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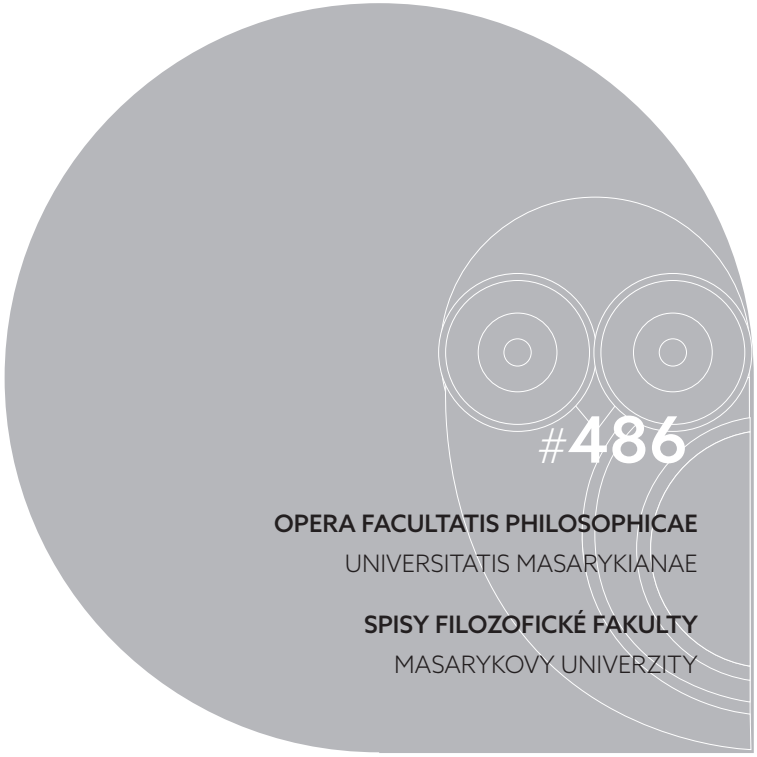
Religious practices in the Japanese mountains : from fleeing the hells towards the healthy, sustainable and spiritual practices of the consumer society First published Brno: Filozofická fakulta, Masarykova univerzita, 2019

ISBN 978-80-210-9197-9; ISBN 978-80-210-9198-6 (online : pdf)
ISSN 1211-3034 (print); ISSN 2787-9291 (online)

Stable URL (DOI): https://doi.org/10.5817/CZ.MUNI.M210-9198-2019
Stable URL (handle): https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/139108
Access Date: 27. 11. 2024
Version: 20220902



#486

OPERA FACULTATIS PHILOSOPHICAE
UNIVERSITATIS MASARYKIANAE

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MASARYKOVY UNIVERZITY

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Religious practices in the Japanese mountains

From fleeing the hells towards the healthy, sustainable and spiritual practices of the consumer society

Zuzana Malá

FILOZOFICKÁ FAKULTA
MASARYKOVA UNIVERZITA
#486

BRNO 2019

KATALOGIZACE V KNIZE – NÁRODNÍ KNIHOVNA ČR

Malá, Zuzana
Religious practices in the Japanese mountains : from fleeing the hells towards the healthy, sustainable and spiritual practices of the consumer society / Zuzana Malá. – Vydání první. – Brno : Filozofická fakulta Masarykovy univerzity, 2019. – (Opera Facultatis philosophicae Universitatis Masarykianae = Spisy Filozofické fakulty Masarykovy univerzity, ISSN 1211-3034 ; 486)
Francouzské resumé
ISBN 978-80-210-9197-9

225 * 252/256+22]-187 * 252/256+22]-4 * 2-5 * 221-5 * 2-1/-5 * 316.3:17.023.5 * 911.2(23.0) * (520) * (048.8)
- japonské náboženství
- posmrtný život
- náboženský život – Japonsko
- náboženský kult – Japonsko
- rituály a obřady – Japonsko
- náboženské tradice – Japonsko
- konzumní společnost – Japonsko
- pohoří – Japonsko
- monografie
- religions of Japan
- life after death
- religious life – Japan
- cultic acts – Japan
- rites and ceremonies – Japan
- religious traditions – Japan
- consumer society – Japan
- mountain range – Japan
- Tateyama (Japonsko : hora)
- Tate Mount (Japan)
- monographs

22/24 - Náboženství Dálného východu. Indická náboženství. Hinduismus. Buddhismus [5]
294 - Religions of Indic origin [5]

Reviewers: prof. Zdenka Švarcová (Palacký University Olomouc)
Mgr. Marek Zemánek, Ph.D. (Charles University)

ISBN 978-80-210-9197-9
ISBN 978-80-210-9198-6 (online : pdf)
ISSN 1211-3034
https://doi.org/10.5817/CZ.MUNI.M210-9198-2019

CONTENT

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book draws on my doctoral thesis based on the research of religious practices in the Japanese mountains. My advisor, doc. PhDr. Luboš Bělka CSc., was a great support during my research and I would like to express my gratitude to him. I have benefited greatly from the critical advice of my Japanese professor Yamanaka Hiroshi from the University of Tsukuba.

I would like to thank the historian Fukue Mitsuru for his expertise on the cult of Tateyama and his kind guidance through the village of Ashikuraji. I must also extend my gratitude to researchers at the Tateyama Museum of Toyama for their assistance.

The second year of research was made possible by the generous support of the Rotary Yoneyama Memorial Foundation, particularly the Koga Higashi Rotary Club and all its members.

I am also grateful for the help of members of the Nikkō Shugendō Sannōin group based in Kanuma, who led me through experiences in the Nikkō mountains, as well as for their generous hospitality and for taking time to answer my questions. I am also indebted to a representative of Dewa Sanzan Shrine who was kind enough to answer my questions and provided hospitality on my visit to Dewa Sanzan.

My final and special thanks are reserved for Carlos for his support. Without him this work would not have been possible.

INTRODUCTION

The Japanese mountains contain areas associated with various religious practices[1] combining elements of what are nowadays known as different religious traditions. However, clear boundaries between such traditions were crystallized only with time. Materials such as discovered ritual tools, texts and visual images demonstrate notions of mountains as dwelling places of *kami* and other deities, as well as areas of encountering spirits of the dead. They have also provided space for rituals aimed at securing a favourable fate in the afterlife. Among the ideas linked with practices enacted in the mountains is the idea of rebirth connected to notions of Buddhist cosmology and eagerness to escape the punishments of hell.

This book presents an example of a locality associated with such religious practices – the mountains of Tateyama (located in today's Toyama Prefecture). Tateyama was a popular pilgrimage site progressing throughout the 18th up to the 19th century. A distinctive characteristic of the mountain cult which developed in this area is the use of the visual objects known as the Tateyama Mandalas. These mandalas encompass religious practices and ideas of the Tateyama cult. While the given visual objects – the Tateyama Mandalas – have been examined by the Tateyama Museum of Toyama, especially by Professor Fukue Mitsuru, and also by Caroline Hirasawa (2012) from the historical perspective, this work examines the Tateyama cult in relation to the current state of local practice, considering the trends of 21st century society. In this sense, the Tateyama cult represents a landmark moment in the historical development of religious practices in the mountains.

1 The term religious practices will be used throughout this work in reference to practices encompassing human interactions with superhuman powers. This definition is borrowed from Martin Riesebrodt (2010: 72).

In this context, it is interesting to note that the economic conditions in mountain religious sites such as Tateyama caused changes in the character of religious practices. This development was pointed out by some studies about Japanese religion during the Edo period (Hirasawa, 2012; Hur, 2009). At this time, as has been noted by some authors (Formanek, 1998; Tsushima, 2012; Reader, 2014), the motivations of pilgrims changed with increasing inclination towards comfort and relaxation on their journeys.

The popularity of pilgrimages to sacred mountains reached its peak in the Edo period. However, the Meiji government intervention around 1868 interrupted the status quo of mountain pilgrimage sites. New ideas introduced during the Meiji period (1868 – 1912) were applied to the religious network. This process ended up in restructuralization procedures. These novelties also affected the cult of Tateyama. Moreover, the later impact of the Second World War, urbanization, technology, science but also new types of leisure transformed the religious mountain sites into quiet peripheries.

The 1980s saw a pilgrimage boom that was followed by a decline 20 years later (Reader, 2014). In the 21st century, the Tateyama Mandalas – religious objects which guide observers through the tortures of multiple hells but also through rituals promising rebirth in a paradise or attainment of Buddhahood – still arouse admiration among viewers. However, nowadays they are admired as objects of cultural value. Interestingly, a ritual depicted in these mandalas which gave hope to people in the Edo period for rebirth in a paradise has been revived. Moreover, this religious practice has even been exported abroad as a valuable cultural item, and it is not the only case of export of religious culture from Japan.

In this sense, transformations in the Tateyama cult link with the broader academic debate on commodification of religious practices. The examples of religious practices enacted in mountain sites which are documented in the following chapters indicate an enduring interest in these practices among the Japanese people. Moreover, the ways providers of these religious practices have adapted to changing conditions reveal social changes related to consumerism.

In order to analyze such a topic, theories of social change based on consumerism seem to provide a useful tool. An analysis of this consumerist behaviour in the sphere of religion, with this phenomenon not viewed as negative, has been chosen to guide the reader in understanding these changes. The aim is to show how consumerism affects the maintenance or revival of religious practices in mountain sites.

The importance of the role of mountains in Japanese culture and religiosity has been stressed in Japanese folklore and historical studies (among others by: Hori Ichiro, Miyake Hitoshi, Wakamori Taro, Gorai Shigeru and in publications known as *Sangaku shūkyōshi kenkyū sōsho* 山岳宗教史研究叢書).

In these studies, mountains figure as the other world. Yet, this view bears the risk of giving only a limited insight into the everyday lives of people inhabiting mountain areas. A religious sect known as Shugendō appears in the centre of these studies. Ascetic practices enacted in the mountains by Shugendō followers have been interpreted by scholars as a means of acquiring supernatural or magico-religious powers. The power is attained by a symbolic passage through Buddhist realms or religious practices representing the growth of the foetus. However, such interpretations seem too narrow for an analysis of current religious practices in the mountains. The reason for this is that the current practices show a wider range of ways in which participants experience them and engage in them.

Shugendō has been viewed by Japanese scholars as an ahistorical concept. Suzuki (2012, 2013a, 2013b), for example, criticizes the academic usage of the term Shugendō as vague and as a problematic analytical, historical and substantial concept. Suzuki also argues that Shugendō is an academic term produced by scientists under the specific conditions of a given historical era.[2] Nevertheless, practices related to Shugendō are linked to the mountains and for this reason they also serve as useful examples for the research presented here. With awareness that it is not a homogenous concept, this term will be used throughout the book to refer to specific religious practices and ideas.

Among non-Japanese scholars, it was in the 1970s that H. Byron Earhart and C. Blacker conducted research on religiosity in Japan related to mountains and mountain ascetic practices. Similarly to Japanese folklore and historical studies, Earhart (1970) focused in his study on Shugendō at Mount Haguro. In this work he explains specific relations between Shugendō and sacred mountains in Japan. He warns that *sangaku shinkō* (mountain cult) 'should not be confused with the misleading notion of "mountain worship", which falsely implies that a mountain is deified or worshipped' (Earhart, 1970: 7).

In his research, Earhart has been concerned with the structural meaning of various components he observed in the practices of the Shugendō group. However, research focused on categories such as the meaning or belief was viewed critically by scholars of non-western religions. The weakness of analyses based on these categories is caused by an understanding of religions as beliefs or worldviews that are articulated in creeds or texts or as sets of meaning systems. This approach has been criticized for being rooted in Christocentric models (Asad, 1993; Chakrabarty, 2000; Bender, 2013). Reader and Tanabe (1998) have demonstrated these limitations in the case of Japan, highlighting practice and action

2 From the lecture *Shugendō wa minzoku shūkyōka? — Shūkyō jinruigaku no men kara*. This lecture was presented by Suzuki Masataka at the 72nd Annual Conference of the Japanese Association for Religious Studies on September 7th (Suzuki, 2013b).

as more important to non-Western religion than belief.[3] Accordingly, religious practices which appear throughout the current work lack a unified or prescribed form and their meaning seems to be actively modified by their providers.

For Earhart, Shugendō consists of various religious elements which exist together as a complex unity. He has also emphasized the selective process in usage of doctrine that can be applied to Shugendō practice. This combinative character of Japanese religion together with focus on specific localities has been at the centre of attention of studies (Hur, 1992; Hardacre, 2002; Moerman, 2005; Thal, 2005; Ambros, 2008) influenced by Allan Grapard (1982).

