

THE KUMANO AREA AND
THE ROOTS OF SHUGENDO:

熊野地方と修験道の原流

A STUDY IN
ECLECTIC JAPANESE RELIGION

日本折衷的宗教研究

by Paul L. Swanson

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Paul L. Swanson

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INTRODUCTION

I would want the reader to understand my title "The Roots of Shugendō" in two ways. The first is geographical: the roots of Shugendō are grounded deep in the geographical area of Kumano, both historically as it originated and developed in this area, and in the sense that Shugendō still draws much of its vitality from the traditions and activities of this area. The Kumano area is located on the Kii peninsula, blessed with most of the best creation has to offer--lush forests and mountains on one side, the sea with its rocky shores and white sandy beaches on the other with an abundance of rivers, waterfalls, hot springs and clean air in between. It stretches from the Nachi-Katsura area in the south to past Owase in the north and includes the mountainous regions inland between these two areas.

In one visits the Hayatama Shrine of Shingu city, at the mouth of the Kumano River where it flows from the mountains of Kumano into the Pacific Ocean, one can still find a wooden plaque near the main entrance of the worship hall on which is written:

The First Great Spiritual Place of Worship in Japan,
The Foundation of the Three Kumano Gongen. (Shingu, Nachi, Hongu)

「日本第一大靈驗所
根本熊野三所権現」

Here is evidence that it was this area which gave birth to Shugendō. In addition, it claims to be the earliest "holy ground" in Japan. The word gongen (権現) immediately reveals the eclectic nature of Shugendō, for gongen means the Japanese, or native, manifestations (the kami) of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. It is a word coined by the followers of esoteric Buddhism to explain the unity of the Buddhas and kami.

The "Chronological Records of Kumano" (熊野年代記); an historical document, records that this plaque was first set up in the first month of the third year of the reign on Emperor Kōken (751 A.D.). More details on the historical and geographical roots of Shugendō in the Kumano area will be discussed later.

Secondly, I would like to look at the roots of Shugendō as an eclectic religion. In this sense the roots are the various religious traditions which have come together to shape Shugendō into what it is today.

Therefore, I have divided my paper into three sections. Part One will discuss the various religious traditions which came together in the mountains of Kumano to form Shugendō: shamanism, folk beliefs and customs, Shintō, Taoist and Yin-Yang magic, Pure Land and Esoteric (Tendai and Shingon) Buddhism. The Taoist magic refers not to the "Laoism" of the Tao Te Ching but to the later development of magic (including Yin-Yang divination) and wizardry, such as the lucky-unlucky days and directions of the calendar, various taboos, incantations, spells and divination which were assimilated by Japanese culture and became so much a part of the life of, for example, the Heian nobility. The attraction of the Chinese mountain wizard (仙人) can also be seen in the legends surrounding various yamabushi. I would like to emphasize three areas: a) Folk Religion--shamanism, Shinto, and folk beliefs and customs, none of which can be completely isolated from the others; b) Pure Land Buddhism; and c) Esoteric Buddhism.

In Part II I hope to give the reader a general idea of the flow and development (not evolution) of Shugendō through a brief history of the activities of the yamabushi (山伏) in various periods of Japanese history, and the rise of its organizations, with emphasis on the role and activities of the Kumano area.

In Part III I will record the five day journey into the mountains of July 19-23, 1975, with approximately one hundred yamabushi associated with Shōgōin (聖護院) of Kyoto. I have also added appendices of important material and maps which I did not want to include in Part III for fear that it would interrupt the flow of what I was trying to express. This section is not particularly academic (nor is the prologue, a report on my first mountain trip which was a one day walk at the end of October, 1974), but I hope it captures to a certain extent the experience of walking in the mountains. The academic material in the rest of the paper is next to worthless without

the vitality of personal, practical experience. I hope that its spirit will be retained by the reader through the more theoretical and academic sections. If it strikes the reader as insufficiently scholarly, so be it. There are many aspects of life which when scientifically analyzed are squeezed dry of life and thereby murdered. Therefore an overly scholarly analysis is at times inevitably insufficient and even inaccurate. I would rather be right than scholarly.

There were certain difficulties in writing this paper which I would like the reader to keep in mind. Foremost among them: how can one adequately write about a religion for which practical experience (especially walking in the mountains) is of the essence? The sounds and smells, the aching legs and parched throat, the sense of comradeship which arises spontaneously between the climber and other climbers and the environment, that comradeship which grows in people who have shared a common, significant experience; these things cannot be reproduced on paper. Words are, needless to say, inadequate; and so are pictures, although they add an extra dimension. I hope the reader will use his imagination, or draw on his own past experience, to compensate for the author's inadequacies.

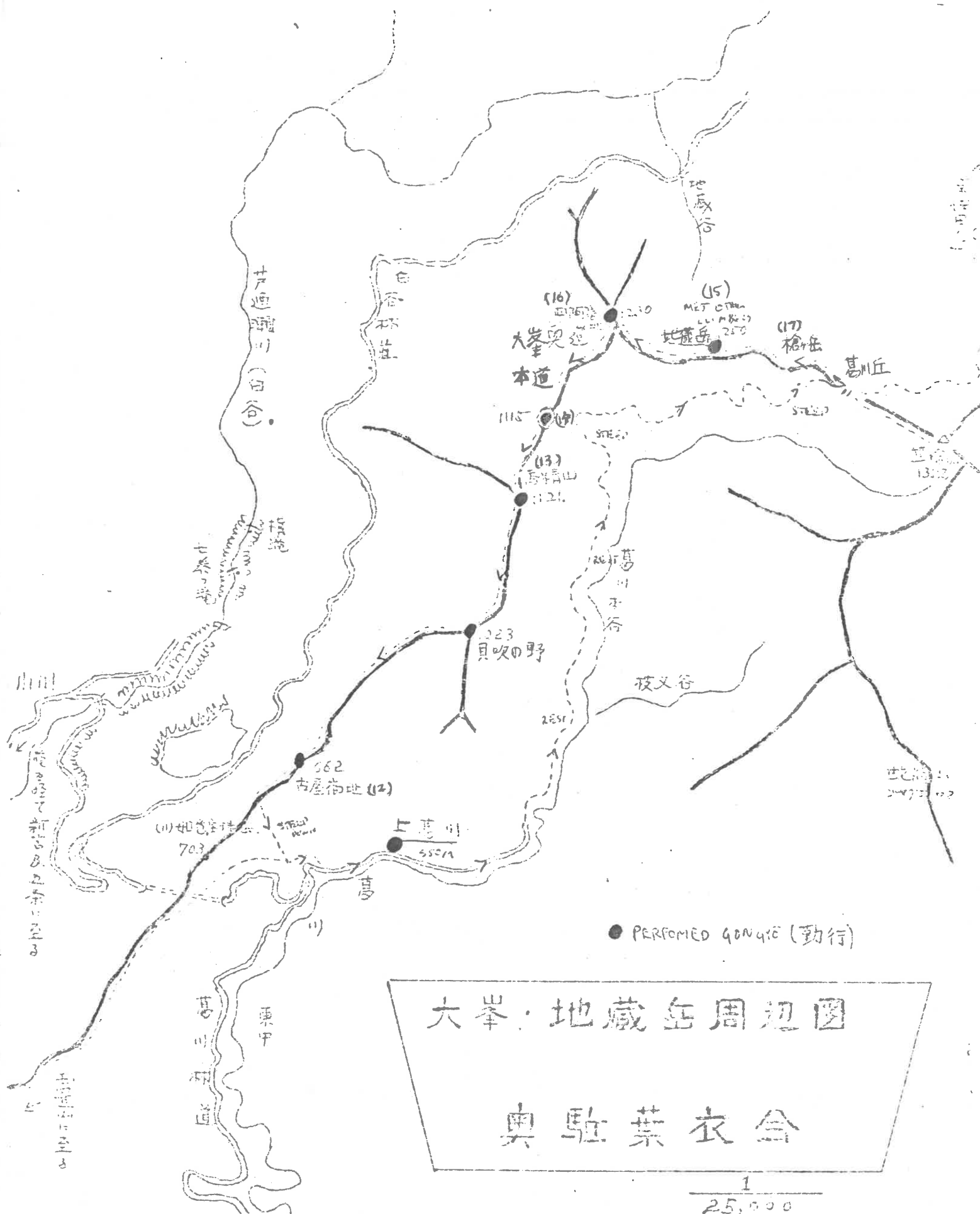
Finally, I must acknowledge my debt to many people. Mr. Nikko Ryōei, Christian and scholar, who shared with me much of his time and work; Mr. Miyagi Yasutoshi, head priest of Shōgōin, who befriended me in the mountains and invited me to accompany him last summer on the trip reported in Part III; Sato Kannushi of Kumano Hongu Shrine and Kikitsuchi Michio, Aikido tenth rank and ordained Shinto priest and Zen monk, for their interest in my work and for many personal and informal discussions; Maeda Yuichi, guide and head of the Hagoromo Association for the preservation and protection of the Kumano area's tradition and natural beauty; Father Bairy my advisor; Mr. Tamaoka and the members of the Shingu Mountain Climbing Club; and many others who have given a helping hand in this long uphill struggle.

Japanese names, when they appear, are written in the Japanese order, as they should be, with family name first.

PROLOGUE

My first journey began on a Thursday when I received a post card from Sato kannushi of Hongu Shrine informing me that a trip into the mountains was planned for the next Sunday and that I was welcome to participate. I immediately bought my train tickets and left for Wakayama-ken. Saturday afternoon found me at Hongu Shrine, where Sato kannushi gave me directions as to where the group was assembling and apologized for not being able to go along. I took off for a remote mountain village called Kamikuzukawa (上葛川) a small hamlet wedged between mountains of green and watered by a pure mountain stream. Many people had already arrived, and more came later. Registration was completed and the evening's business began. Maeda-san, who has been walking in the Kumano mountains for forty years, was our guide and he gave us instructions concerning the walk the next day. We would be walking from 7:30 A.M. Sunday morning to approximately 4:30 in the afternoon. Our direction was jun no mine ire (順の峰入礼). We would climb a height of seven hundred meters; we were already at 550M above sea level and the highest peak in our climb would be 1250M. There would be three particularly dangerous spots and seven places where extra caution would be necessary. He would blow his whistle as a warning when we reached those spots.

Miyagi-san, a priest from Shōgōin, was introduced next. Shōgōin is one of the two main Shugendo temples, and has in its possession many old documents and tools used by yamabushi throughout its history. It is also the headquarters of the Honzan-ha (本山派) of Shugendō. Miyagi-san had with him a diary written by a yamabushi in the 42nd year of Meiji (1908) describing his trek from Mt. Yoshino to the Kumano area. It had taken him six full days. A short sermonette was delivered: a reminder that En no Gyoja (役行者) had opened the mountains more than one thousand two hundred years ago; a claim that Shugendo is an indigenous Japanese religion, since its roots can be traced to the days before the introduction of Buddhism to Japan; the boast that Japan, and especially the Kumano area, has been blessed with an abundance



大峯・地藏岳周辺圖

奥 葉 衣 合

1 / 25,000

of beautiful mountains; the belief that the mountains themselves (山々) are sacred and worthy of special respect.

A service of chanting in front of the scroll on display in the tokonoma lasted ten minutes and was led by Miyagi-san. A shorter version of the same service (consisting of chanting the Hannya Shin Sutra) was to be repeated many times the next day at various places of worship in the mountains.

Many of those present for this climb had also participated in a walk on August 6th, and slides from this walk were shown next. The Aki-no-mine (秋の峰-"autumn peak") is not one specific festival in Kumano as it is at Haguro. In Kumano the Aki-no-mine refers to the shugyo (修行) or practice done during the whole autumn season, and perhaps could be translated, in crude laymen's terms, the "autumn climbing season." If one were to choose one walk which was most similar to the Haguro Aki-no-mine, the choice would fall on the August 6th walk. The slides revealed an impressive sequence of ceremonies. The day began by walking in the mountains to a predetermined spot. A purification ceremony with water was followed by the question and answer testing period (問答-mondō). A bow and arrow ceremony was highlighted by a yamabushi who "shot an arrow into the air." Another purification ceremony followed, this time with a sword swung through the air. This symbolized the "cutting off" of worldly desires and impurities (煩惱). The final purification ceremony was of fire, which was lit from the front and back, also symbolizing the purification from worldly desires.

Everyone was relaxed after supper and an interesting slide show, but the evening would not be complete without the General Self-Introduction. There were many people of all ages, occupation, and intent, with whom I had the opportunity to get acquainted with one the walk the next day. One comment which cannot be left out, however, was made by a man with a smile on his face; that he planned to walk in the mountains to "purge himself of his many sins," and received in response the heartiest laugh of the night.

Just before turning out the lights, Mr. Morishita, the owner of the

house we were staying in, talked about the various places we would see and how they had received their names. By this time, however, everyone seemed rather tired and I, for one, was not as attentive as I could have been to this accessory information, and gladly climbed under my futon when he finished. There was a paucity of space and futon to the effect that three people shared two futon, and I had the privilege of squeezing in between the priest from Shogoin and a yamabushi.

When I awoke the next morning it was just five-thirty. The yamabushi next to me had also just woken up and as we climbed out of our futon others woke from their sleep and soon the whole room bustled with activity. Breakfast was served at a little past six. Preparations continued until past seven as bentos were passed out and backpacks were readied. Finally everyone and everything was ready, except for two more preparatory rituals. The first was a relatively modern phenomenon called the "Group Picture." It was mandatory that all participants in the walk be included in this ceremony. It should be noted that this ritual is not original with nor limited to Shugendo but has become a universal ritual in Japanese life. The second ritual was similar to the service conducted the night before: chants and prayer led by Miyagi-san. This service was held in front of the house where we had slept the night before and everyone stood in the front yard and faced the front door. Then we were on our way.

In a single file we plunged into the deep green and brown of the mountains, and for over eight hours we walked through a seemingly endless paradise of color and sound. I scribbled down my impressions as they came to me.

The air was pierced periodically by the sound of the yamabushi's conch shell. This would signify the passing of a particularly beautiful spot, such as the sight of a waterfall or an exceptionally good view of the river far below.

Sounds:

The crunching of sticks and stones under the feet of the walkers. The river far below. The yamabushi's bell hanging from his belt. The

whispers of the walkers. An occasional chirp from the birds. The groans of the too young and the too old. The warning whistle. The cradling instructions on the guide through his hand mike. A lone yamabushi singing to himself. Silence.

We would rest fairly frequently for there were a few old people and children among us. The barking voice of the guide would say "juppun shokyūshi (小体止)" and we would rest for ten minutes. I asked why the term shokyūshi was used instead of the usual kyūkei (休憩) and the answer was that kyūkei refers to physical rest but shokyūshi implies an added settling of quieting of the heart and spirit. I thought this phrase particularly appropriate for our times of rest, for the environment in which we found ourselves was very conducive to a quieting of the spirit.

Conversation along the path revealed many different people. One middle aged man from Wakayama City was climbing this route for the first time, although he had climbed Oomine-san (大峰山) twice this year. A Junior High school age boy was on his first walk and had come with his father from Shingu. Another man from Shingu had already climbed Yoshino-san four times this year, and his goal was to climb Nachi-san one hundred times in one year. Maeda-san, the guide, had first climbed the mountains of Kumano forty years ago. Miyagi-san, from Shogoin, had brought one of his assistants, who was very intellectually informed on Shugendo, for his first climbing experience in Kumano. Another older man from Wakayama City, apparently retired, was walking in the mountains for the first time ever. This walk was a relatively easy one, so many of the participants were beginners. Five members of the Shingu Mountain Climbing Club had come along for the walk, and three girls who work together in the same company in Shingu were on their monthly walk in the mountains. And then there were the yamabushi. One is allowed to wear the yamabushi uniform in Kumano after climbing the Yoshino-Oomine route a minimum of three times and passing the oral question and answer test (問答). One can advance in rank as he piles up the number

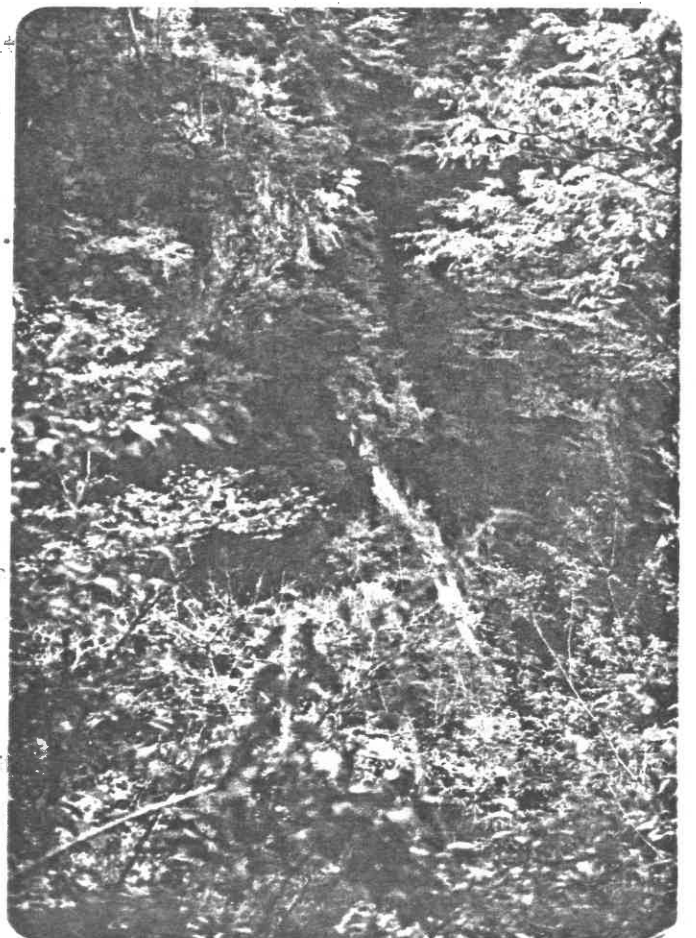
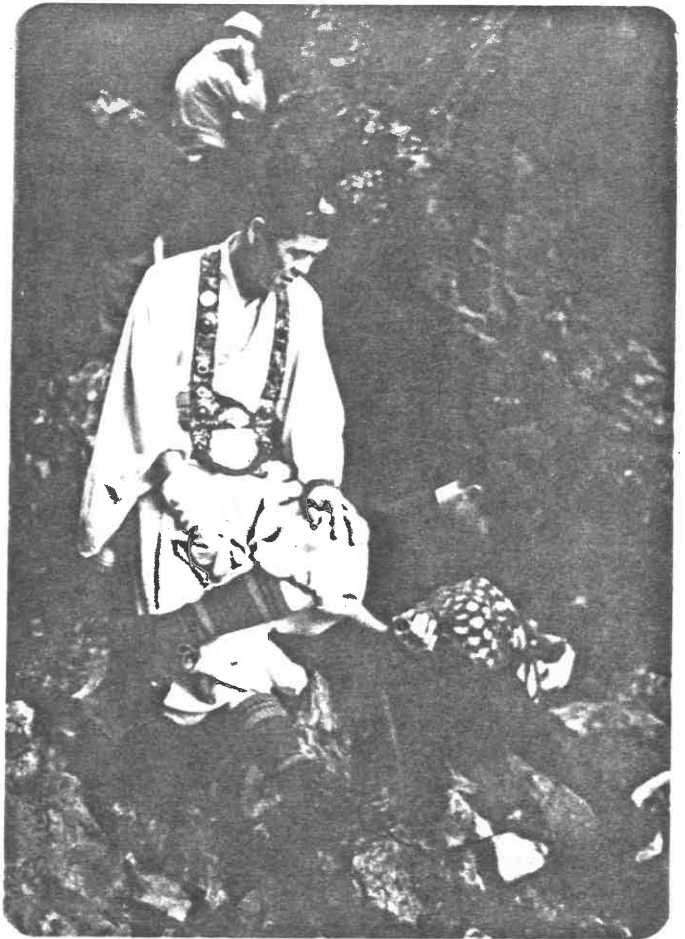
of walks and knowledge of Shugendō.

The Kumano yamabushi wore baggy white pants and shirt (結袈裟-yuigesa). On his head he wore a small black "skull cap" (頭襟-tokin) which he used to drink water from a river or waterfall. He carried a rosary and small staff in one of his pockets, for use when he performed gongyō (勤行) at the many sites of worship. The most conspicuous part of his dress was the conch shell (法螺-hora). He also carried a walking stick (錫杖-shakujō). Hanging down over the seat of his pants and tied around his waist was a pelt of some animal, apparently to be used to sit on when he rested (引敷-hishiki). Around his shoulders and down his chest was a purple ribbon on which were sewn various badges and pins, symbolizing his sect (当山派-Tozan-ha) and the various walks in which he has participated, and his rank. An esoteric Buddhist bell hung from his belt and would occasionally break the silence as he walked.

