鳥役講). The delegates of these three groups perform the "opening" (*toake shiki* 戸開け式) and "closing" (*tojime shiki* 戸閉め式) rituals of Sanjōgadake (presently May 3 and September 23), that determine the period of the mountain-entry practices for the various Shugen organizations. Each of these represents a pressure group that is not necessarily in accordance with the others. But all, especially the eight *yakkō* confraternities who hold the key to the Zaōdō, have a traditionalist position, desiring that the Sanjōgadake remain governed by the "rules of the mountain." The ban on women's ascent is for them a tradition that only Ōmine perpetuates entirely at present, representing a cultural heritage that merits preservation at all costs. Shugen groups that practice mountain-entry there accept and follow these decisions.

Yet, contrary to what had happened in the 1930s and 1940s when movements to suppress the ban mainly came from outside Shugendō, since the 1980s, certain groups from within Shugendō itself have manifested a will to lead internal negotiations to find the most appropriate way to obtain an authorization for women to climb Sanjōgadake while perpetuating the traditional rules of the mountain, meaning the ban. But some groups of women have conducted "forced climbs," notably in 1999 and 2006, that they have publicized through the press, in order to break the taboo. For these women, the ban is a matter of discrimination against

25. Yoshino: Tōnan'in 東南院, Kizōin 喜藏院, Sakuramotobō 櫻木坊, Chikurin'in 竹林院; Dorogawa: Ryūsenji 龍泉寺.

women and constitutes a violation of constitutional equality of the rights of men and women. Clearly, the points of view are not on the same plane, thus impeding any fruitful negotiation. The situation was then “frozen” concerning the ban and, in 2009, things remain at a standstill.

Yet, if one should ask the authorities of the diverse Shugen organizations today about the number of their affiliates and about the participants in mountain-entries and other annual rites, the observation is clear. In Shōgoin, for example, among those in the official register (*tōroku daichō* 登録臺帳) of masters (*kyōshi* 教師) and followers (*shinja* 信者) who have taken the *tokudo rite* 得度, 40% are women. At large festivals like Setsubun 節分, women followers represent 50% of the participants at the *saitō goma*. It is the same for other rites.

The numerical importance of women does not only concern the central organizations. In regions and groups of lesser importance, the proportion is similar or even superior. Thus, as several examples gathered in April 2008 illustrate, if twenty *yamabushi*, close followers of the Kumano (Nachi) Shugen leader are men, 40% of the members of the group that accompany them to the mountain-entry are women. Similarly, the head monk-*yamabushi* of the Shugen temple Hongyōin (Fukuoka) declared that 70% of his disciples (in total about fifty) and followers are women. Among the eighty disciples and the several thousand followers of the head monk-*yamabushi* of Myōōin (明王院, Sasaguri), there is also a total of 70% women, of which the majority are between forty and fifty years of age.

Many women are today at the head of more or less important local Shugen groups that are affiliated to one of the greater Shugen organizations, Shōgoin, Daigo Sanbōin 醍醐三寶院, or Kinbusenji. The size of these groups varies, from the small *dōjō* welcoming twenty or so practitioners to the temple supported by a group of close *yamabushi* disciples and hundreds of followers. As far as I can see, however, the common characteristic of these groups is the fervor with which the believers and disciples follow the women who are at their head and who often boast charismatic personalities. In this regard, women do not concede to men who lead Shugen groups, all depending on the groups around them. It is their emergence in the higher functions of Shugen temples that is nevertheless a novelty in Shugendō, going back to the second half of the twentieth century. This change places an increasing number of women on equal terms with men.

#### *A key role for women in future restructuring?*

In 2002, for the first time in its history, Shōgoin authorized the entrance of a woman as a monk-*yamabushi* in training, *gakusō* 學僧. Having been ordained (*tokudo* 得度) in 2001, she had followed two years of apprenticeship before becoming the first woman monk-*yamabushi* of Shōgoin in 2004. Since this date, she has been employed with the status of monk in the central bureau of Honzan Shugenshū. Today, she is in her early thirties. Another woman, about 28 years old, after having completed her studies at one of the universities in Tōkyō, engaged herself in the same path by coming *gakusō* in 2005 and she desires to remain at Shōgoin for the rest of her life. These two young women follow the same training as the male

apprentice monks (of whom there are one or two each year) who enter Shōgoin and stay there during the training period. The rules are the same for all, as well as the status. It is noteworthy that they are all *yamabushi* and monks, *sō* 僧, and that women are not called *nisō* 尼僧, nuns. What differs is that the men share a common room, whereas the women each has her own room. This year (2009), interestingly, the first of the women *yamabushi* was absent for maternity leave following her marriage with a layman.

I had encountered the first of these women in 2002, at the Katsuragi water-pouring rite. In 2006, having requested permission to attend the secret rite of *hashiramoto* in Shōgoin to study it, I was informed that the authorities would choose the officiant. To my great surprise, the officiant who walked towards me on the ritual platform was none other than the second young woman. We can see in these recent events the sign of a double will: to actively and equally integrate women by training them within the religious community that had been, until recently, exclusively male, and to assimilate the activity of monk-*yamabushi* as an occupation like any other. Beneath this innovative and decisive orientation lies the very condition of the existence of Shugendō.