While these studies have analyzed the historical background related to negotiations of power or politics, a different approach to religious practices has been taken in studies which have developed around the concept of embodiment. These have changed the focus of research analysis from the meanings people give to their actions to observation of those actions in everyday lives. These studies view humans as part of processes and phenomena to which they sometimes do not attach any meanings. The focus of these studies is the human body (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, 1964; Csordas, 1993; Jackson, 1989; Ingold, 2000, 2011; Wylie, 2007).

Despite physical activity being an intrinsic part of practices related to Shugendō, not enough attention has been paid to the embodiment perspective on religious practice in the Japanese mountains. An exception is Lobetti (2014), whose work acknowledges such aspects in the ascetic tradition connected to Shugendō. Drawing on these approaches, sensory experiences in religious practices is one of the themes addressed in this book.

The approaches which have influenced this book are many; however, with its focus on the maintenance and revival of religious practices in the mountains, the most helpful have been those which consider the economic context of religion. In this economic context, consumerism appears as an important characteristic of contemporary societies. That is why the current work analyzes the examined religious practices in relation to consumerist behaviour. In this respect it draws on the study of Reader (2014) who discusses Japanese mountain pilgrimages in relation to commodification and argues for consumer attitudes in the religious sphere, stressing that these attitudes should not be viewed as negative traits.

The analytical part of this book has mainly benefited from the work of Gauthier and Marikainen *Religion in consumer society*, in which they argue that we live in consumer societies where consumerism is a culturally dominant ethos (Gauthier

3 They have focused on practices related to 'this-worldly benefits' *genze riyaku* 現世利益 which, as they have argued, are a normative and central theme in the structure and framework of religion in Japan. The idea of 'this-worldly benefits' was also used as a theoretical background in the studies on religious practices related to death by Formanek & LaFleur (2004).

and Martikainen, 2013a: xv). The research presented here bolsters their claim that consumer attitudes have a profound influence on religious practices and that this is happening in an era of commoditization,[4] globalization and mediatization[5] (Gauthier and Martikainen, 2013a: 2). As such, this book offers additional insight into changes in the values which are attached to religious practices as well as novelties in interactions between practitioners and providers.

Field work

The findings of this book are based on ethnographic study and participant observations conducted in the Japanese mountains of Tateyama (currently located in Toyama Prefecture), Dewa Sanzan (currently located in Yamagata Prefecture) and Nikkō (currently located in Tochigi Prefecture) over the course of three years of research, as well as review of academic studies related to these localities. In addition, experience from other sites, such as the Kumano mountains located in the current Wakayama Prefecture, the Mitsumine mountains located in the current Saitama Prefecture, and Mount Ishizuchi located on the island of Shikoku, together with perceptions gathered from numerous religious sites, including those not located in the mountains, also provided valuable data for the research on religious practices. Experiences of climbing and hiking in these mountain sites enabled an embodied perception of the landscape which is also part of the ritual ascending.

Long term research has been conducted in the area of Nikkō, which included observation and participation in rituals during the cycle of the religious year. This included participation in the ritual opening of the Mount Nantai in the summer, which is held annually on July 31st. The climb to the summit starts at midnight. During the ascent in 2013, in a heavy rain, I discovered my bodily limits in climbing as well as my altitude sickness. The ritual finishes in the morning, after descending to the shrine at the foot of the mountain. I also participated in the ritual worshipping of sacred spots held at the Chūzenji Lake, which is performed from a boat in August. These were followed by rituals of the Autumn peak lasting for three days, and later the Spring peak conducted on two consecutive days. I chose to omit their first (physically demanding) parts, in order

4 Commodification refers to the action or process of turning something into, or treating something as, a commodity, even if it is generally viewed as non-marketable. Commoditization refers to the action of rendering (a good or service) widely available and interchangeable with one provided by another company (source: Merriam Webster Dictionary). This affects companies in their endeavour to stand out against their competitors.

5 In this sense, the term mediatization indicates the process by which media influence religion in present-day society.

to be able to fully concentrate on the subsequent rituals. I also observed the ritual walking on fire twice. The event is held in May. The first time, I tried to document the ritual proceedings by taking notes and pictures. I participated in the walking only the second time. The last ritual I attended was *segaki*[6], a set of religious practices held in August devoted to the deceased. Apart from these observations, semi-conducted interviews were carried out with some of the members with whom I developed closer relationships during the period of joining their ritual activities. Research within this group provided valuable information on participants in religious practices who have a long-term affiliation with a Shugendō group. Nevertheless, the focus of the work presented here is on different types of affiliations and, therefore, details from the observations and interviews have not been included.

A three-day participant observation of a Shugendō retreat took place at the site of Dewa Sanzan. This was followed by later observation of a Shinto ritual known as *Hassaku sai*[7] which coincides with a Shugendō ritual known as the Autumn peak. Similarly as in Nikkō, short conversations with participants and visitors, including interviews with two Shugendō guides – one related to the shrine complex and one to a lodging for pilgrims – were carried out.

The research on the Tateyama cult owes a lot to Professor Fukue Mitsuru, who handed to me a whole collection of the published Bulletin of the Tateyama museum, including some special issues. He also kindly accompanied me during my first visit to the village of Ashikuraji and introduced me to the local community as well as to the researchers in the museum. There I participated twice in the ritual of exchanging the robes of the statues of the local deity. During my second visit to the village and participation in the ritual, I conducted interviews and short conversations with participants, one local inhabitant and a researcher from the Tateyama museum. Another participant observation was conducted during the re-enactment of the Cloth Bridge Consecration rite.

The research is lacking, particularly in the limited number of times of participation in religious practices. This was caused by high participation fees as well as by the limited budget for the fieldwork and for the research in general. For this reason, and also because three years of research is a relatively short time compared to long and complex field experiences, the current work does not intend to match the quality of descriptions and analysis based on data collected over a span of decades by other researchers, such as Reader (1998, 2005, 2014).

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6 The word *segaki* 施餓鬼 stands for rituals performed for the sake of the dead.

7 The term *hassaku* 八朔 indicates the 1st day of the 8th month according to the old Japanese calendar and *sai* 祭 refers to a festival.

Conventions

I use the modified Hepburn system when Romanizing Japanese words and use macrons to indicate long sounds of vowels such as Shugendō. I have omitted macrons from Japanese names and some words widely used in English such as Shinto or Tokyo.

Some Japanese terms appear in the text in italics. This indicates that they are non-English terms. The Japanese characters and the meaning of these terms are explained the first time they are used; afterwards they may be found in Japanese, indicated by italics. I use the standard mode of reference to Japanese religious institutions. Therefore, the term 'shrine' indicates an institution related to Shinto, and 'temple' indicates an institution related to Buddhism. Names of Japanese historical eras appear through the text. These are specified by years when they appear for the first time. Thereafter they are not specified. Japanese names are given in the following order: family name and given name. Original versions of translations from Japanese are given in Appendix 1. My own translations are marked as 'translated by the author'. Interviews and conversations have not been translated verbatim and I have paraphrased or summarized what was said.

Structure of the book

The book is divided into five chapters. The first three chapters introduce the reader to concepts and practices related to the mountains which attracted the visitors of mountain religious sites up to the Edo period, with the focus on the specific locality of Tateyama. This information provides an insight into concepts which have developed under the influence of Buddhism and are still a vivid part of current practices. An understanding of the elements of various religious traditions which appealed to practitioners in the past helps readers to see the shift in interpretations encountered in the current enactments of religious practices. The example of a specific locality demonstrates how important these concepts have been for providers of religious practices in a mountain site for the maintenance of a mountain cult. This historical overview is followed by two chapters about the maintenance and reviving of mountain religious practices in the 21st century.

The focus of Chapter I is on rebirth as an important concept in early Japanese notions of the afterlife, and at the same time one of the central ideas that later aroused the popularity of the mountain cults. The first section of the chapter introduces some continental texts dealing with cosmological concepts related to the afterlife, as well as texts of Japanese origins, in order to demonstrate the

assimilation of various concepts of the afterlife. These texts also show that mountains figure as an important element in Japanese notions of the afterlife. Following the concept of rebirth, in the next section I first look at the Six Realms of existence and the cult of the Ten Kings, both of which have been associated with rituals related to retribution in the afterlife. Then, I discuss more closely the Six Realms of existence and other afterlife fates rendered in visual images.

In order to look at an overlap of such concepts with local knowledge, Chapter II presents the visual objects known as Tateyama Mandalas. These mandalas encompass the concepts introduced in the first chapter, together with local notions and practices reflected in the geographical space of the Tateyama Mountain Range. Moreover, this type of image demonstrates a relationship between visualization of the realms of existence and the cult of mountains in Japan. I analyze scenes depicted in the images of the Tateyama Mandala, benefiting from the study of Wang (2005). By doing so, this part draws further attention to the visualization of scenes which reflect local notions and practices overlapping with concepts related to the Buddhist tradition.

Chapter III extends the discussion on rituals related to aspirations for rebirth in the supreme realms. In this context, the chapter focuses on rituals enacted in Tateyama and the way these were promoted around the country. With the aim of spreading the Tateyama cult, representatives of the cult visited distant areas, where they presented the cult using images of the Tateyama Mandala. This chapter calls attention to religious practices as ways to sustain pilgrimage places. It therefore considers closely the Cloth Bridge Consecration rite and its role in the financial sustenance of the cult. Orientation of the cult towards rituals for women is an aspect of the cult which indicates that mercantile activities were part of the activities of mountain pilgrimage centres. This chapter also discusses the political intervention which affected the religious structure of Tateyama together with other religious sites, and the final vanishing of the Tateyama cult.

Chapters IV and V bring the reader to the question of new values ascribed to religious practices. Chapter IV looks at how religious practices became associated with a cultural value. It is within this process that the concept of cultural heritage has been applied in the promotion of pilgrimage sites. The chapter is intended to demonstrate this process with examples from research conducted in mountain sites. The first example is the Cloth Bridge rite which is now re-enacted in Tateyama as a cultural event. This case also demonstrates the discrepancy between the official rhetoric and reactions of the participants. The chapter then touches on the topic of the current discourse about the relationship of Japanese people with nature. This claimed relationship is the key to understanding the process in which religious practices have emerged as an activity associated with a cultural value. An example from the site of Dewa Sanzan is introduced to show

how such rhetoric works for Japanese religious groups. Lastly, this part also addresses the topic of commodification of religious practices.

The last chapter extends the analysis of new values ascribed to religious practices by turning attention to the debate on contemporary consumer society and questions about what kinds of immaterial values, such as experiences, are associated with religious practices in order to attract prospective practitioners. In respect to this view, the analysis demonstrates the attempt to present current religious practices as sustainable. This work recognizes such an endeavour, as well as the growing significance of one-time experiences and body-oriented religious practices as an adaptation to the current trend within the consumer society. It also introduces the variety of choices that are offered to potential practitioners in religious sites to identify with. Special attention is paid to the practice of *taki gyō*[8] in this kind of enterprise.

8 The term *taki* 滝 refers to waterfall and the expression *gyō* 行 stands for austerities.

CHAPTER I: **THE AFTERLIFE**

In my research on present-day religious practices in the mountains, which in the Japanese academic world falls under the category of *sangaku shinkō* 山岳信仰 'mountain veneration' or 'mountain cult',[1] the idea of rebirth appeared as an important concept. In the rituals that I observed and participated in during my fieldwork, I came across the idea of rebirth associated with this life. However, since much earlier times the idea of rebirth has been connected to the afterlife. This chapter examines such early historical notions of the afterlife. More specifically, it focuses on the ways they manifest in textual and visual works, as well as in religious practices.

When tracing the history of Japanese concepts of the afterlife, studies in the area distinguish between pre-Buddhist and Buddhist concepts. Based on such distinction, the undifferentiated notions of the afterlife have been viewed as characteristic for pre-Buddhist concepts. In this view the afterlife does not depend on individual actions during one's lifetime. In contrast to such concepts, the systematized notions of the afterlife, rebirth and the doctrine of karmic causality, introduced from the continent, included post-mortem retribution or reward tied to individual conduct. At the same time, however, there were rituals and practices of merit transference offering a hope for salvific rebirth or at least some ease to the sufferings of those who were condemned to an unpleasant rebirth. It seems, then, that in spite of the karmic laws, the afterlife condition of sinful humans has not been seen as so hopeless. Studies in the area of karmic causality and merit transference have pointed out its contradictory logic (Stone and Walter, 2009; Formanek and LaFleur, 2004).[2] This contradiction however, does not seem to have bothered the practitioners.