Sights:

Autumn leaves-red, yellow, orange, brown, green. Jagged rocks, waterfalls. The river far below.

Crumbling wooden bridges, Majestic trees. Moss still wet with dew. Moss covered rocks. Moss covered tree stumps. Moss covers logs. Moss covered moss. Moss on the path. Dead stumps. small white flowers. Yellow flowers. purple flowers. Sheer rock cliffs.



Rotting wood.

In contrast to the color of our immediate surroundings, the dull overcast sky, covering the tallest peaks with mist. Later in the afternoon, the mist would descend and swallow us, wetting us with its tears.

Bright red maple leaves.

Electric wire towers, a reminder of that audacious, aggressive juggernaut named Civilization, which has left few unconquered virgins in this corner of Creation. As we penetrated into the mountains I wondered if we were contributing to the rape of Creation.

Discarded mikan peelings, gum wrappers, can tops.

Young bamboo shoots, Red berries. Mushrooms. Shakunage (rhododendron). Moisture hanging like pearls from the overhanging evergreens.

Some things are so obvious that they are not noticed at first: moss on the path. The panorama of abundant green. Michikusa (道草). The stillness and silence.

We entered the main route (本道), which runs from Yoshino to Kumano, around 11:00 A.M. and after fifteen minutes of walking stopped for lunch. While munching on our lunches of onigiri, I talked with Miyagi-san about the differences between Kumano and Haguro Shugendo. He had just visited Haguro the year before and gave the following differences:

- 1) the costume of the Kumano yamabushi is much simpler.
- 2) Kumano yamabushi teach their doctrine (十界, 六波羅蜜, etc.) in the mountains as they walk. At Haguro the instruction takes place in the temple.
- 3) The Haguro mountains were opened, traditionally, by Prince Hachiko, the eldest son of Emperor Shushun. The Kumano mountains were opened and Shugendo founded, traditionally, by En no Gyoja.
- 4) The Kumano yamabushi walk in the mountains more frequently than Haguro yamabushi.
- 5) The spring walks are the most important in Kumano. The autumn aki-no-mine (秋の峰) is the highlight of Haguro Shugendo.

In the afternoon it rained slightly as we descended into the misty valleys.

Sights:

The valley hidden by mist.
Twisted branches.
A lone pine standing up through the mist.
A spider web spotted



with moisture. Red tape around tree trunks to mark the path. A sudden breeze and leaves flutter to the ground. A dark path of overhanging trees. Worms out after the rain.

On the main path we passed six places of worship (nabiki-摩 see map) where we stopped while the yamabushi performed gongyō. These spots were six of the traditional seventy-five places of worship on the main route between Yoshino and Kumano (see appendices #1 and #2). The first and longest, and also the only ceremony which included the lighting of a candle, was on the highest peak. The rest of the ceremonies were also on various peaks as we followed the path. The final ceremony was conducted, as when we started the walk, in front of the house in which we had slept.

Sensations:

A drop of water on the face from an overhanging evergreen. A cool breeze after a steep climb. Aching legs. Slippery rocks. A helping hand. A slow chill from resting too long. Dirty hands. The tell-tale smell revealing the past presence of deer. A slight drizzle.

Silence. Solitude.

Recongnition of a path one has travelled on before. Resting after arriving back at the mountain cottage.

During this walk in the mountains I believe I had an encounter with the yama no kami (山の神). I do not speak of the kami as a personal spirit which exists apart from the mountains, but as a spirit which arose in my heart, as I walked, of intense desire to become one with the beauty which surrounded me. It was an "experience of intense longing" which C.S. Lewis called Joy. It was a special longing, a desire which, "even when there is no hope of satisfaction, continues to be prized, and even to be preferred to anything else in the world, by those who have once felt it." All men vainly attempt to satisfy this longing, grasping at false substitutes such as power, wealth, sex, fame, knowledge, art, nostalgia for the half-remembered past or imagined future, or Joy itself: pleasures or pains not wrong in themselves but incapable of satisfying this deepest of needs. Lewis adds in his preface to The Pilgrim's Regress: "It appeared to me therefore that if a man diligently followed this desire, pursuing the false objects until their falsity appeared and then resolutely abandoning them, he must come out at last into the clear knowledge that the human soul was made to enjoy some object that is never fully given--nay, cannot even be imagined as given--in our present mode of subjective and spacial-temporal experience. The Desire was, in the soul, as the Seat Perilous in Authur's castle, the chair in which only one could sit. And if nature makes nothing in vain, the One who can sit in this chair must exist."

This experience was a religious experience. Some may inaccurately dismiss it as merely "aesthetic" or even as totally subjective. But as a result it is no strange mystery to me that this religion called Shugendō and the worship of mountains has developed, for it reveals the attempt to find the path whereupon the human heart is willing and created to trod.

Part I: Roots of Tradition

1) Folk Religion

I considered titling this section "Shinto: Japan's Indigenous Religion," but have avoided doing so for a number of reasons. For the most part, I wanted to avoid arousing connotations associated with State Shinto or Sectarian Shinto, and even some images associated with Shrine Shinto. That is not to say that Shinto and Folk religion are not related. On the contrary, they are so interrelated that by some definitions they are the same. Sato kannushi of Kumano Hongu Shrine once told me that Shinto is merely the Japanese way of life, or the distinctive Japanese view of life, no more and no less (but, he quickly added, "let us not talk about such difficult things tonight. Let us eat and enjoy ourselves."). He had no list of orthodox dogma, except an irresistible attraction to a vaguely comprehended "Japanese way of life;" no main object of worship, except for everything around him, especially the surrounding mountains, rivers and trees. It is in this sense that I would like to use the word Shinto in this paper, and in this sense folk religion and the way of the kami are one and the same. Shamanism also is inseparable from these and will be dealt with in this section.

To adequately cover folk religion in Japan would require an expert's knowledge of folk legend, such as compiled by Yanagita Kunio, Japanese studies as exemplified by Motoori Norinaga, and folk beliefs and customs, including shamanism, studied and analyzed by such scholars as Hori Ichiro and Sakurai Tokutaro. For the beginner I would like to deal particularly with those elements which are more or less directly connected with the chronological origins and heart of Shugendō: a) the kami, 2) the mountains, and 3) shamanism. I will not deal specifically with such important topics as festivals, mythology, the sacred regalia, folklore, etc., which are not directly related to the subject at hand.

a) the kami: The longer I live in Japan and the more I study Japanese religion, the stronger grows my doubt as to the wisdom of translating the word "kami" into "god" or, for that matter, the word "God" into "kami." It seems that a feeling for what is kami can be cultivated without coming any closer to an all inclusive verbal definition, so that one can walk in the mountains and come to know what is meant by yama no kami (山の神), but not be able to put it into a neat formula on paper for a thesis. The mountains are kami, the sea is kami, the trees are kami, the wind is kami; without the mountain there would be no kami, yet the mountain and yama no kami are not the same "thing." So explained Mr. Hikitsuchi Michio, the highest ranking Aikido expert in the world and ordained Shinto priest and Zen monk who lives and teaches in the mountains and sea of Kumano, to me in one of our private conversations. To say that kami created the world is impossible and a contradiction, for yama no kami could not have existed before the mountain. And yet to say that the mountain and yama no kami are the same is to reveal your ignorance as to what kami is, or are.

Even Motoori Norinaga, perhaps the greatest scholar of Japanese studies, wrote in the 18th century:

I do not yet understand the meaning of the term kami. Speaking in general, however, it may be said that kami signifies, in the first place, the deities of heaven and earth that appear in the ancient records and also the spirits of the shrines where they are worshipped.

It is hardly necessary to say that it includes human beings. It also includes such objects as birds, beasts, trees, plants, seas, mountains, and so forth. In ancient usage, anything whatsoever which was outside the ordinary which possessed superior power, or which was awe-inspiring was called kami. (italics mine) Eminence here does not refer merely to the superiority of nobility, goodness, or meritorious deeds. Evil and mysterious things, if they are extraordinary and dreadful, are called kami.

It seems to me that the key here is the part I have underlined, especially the words awe-inspiring and dreadful. (Unfortunately these words have lost much of their original meaning of "that which arouses awe or dread," possibly through overuse.) To use western philosophical terminology, kami is the subjective emotional response in the mind of the observer to the sublime

¹ quoted in Holtom, Daniel C., The National Faith of Japan, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1947, pp. 24-25.

and awe-inspiring mountain, tree, rock, person, spirit, or Unknown, revealed through the senses. Yet, it is not merely subjective, for the mountain, or whatever is considered as kami, or possessed with kami, or inhabited by kami, objectively demands a certain response. For example, even is some insensitive Philistine (gaijin) would not experience the presence of kami while walking in the mountains, that does not mean that kami are not "there." The above explanation is a good example of the futility of trying to explain Japanese religion with western philosophical terminology.

The kami can be divided into various categories, such as ujigami (氏神)-the shrine or guardian kami identified with ancestor worship, and hitogami (人神) which are closely connected with shamans. Another professor of folk religion I spoke with divided the kami into those which move around and those which are confined to one place, a distinction I find not particularly helpful. Often the kami are described as three types: 1) the kami of nature (自然神) which include a-unique, awe-inspiring, or dreadful natural phenomenon such as the sun, moon, stars, wind, thunder, etc.; and b-objects of nature such as mountains, trees, the ocean, rivers, large or unusually shaped rocks, waterfalls, hot springs, etc., which are surrounded by an aura of greatness, a breathtaking beauty, an awe-inspiring uniqueness, or perhaps a symbolic common-placeness. 2) Human kami (人間神)-larger than life human beings, living or dead, which inspire a certain respect, dread, or awe because of their position, presence, deeds, or a combination of these, such as a-former emperors. The most celebrated examples would be Emperor Meiji who is enshrined at Meiji Shrine in Tokyo and Emperor Kammu who is enshrined at Heian Shrine in Kyoto. b-Historical heroes, such as warriors, or scholars. An example of the first would be Tokugawa Ieyasu, founder of the Tokugawa Shogunate, who is enshrined at Nikko. One of the most celebrated historical heroes now considered a kami is the scholar Sugawara no Michizane. A victim who died as a result of an unjust exile, it was believed that the spirit of Michizane returned to the Capital to haunt his persecutors. In order to pacify his spirit, he was enshrined and payed homage. To this

day he is known affectionately as Tenjin-sama (天神様) and is the recipient of prayers from flocks of would-be college students preparing for the annual "examination hell."

c-Unique individuals, such as founders of new religions.

d-The dead, or ancestors. In a sense anyone who dies can be considered a kami and is often referred to as uchi no hotoke-sama (家仏様-this house's Buddha). Here again we see the synthesis of Shinto and Buddhism.

3) The Kami of Function (機能神)-the kami in charge of a certain function or action. For example, the kami of agriculture is enshrined at Izumo Shrine. The Inari Shrine used to enshrine the kami of food and drink, but now, moving with the times, caters to the kami of business. There are also the kami of procreation and the kami of wealth. The kami of poverty, rather than being enshrined, is driven out of the house every March in a bean throwing ceremony. These three categories are not all-inclusive, nor are they always distinct from each other. For example, the kami of the dead were often one with the mountain kami. This brings us to our second area of emphasis and one of the most important for this study, the role of the mountains.

b) the mountains:

1-the universal symbolism of mountains. Eliade claims and documents, that one of the almost universal beliefs of man is in the three cosmic zones: the sky (heaven), the earth, and the underworld.² The prime importance of the mountain, therefore, is as a link between the cosmic zones of the earth and the sky, between man and his gods.

Another important symbol is the mountain as the "navel of the earth," or center of the world; and as the center the place closest to the gods and where communication with the gods is possible. There are three aspects to this "symbolism of the center:"

a-the Sacred Mountain, where heaven and earth meet, situated at the center of the world,

b-Every temple or palace--and by extension every sacred city or royal residence--is a sacred Mountain.

² see Eliade, Mircea, The Myth of the Eternal Return, and Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy, Princeton Univ. Press, 1971.

c) Being an axis mundi, the sacred city or temple is regarded as the meeting point of heaven, earth, and the underworld.

Eliade adds that if there are not natural mountains present, a culture will produce artificial ones. The examples are numerous: the ziggurat, the towers of Babylon (often called "link between heaven and earth"), the pyramids of Egypt, the palaces and temples of the Maya Indians, the Temple at Jerusalem (Mt. Zion). The capital of the Chinese was considered to be the meeting place of the three cosmic zones.

Death is often identified with mountains. In many ancient funerals there was a symbolic ascent to the celestial dwelling of the dead. The mountain is often considered the swelling place of the dead. Finally, the mountain was often considered the dwelling place of guardian spirits and the source of supernatural power.

2-The significance of mountains in Japan: i-general symbolism.

The central symbolic meaning of mountains in Japan, as in other parts of the world, is that of the center of the world, the link between the cosmic zones, the sacred dwelling place of the kami and the spirits of the dead. Hori Ichiro lists three specific categories of Japanese mountain worship:³

a-as a link between heaven and earth, especially conically shaped mountains. Mt. Fuji would be the prime example.

b-mountains as watersheds or sources of streams. Agriculture rites were performed at the foot of or on the mountain to insure good crops. The mountain kami (山の神) and the field kami (田の神) became interchangeable because in the spring it was believed that the mountain deity came down from the mountain to the fields and became, or was, until his return to the mountain in the autumn, the field kami.

c-the relationship between the mountain and the spirits of the dead. There were two sites-the mountain top (山宮) and the foot of the mountain (里宮)-for the worship of the dead spirits, or rather the spirits of the dead. Perhaps because the mountains were considered a link between heaven and earth, the dead were buried, or left, on the mountain. Thus, the

³ see Hori Ichiro, Folk Religion in Japan, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1968.

mountain also became the dwelling place of the ancestor's spirits and worshipped as such.

At first, Hori writes, the yama miya (山宮) were natural formations such as impressive trees or rocks, around which straw ropes were tied, but later buildings and alters were added. The main festival connected with the yama miya is obon,⁴ when the spirits of the dead are welcomed back for an annual visit. Some of the rites connected with this festival were directly connected to mountains, such as "clearing the tops of the mountains," or flower gathering on the mountain in preparation for obon. Many poems in the Manyoshu (万葉集) link the souls of the dead with sacred mountains, refer to mountains as an "other world," and/or refer to many burials on the mountain top.

In these various ways, the aspects of death, life (rice fields as the source of food, mountains as the source of water), heaven and the underworld were merged and the mountain kami, field kami and ancestor spirits were interchangeable and even identical.

Added to these is the symbolism of the mountain as the Divine Mother, which is "the belief that the mountain itself has a mystical power to cause the birth or rebirth of human beings or animals."⁵ Mt. Gassan and Mt. Haguro are two mountains in Japan which are connected with Shugendō and symbolize the Divine Mother, specifically in the special rites for the four seasons, as discussed in detail by Earheart in his study of Haguro Shugendō.⁶

Concerning the importance of mountains in Japan, Earheart writes that the factor which makes Shugendō distinctive is its belief in the presence and worship of the kami within the mountains. He lists three presuppositions of Shugendō:

1-Mountains are sacred;

2-Buddhas and kami have appeared within the mountains; and

⁴ see also Sakurai Tokutaro 桜井徳太郎, Minkan Shinko (民間信仰-Folk Religion), Kosensho #56, Tokyo, 1966, p. 214-216.

⁵ Hori, op. cit., p. 166.

⁶ Earheart, Byron, A Religious Study of the Mt. Haguro Sect of Shugendō Sophia University, Tokyo, 1970. see also Hori, *ibid.*, pp. 170ff.

3-Human beings can tap this power through special procedures, such as mountain pilgrimages.

These mountain beliefs were called sangaku shinko (mountain faith- 山岳信仰). It is not mountain worship in the sense that the mountain itself is deified and worshiped. It includes mythology, folk beliefs, festivals, rituals, asceticism, shrine and temple buildings--all related to the mountain as a religious site.

2) Mountains in early Japanese history and literature: Even in the earliest mythology of Japan, mountains were considered the place of descent, or dwelling, of the kami. In pre-literary times, there is archaeological evidence which points to ritual activities that took place at the foot of the mountain. Ritual bowls, jewels, swords, mirrors, and stone seats from the Kofun Age (250-552 A.D.) have been found at sites believed to have been used for religious ceremonies. The earliest traceable ritual is one connected to the harvest, and consisted of thanksgiving at the foot of a mountain.

In the Kojiki and Nihon Shoki, mountains appear constantly. For example:

- a-in creation accounts;
- b-as important ritual sites;
- c-mention of specific mountain kami in the geneologies;
- d-major kami performed important religious activities on mountains.

In the Manyoshu, the earliest and best anthology of poetry in Japanese history, mountains are often referred to for their beauty, for their capacity to inspire awe, as well as the cases referred to above. For example, we have a poem attributed to Emperor Jomei, traditionally the 24th emperor of Japan, written in the early part of the seventh century. It happens to be one of my favorite poems, but since I am not a poet, I will merely translate its surface meaning:

Yamato ni wa	Murayama aredo,
Toriyorou	Ame no Kagu yama.
Nobori tachi	Kunimi o sureba,
Kunihara wa	Keburi tachi tatsu.
Unahara wa	Kamame tachi tatsu.
Umashi kuni zo	Akizushima
Yamato no kuni wa.	

of the soul from the body, etc.)."⁸ The characteristics of a shaman are as follows:

- 1-"the shaman specializes in a trance during which his soul is believed to leave his body and ascend to the sky or descend to the underworld."⁹
- 2-the shaman experiences one of two kinds of "calling:" hereditary or spontaneous (through non-premeditated sickness, trance, dreams or ecstasy).
- 3-the shaman passes through a two fold initiation: a-spontaneous - ecstatic dreams, trances, etc., and b-receives the traditional doctrine (techniques, names and functions of the spirits, mythology, genealogy of the clan, secret language, etc.) The final initiation must include an ecstatic trance in which one passes through the three stages of suffering, death, and resurrection (or renewal). This process consecrates the shaman. The ecstatic trance includes the experience of many if not all of the following: dismemberment of the body, a renewal of the internal organs and viscera, ascent to the sky or descent to the underworld, dialogue with the gods or spirits, conversation with spirits or souls of the dead shamans, various revelations, and renewal of mythical time.
- 4-the shaman possesses particular magical powers or specialties: flight, mastery or power over fire, communication with spirits and the dead, diagnosis of sickness, possession by or control over spirits.
- 5-important symbols of the shaman include
 - a-fire (walking over coals) or magical heat.
 - b-the three cosmic zones, including various links between the three zones such as the mountain, a ladder, spiral staircase, bridge, road, path, tree, pillar, rope, rainbow, or boat.
 - c-various animals such as the swan, eagle, reindeer, bear, dog, horse.
 - d-magical numbers; 3, 7, 9. In Japan the number 8 is important.

It is with the particular magical specialties that we find the yamabushi most like shamans. In my interviews with various people: priests, monks, laymen and scholars, they all agreed that it was expected that, at least in the past, the yamabushi attained certain powers through his ascetic practices in the mountains. These powers included flight through the air, walking over fire, imperviousness to cold (a kind of inner heat common among shamans), walking over sword edges, diagnosing illnesses, finding lost objects, exorcising evil spirits, and communicating with the kami. It was also added that present day yamabushi are not capable of performing these feats because they do not practice as severely as in the past. Among the legendary deeds of the founder of Shugendo, En no Gyoja, we find him accomplishing many of these shamanistic activities: authority over spirits, flight through the air, mastery over fire. We will look at his life and deeds in more detail later. Many shaman-like yamabushi appear throughout the history of Shugendo.

⁸Hori Ichiro, "Japanese Shamanism," Japanese Journal of Religious Studies, Vol. 2, No. 4, 1975, P. 245.

⁹Eliade, OP.cit., p. 5.

b) Japanese Shamanism:

The Chronicles of Wei (魏志倭人伝-3rd century A.D.) of China contain a description of the country of Wa (Japan) where "a rebellion arose and the country was at war for many years until the people together crowned a girl to rule over them. This queen was named Himeko (卑弥呼)." ¹⁰ This queen, or queens, it is commonly thought, was a classic shamaness. Hori translates another section as follows:

She attended and rendered service to the Deities or Spirits and had a special power that bewitched the people. She never married even in youth, and her brother helped her administer the affairs of the Kingdom. After she was enthroned, only a few people were able to see her. There was only one man who always attended her, served her meals, transmitted her words, and had access to her living room. Her palace, many storied buildings and citadels, were very solemn and imposing, and were guarded continuously by armed soldiers. ¹¹

Himeko had absolute control over all affairs of "matsurigoto," the root for both politics and religious observances. If this account is historically reliable, then some areas of ancient Japan were ruled by a shamaness who made decisions through communication with the "other world."