Indeed, to continue with the example of Shōgoin, since the post-war period, the foundations of the internal and external ritual activities as well as those of the economy of this Shugen organization have been supported by the lay *yamabushi* confraternities, known under the general name of *gyōjakō* 行者講, “confraternities of the Ascetic.” There are about 120 such confraternities, mainly grouped in Kyōto and Ōsaka. For the last ten years, more precisely since 1994 and the outbreak of the financial crisis, there has been an increase in independent affiliates and a decrease in *yamabushi* confraternities. Today, out of 2500, only 1000 of these *yamabushi* are truly available. Among them, two hundred alternately perform functions at annual rites and other outside activities of Shōgoin (mainly *saitō goma*). About twenty constitute the operational core of *yamabushi* for the mountain-entries, in which they carry out the three major functions (*ōjuku* 大宿, *ninoshuku* 二の宿, *sannoshuku* 三の宿). Whereas the confraternities must face the problems of aging and the lack of *yamabushi* to take over, the majority of these extremely conservative groups have no desire for change. It is the same for the *yakkō* confraternities who maintain great decision-making power in the management of Ōminesanji. Thus, according to the authorities at Shōgoin, in the next ten years, the question of the survival of these confraternities, and in turn, Shōgoin in its present state, will become crucial. And yet, no measures have been taken by those concerned.

Faced with this crisis, the new *monshu* has envisaged a resolutely novel political scheme and has declared two objectives as priority tasks: the formation of an executive section and a women’s section that will both have a central place and function in the organization of Shōgoin. For that, the laity will be called upon and given religious and practical training. All would become professionals of Shōgoin and contribute to the maintenance of its ritual, economic, administrative, and pedagogical functioning. They would also constitute a support of mountain professionals for the *okugake* and other ritual journeys. The authorities deem it necessary to consider and to place this transformation of Honzan Shugendō within the changing landscape

of the Japanese religious world. Kinbusenji at Yoshino and Shippōryūji 七寶瀧寺 at Mount Inunaki 犬鳴山 have already started a women's section, illustrating that the enterprise is possible. The success and difficulty that these initiatives have encountered should serve as a reference. It is within this framework that a solution should also be found to the question of the ban on women on Sanjōgadake and that of the survival of the entire Shōgoin organization beyond the crisis that is affecting the old *yamabushi* confraternities.

We are faced with what is considered as one of the most crucial of all of the dynamics presently at work in Shugendō. According to facts, during the second half of the twentieth century and at the beginning of the twenty-first, in the context of Shugendō, women went from having a one-sided position as objects of exclusion (from mountains, practices, organizations), seekers of ritual services and receivers of beliefs, to having an ambivalent position. Even if, according to points of view and circumstances, women remain more or less confronted with this type of mentality (which is not limited to Shugen), they are progressively becoming essential actors in Shugendō. Without going so far as to affirm that “women are the future for Shugendō,” nevertheless, if the politics previously envisaged is put into place in the next few years, not only will the position of women within Shugendō change completely, but most obviously the Shugen organizations themselves will undergo a profound metamorphosis. The authorities agree that from the moment women take an active part in the heart of Shugen organizations, it is hardly thinkable that they would not exercise, or request to exercise, certain of the highest functions.

The apparently antinomic dynamics presented here only constitute one part of the diverse tensions, orientations and choices that Shugendō is confronted with today. Among the particularly noteworthy is the tension between the practices and asceticism performed *at the risk of one's life* and the necessity for the organizers of the mountain-entries to make the safety of each of the participants their priority. Also significant is the incompatibility between the will to maintain “sacred” (sacralised) and secret the places of practice in the mountains and all of the politics of tourism development. Such politics are linked with regional, national (delimitation of national and regional natural parks, for example), or international (registration in the list of world heritage sites) movements, and they contribute to the valorization of Shugendō and its anchorage in these places. Similarly, the reference to a *tradition* erected as an immutable model is far from being compatible with the inevitable arrangements imposed by the modifications, or even drifts, resulting from the recent export of Shugendō elements outside of Japan, that contribute, through certain of their aspects, to the valorization of the internal image, and so on.

These antagonistic logics could appear to be a motor for the disintegration of this religious stream. Yet, at least at the present state of things, this is not the case. Inversely, they seem to play more of the role of stimuli towards a positive self-questioning or, in any case, towards options for transformation. By this, the very existence of such dynamics proves the vitality of Shugendō as a federating force and motor for socio-religious construction. In this regard, these dynamics occupy an essential role in the identity construction of contemporary Shugendō, its

legitimization as a religious movement and its anchorage in society. The ruptures brought about by the metamorphoses of Shugendō can also be seen in continuity with its legitimacy all throughout history; that is to say, a legitimacy that has always contained one or several forms of illegitimacy, depending on the angle of approach. Seen in this light, the choices and transformations of Shugendō today inform us not only about what is this current in the *ensemble* of Japanese religious phenomena, but also lead us to question, through the issues raised, the religious phenomenon itself, as well as definitions and diverse valorization attempts of concepts such as *religion* and *tradition* that are, it must be remembered, inscribed in Japan in the context of the construction of modernity and societal, political, scientific and conceptual upheavals from the Meiji period.

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