1 I will continue to use the term 'cult' in this work in this sense of worship or veneration and the associated practices or institutions.

2 On the doctrine of karmic causality and merit transfer, see LaFleur (1983). On this topic in the Chinese environment, see Teiser (1994).

Early textual traces

Interpretations of pre-Buddhist concepts of the afterlife have usually been based on textual sources such as *Kojiki* 古事記, *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 dated to the first half of the 8th century,[3] or texts compiled between the late Nara period (710 – 784) and the early Heian period (794 – 1192)[4] known as *Nihon kokugenpō zenaku ryōiki* 日本国現報善悪霊異記 (from now on abbreviated to the *Nihon ryōiki* 日本霊異記).[5] These textual sources refer to various realms of the dead such as the lands *Yomi no kuni* 黄泉の国 (also *Yomotsu kuni* 黄泉国), *Ne no Kuni* 根の国 or *Tokoyo no kuni* 常世の国 (also just *Tokoyo*).[6] However, there are no known detailed descriptions of these afterlife realms.

Based on a variety of practices connected to notions of the afterlife in pre-Buddhist Japan, researchers are warned to be careful with possible assumptions about views of the afterlife as being homogenous or separately practiced traditions. Based on analysis of the tales in *Honchō shinsen den* 本朝神仙伝[7], Kleine (2004) has, for instance, suggested that a concept of immortality should be considered an important view of the afterlife. He has also questioned the Japanese origins of the realms (or lands) of the dead. He notes that such concepts are probably modified adaptations of their continental versions (Kleine, 2004: 63).

Yet another perspective on early ideas of the afterlife has been offered by Naumann (2004), who in her study interprets disposal of the dead in burial practices during the Jōmon (12000 – 2000 BCE) and Yayoi periods (500 BCE – 400 CE). She argues that other types of burials co-existed with the practice of abandonment of the corpse or the second burial practice. These were the flexed type of burials (thought to mirror the position of the embryo) and jar burials of infants (the jar resembles the placenta and the shape of the bottom seems to be related

3 The texts are dated to the years 712 and 720 respectively and the *Nihon shoki* can be abbreviated to *Nihongi* 日本記.

4 The Heian period is sometimes dated to the years 794 – 1185.

5 The texts were compiled around the year 787, and the currently available version of *Nihon ryōiki* probably dates from the year 822. The author is the monk Keikai (also Kyōkai) 景戒, according to Nihon koten bungaku zenshū (1975). Moerman (2005: 50) adds that Kyōkai was a priest from Kōfukuji.

6 The expression *no kuni* may be translated as 'the land of'. *Yomi no kuni* is sometimes translated as 'Land of the yellow springs' and *Ne no kuni* as 'Land of Roots'. On pre-Buddhist realms of the afterlife: *Ne no kuni*, *Yomi no kuni*, *Tokoyo (no kuni)* see, for example, Blacker (1975) and Senda (1995). For these lands and the concept of Immortals or Eternal land, see Kleine (2004). For *Yomi no kuni* see Kawamura (2000: 37–46). On *Yomi no kuni* and notions about the afterlife in the collection of poems *Manyōshū* 万葉集, see also Naumann (2004, 1996) and Matsunaga and Matsunaga (1974). On *Tokoyo* see also Moerman (2007: 285–287).

7 A collection of stories compiled probably in the beginning of the 12th century by Ōe no Masafusa (Mara, 1986).

to the idea of rebirth) (Naumann, 2004: 52). According to Naumann such a position of the body may suggest a hope for rebirth.

Buddhist hells

While admitting the gaps in our knowledge of pre-Buddhist notions of the afterlife, scholars have argued that these merged with Buddhist concepts of the afterlife (Stone and Walter, 2009; Formanek and LaFleur, 2004). Buddhist cosmology introduced to Japan a complex and systematized view of the world. One of the new concepts was the idea of the eight Great Hells. The early textual and visual materials that survived suggest that notions of hells captured Japanese interest.

Hells and the names under which they appear in the later Buddhist tradition can be found already in the 'Texts of Manu' or the 'Laws of Manu' (*Manusmṛti*), compilation of which is dated between the 2nd century BCE and 2nd century CE (Berounský, 2012: 22). However, the work which according to scholars became one of the authoritative sources of concepts of the Buddhist hells came from the Abhidharma tradition, and it is known as *Abhidharmakośha*. The text contains systematic descriptions of the hells (Matsunaga and Matsunaga, 1972; Berounský, 2007, 2012; Sadakata, 1997). It was probably composed around the 4th to 5th centuries by a Gandhara scholar named Vasubandhu (Berounský, 2007, 2012; Hirasawa, 2008, 2013). Vasubandhu later wrote a commentary on *Abhidharmakośa*, which is known as *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (Berounský, 2012: 26). This commentary is of particular significance as an important source of the Japanese notions of hells (Hirasawa, 2008, 2013; Gutiérrez, 1967; De Antoni, 2009; Takasu, 2001). It appears under its Japanese name as *Abidatsuma kusharon* 阿毘達磨倶舎論 (abbreviated to *Kusha ron* or *Gusha ron* 倶舎論). In addition to the cosmology of the eight Great Hells, *Kusha ron* also mentions the eight Cold hells together with their names (Hirasawa, 2008; Takasu, 2001).[8] Hirasawa (2008) further informs about a second-century text *Dhīga nikāya* related to the hells, in Japanese known as *Jōagon gyō* 長阿含経. She notes that both texts *Kusha ron* and *Jōagon gyō* describe the eight Great Hells and the sixteen satellite or small hells. However, while *Kusha ron* describes the hells vertically *Jōagon gyō* describes them horizontally.

Chinese translations and commentaries on the texts of the Mahāyāna tradition inherited from the Indian sources were among the early works dealing with Buddhist cosmology in Japan.[9] One of the influential texts in the Mahāyāna

8 Hirasawa (2012) names an additional text of Great commentary on the Abhidharma (*Abidatsuma daibibasha ron* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論, *Abhidharmamahāvibhāsāśāstra*) edited around the 3rd century.

9 See, for example, Hirasawa (2008: 2–4).

tradition was *Saddharmasmṛtiupasthāna*. This sutra is known under its Japanese title *Shōbōnenjo kyō* 正法念処経, and it has been translated to English as 'Sutra of the remembrance of the true law' (Matsunaga and Matsunaga, 1972) or 'Sutra on proper vows for the true dharma' (Yamamoto, 2010). Known translations are of Tibetan and Chinese origins (Matsunaga and Matsunaga, 1972; Berounský, 2007; Bělka, 2009).[10] This comprehensive text contains complex descriptions of hells and it is likely that it reached Japan by the 8th century (Yamamoto, 2010: 85). Moreover, as Yamamoto (2010) demonstrates in her study, the sutra also discusses composition of the body and origin of illnesses. The cosmology of *Shōbōnenjo kyō*, similarly to *Jōagon gyō*, describes the hells as horizontally layered with the sixteen satellite hells for each of the main eight hells (De Antoni, 2009: 19). Yet what makes the text unique is that each of the hells surrounding the eight Great Hells is considered a specific hell (Berounský, 2012: 29). Names of the eight Great Hells in accordance with *Shōbōnenjo kyō* are as follows: [11]

The Hell of Revival: *Tōkatsu jigoku* 等活地獄[12]

The Hell of Black Ropes: *Kokujō jigoku* 黒縄地獄[13]

The Hell of Assembly: *Shugō jigoku* 衆合地獄[14]

The Hell of Screams: *Kyōkan jigoku* 叫喚地獄[15]

The Hell of Great Screams: *Daikyōkan jigoku* 大叫喚地獄[16]

The Hell of Incineration: *Ennetsu jigoku* 炎熱地獄 [17]

The Great Hell of Incineration: *Daiennetsu jigoku*大炎熱地獄[18]

The Hell of No Interval: *Muken jigoku* 無間地獄 or *Abi kyōkan* 阿鼻叫喚[19]

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10 The author of the Sanskrit version, which is no longer extant, is considered to be Aśvaghoṣa, who lived between the 1st and 2nd centuries (Berounský, 2007; Bělka, 2009). According to Matsunaga and Matsunaga (1972) it was probably composed between the 4th and 5th centuries by Gautama Prajñāruci. Yamamoto (2010) notes that it was probably translated into Chinese during the Northern Wei period (386 – 534).

11 I am following Japanese names and their translations as given in Hirasawa (2008). However, I am also including the English translation of the hells as they are given in Matsunaga and Matsunaga (1972) and Wakabayashi (2009), respectively, in the notes.

12 The Hell of Repetition, the Hell of Repeated Resuscitation.

13 The Black-roped Hell, the Hell of Black Cords.

14 The Crowded Hell, the Crushing Hell.

15 The Screaming Hell, the Hell of Screams.

16 The Great Screaming Hell, the Hell of Great Screams.

17 The Hell of Burning Heat, the Flaming Hot Hell.

18 The Hell of Great Burning Heat, the Hell of Extreme Heat.

19 The Hell of No Interval, the Hell of No Respite.

Japanese translations for names of the hells deriving from *Abhidharmakośa* differ for:

The Hell of Screams: *Gōkyō jigoku*号叫地獄
The Hell of Great Screams: *Daikyō jigoku*大叫地獄
The Great Hell of Incineration: *Dainetsu jigoku* 大熱地獄

Kusha ron lists also the eight Cold hells:

頻部陀 *Abuda*, 尼剌部陀 *Nirabuda*, 頻嘶吒 *Ansetta*, 臛臛婆 *Kakaba*, 虎虎婆 *Kokoba*, 嗢鉢羅 *Uhara*, 鉢特摩 *Hadoma*, 摩訶鉢特摩 *Makahadoma*.[20]

Translations of the Sanskrit names for the hells into Japanese were based either on their pronunciation or their meaning (Hirasawa, 2008: 3). Under this rule, the Avici hell might be transcribed based on the pronunciation as *Abi* 阿鼻 or translated based on the meaning as *Muken* 無間 'The Hell of No Interval'. In a similar way, the term for hell would be transcribed based on pronunciation as *naraka* 奈落迦 (also 奈落) or translated as *jigoku* 地獄, where 地 stands for ground/land/earth and 獄 stands for prison/jail (Hirasawa, 2008: 3). Japanese names for the above-mentioned Cold hells are an example of those that were based on the pronunciation.[21]

A later text from the 10th century, titled *Ōjō yōshū* 往生要集 the 'Essentials of salvation' or 'Essentials of Pure Land birth', composed by the monk Genshin (942 – 1017), lists the eight Great Hells, the sixteen satellite hells and the eight Cold hells. However, in this text the names of the eight Cold hells do not appear. The names for the Hell of Incineration and the Great Hell of Incineration – *Shōnetsu jigoku* 焦熱地獄 and *Daishōnetsu jigoku* 大焦熱地獄 – that appear in this text are different from the previous translations. Hirasawa has suggested that various sources of the text are likely to be the reason why the names for these hells differ from the previous translations (Hirasawa, 2008: 10).

A great deal of scholarship has considered the *Ōjō yōshū* to be a text that had special influence on notions of the afterlife in Japan and the main source of inspiration for the visual representations of the hells in Japan. However, there is a disagreement regarding the original texts that Genshin used for his compilation.[22] This text is of particular importance not only because of Genshin's treatise

20 The names of the Cold hells are listed as given in Takasu (2001).

21 Their respective Sanskrit names are: Arbuda, Nirarbuda, Aṭaṭa, Hahava, Huhuva, Utpala, Padma and Mahāpadma (Berounský, 2012).

22 While Matsunaga and Matsunaga argue that Genshin's text is an abbreviated version of the sutra *Shōbōnenjo kyō* (1972: 76), Wakabayashi names two sutras *Kise kyō* 起世経 (Sutra of the World

on the hells, but also because it contains instructions for deathbed rituals leading a practitioner to the Pure Land. These types of rites will be discussed later in Chapter 3.

Returners from death in the Nihon ryōiki

The early influence of Buddhist concepts on the local knowledge might be traced within the texts of Japanese origin, dated to the late Nara period and early Heian period,[23] known as the *Nihon ryōiki*日本霊異記. The *Nihon ryōiki* portrays the afterlife world with a ruler King Enma 閻魔王. His Indian counterpart is Yama raja – who is a ruler of the land of the dead in the Indian Vedas (dated to the 5th century BCE) (Mao, 1997; Teiser, 1994). The character of Yama raja was adapted to Buddhist cosmology and he became a deity called Yama Ten (also known by his Japanese name, Enma Ten), dwelling in one of the eight heavens. Later, as the ruler of the underworld, he assimilated the role of the judge of the dead (Mao, 1997). Such notions of Enma spread through China to Japan and later merged with the cult of the Ten Kings (Mao, 1997).[24]

Among other texts this compilation contains specific narrations about people who once died but came back to life. Interestingly, similar stories of returning to life after death have been preserved in other countries with the Mahāyāna tradition. In Tibet, for example, such stories of people witnessing the afterlife belong to the *delog* genre and in China they belong to the genre of *zhiguai* or 'accounts of strange' (see Berounský, 2012: 43–76). Berounský (2012), considering the Tibetan and Chinese stories of the returners from death, points out the striking proximity of their storylines. The following Japanese stories might be viewed as their counterparts.