The widespread practice of shamanism in pre-Buddhist Japan is also reflected in the many shamanistic tendencies recorded in the myths of the Kojiki and Nihon Shoki. The most famous example is the account of the preparations, rites and dances performed by various kami to induce the Sun goddess Amaterasu Oomikami out of the cave in which she had hid herself, pouting in a fit of rage. It is interesting that the sun goddess is at the top of the Japanese pantheon, considering the shaman's use, control of and power derived from fire.

Modern day shamanism in Japan has been well documented by Sakurai Tokutaro in his two-volume Japanese Shamanism (日本のシャマニズム). Unfortunately his second volume has not yet been published. In his first volume he lists a few of the characteristics of Japanese shamanism:

- a-for the most part female (miko-巫女)
- 1-shrine shamanesses (神社巫女-jinja miko, 神祝-kannagi) connected with shrines and responsible for various dances, purification

¹⁰ trans. from Inoue Mitsusada, Nihon no Rekishi #1 Shinwa kara Rekishi e (日本の歴史: 神話から歴史へ-Japanese History Vol. 1, From Myth to History) Chūō Koron, 1970.

¹¹ Hori, op. cit., Folk Religion.

ceremonies, oracles, etc. Today the shrine shamanesses are such only in name and possess no traditional shamanistic power.

2-spiritualist shamaness-wandering mediums often called kuchiyose, itako, or gomiso who are not connected with any shrine but wander from village to village providing the following services:

b-major activities:

1-possession (憑依): calling or bringing down a Buddha or spirit (仏おろし), possession by kami (神憑き), possession by a Buddha (仏憑き), possession by a guardian spirit (守護神).

2-prayers (祈願) for good health, protection from disasters, specific requests, etc.

3-oracles (託宣): voice of a kami (神口), voice of a buddha (仏口), kuchiyose (口寄せ), etc.

4-miscellaneous activities not necessarily shamanistic such as scripture reading (巫経), singing (巫歌), music (巫楽), dancing (巫舞), or funeral prayers (祭文).

c-method for becoming a shamaness:

1-hereditary and 2-spontaneous, both of which are rare today, and 3-special training for the blind. The primary motivation for becoming a shamaness today is economic; i.e. a profession for blind women who cannot make a living in any other capacity.

d-often works as a male-female team; a shamaness and a yamabushi.

The closest connection the shamanesses had with Shugendō was during the middle ages of Japanese history (10th-15th centuries), especially the Ashikaga period (1338-1573), when the yamabushi sometimes married shamanesses and wandered with them from village to village taking care of the religious needs of the common people. Since the yamabushi were associated with the Tendai and Shingon sects, and thus considered monks, their wives or companions were often called Kumano bikuni (Buddhist nuns of Kumano).

It seems thus that this folk religion (including shamanism) or Shinto (in the sense discussed above), is the basis or heart of Shugendō. We find here already most of the basic and vital elements of Shugendō: the sacred mountain, where one can communicate with and tap the power of the kami, be renewed spiritually and/or worship through certain practices and ceremonies; the mountain ascetic or holy man; and the shamanistic tendencies. This is not meant to downgrade the importance of later influences, especially esoteric Buddhism, which greatly transformed this basic but vague mountain religion into the organized movement called Shugendō today, but merely to recognize that it is these simple folk beliefs which make Shugendō distinctly Japanese, and which is still the source, I believe, of its vitality.

2) Fudaraku; The Kumano area as the eastern gate to the Pure Land.

The country of Kumano is a land rich in beauty, and to the members of the Japanese nobility it was a heaven on earth; part of the Pure Land of Kannon, or at least a gate to it. As early as the Nara Period we find excursions by the nobility to the hot springs or mountains and rivers or seacoast of Kumano. This came to be known and the Kumano Mode (熊野詣), the pilgrimage to Kumano. A part of this movement was the belief that one could enter the Pure Land (Fudaraku) of Kannon through the land of Kumano, either through death in that country or by crossing the sea to the east from Kumano. It is this movement which I would like to examine as just one example of the Pure Land faiths which were very popular and were preached by many yamabushi.

The word Fudaraku originally came from the Sanscrit "potalaka" or "potala," which was phonetically transliterated into Chinese in a number of ways (補陀洛, 補陀落迦, 補怛落迦, 補皇洛迦, 布咀洛迦, 寶陀羅, 補多羅, 普陀落, etc.) and transmitted to Japan in that form. Translated we find the following: 白華 - white lotus, 小白華 - small white lotus, 光明 - bright light, and 海島 - island in the sea. This was believed to be the Pure Land of Kannon Bodhisattva (the incarnation, or goddess, of mercy), the spiritual mountain or island which always shines with a bright light and gives off a wonderful fragrance.

In any case, various sutras appeared which mention the Pure Land of Kannon. For example, the Lotus Sutra says: "When the innumerable masses experience all the sufferings of this world, if they hear (the call of) Kannon and with one heart call on her name, she will immediately hear your voices and will relieve you of your sufferings."¹²

This faith in Kannon gradually spread from India to the east. In China many islands off the eastern coast were given the name of Kannon's Pure Land, such as 補陀洛山, 小白華山, 普陀山, etc., and worshipped as the residence of the Bodhisattva Kannon. In Tibet the Dalai Lama was (and still is)

¹² 如法華蓮經: 觀世音菩薩普門品第25. Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law, Chapter 25, "On Kannon Bodhisattva."

believed to be an incarnation of the Bodhisattva Kannon, and the northwestern palace of his residence was called Fudaraku. In Manchuria, the residence of the priest of the Lama sect was called Fudaraku temple. In Korea there is an island off the coast where Kannon was once enshrined called Raku-san (洛山). And in Japan, the mountains around Nachi Falls in Kumano were considered the eastern gate to Fudaraku, and the temple near the harbor at the foot of the mountains was called Mt. Fukaraku Temple. In the Tales of the Heike, there is a description of this as follows:

Arriving at the mountains of Nachi, we can see the overflowing waterfall which falls a thousand meters an exaggeration. The spirit of Kannon seems to appear above the cliffs; this place is truly appropriately called Mt. Fudaraku. Through the mist we can hear the chanting of the Lotus Sutra as if we were on the Vulture Peak.¹³

Nachi is one of the first three of the seventy three nabiki or places of worship on the yamabushi path between Mt. Yoshino and the sea coast of Kumano. The first is Hongu, a village up the Kumano river and the home of the Kumano Hongu Shrine. Hongu represents the salvation of the future and it's resident Bodhisattva is Amida, whose Pure Land is the West. The second is Nachi, the home of the sacred Nachi waterfall, the tallest in Japan, and representative of the present. As mentioned above, it's representative Bodhisattva is Kannon whose Pure Land is in the East. The third is Shingu, home of the Hayatama Shrine, at the mouth of the Kumano River. Shingu is representative of the sins and ignorance of the past, which can be healed by it's resident Bodhisattva the Medicine King (Yakushi Nyorai-薬師如来). The representative direction here is south. The fourth direction, north, is represented by Shakamuni who has his residence up north in the mountains of Kumano.

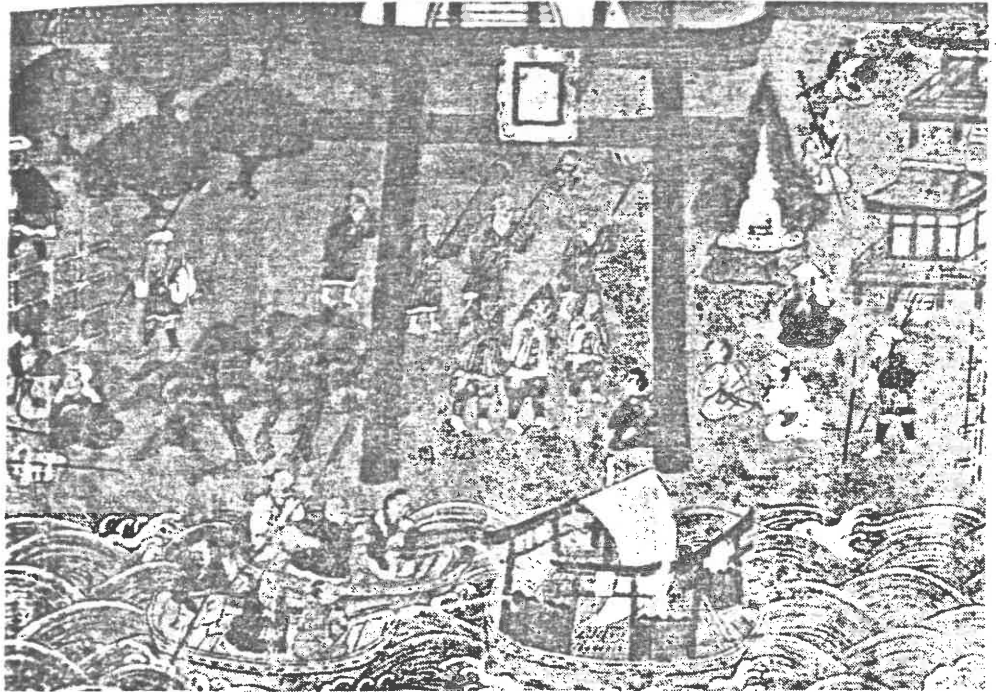
One of the beliefs prevalent in this area during the Kamakura period was the belief that one could reach Kannon's Pure Land by sailing east from the beach of Nachi.¹⁴ Many recorded, and perhaps innumerable unrecorded,

¹³trans. from Nikko Ryoei 二河良英, "Fudaraku Tokai ni Tsuite" (渡海に ついて-Concerning Crossing the Sea to the Pure Land of Fudaraku), Kumano Shi 熊野誌, #20 (1975), Pp, 48-49.

¹⁴I remember swimming at this beautiful sand beach every summer as a child and in the evening when the fishing boats were out and lined the horizon with their points of light I would imagine that I could see San Francisco, or Los Angeles. Unfortunately for those who put their faith into practice, the ocean is wider than I imagined.

priests and laymen would step into a boat covered by a roof and filled with supplies for a few days, have their fellow priests nail them in so that there would be no turning back, and then be sent off to the Pure Land, never to return again.

For example, there are records of a number of priests who departed on November 3, 868; a priest and 13 laymen in February of 919, and the priest Kōgen (高嚴) in November of



ふだらく渡海 (那智曼荼羅部分図)

1131. The picture reproduced here is an example of this action from the famous Kumano mandala. One can make out the nailed-up boat (bottom right) with torii on all four sides, accompanied by two other boats which start it on its way. The large Torii of Nachi Shrine (which is actually much further inland), and the small stupa (upper right) for storing sutras can still be seen today.

It is debatable whether it was believed that the Pure Land could actually be reached physically by this route. At any rate, it was believed that if one did die in this manner, one would be immediately reborn in the Pure Land. Even today at the death of a parishoner of Fudaraku Temple, the remains of the dead body are placed aboard a small boat and, in the hope of rebirth in the Pure Land, set adrift from this harbor to be buried by the sea.

3) Esoteric Buddhism: Tendai and Shingon

In the later part of the eighth century, Kukai (Kōbō Daishi, 774-835) and Saicho (Dengyō Daishi, 767-822) introduced two new sects directly from

China which were to change completely the face and role of Buddhism in Japan. These were the Shingon and Tendai sects. These two sects are characteristic of what is called esoteric Buddhism. Shingon is pure esoteric Buddhism, and esoteric Buddhism was one of the "four pillars" of Tendai as introduced to Japan by Saichō (the other three are meditation 禪, precepts 律, and Tendai proper 円 which recognizes the Lotus Sutra as the most superior sutra). Later head priests of the sect, namely Ennin (Jikaku Daishi, 794-864), Enchin (Chishō Daishi, 814-891), and Annen influenced the sect strongly in this direction until the two sect came to be known as the two branches of mikkyō (密教-esoteric Buddhism): Shingon-Tomitsu (東密) and Tendai-Taimitsu (台密).

Watanabe Shōko, in an article for a series call "In Search of True Esoteric Buddhism," lists five characteristics which define a truly esoteric religion: 1-The secret and deepest teachings are taught or passed down only to those with special qualifications. In contrast to a religion which is open to all who come and seek, the secrets of an esoteric religion are revealed only to a limited chosen few. 2-The religion's main object of worship is a symbolic, yet at the same time concrete, image, mandala, etc., whose name and form are rigidly defined. 3-The ritual necessary for worship is rigidly defined, scriptures have been compiled and edited, and words are used which are not to be found in every day use. 4-Tradition is stressed and held in high regard, one receives training directly from his personal teacher, and the secrets ~~xxx~~ passed on are never revealed to outsiders. If this point is disregarded, it can never be considered an esoteric religion. 5-There is often evidence of extraordinary, spiritual powers. In order to attain this level, some groups use severe ascetic training and avoidance of regular every day life; some use drugs; some rely on meditation.¹⁵

As we shall see in the history of Shugendō, the roots or religious activities discussed thus far were gradually assimilated by these two sects and received much of its ritual and organization from them. Shugendō eventually formed two branches: the Honzan-ha (本山派), connected with Tendai and with its headquarters at Onjō-ji (園城寺, or Miidera 三井寺) and

¹⁵ see Daihōrin 大法輪, Vol. 41, #3 (1974), pp. 94-140.

Shōgōin (聖護院); and the Tozan-ha (当山派) connected with Shingon and with its headquarters at Daigo-ji (醍醐寺) and Sanpoin (三宝院).

I would like now to discuss a few rituals and beliefs of esoteric Buddhism incorporated by and in use today by the Yamabushi.

1-the Goma (護摩): from the Sanskrit "homa," or "sacred fire." The first use of this "bonfire" service is found in the era of the Rig Vedas for the presentation of burnt offerings, but was later incorporated into esoteric Buddhism during its development and rise by at least 500 or 600 A.D. There are three general types or purposes for the burning of the goma: a-for the avoidance of calamities; b-for the happiness which comes from increasing merit; and c-for the exorcism of evil spirits of impurities. A new development within esoteric Buddhism was the development of the "inner goma" which is the hope for enlightenment, added to the outer goma which was used as prayer for benefits in this world.

2-Diamond Pestles-esoteric instruments (Sanskrit-vajra). These are instruments held in the hand during various rituals. They are most often seen in Buddhist statues as one of the symbolic instruments held by various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. There are four basic types: the pointed, or single pronged pestle (独鉷杵); three-pronged pestle (三鉷杵); five-pronged pestle (五鉷杵); and nine-pronged pestle (九鉷杵). It is believed that in ancient India these were weapons used in war to throw at the enemy and smash their heads or chests, but now they are symbolic of the teachings and wisdom of the Buddha which can smash the attachments (煩惱) or evil passions of the heart.

3-The Three Secrets (三密) of Shingon: Buddhism teaches three areas of activity for the human being; physical, verbal, and spiritual. These must be coordinated and realized to their full potential in order to attain enlightenment. Thus these three activities are trained in the following manner: a-physically (身) one learns various hand positions called mudra (印契). These are the various symbolic finger, hand and arm positions one often encounters in Buddhist art. b-Verbally (語) one is given a mantra, or in Japanese "Shingon"-true word-(真言). In ancient India this was used in

special worship services for various deities, but in esoteric Buddhism has come to be used as words which express the deep teachings or virtues of various Buddhas or Bodhisattvas. Most of these words were not translated into Chinese but have retained their Sanskrit pronunciation. c-Spiritually (意), one is taught to concentrate the consciousness in order to reach the state of samadhi.

4-The letter a. The Sanskrit letter a, with the same root and the Western letter a, is the first letter of the alphabet and of great symbolic significance in esoteric Buddhism. It symbolizes the unborn source of all things, the essence of all reality, the foundation, the diamond realm, the noumenal, wisdom, the sun, the East, birth. In contrast, the last letter of the alphabet (om) symbolizes the world of illusion, the created, the womb realm, the phenomenal, reason, the West, death.

5-The mandala. The root of the word mandala (曼荼羅) is the Sanskrit maṇḍala, which was phonetically transliterated into Chinese and brought to Japan in that form. Eliot and Takakusu are of the opinion that Maṇḍala in Sanskrit means a circle. Manabe Shunsho, however, writes that maṇḍa means essence or reality, and la means to acquire, find or gain. Therefore maṇḍala would mean "to capture the essence, or reality," "reality itself," or "that which contains all things and/or the whole law." It is a representation of the real world of enlightenment presented in a way in which one can see with his unenlightened eyes. This "essence" is identified with satori and described as the "highest and greatest insight (無上正等覺)" which is impartial and complete (平等圓滿). For the Shingon sect, supreme enlightenment is found in the sphere of Mahavairocana (大日如來 - Dainichi Nyorai, or the Great Sun Buddha). The universe is identical with Mahavairocana, i.e. all phenomena are merely manifestations of this central and One Buddha. Therefore it can be said that this world is one large mandala. However, we will limit ourselves to a smaller scale and take a detailed look at the pictorial and abstract representations of the "essence" which we commonly refer to as mandala.

Types of Mandala:

Kobo Daishi, founder of Japanese Shingon Buddhism, puts att mandala into four categories, following the Magavairocana Sutra ().

1) Great Mandala (大曼荼羅)-pictures the thirty-two major marks and eighty minor marks of the Buddha.

2) Law (法) Mandala-represents various Buddhas with single symbolic Sanscrit letters.

3) Equality (平等) Mandala-show Buddhas carrying various symbolic instruments.

4) Majestic Works (事業威儀) Mandala-sculptural representations of Buddhas.

These four mandala can be classified, as they usually are today, into the following four categories:

1) Mandalas of Manifestation (現因)-represent what are commonly understood to be mandalas, are are also called the "Both Worlds(兩界)" Mandala. These are the Diamond Realm (金剛界) mandala and the Womb Realm (胎藏界) mandala.

2) Law (法) Mandala-same as #2 above.

3) Samaya (三昧耶), or Symbol, Mandala-same as #3 above.

4) Karma (羯磨) Mandala-same as #4 above.

The above categories are divided according to their outward appearance.

If one was to classify mandala according to their function, the following three categories could be distinguished:

1) Toe, or Assembly (都会), Mandala-picture of an assembly of Buddhas with Mahavairocana in the central position. This refers to the Both Worlds Mandala. These two mandala are very important in Shingon Buddhism and Shugendo, for they are based on their two basic scriptures, the Mahavairocana Sutra (大日經), and the Diamond Cutter Sutra (金剛頂經). These two mandala will be closely examined later.

2) Sectional (都會) Mandala-divided into a section for Buddhas and a Lotus section. These mandala represent only a part of reality.

3) Separate Buddha (別尊) Mandala-these concentrate on one Bhudda and places it in the central position. These mandala are especially numerous in Japan so I will briefly mention a few of them:

- a) Amida (阿彌陀) Mandala-centered around Amida Buddha, the saviour and Lord of the western Pure Land.
- b) Lotus (法華) Mandala-based on the Treasured Stupa chapter of the Lotus Sutra.
- c) Request for Rain Mandala (請雨經)-centered around to Buddha to which one appeals for rain.
- d) "One Letter Golden Wheel" (一字金輪) Mandala-a secret Buddha. One cannot make this mandala unless he has studied at Toji (東寺), one of the most important Shingon temples, for a long period of time.
- e) Six Letter Sutra (六字經) mandala-used for divination and prayer for relief from sickness.
- f) Emma-ten (閻魔天) Mandala-centered around Emma-ten, the king of Hades. Used to avoid calamity.
- g) Star (星) Mandala-based on and centered around the Big Dipper. Used to avoid calamity and live a long life.

The following are closely connected with Shinto:

- h) Shinto (神道) Mandala-based on themes from Shinto and representing kami from the Shinto pantheon.
- i) Hachiman-gu (八幡宮) Mandala-centered around Hachiman, the Shinto kami of war.
- j) Kumano (熊野) Mandala-based on the Kumano area, which is considered a mandala in itself because of its natural beauty.

The Diamond and Womb Realm Mandalas:

In his work on Japanese Buddhism, Charles Eliot writes that Shingon's "fundamental doctrine is that the whole universe is a manifestation of the Buddha Vairocana, but the manifestation is two-fold and is divided into the categories called Diamond or indestructable and Womb or material and perishable, in Japanese Kongo-kai (金剛界) and Taizo-kai (胎藏界).¹⁶ These two realms are depicted in all their detail in the Both Worlds Mandalas.

¹⁶ Eliot, Charles, Japanese Buddhism, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964, p. 238.

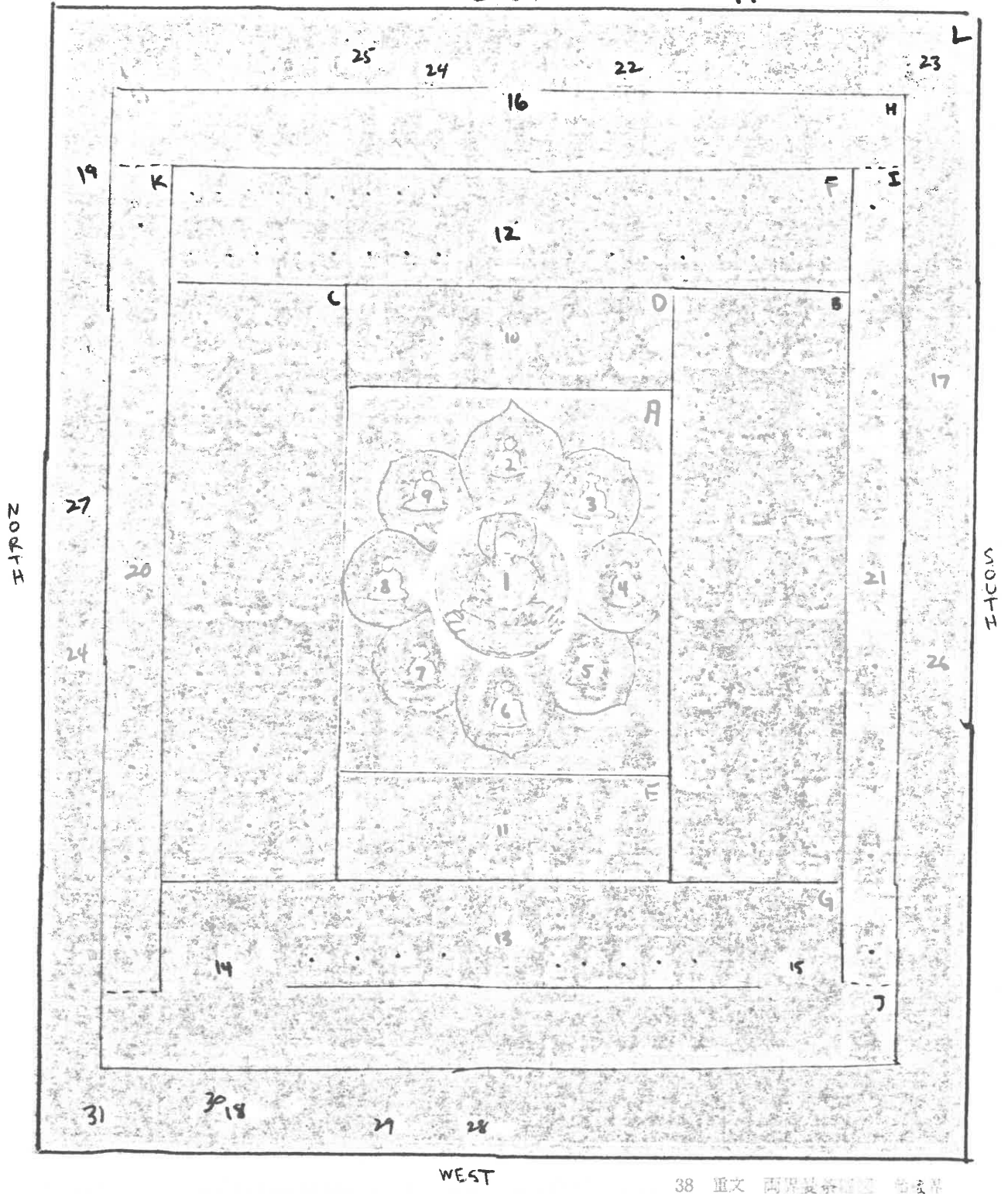
The Diamond Realm (金剛界) is so called because it represents the eternal, indestructable, or fundamental world of Mahavairocana; the Womb Realm (胎藏界), on the other hand, represents the phenomenal representations or manifestations of Mahavairocana. In the sense that Mahavairocana and his manifestations are One, in that all things are manifestations of Mahavairocana, these two mandala (and all Mandala) are also One; i.e. they are all different representations of the Same One. They have been compared to the ocean: the Diamond Realm being the eternal, unchanging ocean, and the Womb Realm being the waves which are phenomenal and ever changing and yet one with the ocean. The following chart is a compilation of the representative characteristics of the two mandala:

	Diamond Realm	Womb Realm
Representative aspects:	Eternal Noumenal Wisdom (智法身) Indestructable Fundamental Non-material State of Enlightenment	Created Phenomenal Reason (理法身) Perishable Derivative Material Compassion (大悲) of Buddha leading to enlightenment
Compared to	Ocean	Waves
Dominant color	White	Red
Based on	Diamond Cutter Sutra	Mahavairocana Sutra
Pattern	Nine square sections	Concentric (12 sections)
# of Buddhas	1461	414
Symbolic #	Nine	Five

In the next few pages I would like to explain these two mandalas section by section and point out the most important Buddhas.

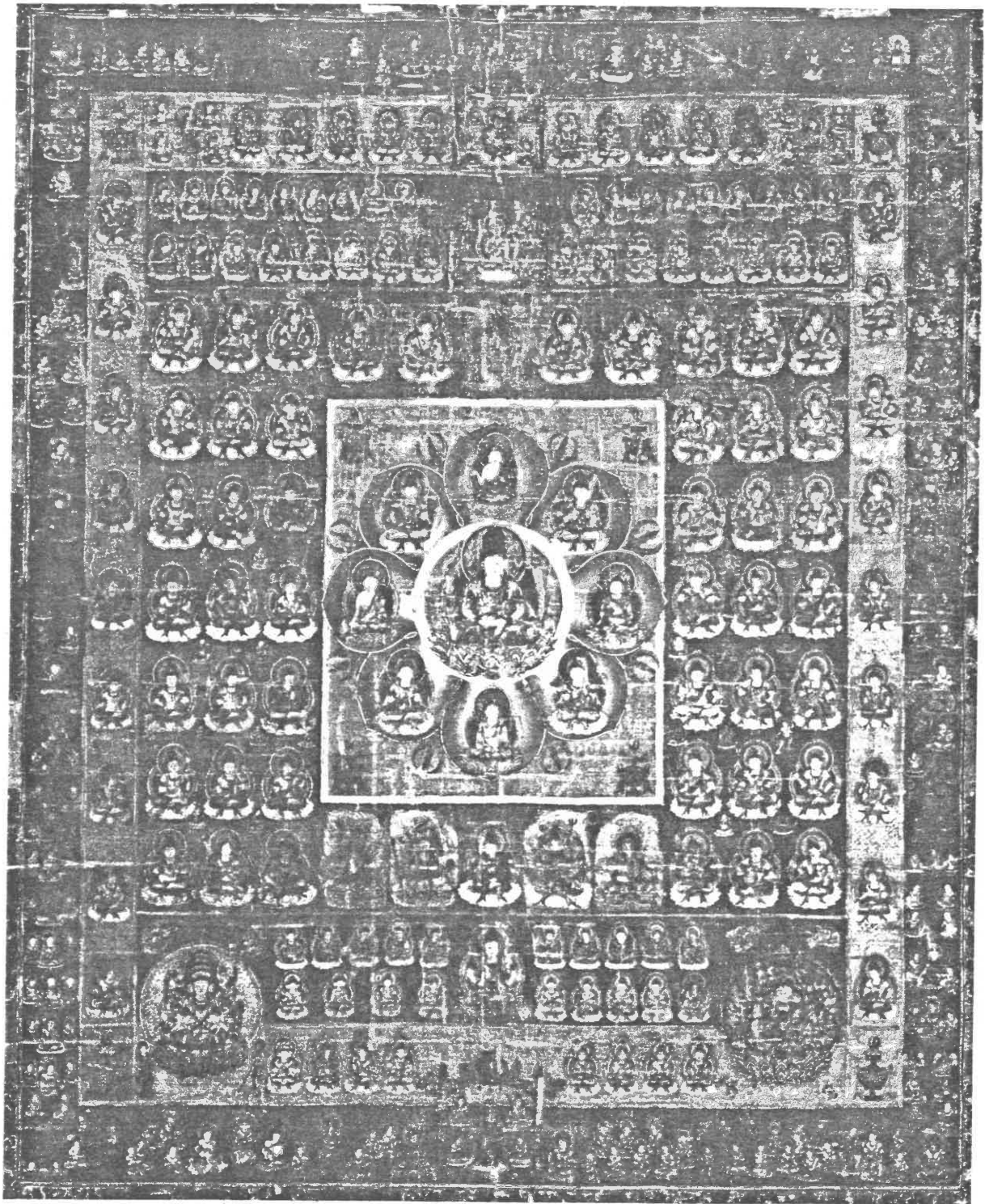
EAST

胎藏界



38 重文 胎藏界曼荼羅圖 胎藏界

- A) Middle Temple of the Eight Petals (中台八葉院)
- E) Diamond Temple (金剛手院)
- C) Lotus Temple (蓮華部院)
- D) Temple of Universal Wisdom (遍智院)
- E) Temple of Guardian Deities (持明院)
- F) Temple of Shakamuni (釈迦院)



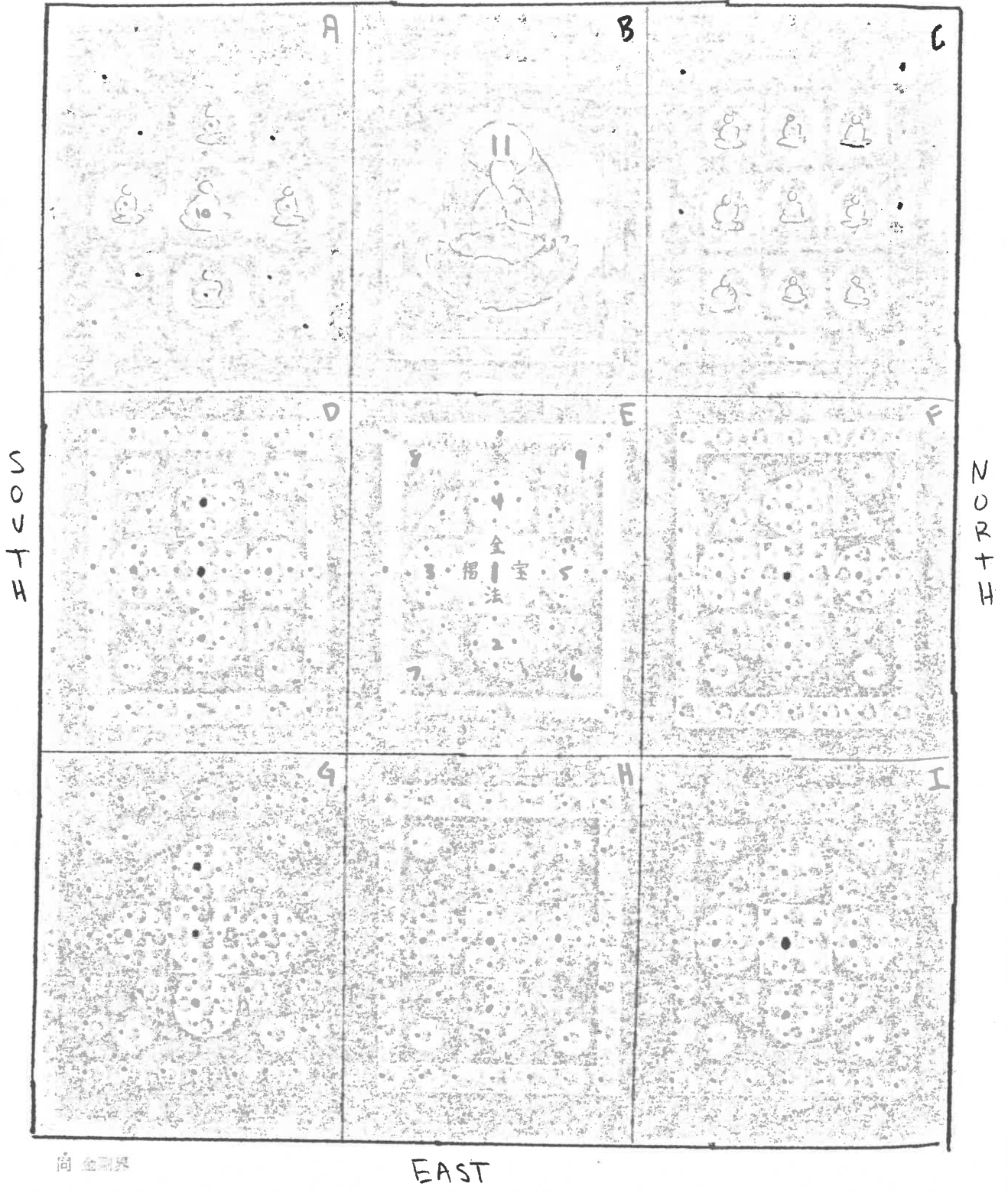
38 重文 兩界曼荼羅圖 胎藏界

- A) Middle Temple of the Eight Petals (中台八葉院)
- E) Diamond Temple (金剛手院)
- C) Lotus Temple (蓮華部院)
- D) Temple of Universal Wisdom (遍智院)
- E) Temple of Guardian Deities (持明院)
- F) Temple of Shakamuni (釈迦院)

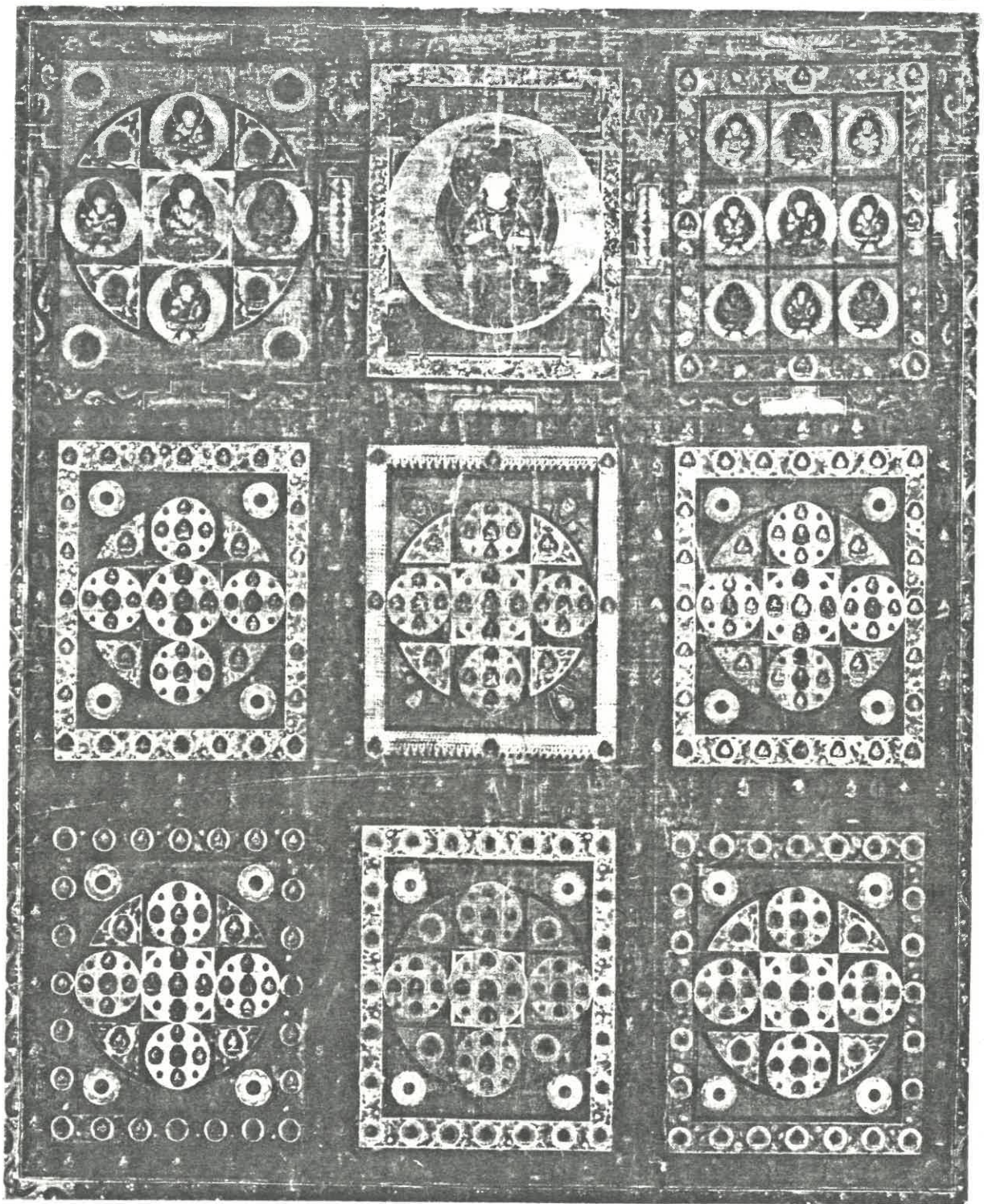
- G) Temple of Kyokuzō (虚空藏院)
- H) Temple of Manjū (文殊院)
- I) Temple of Jogaishō (除蓋障院)
- J) Temple of Wonderful Fulfillment (蘇悉地院)
- K) Temple of Jizō (地藏院)
- L) Outer Diamond Temple (外金剛部院)
- 1) Mahavairocana (Dainichi-Great Sun) Buddha (大日如來)
- 2) Hōshō Nyorai (宝幢如來)
- 3) Fugen Bodhisattva (普賢菩薩)
- 4) Kaifuku Ō Nyorai (開敷華王如來)
- 5) Monjū Bodhisattva (文殊菩薩)
- 6) Muryōju-Amida Nyorai (無量壽如來)
- 7) Kannon Bodhisattva (觀音菩薩)
- 8) Tenku Rai-in Nyorai (天鼓雷音如來)
- 9) Miroku Bodhisattva (弘勒菩薩)
- 10) Wisdom sign of all Buddhas (一切如來智印)
- 11) Hannya Bodhisattva (般若菩薩)
- 12) Shakamuni Nyorai (釈迦如來)
- 13) Kyokuzō Bodhisattva (虚空藏菩薩)
- 14) Thousand-hand Thousand-eye Kannon (千手千眼觀音)
- 15) Diamond King (Zao) Bodhisattva (金剛藏王菩薩)
- 16) Monju Bodhisattva (文殊菩薩)
- 17)-19) various heavenly beings
- 20) Jizō Bodhisattva (地藏菩薩)
- 21) Jogaishō Bodhisattva (除蓋障菩薩)
- 22) Brahman-Bonten (梵天)
- 23) God of Fire (火天)
- 24) Taishaku-ten-Indra (帝釈天)
- 25) God of Sun (日天)
- 26) Emma-ten-God of Hades (焰摩天)
- 27) Bishamon-ten (毗沙門天)
- 28) God of Earth (地天)
- 29) God of Water (水天)
- 30) God of Moon (月天)
- 31) God of Wind (風天)

WEST

金剛界



- A) Assembly of Four Seals (四印会)
- B) Assembly of One Seal (一印会)
- C) Assembly of the Appearance of Reason (理趣会)
or, Assembly of Fugen (普賢会)
- D) Assembly of Alms (供養会)



同 金剛界

- A) Assembly of Four Seals (四印会)
- B) Assembly of One Seal (一印会)
- C) Assembly of the Appearance of Reason (理趣会)
or, Assembly of Fugen (普賢会)
- D) Assembly of Alms (供养会)

- E) Assembly of the Body of Enlightenment (成身会)
- F) Assembly of the Descent of the Three Worlds (降三世会)
- G) Assembly of Minuteness (微細会)
- H) Assembly of Samadhi (三昧耶会)
- I) Assembly of Samadhi and the Descent of the Three Worlds (降三世三昧耶会)
- 1) Mahavairocana Nyorai (大日如来)
- 2) Ashuku Nyorai (阿閼如来)
- 3) Hōshō Nyorai (宝生如来)
- 4) Muryōju-Amida Nyorai (無量寿如来)
- 5) Fukū Jōjū Nyorai (不空成就如来)
- 6) Kami of Earth (地神) 7) Kami of Fire (火神)
- 8) Kami of Water (水神) 9) Kami of Wind (風神)
- 10-11) Mahavairocana Nyorai (大日如来)

I have gone into great detail on the mandala because I feel it is of great importance. As mentioned above, there are mandala called Kumano mandala; the picture of page 27 is a section of one of these. Most important of all, the Kumano area itself is considered a mandala, the dwelling place of the kami and the land of the Buddhas. The route between Mr. Yoshino and Kumano was divided in half between the Womb Realm (KUmano) and the Diamond Realm (Yoshino). The Collection of Leaves, an important Shugendō document, records the following yamabushi belief:

大峯者真言兩部峯也，故熊野者胎藏權現也，
金峯山金剛權現也，大峯中間兩部不二曼陀羅有。

"The peaks of Oomine are the Both Worlds of Shingon;
Thus Kumano is the incarnation of the Womb Realm,
Mt. Kirpu is the incarnation of the Diamond (Realm).
Between these (two peaks), in the area called Oomine, is the
"Both Worlds, Non-dual Mandala."¹⁷

¹⁷ see Wakamori Taro 和歌森太郎, Shugendō Shi Kenkyū, (修驗道史研究: A Historical Study of Shugendō), Heibon Sha, 1973, p. 175ff.