Some of the stories about revenants from the *Nihon ryōiki* offer details not only about the Japanese concerns with the afterlife but also about procedures for treating the corpses after death. Kawamura, in his book *Jigoku meguri* (2000), gives examples of such tales. A distinctive trait of the Japanese narrations, which Kawamura points out, is a custom of treating the dead called *mogari*. After a person in a story is considered dead, the corpse is neither burned nor buried but

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Arising) and *Shōbōnenjo kyō* (2009: 329) as sources of Genshin's inspiration, and Gutiérrez argues that descriptions of the hells in *Ōjō yōshū* are based on a sutra called *Kanmuryōju kyō* 観無量寿経 (1967: 280). De Antoni adds other sutras, yet agrees on the great influence of *Shōbōnenjo kyō* (2009: 36). See also Rhodes (2000: 22–23).

23 Although the original texts were probably compiled in the 8th century, the extant version dates from about the 9th century.

24 The cult of the Ten Kings will be discussed later in this chapter.

placed in a special location while other death rituals are being observed. Meanwhile the deceased person visits the afterlife world and after a certain time – three, five, or nine days – the person comes back to life.

The stories of the revenants in the *Nihon ryōiki* have a similar structure: after a person dies, he or she finds herself in a field, where there is a steep hill. When the deceased climbs to the top of the hill, from this point either the ruler of the afterlife (Enma) or his palace is already visible. In the narratives there is a reappearing element of a bridge leading from the hilltop over a river. Another recurring element of these accounts is a motif of three pathways.[25] The unfortunate person walks on one of the three pathways to places where he or she has to undergo suffering. The punishments are various, but the common torture is carrying an iron or a copper pillar on one's back.[26] After the torture, the revenant is informed by the personnel of hell about the bad deed he or she committed and thereby has atoned for. At the end of the narratives the deceased person returns to life.

The following narrations are selected tales from the *Nihon ryōiki*, also given as examples by Kawamura (2000):

The story of Ebisu[27]

Ebisu, who earns his living from levying money and rice at a high interest rate, suddenly dies one day. However, on the seventh day he comes back to life. During these seven days his family decides (based on the year in which he was born) not to burn his body but to install it in a special place and to observe the *mogari* ritual.

While dead, Ebisu, accompanied by four envoys, sets out on a journey to the hells. On his journey, he first arrives at a field and a steep hill. He climbs the hill and comes across a road and a bridge leading over a wide river to the golden palace of King Enma. Ebisu observes many people cleaning the road with brooms and repairing the bridge. He is informed that they are doing this for those who copied the Lotus Sutra, so that they can pass to the other side. Near the bridge there are the three pathways.[28] The first pathway is wide and flat, while the second pathway is covered with a little

25 According to Kawamura (2000), these are the pathways of bad existence, in Japanese known as *akudō* 悪道.

26 In his comparative study on king Enma in China and Japan, Mao (1997) describes additional punishments in the *Nihon ryōiki* such as fastening iron nails into one's body or being beaten with an iron stick. According to this text, the deeds that brought people to Enma are various such as killing, stealing, cheating in business or selfish wasting of a temple's property.

27 Lower scroll (下巻) of the *Nihon ryōiki* number 22. The titles of the stories are not original. I am using simple titles for better orientation.

28 Kawamura explains that the three pathways '*sanzu*' are the three realms of animals, Hungry Ghosts and the hells. The river is not yet designated with the name *Sanzu no kawa* and the notions of separated realms of Hungry Ghosts and animals are also not clear yet.

grass. The third one is overgrown with grass to such a height that it is no longer visible. One of the envoys visits Enma and explains that because Ebisu copied the Lotus Sutra during his lifetime, he is going to be taken to the second pathway. There he stays for six days. For the first three days and three nights, he is forced to carry a hot iron pillar on his back. For the following three days and three nights he is forced to carry a hot copper pillar on his back. On the sixth day three monks appear telling him that this was a punishment for his sin of cheating by using a lighter counterweight on his scale. They also inform him that he is released from the place and allowed to return. When he crosses the bridge, he returns to human life.

Another tale from the *Nihon ryōiki* tells the story of a bonze named Oshikatsu, who was murdered.

The story of Oshikatsu [29]

People close to Oshikatsu observed the *mogari* ritual and he came back to life after five days. While dead, Oshikatsu encounters a King at the crossroads.[30] Contrary to the previous narration, in this story there is no bridge leading to his palace and the three pathways are accessible right from the hilltop. Oshikatsu is led to the first pathway which is wide and flat. At the moment when a loud noise like a thunder rumbles, he is thrown into a big cauldron with hot boiling water and steam like flames. At that very moment the cauldron cools and breaks into four parts. Oshikatsu is then approached by three monks who explain to him that what happened was a punishment for the misuse of temple wares. After that, he is brought back to the three pathways, he climbs down the hill and comes back to life.

The last story is of a bonze named Chikō who was brought back to life after encountering Enma and suffering in the hells.

The story of Chikō [31]

After speaking ill of a transformed bodhisattva out of jealousy, Chikō was taken to hell. First, he underwent the suffering of boiling in the hot air of hell. After that, accompanied by the hell envoys, they reached a place with the hot iron pillar. Forced to carry the hot iron pillar on his back for three days, Chikō's flesh melted and only his skeleton was left. Fortunately, on the third day Chikō's flesh re-appeared after the hell envoys stroked the pillar with a broom, reciting the words 'revive'. The same

29 Lower scroll (下巻) of the *Nihon ryōiki*, number 23. See also Kawamura (2000: 28).

30 The text of the *Nihon ryōiki* does not mention 'Enma', just the 'King' Ō 王 (Based on the original text from the *Nihon ryōiki* in Nihon koten bungaku zenshū, 1975: 305).

31 Middle scroll (中巻) of the *Nihon ryōiki*, number 7.

happened with the copper pillar in the subsequent three days. Finally, Chikō was condemned to the Abi hell located in the North. There, he was baked and roasted for another three days. After that the envoys hit the hell bank and recited words to 'revive' again. Chikō was then escorted to the gate of the hell. He was warned not to eat *Yomotsu he mono* ヨモツヘモノ[32] and in the end was brought to life.

In Chikō's story Kawamura identifies a distinctive motif of a taboo connected to food. In addition, the body, as Kawamura notes, was not burned but it was handled in a similar way to that in the *mogari* rite from the previous stories of the *Nihon ryōiki*. Chikō was dead for nine days which is the longest period of time among the stories related here. Interestingly, a further analysis of the text[33] revealed that while in the previous tales the decisions about procedures related to the corpse are made by the bereaved, in this story the arrangement was made by Chikō himself. Chikō was a Buddhist monk and before he died, he asked his student not to burn his body but to keep it in a closed room. He instructed him as well to tell those who would ask about him that he had gone outside the temple. The way Chikō acted indicates that he expected to be revived.

Accounts of journeys to the afterlife in the *Nihon ryōiki* are marked by a unique topography including a field, a hill and a wide river. An important motif for the purposes of this study is the reoccurring element of a hill. It is likely to indicate a strong relationship between mountains and the afterlife in the Japanese context. Studies have described such a motif of a hill (or a mountain) as a border between this world and the other world (Takasu, 2000; Kawamura, 2000; Fukue, 2005). The first scroll of Kojiki, for example, describes a hill dividing this world from the Land of *Yomotsu* (*Yomi*). The name of the hill is *Yomotsu saka* or *Yomotsu hira saka* 'the Hill of *Yomotsu*'. Indeed, in the *Nihon shoki* also, the god Izanagi escapes from the Land of *Yomi* across the mountain pass and closes it from the world of the living. However, as Moerman (2005) notes, although the site of the goddess Izanami's corpse was identified with the village of Arima in the Kumano mountains in the province of Kii, the text of *Nihon shoki* also adds that 'some say that the mountain pass of *yomi* is not any place in particular, but means only the space of time when the breath fails on the approach of death' (Moerman, 2005: 45). Thus it may refer to both the world of the dead and the time of death.

These early texts also suggest notions about a ruler in the afterlife world, as well as the concept of three alternative fates signified by the three paths. Another interesting part of the Japanese stories is that the dead person who is damned to

32 *Yomotsu he mono* seems to be a similar expression to *Yomotsu gui* that appears in the story of Izanami and Izanagi, in the first scroll of Kojiki. The expression refers to the food of *Yomi* (*Yomotsu*) *no kuni*.

33 Based on the original text from *Nihon Ryōiki* in Nihon koten bungaku zenshū (1975: 140).

hell not only witnesses the pain and suffering but goes through his own bodily experience of hell.

The narratives portray King Enma as the only ruler in the afterlife. The character of King Enma became one of the Ten judges in the afterlife – a new concept which was introduced to Japan from the continent. The idea of the one ruler in the *Nihon ryōiki* suggests that the tales of *Nihon ryōiki* had originated before the idea of the Ten Kings was introduced to Japan (Mao, 1997).[34]

The Scripture on Jizō and the Ten Kings

A mountain which by its name manifestly suggests a border with the afterlife is known in Japan as *Shi de no yama* 死出の山 the 'Mountain of death' (死 death or die, 出 go out or depart, 山 mountain). A mountain with such a name appears for the first time in the Scripture on Bodhisattva Jizō and the Ten Kings *Jizō jūō kyō* 地蔵十王経.[35] This text is of particular importance here because it contains references to a new concept of the afterlife introduced to Japan from the continent – the cult of the Ten Kings. The Ten Kings became a popular concept among Japanese people between the 15th and 16th centuries (Wakabayashi, 2009: 346; Kajitani, 1974: 87).

The cult of the Ten Kings was associated with the memorial rites for the deceased. The idea of the afterlife was portrayed by means of the courts in charge of which were the Ten Kings as their respective judges. This cult enriched the doctrine of karmic causality and the concept of transmigration through the Six Realms of existence that had already been known in Japan. Suffering in hell was part of the process of transmigration within the Six Realms. These realms are known in Japanese as *Roku dō* 六道. The quality of the realm into which a person would be reborn is determined by actions during his past life. The Six Realms are hierarchically ordered into six levels from the lowest to the highest realm: Hell *jigoku dō* 地獄道, Hungry Ghosts *gaki dō* 餓鬼道, Animals *chikushō*

34 Wakabayashi (2009) has recognized a similar development in the case of narratives from the Muromachi period *Chikurinji engi* (*emaki*) 竹林寺縁起(絵巻). (The Muromachi period is dated to 1336 – 1573. Alternatively, when the years 1336 – 1392 are designated as the Nanbokuchō period, then the Muromachi period is dated to 1392 – 1573). The older scroll of the narrations depicts only Enma while the later scroll places Enma among the Ten Kings.

35 For more information on the mountain as a special border, see Takasu (2000: 11–19), and Kawamura (2000: 69–71). The term was also used by Fukue (2005). According to Takasu, it appears in *Jizō jūō kyō* for the first time in the cosmological context. This scripture had immense influence on the development of the visualization of the Six Realms and the Ten Kings. It also contains the notion of *Shi ten san* 死天山 ('*Shi*' means death, '*ten*' refers to heaven, and '*san*' stands for mountain). The notion of *Shi ten san* was later developed in the text *Jūō kyō santanshō* 十王経賛嘆鈔 which was composed in the Kamakura period and was based on the text of *Jizō jūō kyō*.

dō 畜生道, Humans *ningen dō* 人間道, Asura *ashura dō* 阿修羅道 and Heaven *ten dō* 天道.[36]

The novelty of the cult of the Ten Kings consists in the assimilation of the concept of bureaucratic courts, along with the system of rites for the deceased that were observed for 49 days after the death, with notions of the afterlife rebirth in one of the Six Realms of existence. According to this view, after a person dies there is a period of 49 days until that person is reborn in another form. During this time the future rebirth is decided in a process of judgement administered by the Ten Kings (Teiser, 1994).

The textual base for the cult is considered to be the Scripture on the Ten Kings *Jūō kyō* 十王経 which was probably composed in China. The scripture depicts the journey that a deceased person undergoes after death. Seven times on every seventh day the deceased is brought in front of one of the Ten Kings, who figure as judges. Meanwhile, the rites performed by the bereaved provide a way to transfer merit to the deceased and help him or her to ease or avoid hell sufferings, as well as an unpleasant rebirth.

Such rites consisted of the observances which were held seven times on every seventh day after death,[37] and on an additional three days – the 100th day, one year and three years after death.[38] However, before the figures of the Ten Kings were assigned to each of these ten observation days, the rites were held without recognition of any established deity for the respective days (Kajitani, 1974: 85–86).[39]

The composition of the Japanese version, known as the Scripture on Jizō and the Ten Kings *Jizō jūō kyō* or *gyō* 地蔵十王経 (also known by its longer name as *Bussetsu Jizō bosatsu hosshinn innen jūō kyō* 仏説地蔵菩薩発心因縁十王経),[40]

36 *Dō* 道 is a suffix signifying the 'realm'.

37 These ritual observations, known as *shichishichi sai* 七七斎 (seven-seven observation rites), were held for the sake of the deceased. In addition, studies also mention rites which were held for one's own sake. These were known as *gyakushu sai* 逆修斎 (Moerman, 2005: 135; Wakabayashi, 2009: 340; Tateyama Museum of Toyama, 2009: 46) or *shōshichi sai* 生七斎 (Hirasawa, 2008). Hirasawa argues that the practice of *gyakushu* rites, which she suggests originated in China, developed into the *shichishichi sai* rites and later mingled with the cult of the Ten Kings (Hirasawa, 2012: 155).

38 Teiser demonstrates that designations for the last three rites are of Confucian origin (Teiser, 1994: 26).

39 Kajitani demonstrates this, based on his analysis of the Diary of Taira Nobunori (12th century) and the Diary of Fujiwara no Munetada (11th – 12th century). *Shichishichi sai* and *gyakushu sai* described in these texts mention respective deities for each day of observance, however, they were not yet formalized.

40 The information is taken from Teiser (1994), who also gives the English translation of the title: 'The Scripture spoken by the Buddha on the causes of Bodhisattva Jizō'. Kawamura (2000: 85) refers to the original Chinese version as *Bussetsu yoshu jūō shōshichi kyō* 仏説預修十王生七経 (abbreviated title: *Yoshu jūō kyō*) and its Japanese compilation abbreviated to *Jizō jūō kyō*. Kajitani (1974) refers to the same Chinese text and mentions its alternative long title *Enma(ra)ō jukishishū gyakushu shōshichi ōjō jōdo kyō* 閻羅王授記四衆逆修生七往生浄土経 as the fundamental text of the cult of the Ten Kings in Japan.

was probably completed by the 12th century.[41] It was partially based on the Chinese Scripture on the Ten Kings and partially on texts of different origins.[42] Teiser's complex study on the cult of the Ten Kings (1994) traces the changes between the two versions of the script. He explains that the Japanese scripture extends the parts portraying the suffering of the deceased and elaborates the fifth court. There the deceased can encounter not only Enma, but also the Bodhisattva Jizō. The text continues with descriptions of 'the prospects for salvation offered by Jizō' (Teiser, 1994: 59). Bodhisattva Jizō, as is evident also from the title of the Japanese version, complements the figures of the Ten Kings and therefore deserves further attention.

Studies discussing the development and spread of the cult of the Ten Kings around Japan (Kajitani, 1974; Hirasawa, 2008; Kiyomizu, 1993; Teiser, 1994) have stressed the associations between the cult of the Ten Kings and an older cult of the Bodhisattva Jizō.[43]

Early texts related to Jizō were in circulation already around the 8th century.[44] Judging from the findings of sculptures of Jizō, it is thought that this bodhisattva became popular in Japan around the 10th century (Kiyomizu, 1993). Texts from around the 10th century present Jizō primarily as a saviour from the hells (Hirasawa, 2008; Hayami, 1975; Kajitani, 1974). Indeed, Jizō figures in the stories from a later compilation *Konjaku monogatari shū* 今昔物語集 (dated to the first half of the 12th century), where he appears in the hells or at the trial of the King Enma (Kajitani, 1974: 85).[45]

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41 Teiser states it was completed sometime between 1000 and 1300 (Teiser, 1997: 58). Wakabayashi claims that it was composed sometime between 1100 and 1300 (Wakabayashi, 2009: 339). For more on the cult of the Ten Kings and the scripture in China and Japan, see Teiser (1997: 57–62); for the information from the Tibetan environment, see Berounský (2012); for more information about the cult of the Ten Kings in Japan, see Motoi (2004). See also Hirasawa (2008), Wakabayashi (2009), Takasu (2001), Nishiki (2003) and Kawamura (2000). For visual works portraying hell scenes of the Ten Kings, see Ledderose (1998: 163–185) and Tateyama museum of Toyama (2001).

42 According to Hirasawa (2008: 15), the Korean version of the scripture contains verses identical to the Japanese version, which are missing in their Chinese counterpart from Dunhuang.

43 In Sanskrit Kṣitigarbha. On the role of this Bodhisattva in the Cult of the Ten Kings in China and Japan, see Teiser (1994: 6–11, 34–48).

44 Kajitani (1974: 85) considers the Jizō cult to be known in the 8th century (Tenbyō period, 710–794). Among early texts originating on the continent that influenced the cult of Jizō were the sutras *Daihōkō jūrin kyō* 大方広十輪経, *Daijōdaishū Jizō jūrin kyō* 大乗大集地蔵十輪経 and *Jizō bosatsu hongan kyō* 地蔵菩薩本願経. Hirasawa (2008) and Kiyomizu (1993) list texts of Indian origin *Jūrin kyō* 十輪経 (dated to sometime around the 4th to 5th century), together with *Jizō bosatsu hongan kyō* 地蔵菩薩本願経, as influential texts on Jizō during the Nara period (8th century). In this early time he was not coupled with Enma but with another bodhisattva – Kokūzō 虚空蔵 in esoteric type of prayers. Analyses of these texts revealed that his cult was closely related to the Pure Land belief (Kajitani, 1974; Hirasawa, 2008).

45 The 11th century stories collection *Reigenki* (also known by its longer title *Jizō bosatsu reigenki* 地蔵菩薩霊験記) is considered to be among the oldest Japanese texts which mention Jizō. It has been stated that the texts of *Reigenki* were influenced by the older Chinese collection of texts *Jizō bosatsu*

The notion of a connection between King Enma and Bodhisattva Jizō can already be found in a story from the *Nihon ryōiki* (9th century), in which Enma explains to a visitor to the hells that he is also known as the Bodhisattva Jizō.[46] Paintings of hells depicting Enma as a judge in the hells and Jizō as a saviour reflect the popularity that Bodhisattva Jizō, together with King Enma had gained in Japan. However, the association that developed between them is to be found in the later text of the Scripture on Jizō and the Ten Kings (Kajitani, 1974).[47]

As has been noted by Teiser, the Japanese version of the Scripture on the Ten Kings, in which these two characters appear, is an interesting assimilation of local deities with Buddhist deities (Teiser, 1994: 60). This form of assimilation is known as *shinbutsu shūgō* 神仏習合. This relationship between deities was expressed in the concept of *honji suijaku* 本地垂跡[48] which literally means 'original ground – manifested trace'. It indicates the idea that Buddhist deities, in their effort to save sentient beings from suffering, manifest themselves in the form of local deities.[49] By this logic, the pre-Buddhist deities were combined with the introduced Buddhist deities. Each of the Ten Kings was, for example, coupled with a Buddhist deity, as follows:

Shinkō – ō 秦広王 with Fudō 不動, Shokō – ō 初江王 with Shaka 釈迦, Sōtei – ō 宋帝王 with Monju 文殊, Gokan – ō 五官王 with Fugen 普賢, Enma – ō 閻魔王 with Jizō 地蔵, Henjō – ō 変成王 with Miroku 弥勒, Taizan – ō 太山王with Yakushi 薬師, Byōdō – ō 平等王 with Kannon 観音, Toshi – ō 都市王 with Ashuku 阿閦, Gōdō Tenrin – ō 五道転輪王 with Amida 阿弥陀.

ōgenki (Hirasawa, 2008; Kiyomizu, 1993). According to Hirasawa (2008: 19), the texts of *Jizō bosatsu ōgenki* were compiled by Changjin in 989. Kiyomizu (1993: 48) dates the texts to 986. The texts of *Reigenki* consisted of 31 scrolls. However out of these, three scrolls (the 8th, 18th and 21st) are no longer extant. Although the texts of *Reigenki* have been discussed as the oldest texts to mention Jizō, because only revisions dated to the 16th century have survived of the original texts (Kiyomizu, 1993), the 17th scroll of *Konjaku monogatari shū* actually seems to bear the oldest notions of Jizō (Hirasawa, 2008; Kiyomizu, 1993).

46 Lower scroll (下巻) of the *Nihon ryōiki*, number 9. This story is mentioned also in Hirasawa (2008) and Kajitani (1974).

47 Teiser notes that although Jizō is not mentioned in the Chinese version of the text, he appears in the illustrations to the sutra (Teiser, 1994: 6).

48 This idea became widespread around the 11th to 12th centuries (Hirasawa, 2008).

49 This idea of manifestations of buddhas is not a Japanese invention, it was known in India and spread through Central Asia to China, Korea and Japan (Smith, 1974: 12). In China, *hon* 本 and *jaku* 跡 were used already in the 4th century to indicate the relationship between Buddhist deities and their historical appearances (Hirasawa, 2008: 23; Smith, 1974: 12–13). More on *honji suijaku* can be found in: Itō (2011). On this topic see also Sueki (2003). In English, see for example Arichi (2006), who illustrates the concept on *Sannō* 山王 system at Mount Hiei.

Evidence of this pairing can also be traced in the visual works portraying the Ten Kings and their respective buddha or bodhisattva identity.[50]

This Chapter has so far introduced some of the early texts of continental and Japanese origins bearing various cosmological concepts. These texts reflect not only ideas but also practices such as those of transmitting merits for others, but also on one's own behalf. [51] The first story of Ebisu from the *Nihon ryōiki* illustrates how the punishment of Ebisu was eased because he had copied the Lotus Sutra. In a similar way the copying of manuscripts was practiced in order to transfer merits for the deceased. Besides being sources of knowledge, texts might also serve as ritual tools. The objects of re-production were not limited to texts of manuscripts and sutras, but also included paintings. Such visual images will be the focus of the next section.

Picturing the damned

The Six Realms of existence, the Ten Kings and various hells or paradises became themes for images of the afterlife rendered as paintings, carvings or statues.[52] These images – partially based on the various Buddhist texts, sutras and scriptures – developed into a rich production. Such works include paintings of the Six Realms known as *Rokudō e* 六道絵, the Ten Kings *Jūō zu* 十王図, and the combination of both *Rokudō jūō zu* 六道十王図.[53] Related types of images are those depicting paradises known as *Gokuraku zu* 極楽図 and paintings of hells

50 For example, in *Hon jūō jigoku zu* 本十王地獄図 (14th century, 2 parts, stored in the Idemitsu Museum of Arts), *Hon rokudō jūō zu* 本六道十王図 (16th century, 9 parts, stored in Chōgakuji 長岳寺), *Hon jūō zu* 本十王図 also known as *Kenponchakushoku jūō zu* 絹本著色十王図 (15th century, 10 parts, kept in Nisonin 二尊院), *Meifu jūō shinzu* 冥府十王之図 (15th century, 10 parts, kept in Jōfukuji 浄福寺).

51 For example, the 'pre-emptive funerals' *gyakushu*, or *maikyō* 埋経 – sutra burials were performed, among other reasons, for one's future rebirth in the Pure Land (Moerman, 2005: 135). Hirasawa mentions rites called *shōshichi sai* 生七斎 performed by people pre-emptively for their own afterlife. On contrast, rites for the deceased were known as *shichishichi sai*. Similarly, Wakabayashi mentions *shichishichi sai*, the 'seven seven-day observance' held for the dead, as contrary to the *gyakushu* which were pre-mortem services held for a living person (Wakabayashi, 2009: 340). Moreover, Teiser argues that the rituals addressed to the Ten Kings were also performed during one's lifetime (Teiser, 1994: 26–30). He also describes the pre-mortem and post-mortem memorial rituals in China. Such development, he notes, can be found in both Taoist and Buddhist traditions.

52 The earliest iconography of hell is dated to the 12th century. For the development of the iconography of hell see, for example, Wakabayashi (2004: 285–318) and Hirasawa (2008).