Part III

I began my pilgrimage at home, in a small village surrounded by the sea, rivers, trees and mountains of Kumano. Across the river is the city of Shingu, home of the Kumano Hayatama Shrine. It was a dark and drizzly evening when I met the other climbers from Shingu who were to participate in the mountain walk of July 19-22, 1975. This was the main annual walk of Shōgōin (聖護院), headquarters of the Honzan-ha of Shugendō. In one of my previous walks in the mountains I had had the privilege of becoming acquainted with Mr. Miyagi Yasutoshi, a priest of Shōgōin, and he had invited me to accompany the Shogoin shugenja (修験者) on their walk. Needless to say I accepted with thanks, and these particulars were among the many which weaved their way through my mind as the night train from Shingu struggled through the darkness. After changing trains in the morning we finally arrived at the point of rendezvous with the yamabushi from Osaka and Kyoto. Those from Kyoto had risen early in the morning and performed the departure ceremony (馬出勤行) in front of Shōgōin before catching an early train. The religious ceremony of gongyō (勤行) consists usually of blowing of conch shells as an opener and the shaking of the shakujo, chanting of the Hannya Shin Sutra (般若心經), and prayer.

When all had arrived, including about one hundred yamabushi and twenty other assorted participants, the chartered busses took us two hours into the mountains from Shimoichi to the source of the Doro River at the foot of Mt. Oomine (see Appendix I). Before the days of advanced (?) technology, the route began at Mt. Yoshino and the 75th place of worship (摩-nabiki; see Appendix II); we had cut away and ahead to where we could climb up the side of Mt. Oomine and join the old yamabushi path at nabiki #68. If one were to start from the beginning, or end depending on how you look at it, one would still go past nabiki #75 and #74 to the large bronze torii which is the gate to Mt. Yoshino and named "The Gate of Religious Awakening (禿心門)". Usually gongyo is performed at each nabiki, but the special ceremony assigned this spot is for each new member to place his right hand on the trunk of the torii.

and chant the secret poem (秘歌) of this nabiki as they walk around it. The secret poem assigned to this nabiki goes as follows:

Yoshino naru Kane no torii ni Te o kakete
Mida no Jōdō ni Hairu zo nreshiki

Placing our hands
On the bronze torii of Mt. Yoshino,
Joyfully we look forward
To entering Amida's Pure Land.

At one time there were individual poems for all seventy-five nabiki but today only a fraction of these are retained.

Another interesting bit of information is that the four gates of Yoshino: the first gate, the Ascetic's Gate (修門), the Buddha Gate (菩提門, 等覺門), and the Nirvana Gate (涅槃門) are connected with funeral services. This is thought to be connected with the ancient and time-honored belief that the dead go to live on the mountains. Today it is symbolic of the "death" of the yamabushi as they leave this world and enter the other world. As Gorai Shigeru adds, Shugendō is not the type of religion in which it is enough to confess your sins with your mouth and buy forgiveness with a monetary contribution. Yamabushi must die, and repent through death. Of course this is a symbolic death, although that does not belittle it nor distract from its significance. When the yamabushi return from the mountains they are reborn.

After leaving the torii behind, the next object of interest is the gate of Ninno (仁王門). The uniqueness of this gate is that it faces north, while the Zao Temple to which it gives entrance faces south. This reveals the influence of the Tozan-ha, which chose to start climbing from Yoshino and end at Kumano. This direction was called gyaku no mine iri (逆山降) - "entering the mountain from the opposite side." We also, though members of the Honzan-ha were to walk in this direction.

After passing through the Ninno Gate, one enters the compound of the Zao Gongen Hall (藏王堂), the largest wooden building in Japan next to Todai-ji. The three central images represent Shaka (past), Zao (present), and Miroku (future), and tell the story of how En no Gyōja rejected Shaka and Miroku in favor of Zao as most qualified to lead the ascetics in their difficult practices in the mountains. It is after one leaves this temple that one

really enters the mountain, and a preparatory gongyo is performed.

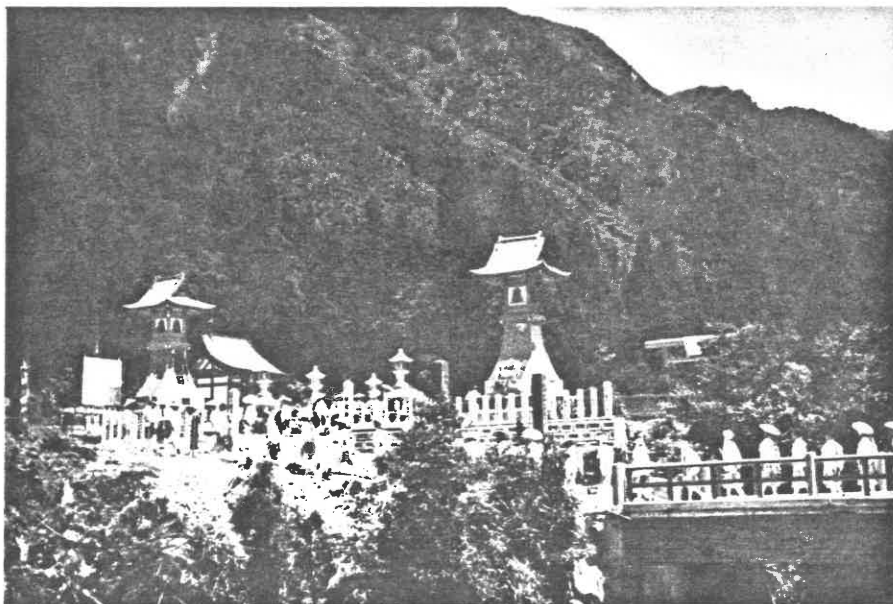
The first place of worship after Mt. Yoshino is the Yoshino Water Shrine (吉野水分神社) or the Shrine for the Protection of Children (子守神社). An oharai (お祓), or purification ceremony, is performed to assure a safe journey.

The seventy-first nabiki is the Kinbu Shrine (金峯神社) where the famous "ceremony to remove stumbling (躓拔行)" is performed. All novices are herded into a small hut called the "pagoda for removing stumbling." The priest chants a certain poem while the practitioners turn around and around, feeling dizzy and dizzy. Suddenly the priest rings a bell, which reverberates in the small hut to many times its original volume. At this unexpected sound the hearts of the listeners jump to their throats, or "turn over" as the Japanese would say, and with this turning over of the heart the impurities are released. This ceremony purifies the heart for the ascent of Mt. Oomine.

From here the ascent is begun in earnest. Along the way one passes over the peak from where En no Gyōja traditionally built a bridge to Mt. Katsuragi in the west (see p. 40). Soon one comes to the spot where we would join the path from the Doro River valley below.

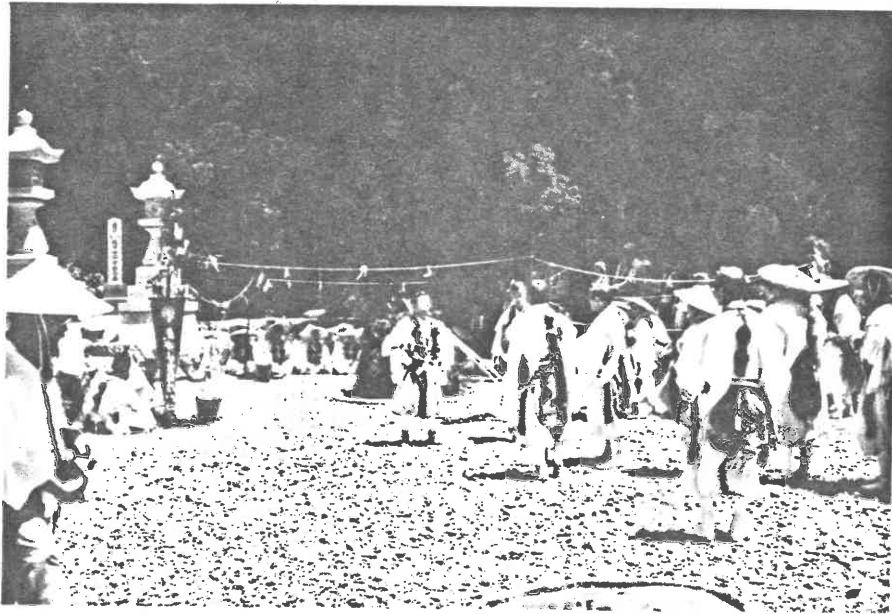
Meanwhile our buses have wound their way up the mountainside and delivered us to the village of Doro River. We managed a hasty lunch at one of the local inns and then crowded into the bus for the last leg on wheels to the foot of Mt. Oomine.

Here were hasty preparations made for the first burning of the goma and the ceremonies necessary before entering the mountain. The goma, as discussed earlier, is a symbolic ritual fire. When the



preparations were finished, the yamabushi lined up in order of rank (see Appendix IV) and walked across the bridge to the shrine at the foot of Mt. Oomine.

Everyone was seated around a pile of wood and evergreen branches and



enclosed in a sacred area marked off by a rope. The first order of business was the Question and Answer Drill (問答 - mondo), a kind of catechism for those who were to advance in rank. The questioner, facing

facing the initiates, would bark out a question, the man on his left would shake his shakujō, and the man facing the questioner would answer. The following is a translation of some of the possible questions and answers:

Question: As a yamabushi, a disciple of the Shōgōin Monseki, it is expected that you are aware of the proper significance of Shugendo. We now test you as is our practice.

Answer: I will answer.

Q: What is the meaning of the two characters 山伏 (yamabushi)? What is the meaning of Shugendō?

A: Yamabushi are those who enter the mountains (which symbolize) the absolute nature of the Law (真如法性), where they conquer the enemy of blind desire. Shugendō is the way which shows how to practice ascetically and reap the benefits from these austerities.

Q: Who was the founder of Shugendō?

A: The founder of Shugendo was En no Gyōja, Jimben Dai Bosatsu. Born on the first day of the sixth year of the reign of Emperor Jomei (635 A.D.) in the village of Kayahara in the land of Yamato, he entered the mountains

near Katsuragi when he was seventeen, and opened the peaks of Oomine for esoteric practices when he was nineteen. In the fourth year of the reign of Saimei (659) he was inspired to practice in a crevice behind a waterfall on the mountain Kimen (?-箕面山) where he worshipped the Peacock Bodhisattva and received the deepest secrets of the law. He travelled up and down Oomine thirty three times in all, and when he was sixty-eight years old he rose up to heaven from the peak of Mt. Kimen.

Q: What is the main object of worship of Shugendō?

A: In general, the mandala of the Womb and Diamond Realms; the focus of ascetic practice is Fudo Myōo, the fierce-looking manifestation of the teachings of Dainichi Nyorai.

Q: What is the meaning of the token (skull cap-see Appendix III for explanation of costume) on your head?

A: This token symbolizes Dainichi's crown of full and complete wisdom. The twelve sections symbolize the twelve link chain of dependent origination. The six on the right represent the six paths of destruction and return, the six on the left represent the six paths of transmigration. Therefore this skull cap also signifies the unity of the common and the holy.

Q: What about the suzukake (鈴掛 or 鈴懸 -a kind of baggy pants) you are wearing?

A: This is the lawful wear for practicing asceticism in the mountains. The bell is a five-pronged pestel, symbolic of the perfect state of meditation of Dainichi, and the sound of its ringing is a sermon on his body as the manifestation of the Law...

Q: What is the meaning of the cloak (袈裟 ^(結) -yuigesa) on your shoulders?

A: This is the special monk's robe worn by followers of Shugendō. It has nine folds, which represents the nine worlds and the interpenetration of all worlds in the world of Buddhahood. Also, the three sections in back represent the unity of the three bodies of the Buddha (法身, 报身, 化身), the six in front represent the six virtues (alms, precepts, patience, effort, meditation, and wisdom. see Appendix V).

Q: How about the cord around your waist?

A: This is called the Kaino-o (螺結-"the shell strap"). This is a tool for use in maneuvering on sheer cliffs, or for use in times of danger or emergency. It represents the diamond realm, the absoluteness of the law.

Q: What is the significance of the staff (錫杖 -shakujō) in your hand?

A: The staff represents the wholeness of the Law; it is the staff of wisdom showing all sentient beings the way to enlightenment. Through the sound of the rattling (of the rings on the end of the staff) sentient beings are awakened from their dream of illusion in which they suffer the sufferings of the three worlds (欲界, 色界, 無色界) and the six ways (the first six of the ten realms of existence: hell, hungry demons, animal, asura, men, heavenly spirits).

Q: If all this is true, answer this. Why do you, a Buddhist, wear the skin of an animal?

A: This is called a hisshiki (引敷). It is patterned after Monju Bodhisattva, who rides on the back of a lion. It symbolized the courage and speed necessary to practice austerities in the mountains. It signifies the unilluminated completely merged, unobstructed nature of the Law. As for practical use, it serves as a blanket to sit on sharp tree trunks or rocks.

Q: What is that sword which is attached to your waist?

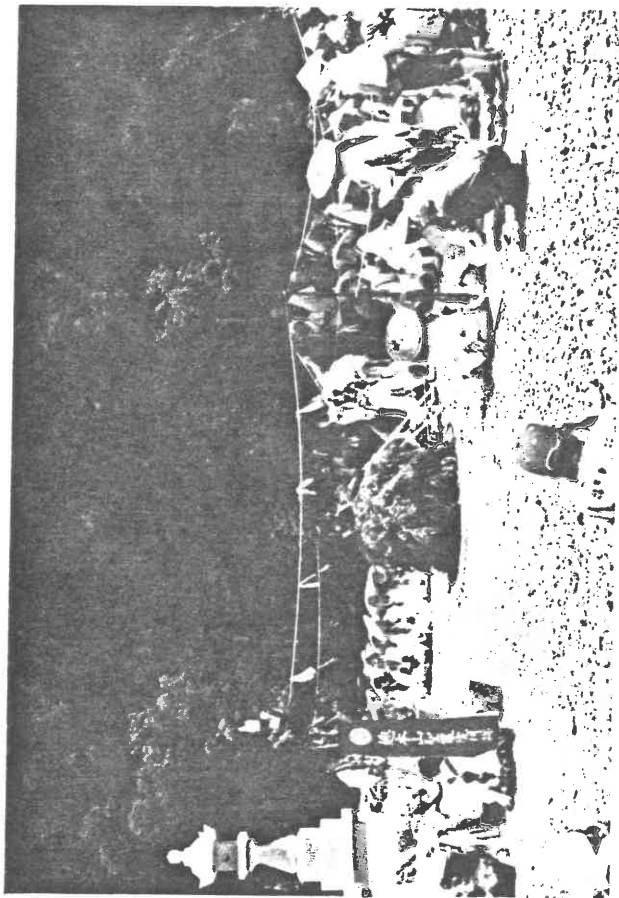
A: This is Fudo's sword of wisdom. It cuts off hindrances, demons, and the passions and attachments to this world.

Q: What about the straw sandals which are called "Eight-eyed (八目の草鞋)"?

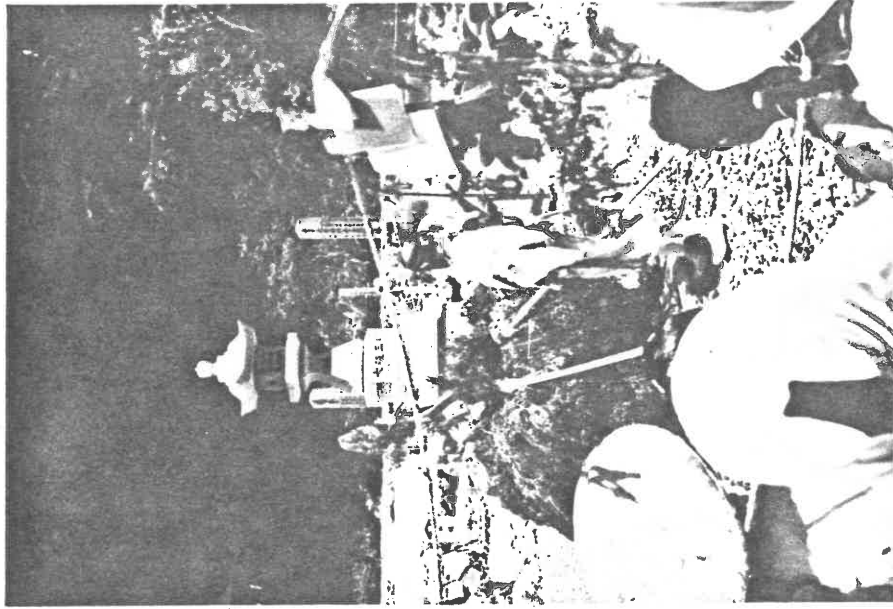
A: They represent the heart which walks on the eight-petalled lotus.

Q: What is the meaning of the burnt offering of the Great Saito Goma (採灯大魔摩供)?

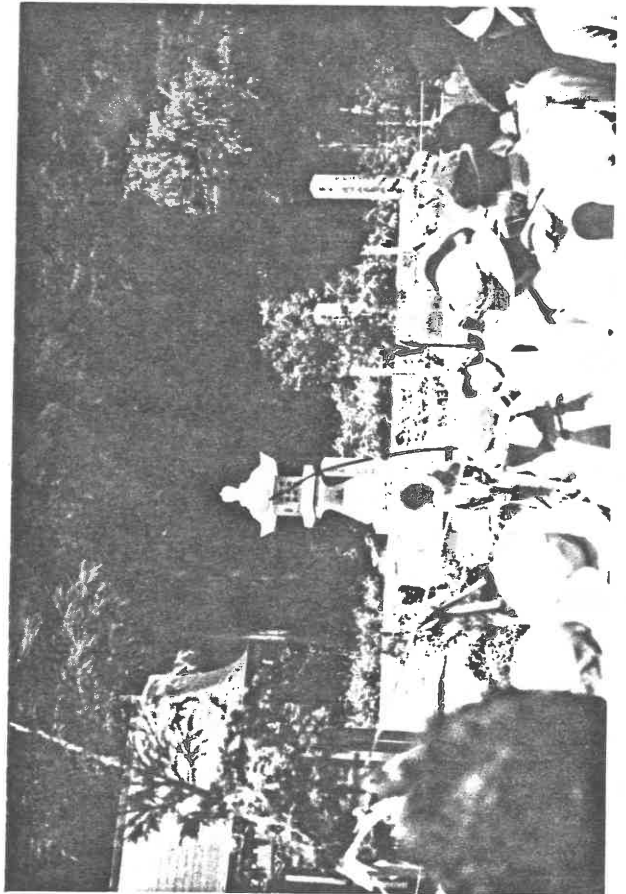
A: The burnt offering of the Great Saito Goma is the secret offering of Shugendo. It is like the Buddha's wisdom which like fire completely burns and consumes all the passions of and attachments to this world. The ceremony expresses clearly the rational aspect of the Law (理法-of the Womb Realm, in contrast to the Diamond Realm and wisdom-智体); burns away the polluted accumulations (karma) of life and death; leads one to rely on the foundation represented by the letter a, (encourages us) to make our residence in the land



I*II: Bow and Arrow Ceremony



III: Cutting away of desires. Notice the yellow-tipped arrow from the previous ceremony sticking out of the goma at about waist level.



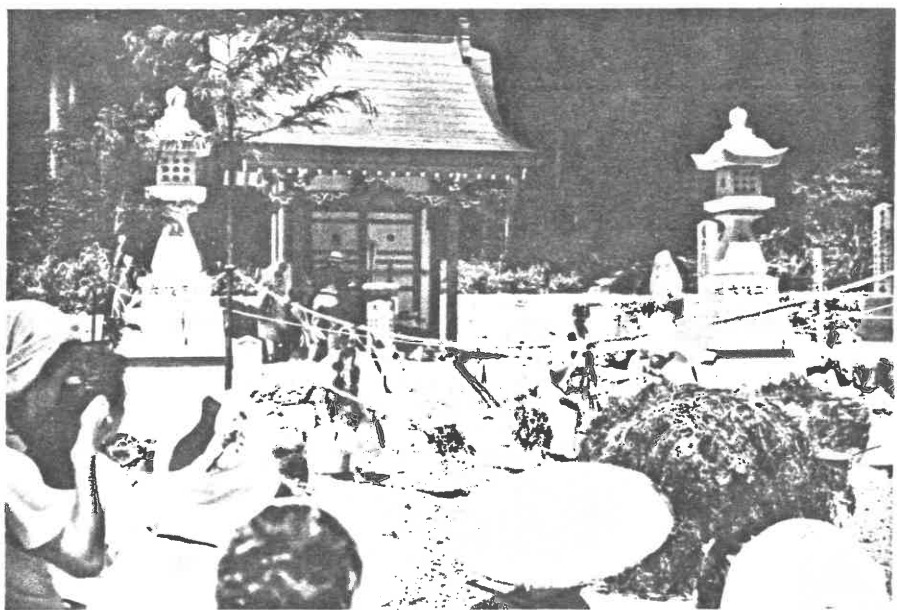
of the five Buddhas; (teaches us to enter the six great concepts, and signifies the non-quality of our selves and the Buddha. The ritual, activities and appearances of the goma all have varying significance.