53 According to Kawamura (2000), the inspiration for the motifs in the *Rokudō jūō zu*, in addition to *Ōjō yōshū* and *Jizō bosatsu hosshin innen jūō kyō* 地蔵菩薩発心因縁十王経, also came from: *Jūō santan shō* 十王賛嘆鈔, *Jūō honseki santan shuzen shō* 十王本跡讃歎修善鈔 (abbreviaton: *Jūō santan shuzen shō* 十王讃歎修善鈔), *Jūō santan shuzen shō zue* 十王讃歎修善鈔図会.

known as *Jigoku e* 地獄絵 and their combinations. I will briefly introduce some motifs manifested in such works of art. This will provide the foundation for examining some later works portraying Japanese ideas of the afterlife, which will be analyzed in the next chapter.

Scenes from the Scripture on Jizō and the Ten Kings

Images depicting the Ten Kings portray the afterlife journey of deceased people through the courts of the Ten judges based on the text of the Scripture on Jizō and the Ten Kings. In their visual representations, the Ten Kings are portrayed as judges with a character for king 'Ō 王'on their headgear, sitting behind a desk in a court-like scene (Figure 1, Figure 2).

According to the scripture, the deceased arrive to the first judge Shinkō 秦広 at the end of the first week after death. In the second week, the way of the sinners leads to the second judge – the second King of hell, Shokō 初江. To reach the second court they have to cross the San zu river *San zu no gawa* 三途の川. The deceased can cross the river either by a bridge, or by a stream of water at a shallow part or at a deep part (Teiser, 1994: 33). The less wrong-doing one has done during his life helps to ease the crossing of the river (Fukue, 2005: 117). Besides the Kings, there are other figures described in *Jizō jūō kyō*. The Japanese version of the scripture mentions two beings waiting on the other side of the river. One is an old woman named Datsueba 奪衣婆 and another is an old man called Keneó 懸衣翁. Datsueba takes the clothes off the sinners who swim across the river and Keneó hangs them on the Eryódžu tree 衣領樹. The weight of wrong-doing is measured based on how low the branches of the tree bend down (Teiser, 1994: 33; Fukue, 2005: 118; De Antoni, 2009: 46). Then the journey of the deceased continues via the trials in front of the Kings. Motifs from the portrayals of the scene from the second court reappear in the later pictorial representations of the afterlife.

Recurring motifs are also human heads (a woman's head and a man's head) responsible for the records of sinners' deeds. There are also frequent motifs of tools of justice which are used by the Kings in the process of judgement. One is the scale of karma in which sinners are weighed against a counterbalance, usually portrayed as a boulder. And the second tool is the karma mirror, in Japanese known as *jōhari no kagami* 浄玻璃鏡 (also 浄頗梨鏡), showing the deeds from the previous lives of sinners (Figure 2). Japanese, Tibetan and Chinese texts of the Scripture on the Ten Kings mention the scale in the fourth court of King Gokan 互官, while the karma mirror is mentioned in the fifth court of

Fig. 1: King Taizan. Detail from the Hon Jizō jūō zu (property of Dairakuji, Edo period 18th century, 8th of 11 parts) originally published in the Tateyama Museum of Toyama (2001). Image reproduced with permission from the Tateyama Museum of Toyama.

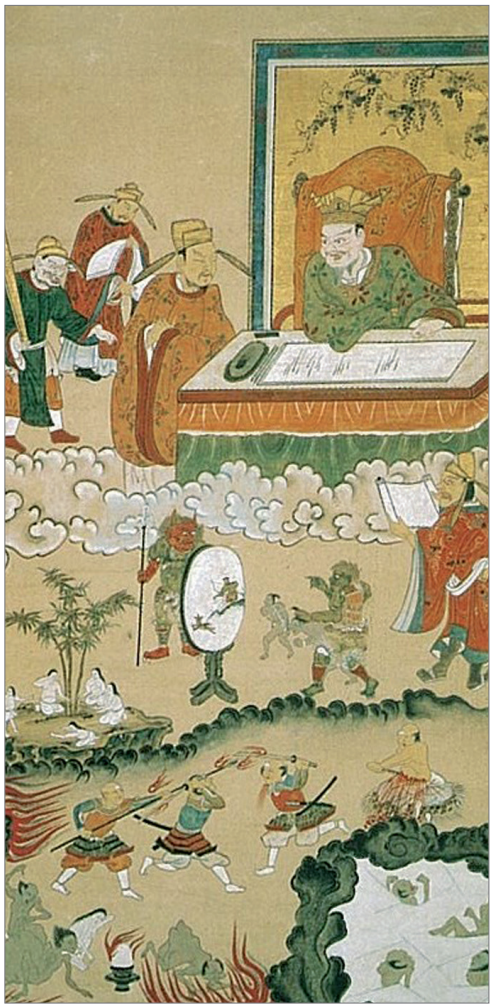

Fig. 2: Detail from the Hon rokudō jūō zu (kept in Shōzenji, 17th century, 3rd plate of 7) originally published in the Tateyama Museum of Toyama (2001). Image reproduced with permission from the Tateyama Museum of Toyama.

King Enma. In some representations, however, these tools can be found portrayed solely with Enma.[54]

The Illustrated stories of Hell and the Stories of Hungry Ghosts

Illustrations known as *Jigoku zōshi* and *Gaki zōshi* are considered to be some of the earliest renderings of the hell images (Wakabayashi, 2009; Hirasawa, 2008). Two renderings of *Jigoku zōshi* 地獄草子 'the Illustrated stories of Hell' or 'the Hell Scrolls' have survived and are dated to sometime between the 12th and 13th centuries. These two scrolls are kept in the Nara National Museum and the Tokyo National Museum.

The Nara Scroll (12th century)[55] contains illustrated stories of the hells consisting of seven painted scenes. The set shows illustrations from the sixteen satellite hells that surround the eight Great Hells.[56] Six of the seven paintings are supplemented by written text. The depicted scenes are believed to be based on *Kise kyō* 起世経 'Sutra of the world arising',[57] which was translated into Chinese by Jnanagupta around the year 600.[58] According to the Nara National Museum, besides the sixteen satellite hells, this set includes a hell for monks, known as the *Shamon jigoku* 沙門地獄. This hell is described in the sutra *Batorasetsu kyō* 馬頭羅刹経, which is part of a voluminous text of *Butsumyō kyō* 仏名経.[59]

The Tokyo scroll is dated to sometime between the 12th and 13th centuries. This scroll was kept in the storehouse of Anjū-in Temple in Okayama Prefecture.[60] In this text, the sinners are tormented in the four subsidiary hells: the Current of

54 Such compression of motifs can be found, for example, in *Chikurinji engi, Kasuga gongen genki-e* 春日権現験記絵 (Wakabayashi, 2009: 328), as well as images of Kumano Mandala and Tateyama Mandala.

55 The Nara scroll is known as *Genkahon* (Gutiérrez, 1967: 283) and *Masuda-ke kō* (Hirasawa, 2008: 6). It was handed down by the Masuda family.

56 According to the Nara National Museum the sixteen satellite hells are: The Black Sand Cloud, Excrement, The Five Prongs, Starvation, Searing Thirst, Pus and Blood, The Single Bronze Cauldron, Many Bronze Cauldrons, The Iron Mortar, Measures, The Flaming Cock, The River of Ashes, The Grinder, Sword Leaves, Foxes and Wolves, and Freezing Ice. According to Gutiérrez (1967), six of the paintings are accompanied by a text describing the hells of Dung Pit, Place of Standards and Measures, Place of the Iron Mortar, The Cock's Hell, Send of Black Clouds and Place of Pus and Blood. Translations of the texts accompanying the paintings are available at Gutiérrez (1967).

57 *Kise kyō* is also translated into English as 'Sutra on the origin of the world' (Yamamoto, 2010).

58 Information given by e-museum. The scroll with a commentary is available at: E-museum(a).

59 Source: E-museum. The *Butsumyō kyō* consists of sixteen volumes. Hirasawa (2008) notes that the hells for monks in Nara's *Masuda-ke kō* version were based on the sutra *Daijōrenge hōtatsu mondō hōō shamonkyō* 大乗蓮華宝達問答報応沙門経 or its quotations in *Butsumyō kyō* (Hirasawa, 2008: 7)

60 Information available online at E-museum(b).

the Fiery Hair; the Worm of Fire Sparks; the Place of Clouds, Fire and Fog; and the Shower of Flames and Fire Stones. In the hell of the Shower of Flames and Fire Stones is a river called the River of Boiling Heat with current of copper, iron and hot blood (Gutiérrez, 1967: 285). According to Hirasawa (2008), the Tokyo scroll is based on descriptions from the Hell of Screams in the *Shōbōnenjo kyō* and the depicted sufferings are punishments for killing, stealing, sexual offences or selling alcohol mixed with water.

The Tokyo National Museum and Kyoto National museum preserve yet another set of illustrated scrolls from the late Heian period, the 'Stories of Hungry Ghosts' (also the 'Scroll of Hungry Ghosts') *Gaki zōshi* 餓鬼草子. The scrolls portray the sufferings of those doomed to one of the Six Realms – the Realm of the Hungry (and thirsty) Ghosts. The scenes of the scrolls are based on various textual sources.[61]

The Tokyo scroll consists of ten sheets of painted scenes. The scenes show the Hungry Ghosts with grey bodies, swollen bellies and ruffled hair as they consume human excrement, urine, blood, sweat, earwax, pus or as they feast on carcasses in cemeteries.[62] While the Tokyo scroll contains only paintings of torments, the Kyoto scroll also contains stories telling readers about the sufferings of the Hungry Ghosts and about the ways to save them from their pitiful condition.

The first section of the Kyoto narrative scroll introduces one of the types of Hungry Ghosts called *shokusui* 食水 'Eating water'. These creatures are troubled by extreme thirst. The scenes of the first and the second section depict them in their miserable condition as they try to slake their thirst. The second section depicts the ritual of pouring water over a memorial marker. The accompanying text explains how to make offerings for the deceased. Although the first section also includes a scene of a hell creature punishing a Hungry Ghost, both scenes place the Hungry Ghosts within the human world.

The third and fourth sections relate to the text of *Urabon kyō* 盂蘭盆経 sutra which introduces the story of Mokuren,[63] one of the disciples of Buddha Śākyamuni, in the realm of the Hungry Ghosts. Mokuren is trying to save his mother from this realm. Instructed by the Buddha, he offers food and drink to

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61 Yamamoto (2010: 85) argues that the Hell Scrolls and the Scroll of Hungry Ghosts are both based on sutras such as *Kise kyō*, *Urabon kyō* and *Shōbōnenjo kyō*. Moreover, she shows that *Shōbōnenjo kyō* was an important source for the Scroll of Illnesses.

62 A view of the Tokyo scroll is available online at E-museum(c).

63 For information on Mokuren in Japan, see for example Maekawa (2000) and Kawamura (2000: 85). Stories about Mokuren were also popular in continental Asia, but there this character appears under a different name; for Chinese versions about Mùlián, see for example Teiser (1994), and for Tibetan versions about Maudgalyāyana, see for example Berounský (2012).

dead monks and from the leftovers provides food for his mother. After portraying a way of relieving the sufferings of the Hungry Ghosts, the fifth section depicts an alternative hope for their salvation, which can be secured after they hear preaching of the Buddha, or due to his compassion. It is based on an unknown text.[64]

The last section retells the story of Ānanda, another of Buddha's disciples, who asked Buddha about the way to save a Hungry Ghost emitting flames from his mouth. Ānanda learns about an incantation and teaches this method first to the hungry ghost and in the next section to the monks. This became the basis for a ritual offering of food and drink to the Hungry Ghosts and spirits of the dead known as *segaki* .[65]

Yet another scroll seems to be related to the scrolls of the Hungry Ghosts and the Hell Scrolls based on a similar style of painting and calligraphy. In her study on the Scroll of Illnesses, Yamamoto (2010) demonstrates the association of the various scenes of this handscroll with passages from the sutra *Shōbōnenjo kyō*, the 'Sutra on proper vows for the True Dharma'. She argues interestingly that the illnesses in the handscroll were chosen because they were understood as the results of karmic retribution. However, the scenes from the handscroll are not of particular interest for the purposes of the current study and therefore they will not be analyzed here.

There were also places of suffering in hells reserved solely for women or children. Such development appears to be based on a concept of pollution connected to women, which intensified from the late Heian through the Kamakura periods (1185 – 1333). Specifically, it was a view of bodily pollution related to childbirth and menstruation. Such attitudes were reflected in visual images of the afterlife.