Q: Your replies leave no doubt that you are a true yamabushi. If that is the truth, again I say, if that is the truth, you may pass.³²

After all of the candidates have passed the mondo, the center of attention shifts back to the goma. At a signal all of the yamabushi stand, the conch shells are blown, and all join in chanting the Hannya Shin Sutra. After all are seated again, there follows an impressive sequence of symbolic ceremonies. The first is a bow and arrow ceremony, symbolizing the casting away of worldly passions. With much fanfare six arrows are shot into the air: to the north, to the east, to the south, to the west, up, and into the goma (see pictures I-II).

Next one of the senior yamabushi stands in front of the goma and with various motions and utterances, waves his sword in a series of cutting motions. This also symbolizes the cutting away of worldly passions (pic. III).

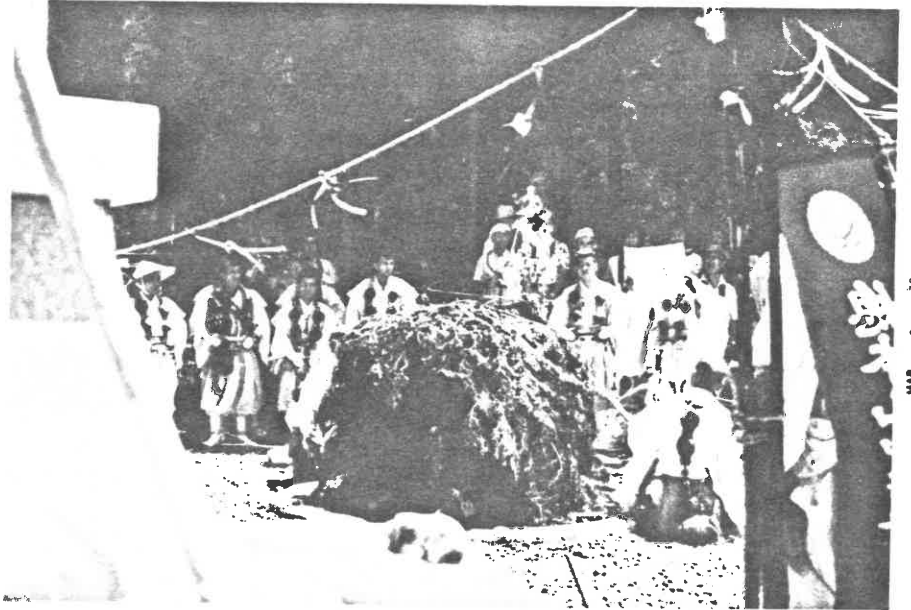
Two senior yamabushi then pick up the torches lying in front of the goma and advance to the main building of the shrine, in front of which is a waist high stone column on which a small sacred fire is burning.



After prayer they light the torches and carefully bring them over to the goma, and kneel there while the head yamabushi reads a proclamation announcing the official commencement of the mountain walk. ^(Pic. IV) The goma is then lit from the front and the back.

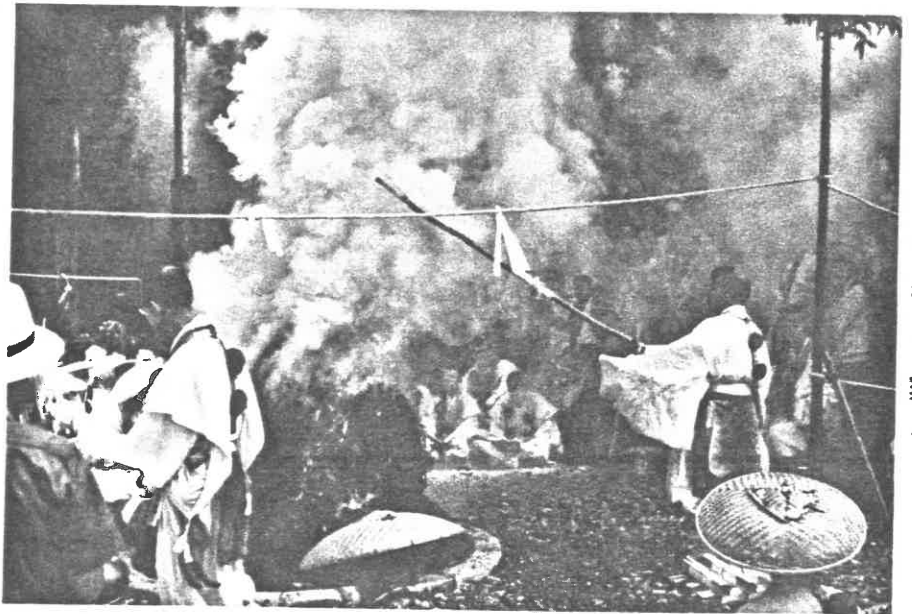
³² adopted from Nikko Ryoëi 二河良英 "Shugendo to Kumano" (修験道と熊野: The Kumano Area and Shugendo), Sangaku 三岳 #26, 1971, PP. 103-104.

IV



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V



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VI



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As the goma begins to burn and smoke (water is splashed on periodically to make it smoke all the more) other ceremonies begin. The head priest picks up a forked pole and traces in the air the Sanscrit letter "a" (see pic. V). This is repeated many times, interspersed with the symbolic burning of the one hundred and eight passions. To the left of the head yamabushi there is a pile of bundles, each bundle containing ten sticks. There are one hundred and eight sticks all together. The yamabushi takes one bundle at a time, cuts at it with his sword, flips it over, cuts the other side and tosses it into the fire (pic. VI).

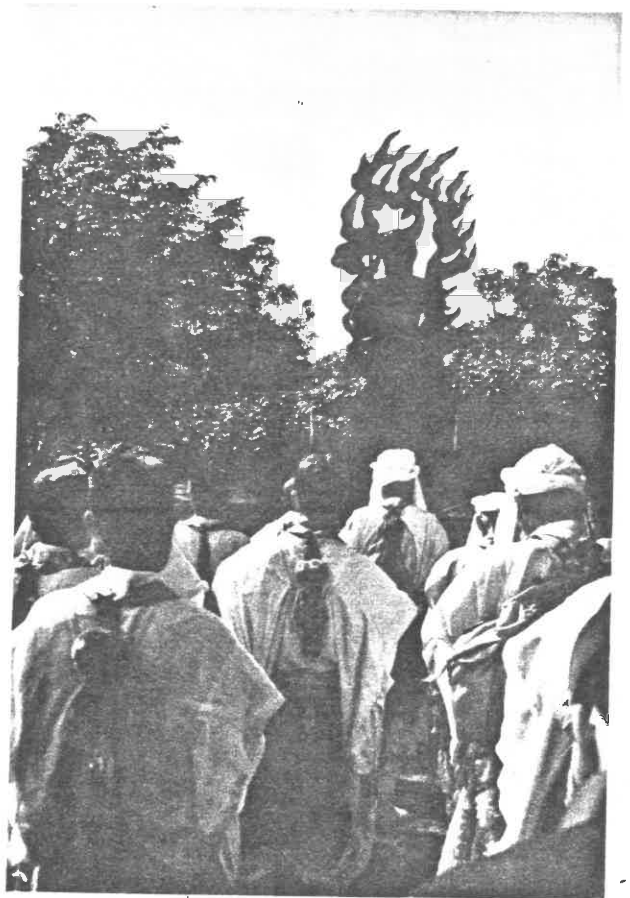
When the bundles have all been burned, the goma ceremony is almost finished. All through the ceremony the yamabushi have been chanting and praying and fanning smoke towards themselves. Finally everyone stands for a final round of conch shell blowing and chanting. The goma ceremony is over after nearly two hours, and at two o'clock in the afternoon we enter the mountain.

The women split off into another group which travelled an easier route along the side of the mountain and met us again later further up along the path the next day. The peaks of Umine and Sanjō Gatake are still off limits for members of the female sex, ostensibly because it is too difficult and dangerous. I would add to this reason the idea that in earlier days women were considered unclean and therefore unfit to enter the most holy mountains. Also, it is essential, man being the weak creature that he is, that there be no unnecessary distractions during the mountain austerities.

I have entered the mountains many times (and will do so again) but the thrill that washes over one at the first plunge off the beaten path still fills me with excitement and expectation, a lightness of heart and a heavy sense of approaching significance, the joy and fear of the unknown. There are few and precious moments in life which one is aware before hand that the coming event will become a treasured memory to be nursed and longed after until it grows greater than the original event in time and space. Such an event was this, and I savored it and enjoyed it as we climbed gradually up and up a narrow path between the trees, into the rays of the sun which pierced

through the branches above, through the mountain air; up, up, up into the dwelling place of the kami and the land of the Buddha. After a couple of hours of steady, relatively easy though consistently uphill travel, we arrived at the traditional yamabushi path. Here there was a shelter for weary wanderers which sold a warm, sweet, paste-like concoction which was delicious and supposedly excellent for renewing one's strength. There was not much time for rest, however, for the yamabushi soon gathered in front of the image of Zao nearby and performed gongyo.

That Zao was the first place of worship in the mountains seemed appropriate to me. Zao—the personification of the release from attachments, which is the goal of this ascetic practice. Zao—whose fiery countenance mimics the yamabushi's determination to face all hardships and overcome all difficulties while walking in the mountains. The chanting begins: "Namu Jimben Dai Bosatsu, Manu Jimben Dai Bosatsu, Namu Jimben Dai Bosatsu."³³ Rattle of shakujo, clicking of rosaries, clapping of hands. (Priest) "Hannya Haramita Shin Kyo." (Everybody joins in) "Hannya Haramita Shin Kyo. Kanjinzaibosatsu. Gyojin Hannyaharamitaji. Shokengoonkaiku. Doissaikuya. Sharishi. Shikifuikku. Kufuishiki. Shikizokuzeku. Kusokuzeshiki. Jusogyoshiki yakubunyoze. Sharishi. Zeshohokuso. Fushofumetsu. Fukufujo.... The breeze blows up from the valley and the hot sun is directly overhead. One is soon lost in reverie, in another world, with the sound of sutra chanting in the far distance. Few are aware of or understand the meaning of what they are



³³This is an honorific title given to En no Gyōja. A literal translation would be "I rely on the Great Bodhisattva of Supernatural Power."

chanting, but that seems to have little significance.

Soon we are on our way again. One of the striking sights was the increasing number of tombstones and monuments along the path. This was another sign of the belief in the mountains as the dwelling place of the dead.



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The view was getting better all the time and soon we arrived at Kanekake Rock (鐘掛岩 - "Bell Hanging" Rock), at the foot of which was a wooden platform overlooking the mountains we had just traversed. Here the Shinto ceremony of Oharai (purification) was performed with an offering of fruit and vegetables. I climbed to the top of the rack ahead of the others to get in a good position for a picture. I was surprised to find a man "setting up shop" for the newcomers, who were invited to pay

¥300 for a stick of incense and have their towels stamped with the mark of Kanekake Rock. This struck me as rather crass, and until I looked up the characters for Kanekake Rock, I thought the meaning was "the rock for placing money." This didn't spoil the view, however, and they said that on the clearest days it is possible to see Lake Biwa. There is also an image of En no Gyoja at the top, in front of which was performed gongyo.

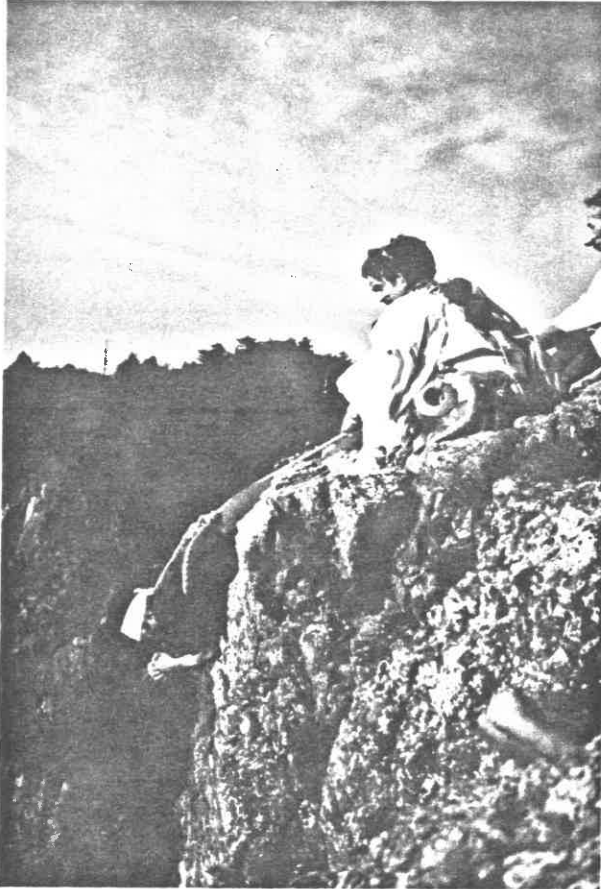
Further up the path is the Turtle Rock (お亀石), almost five meters long. It is said that since women were forbidden to enter this area, En no Gyoja's mother changed into a turtle to visit her son in the mountains. To protect its mystery and spiritualness, there are various taboos associated with this rock as revealed in the poem assigned to it:

Okame-ishi Fumuna tatakuna Tsue tsukuna
Yokete tōreyo Tabi no shinkyaku.

Pass along the side
You who are novice climbers.
Do not step on,
Do not knock,
Do not strike with your staff
The Turtle Rock.

Some yamabushi fear that if women are allowed to enter this far into the mountain, eventually some male climber will break this taboo to impress his girlfriend, and as a result its mystery and spiritualness will be lost.

It is not far from here to the Western Nozoki (西の覗き), a steep cliff over which one is suspended to gaze into the face of death. This is one of the so-called "practice of throwing away the body (捨身行)." Ropes are



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strung across both shoulders and one yamabushi holds your legs while you are slowly lowered over the edge of the cliff. One is to confess his sins and the yamabushi will ask questions like "Will you respect your parents?" "Do you promise to study hard?" or "Have you confessed your sins?" After the victim answers properly (does he have a choice?), he is brought back up. There is one instant when they will loosen their hold so you realize for a split second that you are falling--but you are caught very

quickly. That one fraction of a second, however, is unforgettable and heart-stopping, a moment of truth. This is one of the most important experiences in the mountains, and I realized its significance on a deeper level a couple of hours later. Meanwhile gongyō is performed after all have had their chance at confession and are taught the poem assigned to this spot:

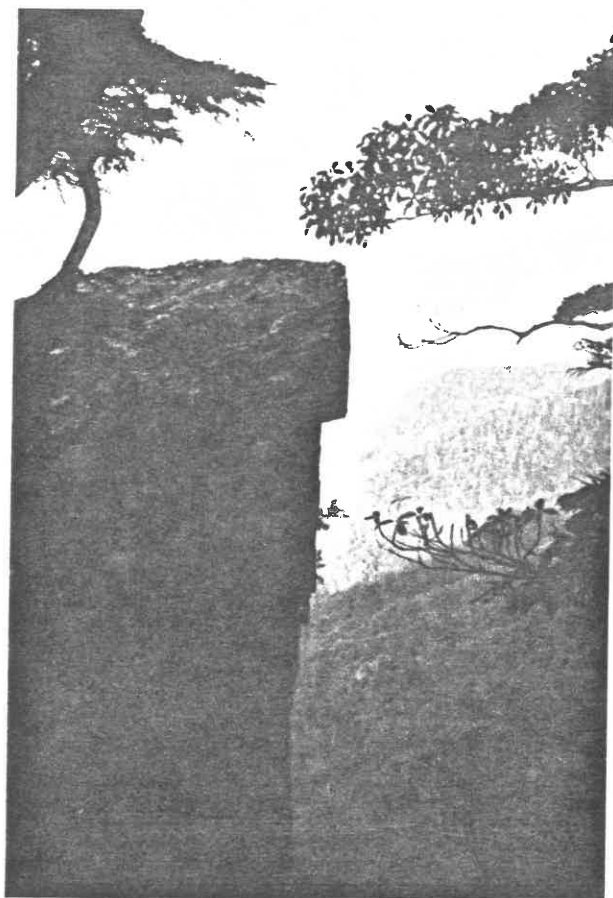
Arigataya Nishi no nozoki ni Zange shite
Mida no Jōdo ni Hairu zo ureshiki.

Thanks to the Western Nozoki
We have confessed, and can joyfully enter
The Pure Land of Amida.

This poem reflects the joy of rebirth after the encounter with death.

To one side of the Western Nozoki is Nihon Gishi (日本岩), a cliff which is not visited these days but was used in the past for the disposal of bodies. It was believed that if one became unable to walk or move because of sickness or fatigue, this was the result of former sins. Rather than obstructing the practice of other ascetics the "lead" would be thrown over this cliff. It was believed that he would then be reborn in the valley. This may sound cruel, but it did add another dimension to the determination and resolution of the climbers who must prepare themselves for this possibility.

In the late afternoon we finally arrived at the Peak of Sanjō Gatake where we were to spend the night. After leaving our luggage in the shelters, we were guided around the Ura no Gyo (裏の行場) which was a challenging route over and around and through rocks and cliffs. We went through Buddha's Womb (仏胎), "Push-Aside Rock" (押分岩), and "through the inner womb" (胎内くぐり) reminding us again of the theme of death and rebirth. One of the most striking sights was the Eastern Nozoki (picture), originally used for the same practice as the Western Nozoki, but closed off by law since a man fell to his death from here in the Meiji Period. Close by is the "Ant's Crossing" (蟻の戸渡り), a cliff wherein order to scale the final distance a short jump is necessary. The jump itself is not very far, but the results of failure would be fatal. The final test comes



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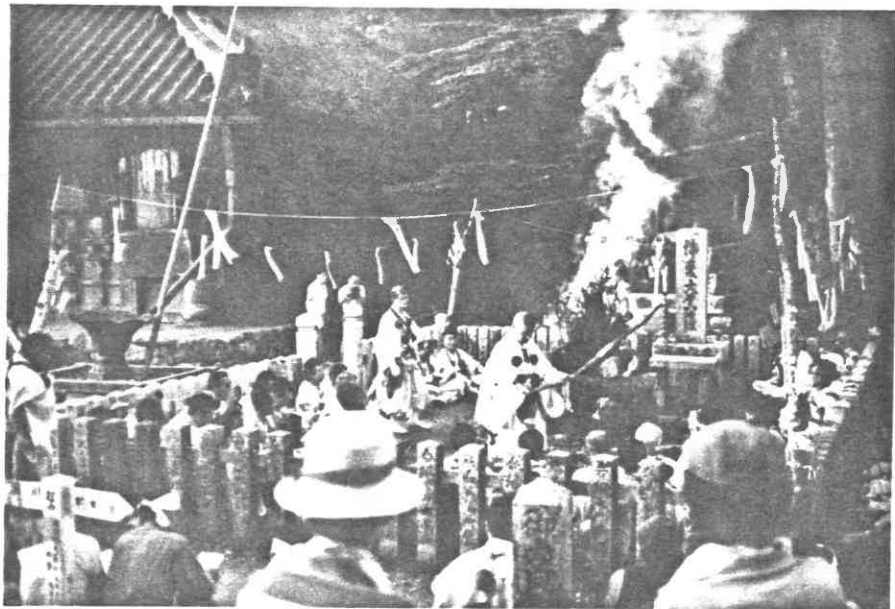
at the "Rock of Equality" (平等岩), perhaps so named because after death all are equal. The position of the rock necessitates a move in which one faces out with his back to the cliff and the beautiful green valley far, far below. One must then grasp a ledge with his right hand and swing his body over, the left leg swinging over empty space and catching a foothold on the other side. Safely gathered together on the other side, the head yamabushi explained to us the reason for all of these dangerous maneuvers. "While you are concentrating on climbing these dangerous places," he said, "your mind is clear. You do not think of money, or sex, or drink, or any other distractions. Perhaps only for a second you think of no-thing (無-Mu). You were then in the world of no-thing-ness (無の世界). It is this state of mind that you must cultivate. The purpose of Shugendo is to realize this state of mind and cultivate it in every-day life." The World of No-thing-ness. Yes, I thought, I know what he means, for I had just experienced it, and in that moment I realized its significance. I did not put it into words at the time, but mulling over it later, when it became more abstract (and thus less real and complete), I tried to capture its implications. The world of no-thing-ness is a death in life. On the one hand, to face death and to overcome it means never to fear death again. But that is not all. One realizes when he faces death that nothing else is ultimately important. One does not know the meaning of life until he has faced death, and come to grips with the reality of Death. Most people stumble through life "solving" this problem by ignoring it. Here one cannot ignore it. It is thrust upon you with all its hideous possibilities. That is its philosophical side. On the practical side is the cultivation of the state of mind which fears no death, is calm, concentrated, awake, and non-distracted. The dangerous activities were not the only experience conducive to this state of mind, for the daily walking and the fresh and beautiful environment also contributed to the cultivation of concentration and "stillness."