In some visual representations of the hells, Bodhisattva Jizō appears on the river bank known as *Sai no kawara* 賽の河原.[66] These paintings depict children as they try to pile pebbles into the shape of a stupa, but their efforts are marred by the hell wardens again and again (Figure 9). Their misery is caused by the suffering that the children caused to their mothers in child-birth and to both parents alike by their sudden death. Further, as they are dead, they are not able to compensate their parents for the love and care they received while they were alive (Fukue, 2005: 57–58; Hirasawa, 2012: 131).[67]

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64 According to Gutiérrez (1967) and the Kyoto National Museum.

65 For information on the Scrolls of Hungry Ghosts, see Gutiérrez (1967). The Kyoto scroll is available online at E-museum(d).

66 The river is not depicted in some cases.

67 In her study, Bargen (1992) explains the character of Jizō as related to the children. Under this understanding he is also known as *Mizuko Jizō* 水子地蔵. The term *mizuko* refers to either an un-born

According to a 17th century hell-tour tale *Fuji no hitoana sōshi* 富士の人穴草紙 'The tale of the Fuji cave',[68] the children at the *Sai no kawara* are burnt by flames and revived by demons in order to commence the suffering anew. They are rescued by the Bodhisattva Jizō as well as by the tears shed by their mothers in the hell that was exclusively for women: the Blood-Pool hell (Hirasawa, 2012: 131).[69]

Portrayals of the *Sai no kawara* showing Jizō as he protects the children are examples of his saviour character. An explanation given by Chamberlain (1893), who visited many Japanese pilgrimage sites in the 19th century, shows an interesting blending of the concept of *Sai no kawara* and the Sanzu River:

> Jizō 'is the superhuman helper of those that are in trouble, especially of dead children. His image is to be seen in every part of Japan, loaded with pebbles, which serve in the other world to relieve the labours of infants who have been robbed of their clothes by the hag named Shōzuka no Baba,[70] and have been set by her to perform the endless task of piling up stones on the Buddhist Styx (Chamberlain, 1893: 356).'

Jizō is not the only figure of a bodhisattva that appears in the role of saviour from hells. Another is the Bodhisattva Kannon *Kannon bosatsu* 観音菩薩,[71] a merciful bodhisattva who vowed to appear in transformations[72] in this world in order to save sentient beings. In one of his transformations, known as *Nyoirin Kannon* 如意輪観音, this bodhisattva became a motif of visual images of the Blood-Pool Hell.

Based on the explanation given in the Blood-bowl Sutra *Ketsu bon kyō* 血盆経,[73] women were tormented in a pool filled with blood (Figure 3, Figure 8 and Figure 9). They were condemned to such sufferings because of the parturition blood lost in delivery or because of menstrual blood, which were both viewed as polluting. The Blood-bowl Sutra tells the story of Mokuren who visited the hells.

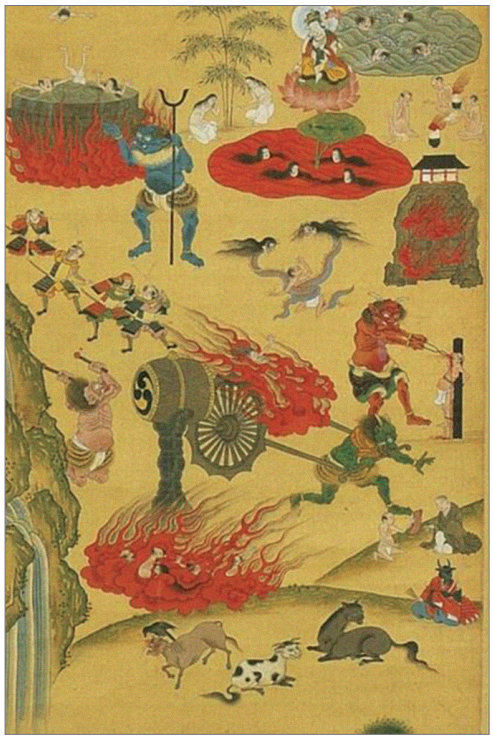

Fig. 3: Detail from the Daisenbō A Tateyama Mandala originally published in the Tateyama Museum of Toyama (2011). Image reproduced with permission from the Tateyama Museum of Toyama.

child or to an infant. Bargen notes that until the medieval period, the term *mizuko* included children under the age of seven (Bargen, 1992: 339). On this topic see also LaFleur (1992).

68 More on the Muromachi period texts from around the 15th to 17th centuries discussing the hell-tour tales can be found in Keller (2006a, 2006b).

69 In Japanese *Chi no ike* 血の池. It has been translated also as 'Blood Lake Hell' (Hirasawa, 2012) or the 'Hell of Blood Pond' (Kodate, 2004).

70 *Shōzuka no Baba* is another name for Datsueba. The name comes from *Sanzu ka no baba* 三途河の婆 'Old woman of the Sanzu River'.

71 Bodhisattva Kannon or also *Kanzeon bosatsu* 観世音菩薩 is a Japanese name for Avalokiteśvara.

72 Bodhisattva Kannon is known in these transformations as *Henge Kannonn* 変化観音.

73 This apocryphal scripture is of Chinese origin, under its longer name *Bussetsu daizō seikyō ketsubon kyō* 仏説大蔵正教血盆経 composed after the 10th century (Takemi, 1977). Glassman dates it to around the late 12th to the early 13th century (Glassman, 2009: 176). Kodate (2004) and Moerman (2005) date its arrival in Japan by the Muromachi period the latest. For translation of the *Ketsu bon kyō* see Takemi (1983).

There he saw many women including his mother suffering in the Blood-Pool Hell. With their bodies soaked in the pool, they are forced to drink the polluted blood which they lost in childbirth or during menstruation. Mokuren asked the ruler of the hell about a way to release women from such torment. He learned that by performing the Blood-bowl rite for three years, followed by a final rite, and by summoning priests to intone the Blood-bowl Sutra, women will be reborn in a Buddha land after a five-coloured lotus flower blooms in the Blood-Pool Hell (Hirasawa, 2012: 113).[74]

The Blood-bowl Sutra and rites associated with the sutra gave hope for salvation to women who, according to the teaching of a sutra called *Tennyō jōbutsu kyō* 転女成仏経, [75] might attain Buddhahood, but only under the condition of transformation into a man. Protection against pollution associated with blood became possible through a ritual transformation of a female into a male. As will be shown later, in the case of rituals in Tateyama the Blood-Pool Sutra played a role in such practices.

Another reason for the torments of women in the Blood-Pool Hell seems to be jealousy. Glassman (2009) mentions two texts from the 15th and 16th centuries with reference to the jealousy of co-wives as a cause of such suffering: the hagiography of Prince Shōtoku, called *Taishiden* 太子伝 and a tale of a young woman killed by her lover's wife (Glassman, 2009: 186).

Jealousy and attachment to a man were considered 'sins' that opened up yet another hell related to women – the Hell of snake-women. Those who during their lifetimes acted possessively towards a man, versus a woman rival, would end up in this hell transformed into snakes (Fukue, 2005: 67; Hirasawa, 2012: 126–130; Kodate, 2004: 131; Kuroda, 2004: 112). The punishment is depicted as a male figure in the grip of two snakes with women's heads (Figure 3, Figure 9).

While the Blood-Pool was a hell destined for women who had children, the Hell of barren women *Umazume no jigoku* 石女地獄 was a place for women who were not able to give birth to children, or who intentionally avoided childbirth. Literally meaning 'the Hell of stone women', it reflects contemporary concerns about abortion and infanticide (*mabiki* 間引き).[76]

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74 There are several versions of this sutra. This story is different from the above-mentioned apocryphal text *Urabon kyō* with the same main character, Mokuren – in this case saving his mother from the Hell of Hungry Ghosts and from the text of *Bussecu Mokuren kyūbo kyō* 仏説目連救母経, according to which Mokuren finds his mother in the deepest hell skewered over fire and burned (Fukue, 2005: 51).

75 The sutra spread in Japan from around the Kamakura period. The title 'Sutra of Women Transforming and Achieving Buddhahood' is listed among Japanese dedicatory prayers and vows as early as the late 9th century (Hirasawa, 2012: 111).

76 *Mabiki* refers to an induced abortion or infanticide; literally it means 'weeding' (Hirasawa, 2012) or 'thinning' (Glassman, 2009). Edicts issued by Tokugawa Tsunayoshi in 1685 – 1709, known as 'edicts on compassion for living beings', suggest that infanticide was practiced in Japan. So do

Illustrations of this hell portray women as kneeling near a bamboo plant and poking the ground (Figure 2, Figure 3). They are trying to find a bamboo seed. The bamboo sprout which represents a new life has been interpreted as a symbol of the child that they never had (Moerman, 2005; Fukue, 2005; Kuroda, 2004). It has been suggested that the tool which the women use to poke in the ground is a candlewick (Fukue, 2005; Moerman, 2005). In addition, Fukue states that candlewicks were in the past used as contraception methods.

Notions of rebirth in the afterlife were introduced here because they reappear in later visual imagery of holy mountains and also because they provide a foundation for later religious practices. As was mentioned before, early Japanese notions of the afterlife encompassing the idea of rebirth revealed that mountains figured as an important element in the spatial logic of these concepts. Not only textual, but also material culture that has survived suggests that mountains became the space where notions of the afterlife were imagined, practiced and lived. Moreover, concepts of mountains as places connected to death or the dead, various realms, mountain ascetics, hunters, various deities, religious and spatial restrictions, rituals or other embodied practices were echoed in legends and narratives about these spheres, as well as in their visual representations. The next chapter presents an example of visual objects in which such notions are reflected. These are images of holy mountains from the late Edo period known as Tateyama Mandala.

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the illustrations known as *mabiki-zu*. On *mabiki*, see for example Motoko (1997) and Watari (1999: 197–243).

CHAPTER II: **THE TATEYAMA MANDALA**[1]

While the literary and visual sources examined in the previous chapter revealed some general cosmological concepts as well as insights into contemporary religious practices, the following chapters will shift attention to specific Japanese sites. The focus of this chapter is on illustrations known as the Tateyama Mandala. These are devotional paintings which circulated among the supporters of the Tateyama cult,[2] which was a popular mountain cult of the Edo period (1603 – 1867). In the centre of the Tateyama cult were the worship of deities and practices associated with the Tateyama Mountain Range.[3]

What is of particular interest here is that in these paintings, the cosmological concepts such as the Six Realms are reflected in the concrete geographical locality of the Tateyama Mountain Range. Therefore, the Tateyama Mandala images serve as a useful source of the religious perspective of a mountain cult in the Edo period.[4] With hells occupying significant space in the renderings of the Tateyama Mandala, it is possible to say that they also demonstrate a relationship between the cult of mountains in Japan and the visualization of hells.

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1 Also known as the Tateyama *mandara*, based on the transcription of the Japanese reading for 'mandala' 曼荼羅. There were historical variations in the name of this mountain range as well as the transcriptions of 'Tateyama'. For example, in the 17th scroll of *Manyōshū* 万葉集 (a collection of poems from the 8th century) it appears under the name *Tachi yama* (Kimoto, 1997: 55). For more information on the development of the transcription styles, see Kimoto (1997).

2 The term 'Tateyama cult' is used through this work as an equivalent for the Japanese term *Tateyama shinkō* 立山信仰.

3 The term Tateyama will be used throughout the work to indicate the Tateyama Mountain Range (as it is used in the Japanese language).

4 On the images of holy mountains of a similar type, see for example the work of Grapard (1982). On the images associated with mountains on the Kii Peninsula, see for example Moerman (2005). On the image of a holy mountain known as *Sannō Miya Mandara*, see Arichi (2006).

What type of mandala is the Tateyama Mandala?

Although some Tateyama Mandala paintings display similarities, each of them represents a unique painting with a unique style and a unique combination of motifs. They portray the world of local and Buddhist notions of the afterlife with the topic of rebirth located in the real terrain of the mountains.

A common shape of the Tateyama Mandala is a hanging scroll consisting of four parts. The height of the mandalas varies between 130 and 180 centimetres and their width is between 95 and 180 centimetres. Apart from the common shape of the four parts, there are sets of five, three, and two parts as well as single sole hanging scrolls (Fukue, 2005: 155; Hirasawa, 2012: 1). The shape of a scroll set enabled its easy transfer. As for material, the mandalas were painted on silk cloth or paper. In 2011, according to the Tateyama Museum of Toyama, there were forty-eight known images of the Tateyama Mandala.[5]

The Japanese term mandala *mandara* 曼荼羅 refers to the images that were used to visualize and interact with the realms of Buddhist cosmology (Moerman, 2005: 81). Moerman suggests that there was a semantic shift of the term 'mandala' during the Kamakura period. In this time the paintings connected to the pilgrimage sites became termed as mandalas. This was, according to Moerman, related to the contemporary change in the function of visual materials – they came to be used as devotional and didactic objects (Moerman, 2005: 81).