Meanwhile we emerged at the summit of Oomine, where the second goma was under way in a small compound next to a large temple. The same ceremonies were performed except for the mondo and bow and arrow rituals.

After the completion of the goma we returned by another route, a wide

stone stairway, to the shelter for supper.

Everyone climbed under their blankets early this evening, and the next evenings as well, not only from fatigue but also with the knowledge that we must be up and on our way before the sun



rises the next morning. Before turning off the dim lights, however, registration was completed and each received a small pamphlet containing basic information on Shugendo. It included a list of rules to keep in mind on the walk:

- one should have a heart full of piety and devotion towards his ancestors, and respect the kami.
- one should offer sincere and fervent prayers and chant in a loud voice during gongyo.
- one should aim for the purification of mind and body and experience the essence of the ten worlds (see App. V) while in the mountains.
- one should perfect his mental powers (or soul) so that he can bear patiently his sufferings.
- one should not have a attitude of discontent, but should cultivate a thankful mind ready to repay one's obligations.
- everyone should work together harmoniously, help each other, and respect the sendatsu.
- one should not act arbitrarily and selfishly but willingly submit to the sendatsu's orders and follow the rules.

The dark room began bustling with activity at two-thirty the next morning in preparation for a three o'clock breakfast and four o'clock departure. There was very little conversation as we arranged our packs, picked up our lunches, washed our faces, filled our water bottles with barley tea, put on our boots, and walked out into the dark, chilly mountain air. Everyone assembled at the summit, in front of the temple and near the sight of the previous evening's goma. Here we listened to instructions for the day, a sermon concerning Shugendo, and gongyo in front of the temple. As we lined up to begin the walk at 4:30, the sky in the east was steadily painted a lighter shade of blue, until the sun burst forth, reborn in all its splendor.

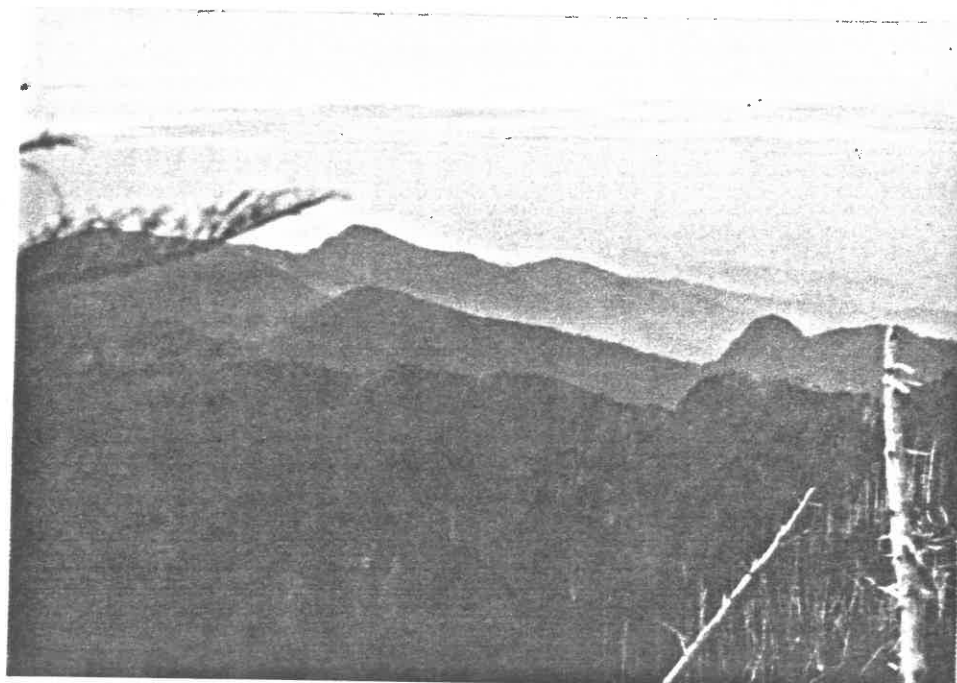
This second day was the least eventful of the trip. I remember thinking

as I marked "9:30-rest" in my notebook that I had already been awake for eight hours, but it was just the time (since this was during summer vacation) that I would be getting up at home. I felt healthy and vigorous. The next entry in my notebook, revealing my fatigue, blurts out "3:30-Misen!" I do remember clearly the stop just before the steep climb up Mt. Misen. There was a statue of Shōbō, founder of Daigo Temple, which claimed the legend that rain would soon fall if it is touched. I was sorely tempted to test the fates, but we had had such good weather so far, and, I reasoned to myself, I did not want to offend my hosts. The statue remained untouched and we enjoyed excellent weather for the rest of the trip, although cause and effect cannot be determined precisely in this matter.

Near the summit of Misen we ate a leisurely supper and stayed there the night. A relatively long worship service and gongyo was performed at the summit in front of the small Misen Shrine.

The night before we had slept of tatami mats, but tonight all we had were a thin blanket on top of wooden boards, and another thin blanket to cover us. Well, I thought in consolation, this is part of the austerities. Hard boards or no, sleep was not long in coming. I had no extra time under my cover to mull over the experiences so far, but their cumulative effect was influencing me even as I slept.

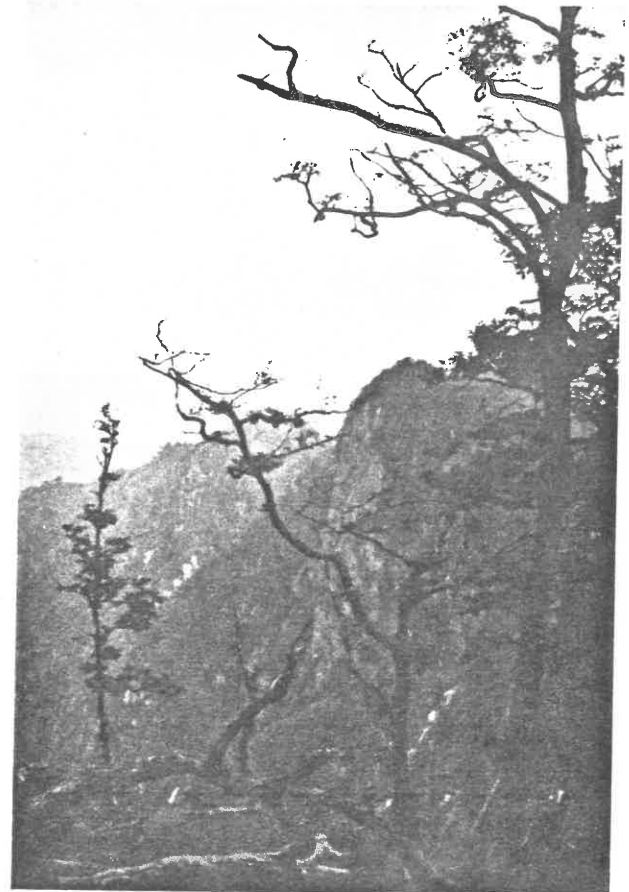
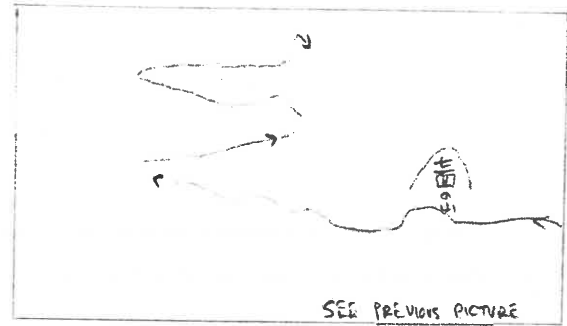
Two Thirty A.M. Another quick breakfast and hurried preparations in the



dark. I was surprised at how awake I felt. After gongyo we left Misen and walked in the dark to Hakkō Gatake (八ヶ岳), the highest peak in the Kansai area at 1915.2 meters, arriving just as the sun rose above Misen behind

us. Eight copies of the Lotus Sutra are said to have been buried here by En no Gyoja, hence its name. Looking southwest from here we could see most of our day's route. We would walk along the ridge in an M shape and down the other side of Shaka Gatake, the tallest peak in the distance.

On our way down from Hakkyo Gatake we walked through Zenji forest, one of the most breathtaking spots along the whole route, for we walked along a ridge with a good view through the trees on both sides. On the left was a long valley with the rocks in the foreground worshipped as images of Fudō, the immovable (below). On the right, a little further down the path, we could see



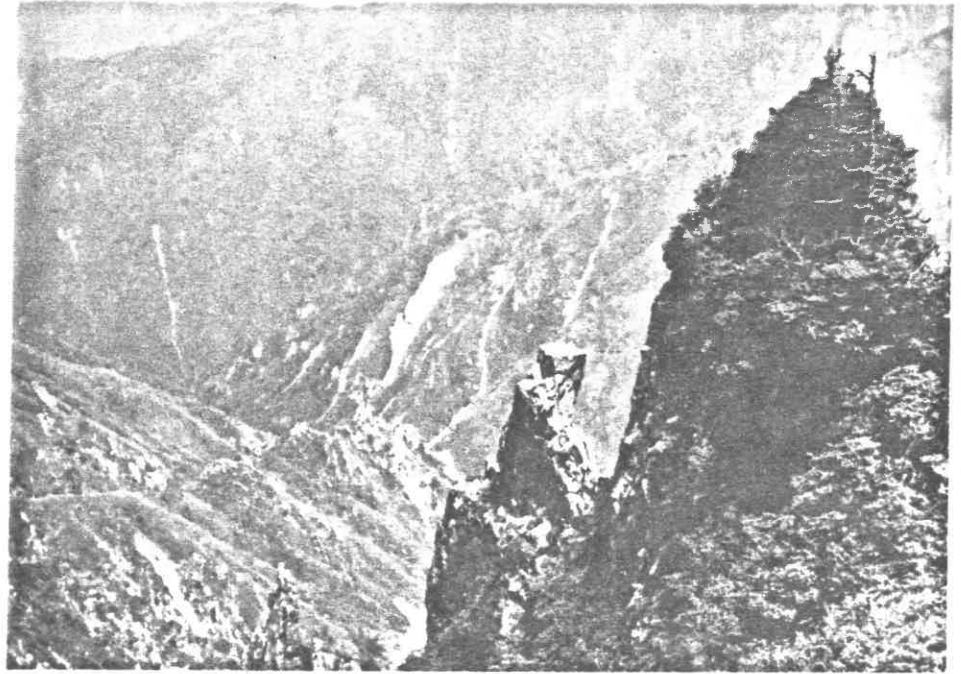
• 七面の山

Mt. Nanaomote (above), the highest sheer cliff in the area.

One of the steepest climbs in the one up Bussho Peak (1304 meters). On the other side of this peak is the dividing line between the womb realm of Kumano and the diamond realm of Washino. The path here is along a cliff, and on the right is a series of rock formations leading down to a steep decline to the valley below.

Now comes the steep, long climb

up Shaka Gatake
 (1799 m.) especially
 difficult because
 it comes after many
 other ups and downs.
 Here, as on other
 steep paths, the
 climbers begin
 chanting "Sange,
Sange (懺悔 じざい -confess
 confess), and other



climbers answer "Rokkon Seijo (六根清浄 -purify the six senses)" and this was repeated back and forth as encouragement. We finally arrived, hot and tired,



on the peak of Shaka Gatake at noon. Here there is a large, five meter high image of Shakamuni set up in 1922 by two devout yamabushi. However, we could not stay here for long, for we must hurry ahead to Jinsen Shelter.

Jinsen is one of the most important spots for Shugendo. It is the traditional place for initiation into the deeper secrets and baptism of the yamabushi. It is considered to be the eight-petaled lotus in the center of the Womb Realm mandala. To commemorate this holy ground, the

final goma was burned. The pure water for baptism is brought from the pure mountain spring which trickles out of the large rock by the shelter (see next picture).



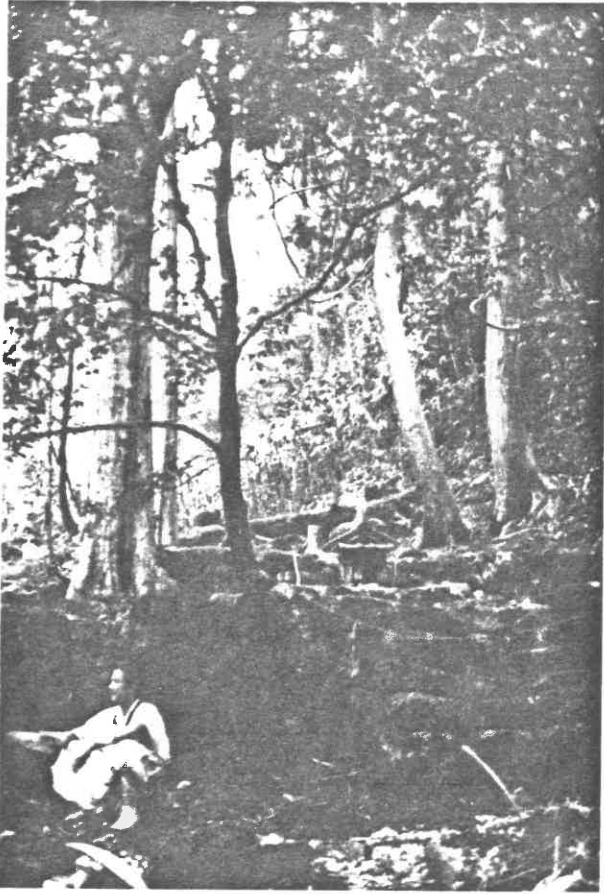
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After a long rest for the
goma we moved on to Dainichi
Peak. In order to reach the
summit it was necessary to
climb about twenty-five meters
over a flat, smooth rock at a
near 45° angle, with the help
of a thin chain. On the left
was a beautiful view, at the
cost of a sharp cliff falling
down to the rocks below. Once
more one faces the "world of
nothingness" and the possibility
of death. At the summit, with
its back to the rocky climb,

is a statue of Dain'chi (below).

Time was running short but there was one more trial left. This was the maneuvering around the "Two Stones": a couple of finger like projections thrusting their way up from a single rock. The ordeal here was to work your way around the left finger about half way up from the ground (aprox. 2-3 meters), jump to the right finger, and work your way around to the starting point. Another time of concentration and cultivation of the one-pointed state of mind, I remembered with confidence. As I shifted my way around the fingers, a friend of mine mentioned to the





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head yamabushi that I can move with ease because of my long legs and arms. No, the yamabushi disagreed, it is because he has nenriki (念力 - "mind power"). My friend passed on this surprising praise to me later in the evening. As I basked in the warmth of this compliment, especially meaningful for a novice like myself, I realized that if it is true, it is true only because as a Christian I need fear no death.

It was only another hour or so down the path to the end of our trail. The yamabushi resting by the last place of worship symbolizes the twin responses of fatigue and joy which came with the end of such a long and trying journey.

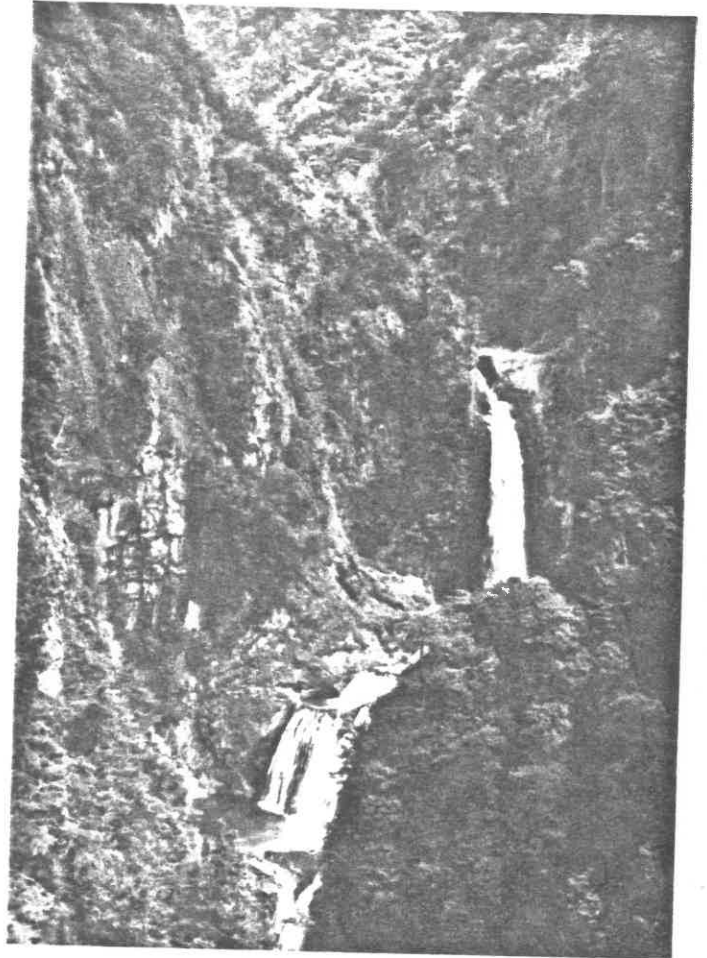
At the first chance after arriving at the lodging houses at Zenki, I entered the bath. There had been many symbolic practices of entering the womb and rebirth during our walk in the mountains, but this felt like the real thing.

That evening was one of celebration. The tensions that accompanied practice in the mountains were released and there was general merriment and breaking of fasts. People recounted their experiences, consummated new friendships, exchanged advice, shared laughter.

All of this made it very difficult (for the first time) to get up the next morning at three o'clock to walk the final leg to the Three Falls. After so many days in the mountains, even majesty becomes commonplace. This last walk revealed many more waterfalls,

rivers, dangerous cliffs harmonized by chains, places of worship. The return added only the sadness of the last glimpses of paradise.

The yamabushi went from Zenki back north by bus to where a banquet was prepared as a celebration of the end of the walk. Those of us from Shingu caught the bus headed south, and two hours later found us back home, the end and beginning of a complete circle.



Sensing a lull in the merriment that last evening at Zenki, I was led out of the somewhat stale air inside to walk a short distance away from the lodgings. The crisp mountain air filled my lungs with freshness, and as I gazed up at the near-full moon the whole experience of the past few days—the outer magnificence and the inner Joy—was overwhelming. I longed to die. Gazing in rapture at the beauty of unspoiled creation, I longed for death to take me into itself. I longed that my imperfection and incompleteness would be devoured, accepted, and lost in the Whole, the Creator. Is this, the irresistible attraction of "primeval" religion, the well-spring of nature worship, I wondered? Is this what the ancient and modern "pagans" experienced when they lifted up their arms to welcome the rising sun or fell on their faces before the Dark Mysteries? If so, modern civilized man scoffs in his empty ignorance, huddled in his antiseptic and dead cities, cut off from the Earth his mother and his Father above, ignorant of that which is his very life and death. "The sweetest thing in all my life," says Psyche the night before she is sacrificed on the mountain, "has been the longing to reach the

Mountain, to find the place where all the beauty comes from, my country,
the place where I ought to have been born. Do you think it all meant nothing,
all the longing?...All my life the god of the mountain has been wooing me."³⁴
I had been reborn. I had come home. Through death in the mountains I had
rediscovered Life. All that remained was to return to the land of shadows
until that final Death opens the door to the eternal Mountain.

³⁴Lewis, C.S., Til We Have Faces, a Myth Retold, William B. Eerdmans
Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., 1966, p. 75-76.

Appendix II

The Seventy-five Nabiki (靡)- "holy places along the way."

✓ 75) The Willow Shelter (柳の宿-Yanagi no Shuku)

✓ 74) Mount of the Buddha's Image (丈六山-Jōroku san)

Formerly the home of a temple enshrining Yakushi-ji, but now there is nothing left.

✓ 73) Mt. Yoshino (吉野山-Yoshino san)

Famous all over Japan for its cherry blossoms, this mountain is the site of many ruins and famous events and places, including:
a-the bronze torii (a national cultural treasure), originally built with the bronze left over from the construction of the big Buddha of Todai-ji in the reign of Emperor Shomu. Another source says it was built by the Emperor Daigo.

b-Temple of Mt. Kimbu (金峰山寺): the main object of worship is Zao gongen, patron Bodhisattva of Shugendo.

c-Katte Shrine (勝手神社): enshrines the kami Katte.

✓ 72) Source of Water Shrine (水分神社-Mikumari Jinja)

Also called "Shrine for the Protection of Children (子守神社)" Enshrines the field kami who stores and provides water. Novices are purified here.

? 71) Kimbu Shrine (金峰神社)

✓ 70) The Aizen Shelter (愛染の宿-Aizen no Shuku)

Also called the shelter for peaceful meditation (安禪の宿) and until 1970 the furthest that women were allowed to climb.

69) The Shelter of Two Treasures (二蔵宿-Nizō Shuku)

Now deserted except for a tea house.

68) The Gate of the Pure Heart (浄心門-Jōshin Mon)

The spot of interception if one starts climbing from Doro River, as we did on July 19, 1975.

✓ 67) Sanjō Peak (山上ヶ岳-Sanjō Gatake)

Location of the Turtle Rock, the western site for the cliff-hanging exercise, the Buddha's Womb (胎内くくり), the Ant's Crossing (蟻の戸渡り), the Main Sanjō Peak Mt. Oomine Temple (山上本堂大峰山寺), etc, plus lodging for the night.

✓ 66) The Small Bamboo Shelter (小篠の宿-Ozasa no Shuku)

A site of pure running water, one of only two places between Sanjo Peak and Mt. Misen, a day's journey. Now a favorite campsite.

✓ 65) Amida's Forest (阿弥陀森-Amida Mori)

64) The Shelter of the Other Way (脇の宿-Waki no Shuku)

A site with pure running water, one of only two places between Sanjo Peak and Mt. Misen, a day's journey. Now a favorite camp site.

63) Fugen Peak (普賢岳-Fugen Dake)

From this peak, on the left, one can see the Sutra-storage Rock (経管石) where En no Gyoja is said to have stored sutras.

62) The Reed Cavern (笹の窟-Shō no Iwaya)

2.5 kilometers off the main path to the left.

61) Miroku Peak (弥勒岳-Miroku Dake)

1.4 kilometers from Fugen to the left.

60) Children's Rest (稚児泊-Chigo Domari)

En no Gyoja is said to have captured a great snake on this spot.

59) Peak of the Seven Days (七曜ヶ岳-Shichiyō Gatake)

Also called the Country Beholding Peak (国見嶽).

58) Return of the Ascetic (行者還り-Gyōja Kaeri)

Site of pure running water. It receives its name from the fact that cutting across the path is a steep cliff which was so steep that even En no Gyoja turned back to find a less dangerous way along the valley.

57) The First Tawa (一の多木-Ichi no Tawa)

A tawa is the low spot between peaks along the ridge of the mountains.

56) Stone of Rest (石休場-Ishi Yasu Ba)

55) Shelter in Which to Lecture the Old Women of the World (7) (講婆世宿-Kōbase Juku)

Also called Shobo's Shelter (聖宝の宿). There is a bronze statue here of Shobo Rigen Daishi (聖宝理源大師). It is said that if one touches this statue, it is sure to rain soon.

54) Misen (弥山)

Lodgings for the night.

53) The Head Wizard Peak (頂仙ヶ岳-Chōsen Gatake)

52) The Then and Now Shelter (支昔宿-Konjaku Shuku)

The above two are not usually visited these days but worshipped from afar, from the peak of Misen.

51) Peak of Eight Sutras (八経ヶ岳-Hakkyō Gatake)

At 1915.2 meters, the highest point in the Kansai area. It received its name from the tradition that En no Gyoja buried eight copies of the Lotus Sutra on this peak.

50) The Peak of the Morning Star (明星ヶ岳 -Myōjō Gatake)

49) The Chrysanthemum Cavern (菊の窟 -Kiku no Iwaya)

Considered to be the site of greatest demonic power. Once one enters the cavern, it is said that he can never get out again. Worshipped from afar.

48) Forest of the Master of Meditation (禪師の窟 -Zenji no Iwaya)

47) Goko Summit (五鼓の嶺 -Goko no Mine)

Holy place for the Buddha of Five Wisdoms (五智如来).

46) The Boat Tawa (船の多和 -Fune no tawa)

A dip between peaks shaped like a ship. Unfortunately, however, there is no water.

45) The Mount of Seven Faces (七面の山 -Nanaomote Yama)

On the right from #46. Worshipped from afar.

44) Yangtze Shelter (揚子の宿 -Yōji no Shuku)

43) Peak of Buddha's Birth (仏生ヶ岳 -Busshō Gatake)

42) Sparrow Peak (孔雀ヶ岳 -Kujaku Gatake)

41) Empty Bowl Peak (空鉢ヶ岳 -Kuhacchi Gatake)

The steepest climb on the whole route, considered the eastern gate to the Pure Land and the dividing line between the Womb Realm (Kumano) and the Diamond Realm (Yoshino).

40) Shaka Peak (釈迦ヶ岳 -Shaka Gatake)

One of the highest and most impressive peaks in the area. There is a large Bronze statue of Shaka on the summit.

39) Totsu Gate (都津門 -Totsu Mon)

38) The Deep Shelter of the Wizard (深仙宿 -Jinzen Shuku)

Also written (神山 -Mountain of the kami). One of the most important places for Shugendo. It is here that the most secret of secrets passed down from En no Gyoja are passed on to the truest initiates. A goma is burned and the pure water which trickles out of the nearby cliff is considered perfect for the rite of "baptism (深仙灌頂)." This rite of "baptism" symbolizes advancement to a higher level by the pouring of water over one's head. This water is considered to be spiritual water (霊水). The ones who receive baptism at this site are considered the true heirs of Shugendo.

It is said that En no Gyoja's beard is buried near here.

37) The Forest of Holy Heaven (聖天の森 -Shoten no Mori)

36) The Five-Cornered Wizard (五角仙 -Gokaku Sen)

35) Dainichi Peak (大日岳 -Dainichi Take)

Here one must climb 25 meters with the help of a chain. There is a statue of Dainichi at the summit.

34) Thousand-Hand Peak (千手岳 -Senju Dake)

33) Two Stones (二ツ石 -Futatsu Ishi)

3 Two finger-like rocks which everyone climbs around as part of the ascetic practices.

32) Peak of Revived Taboos (蘇莫岳 -Sobakusa Dake)

31) Small Pond Shelter (小池宿 -Koike Shuku)

30) Thousand-grass Peak (千草岳 -Sengusa Dake)

The above three are now bypassed on the way down to Zenki.

29) Zenki Mountain (前鬼山 -Zenki-zan)

This is the final and resting place for the annual Shogoin walk. There used to be five families who lived in this area and cared for the travellers. Now there is only one family left who stay here all year round and protect the 1300 year old traditions of Shugendo.

28) The Three Waterfalls (三重滝 -Sanjū Taki or Mikasane Taki)

Three falls on a route from Zenki off the main path.

27) The Interior Peak of Protection (奥守岳 -Okumori Dake)

26) Peak for the Protection of Children (子守岳 -Komori Dake)

25) Wisdom Peak (般若岳 -Hannyā Dake)

24) Nirvana Peak (涅槃岳 -Nehan Dake)

23) Kenko Gate (乾光門 or 剣光門)

22) Shelter for Receiving the Sutras (持經宿 -Jikyō Shuku)

21) Peaceful Shelter (平地宿 -Heiji Shuku)

20) Shelter of Bitter Fields (怒田宿 -Nuta Shuku)

19) Peak of the Practicing Wizard (行仙岳 -Gyōsen Dake)

From #19-27 there is no fixed path today and the way is treacherous. That is why the climbers now go down the mountain at Zenki and return home from there.

18) Mountain of the Discarded Bamboo Hat (笠捨山 -Kasasute Yama)

I have visited from here to #12 on other trips to the mountains (see Prologue)

17) Spear Peak (槍ヶ岳 -Yari Gatake)

16) The Arbor (四阿宿 -Shia Shuku)

15) Chrysanthemum Pond (菊ヶ池 -Kiku ga Ike)

14) Worship of Return (拜返し -Ogami Kaeshi)

When one enters from the Kumano side, this spot is where one looks back for one ceremony of worship before proceeding.

- 13) Mt. of Fragrant Spirits (香精山-Kōshō san)
 - 12) Shelter of the Old Hut (古屋宿-Koya Shuku)
 - 11) Peak of Jeweled Ease (如意珠岳-Nyoiju Dake)
 - 10) Mt. Tamaki (玉置山)
 - 9) Shelter of Drinking Water (水呑宿-Mizunomi Shuku)
 - 8) Cliff Shelter (岸の宿-Kishi no Shuku)
 - 7) Peak of Five Great Buddhas (五大尊岳-Godaison Dake)
 - 6) Diamond Tawa (金剛多和-Kōngō Tawa)
 - 5) Daikoku Peak (大黒岳)
 - 4) Fukikoshi "Blow Over" Mountain (吹越山)
 - 3) Shingu (新宮)
 - 2) Nachi (那智)
 - 1) Hongu (本宮)
- } The "Three Peaks" of Kumano (熊野三山); see also p. 26.

Appendix III

Costume and Tools of Shugendo

According to Shugendo beliefs, an ascetic (yamabushi) is a small universe in himself, symbolic of the one absolute whole body of Dainichi himself, represented in the Diamond and Womb Realms. On this basis, clothing and tools were chosen with symbolic meaning in mind. The following sixteen items are the generally accepted costume and tools of the yamabushi.

1) Skull cap (頭巾-tokin)

A black, bowl shaped wooden or plastic cap, 5.45 centimeters in diameter, worn on the forehead and held there by string. Its purpose is to avoid sickness while climbing the mountains. Its shape is symbolic of Dainichi's jeweled crown of wisdom, black represents worldly passions, the twelve sections symbolize the twelve link chain of dependent origination; as a whole it signifies the non-duality of the common and the holy.

2) Bamboo Hat (班蓋-hangai, or 笠-kasa)

This hat is made of bamboo leaves and is practically the same as the bamboo hats used in everyday life by the country people. However, at the top of the official version, there are eight petals of red silk with a white trim. The practical use of this hat is of course to keep off the rain or the heat of the sun. This hat symbolizes the placenta in the mother's womb. The round shape symbolizes a successful birth, the eight petals are the eight parts of the mother's body. In general, the hat is a symbol of growth in the mother's womb.

3) Robe and Skirt (鈴掛 or 鈴懸巾-Suzukake)

See the explanation given in the mondo (p. 64). Also, the nine folds of the upper robe symbolize the nine assemblies of the Diamond Realm Mandala and the eight folds of the skirt symbolize the eight lotus petals of the Womb Realm Mandala. Thus together

they represent the non-duality or oneness of the two realms. It is a strong symbol of the yamabushi as a miniature universe.

4) Shoulder Straps (結袈裟-Yuigesa)

A simplification of the monk's robe to facilitate ease during the mountain walk. The strap with the different colored puffs attached are the Honzan ha version. The color depends on the rank of the wearer (see App. IV). Originally the puffs were either black or white. The Tozan ha straps have badges rather than puffs (see picture on p. 10). Also see mondo (p. 64) for symbolic meaning.

5) Conch Shell (法螺-hora)

This is the most conspicuous and most widely known part of the yamabushi costume. It consists of a large shell, usually over a foot long, which is blown before the chanting of sutras, as signals, or before some other ceremony. It is very difficult to learn how to blow this shell properly. Most of the yamabushi I spoke with said that it took them at least a year of practice to be able to blow it for minimum satisfaction. The sound of the shell is a sermon of Dainichi on the law. The yellow, red, or orange cord that goes around the waist is considered part of this tool. The length of the cord depends on rank.

6) Rosary (最多角念珠-Iratana Nenju)

A rosary with one hundred and eight beads, symbolizing the one hundred and eight passions or attachments to this world.

7) Staff (錫杖-Shakujō)

A wooden staff with a two prong pestle at the tip which encloses six rings. The rattle produced by shaking this staff accompanies the chanting of sutras. The six rings symbolize the six virtues (see App. V). The staff is considered symbolic of wisdom, able to lead people from the six worlds of passion to enlightenment.

8) Backpack (笈-oi)

A wooden box or case in which to carry the necessary food, tools, and clothing for the walk in the mountains. The wooden boards of

of the box are symbolic of the mother's bones, the food contained inside as the mother's flesh, and the one who carries the load as the mother's skin, and the red shoulder cords as the mother's blood vessels. Therefore, to carry the pack signifies being wrapped up in the mother's womb.

9) Shoulder Box (肩箱-Kata Bako)

A box used as the cover of the oi. The head yamabushi (正先達) puts in here the necessary sutras, paper, ceremonial objects, etc. for the mountain walk. The length of the box is symbolic of the eighteen worlds (six senses, six objects of the senses, six consciousnesses of the senses). It's whiteness represents the blood vessels of the unenlightened sentient beings. In general it signifies the wisdom of the Diamond Realm. When the box and the oi are put together, they then symbolize the non-duality of the Womb and Diamond Realms, of reason and wisdom.

10) Diamond Staff (金剛杖-Kongō Tsue)

A wooden staff to assist one in walking. One end is rounded, the womb realm; the other pointed, the diamond realm. It is the yamabushi's personal stupa.

11) Animal Skin (引敷-Hisshiki)

An animal skin, ideally lion, for the practical use of sitting on. Hung from the waist over the seat of the pants and held by a string tied at the front. See mondo for symbolic meaning.

12) Knee and Elbow Pads (脚絆-Kyahan)

Used to protect the yamabushi's elbows and knees while climbing. They also represent the Diamond and Womb Realms.

13) Fan (檜扇-Hisen)

A fan made from strips of Japanese cypress. Used during the goma ceremony and is symbolic of fire. It also symbolizes the fire of wisdom which can consume the passions or attachments to this world.

14) Hand Sword (柴打-Shiba Uchi)

A small sword used in the goma ceremony to symbolized the

cutting off of attachments.

15) Rope (走繩-Hashiri Nawa)

A safety rope carried by the yamabushi on his right hip.

16) "Eight-eyed" Straw Sandles (八目草鞋-Yatsume warsji)

Straw sandles used by yamabushi while walking in the mountains.

See mondo (p. 65) for detailed explanation.

Appendix IV
Shugendo Hierarchy

There is a saying in Shugendo-真俗一如他-which means that in the mountains laymen and priest are on equal footing, as it were. Anyone, be he businessman, farmer, priest or whatever, may join and rise in the ranks. The following is a list of how and where one can advance, starting from the bottom:

1) Novice (入位-Nyūi)

One who has just entered Shugendo. As soon as one enters he is called a yamabushi.

2) First Level of Respect (一僧祇-Issōshi)

One can advance to this rank one year after becoming a yamabushi. One must have practiced in the mountains at least three times; in the spring, summer and fall. From this rank one can wear the suzukake.

3) Second Level of Respect (二僧祇-Nisōshi)

Allowed to advance after two years, and six trips in the mountains, after the pattern above.

4) Third level of Respect (三僧祇-Sansōshi)

After three years, nine mountain trips.

5) Superior (大越家-Dai Otsuke)

At least five years of three mountain trips per year.

6) Junior Sendatsu (小先達)

7) Sendatsu (先達)

8) Senior Sendatsu (大先達)

9) True Sendatsu (正先達)

One who reaches this rank is call a true follower of Shugendo, or true ascetic, and one is considered the leader of all the sendatsu, the heir of the secrets, highest master of Shugendo. In order to advance to this rank one must show knowledge of and skill in the following ceremonies: a) The Secret Meanings of Certain Goma Ceremonies (加行柱源大護摩秘法); b) the Saito Goma (採灯護摩); c) walking across fire; d) fire ceremony for personal protection; e) prayers for sickness. He must also be acquainted with various secret formulas such as the Gamame (Toad's Eye 蟆目), secret formulas, the Nine Letters (九字) the way to protect oneself with the Ten Letters (護身十字法).

There was once a rank called Tendaishoku (探題職), passed

down from En no Gyoja through the families at Zenki, who were the possessors of certain secrets, but this rank has recently been discontinued. The one with this rank had the responsibility to question yamabushi on various matters and test to see whether or not they deserved their ranking.

The above ranking is a general pattern for all ^{PRACTITIONERS} of Shugendo.

In a personal letter from Mr. Miyagi of Shogoin, I was given the following ranking for the Honzan ha:

1) Associate Sendatsu (准先達)

Three Oomine trips-the mountain walk described in Part III.

2) Sendatsu (先達) Seven Oomine trips.

3) Associate Senior Sendatsu (准大先達) Thirteen Oomine trips.

4) Senior Sendatsu (大先達) Twenty five Oomine trips.

5) Serving Senior Sendatsu (奉仕大先達) Thirty three Oomine trips.

6) Senior Sendatsu Dedicated to the Way (道奉大先達) 33 Oomine trips.

7) Eminent Senior Sendatsu of the Mountains (峰中出世大先達)

Fifty Oomine trips.

Appendix V

Shugendo Interpretations of Various Buddhist Doctrines

A) The Ten Worlds (十界)

It is believed that while walking in the mountains the participants experience and move up and through all ten worlds as follows:

1) Hell (地獄-jigoku) the practice of patiently enduring suffering.

Hell is the world of eight kinds of cold and eight kinds of heat. While walking in the mountains, one experiences the sufferings of heat, the wind and the rain, the cold nights. One must follow the sendatsu's orders and learn to patiently endure the suffering.

2) Hungry Demons (餓鬼-gaki) the practice of knowing how much is enough.

Gaki are beings which are denied ~~and~~ food and drink and so are constantly hungry and thirsty. In the mountains one will also experience hunger and thirst. One will learn to appreciate food and drink, and learn how little is really necessary to sustain life.

3) Beasts (畜生-chikushō) the practice of hard labor.

Beasts must always carry around heavy loads. In the mountain one must carry his heavy pack up and down steep cliffs and for long distances.

4) Asura (修羅) the practice of effort and devotion.

Asura are spirits who are always fighting and quibbling, and therefore never advance spiritually. In the mountain one must learn to keep up with the others, or wait patiently for those who are slow.

5) Men (人間-ningen) the practice of walking and confession.

A man's responsibility is to cleanse himself of all impurities and attachments and be reborn with a clean heart. Through confession one must turn away from evil deeds to good deeds. That is why men chant "Confess, confess; purify the six senses (懺悔々々; 六根清淨)" as they climb.

6) Heavenly Beings (天道-Tendō) the practice of welcoming goodness.

Heaven is the land of goodness. To see the beauty around you and meditate on the joy of the law and long life is to experience the world of Heaven.

7) Shōmōn (声聞) the practice of listening to the law.

Shōmōn (sanskrit-sravaka) are those who become Buddha's disciples when they hear his teachings. When one walks in the mountains he should follow his sendatsu and listen to his advice, and try to understand the Buddha's teachings.

8) Engaku (縁覺) the practice of contemplation.

Engaku (sanskrit-pratyeka) are those who, without having heard the Buddhas teachings, reach an understanding of the truth on account of their own nature. When walking in the mountains, one contemplates the beauty of the clouds, the pure water, the mountain breeze, the green of nature, and through this contemplation may reach enlightenment.

9) Bodhisattva (菩薩) the practice of service.

Bodhisattvas are those who are able to become Buddhas, completely enlightened, but hold back in order to serve others and lead them to enlightenment. This is the practice of the six virtues (see B). All good deeds are of this world and when one is in the mountains one learns to help and serve others and contemplate high thoughts.

10) Buddha (仏) the practice of thanks and prayer.

When one walks in the mountains, he should give thanks for the nature around him and the compassion of the Buddha; and pray for world peace and hope for rebirth in the Pure Land.

B) The Six Virtues (六波羅密-Roku Haramitsu)

1) Alms (布施-fuse)

The sendatsu sharing his information on the history and doctrine of Shugendo, one sharing his lunch with another who is hungry; or sharing water with one who is thirsty, or carrying someone's luggage when he is tired; these are the deeds of alms.

2) Keeping the Precepts (持戒-jikai)

Following the sendatsu, participating in the worship ceremonies,

proper training, abstinence from improper food, drink and conduct, these are the "Keeping of the Precepts."

3) Patience (忍^ん - niiniku)

Not complaining when you are hot or cold or hungry or thirsty, but unrelentingly continue the austerities with patience.

4) Effort, Devotion (精進^{しん} - shojin)

To have a steady will and heart, and to put forth one's best effort.

5) Meditation (禪定^{ぜん} - zenjo)

To fix one's heart and mind on one purpose and remain unmoved by distractions. As one cannot think of money or sex while he is negotiating a life-and-death climb, so one must be single-minded and pure.

6) Wisdom (智慧^ち - chie)

To know the truths of the interrelatedness of all things and to attain the enlightenment of the Buddha.

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