Judging from the absence of geometrical shapes, with the exception of circles which represent the sun and the moon, typologically, the Tateyama Mandala does not strictly represent the Indian iconographic type of mandala.[6] It also differs from the types of mandala which have been used in Esoteric Buddhist rituals and in meditation. The mandalas of esoteric tradition contain a diagram scheme representing a micro-cosmos. The micro-cosmos of a sacred space may have been projected onto a two or three-dimensional rendering, or imagined in the mind (Hirasawa, 2012: 48). In this esoteric type of images gods and buddhas are located within the structure of the sacred space.[7] The concepts of esoteric

5 These forty-eight mandalas were displayed at a special exhibition commemorating 20 years of the Tateyama Museum's foundation in 2011 and later published in the special issue of the museum's bulletin (Tateyama Museum of Toyama, 2011). The Tateyama Mandala images analyzed throughout this work are to be found in this publication. Fourteen of them are painted on silk, thirty-three on paper and one is painted on a folding screen. Twenty-four of the paintings consist of four parts.

6 The Indian iconographic type is related to the expression *bodhimaṇḍa*. Mandala in this sense refers to the site of Enlightenment of Buddha Śākyamuni (Moerman, 2005: 77; Hirasawa, 2012: 45–53). Moerman explains that *maṇḍala* was 'used to consecrate and circumscribe the ritual space of altars, initiation platforms, temples, palaces, and kingdoms' (Moerman, 2005: 77).

7 In the Japanese esoteric tradition there are two unique mandalas: the Mandalas of the Two Worlds *Ryōkai mandara* 両界曼荼羅, also known as the Dual or the Twofold Mandala *Ryōbu mandara* 両部曼荼羅 (Moerman, 2005: 77). Mandalas of the two worlds are images representing a micro-cosmos. They are

tradition were later projected onto the mountain landscape and depicted in the images of sacred mountains (Hirasawa, 2012: 48; Moerman, 2005: 77–80). In such an understanding the mountains represent buddhas or gods.

The Tateyama Mandala represents a locality and resembles a map or a landscape; however, similarly to the esoteric type of mandala, it represents a micro cosmos and it bears meaning which only a person with certain knowledge of the local and Buddhist traditions can decode. Although the esoteric tradition had its space in the teachings of the Tateyama cult, the images of the Tateyama Mandala reflect multi-layered concepts, among which the esoteric tradition may be viewed as one layer.

The Tateyama Mandala has been classified as a pilgrimage mandala *sankei mandara* 参詣曼荼羅 (Hirasawa, 2012).[8] Such mandalas were connected to a pilgrimage site and used in the proselytizing of its cult and for the purpose of *etoki* 絵解き, which might be translated as 'explaining pictures'.[9] They were produced widely during the Sengoku period (1467–1568) and throughout the Edo period (Kuroda, 2004: 102–103; Moerman, 2005: 26).

The current work considers yet another type of images related to interaction with the realms of Buddhist cosmology. They are known as paintings of 'changed aspect or transformed vision',[10] 'transformation tableaux',[11] or *hensō(zu)* 変相(図).

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known as the Mandala of the Womb realm *Taizō kai* 胎蔵界 and the Mandala of the Diamond realm *Kongō kai* 金剛界. Both of them represent the cosmological concepts that developed around Buddha Dainichi 大日, an important element of the esoteric mandalas (Hirasawa, 2012: 47; Moerman, 2005: 77). While the Womb mandala, which is based on the Dainichi Sutra *Dainichi kyō* 大日経, focused on the spiritual aspect, the Diamond mandala, based on the Diamond Sutra *Kongōchō kyō* 金剛頂経, was associated with the practical and material aspects (Okada and Tsujimoto, 1979: 52).

8 For other types of images which are considered in the case of the Tateyama Mandala, see Hirasawa (2012: 45–53). Hirasawa discusses other types of mandala typology (the older type of an illustrated hagiography *eden* 絵伝, or festival images *saireizu* 祭礼図) and problems that such typology might involve. For the same problem with the categorization of mandalas connected to the Kumano pilgrimage site located in the southern part of the Kii Peninsula, known as the Kumano Mandala, see Moerman (2005: 81–84). Moerman mentions examples of other pilgrimage mandalas such as those from Nachi in Kumano, Kiyomizudera, Kii Miidera, Fuji and Chikubushima.

9 The term *etoki* refers to the act of narrating and explaining the ideas expressed in religious paintings. It also indicates the narrator (Kaminishi, 2006: 27). Kuroda mentions that in the Heian period *etoki* referred to an explication of Buddhist wall paintings to emperors and courtiers by high priests. Later, it became a form of performance and lay *etoki* performers emerged by the Middle Ages (Kuroda, 2004). Glassman (2009) compares the Tateyama representatives with the *Kumano bikuni* preachers. The Kumano pilgrimage area was one of the famous sites with *etoki* practice. On their rounds, itinerant nuns, known as *Kumano bikuni*, using a visual rendering of the Kumano – *Kumano kanshin jikkai mandala* – provided explanations in front of an audience gathered in shrines or temples or in the Kumano area. For more information on the *Kumano bikuni* see for example: Kaminishi (2006: Chapter 7), Keller (2006b: 181), Kuroda (2004) and Moerman (2005: 222).

10 The translation is taken from Ten Grotenhuis (1983: 66).

11 The term 'transformation tableaux', which responds to the term *hensō* (in Chinese *pien-hsiang*), was used by Teiser (1994: 40) and Wang (2005: 13). For more information on transformation tableaux, see for example, Mair (1986: 3–43).

Ten Grotenhuis characterizes the paintings of the *hensō* type as portrayals of 'visual transformations of doctrinal themes or legends' and 'interpretations of literary themes' (Ten Grotenhuis, 1983: 66). She notes that although the Japanese terms *mandara* and *hensō* were used interchangeably, compared to the images of the esoteric tradition the *hensō* paintings depict an element that is lacking in the esoteric mandalas – a narrative.[12]

Wang (2005), who in his study *Shaping the Lotus Sutra: Buddhist Visual Culture in Medieval China*, focuses on Chinese visual representations inspired by Buddhist sutras, explains that 'transformation tableaux' portray scenes of miraculous transformations such as rebirth in a land of bliss, Buddhist deities manifesting themselves in various capacities, bodhisattvas in a transformed form, people transformed into an animal or other form, as well as scenes from hells (Wang, 2005: 13).

Contrary to understanding of the paintings of the *hensō* type as visual transcriptions of the canonical Buddhist texts, the sutras and their commentaries or legends, Wang has argued that they are not limited to a textual source of inspiration (Wang, 2005: 15). Wang sees the sutra as 'a pretext for something else' which he characterizes as a 'world' (Wang, 2005: 15). He argues that 'When medieval Chinese painters visualized the world of the Lotus Sutra, they used a certain spatial structure to map out the disparate scenes described in the sutra. ...they were approximating the imaginary world of Lotus Sutra inherent in the text with their own world picture they carried in their heads, which already had its own internal topographic structure and spatial logic, a mental grid on which they plotted the disparate scenes from the Lotus Sutra' (Wang, 2005: 20).

Indeed, the images of the Tateyama Mandala depict scenes indicating rebirth in a paradise and they also include scenes from hells. Moreover, they portray transformed bodhisattvas, as well as people transformed into animals, stones or trees. The Tateyama Mountain Range is a terrain in which people not only lived *in* mountains but also *with* mountains, and as these mountains were part of their everyday lives, so were they part of their practices which included interactions with the beings dwelling there. Therefore, familiar with the topography and space of Tateyama, they plotted on this familiar topography scenes from the Buddhist texts. But exactly as Wang argues, the content of the Buddhist texts is not sufficient to understand the visual images of this topography as painted in the Tateyama Mandala. These visual renderings carry local knowledge from the legends and practices that were part of this pilgrimage site. Thus, it is in this sense that the current work considers the Tateyama Mandala as an example of the *hensō* type of painting.

12 See also Ten Grotenhuis (1999).

The world of the Tateyama Mandala

The Tateyama Mountain Range is located in the south-eastern part of the current Toyama Prefecture. The volcanic origin of the mountains resulted in sulphur springs and steam vents covering the landscape of the area. It is not difficult to imagine such characteristics of the natural environment, with the visual and osmatic sensations of volcanic gases and exhaling steam, intensifying the idea of hells (Fukue, 2005: 37; Kodate, 2004: 132).

Legends about ascetics practicing in Tateyama are evidence that a relationship between the Tateyama Mountain Range and notions of the afterlife, particularly the hells, was probably widespread between the 11th and 12th centuries (Takase, 1981; Blacker, 1975: 83; Formanek, 1998: 186). Examples of such legends can be found in the collection of texts *Honchō hokkegenki* 本朝法華験記 dating from the 11th to 12th centuries, and in narratives from approximately the same time period compiled in the *Konjaku monogatari shū* 今昔物語集. Besides the notion of hells, these legends are suggestive of a tradition of mountain asceticism within the Tateyama area. They contain stories about ascetics in Tateyama who encountered the spirit of a young woman, or about a woman who had fallen into the hells in Tateyama (Formanek, 1998: 186; Takase, 1981; Kodate, 2004).

Compared to these textual references, the visual images of the Tateyama Mandala are of a later date. They were produced in the late or middle Edo period (Fukue, 2005: 156).[13]

They portray a broad spectrum of scenes and motifs. Judging from the analysis made by Fukue which has revealed as many as 219 motifs in the renderings of the Tateyama Mandala (Hirasawa, 2012: 52), a complete list exceeds the scope of this book. The following examples, however, may well demonstrate the concordance of local knowledge and Buddhist ideas.

The paintings portray a panorama of the mountain range with the sun and the moon on the horizon,[14] along with places on the pilgrim path known as 'the guide on ascetic path' or 'the guide on a purification mountain climbing' *zenjōdō meisho annai / zenjō tōzan annai*,[15] (禅定道名所案内/禅定登山案内). Within the

13 In the cases with unclear dating, Fukue suggests the middle of the Edo period.

14 Moerman notes that the solar and lunar discs first appeared in shrine mandalas in the late 13th century and by the late 14th century and they 'had become a standard iconographic convention'. The sun and the moon are depicted in various pilgrimage mandalas and they might indicate an 'unspecified temporality' of a scene (Moerman, 2005: 33–34).

15 The term *zenjōdō meisho annai* was used by Takase (1981) and the term *zenjō tōzan annai* was used by Fukue (2005). *Zenjō* 禅定 refers to a state of mind during meditation (Sanskrit *dhyāna*). Moreover, according to Hirasawa it refers to austerities or 'meditations' at sacred mountains (Hirasawa, 2012: 2).

spots on the pilgrim path are the abodes of creatures known as Tengu,[16] as well as places related to the topography of local legends such as the legend of the 'opening of the mountain' *kaisan engi* 開山縁起,[17] and the legends about women who entered mountains despite the restriction that bound them[18] and so turned into stones or trees. Such narratives were recorded in a specific style of 'origin legends' which Teiser defines as 'narratives that explain the existence of ideas, books, or practices by linking them to events, usually of an extraordinary nature, that occurred in the lives of important persons in the significant past' (Teiser, 1994: 63). They often combine a local legend and an explanatory tale.

The 'origin legends' about the opening of Tateyama are called *Tateyama kaisan engi* 立山開山縁起.[19] They are recorded in a work dating from the Kamakura period: *Ruijukigenshō* 類聚既験抄,[20] *Irohajiruishō* 伊呂波字類抄,[21] fourth scroll of *Shintōshū Etchū Tateyama gongen ji* 神道集越中立山権現事 (1352 – 1361), in the texts from the Edo period *Tateyama mandara kaisetsu wa* 立山まんだら解説話, and in the encyclopedia *Wakansansaizue* 和漢三才図会 (1712).

The history of the Tateyama cult is connected with two villages – one is Iwakuraji 岩峅寺, located at the foot of the Tateyama mountains, and the other is Ashikuraji 芦峅寺 on the mountain's slopes. These two villages were involved in the spreading of the Tateyama cult throughout the country. Stories, which were created by the proselytizers of the Tateyama cult in the middle and late Edo period, have been recorded in the *Tateyama dai engi* 立山大縁起,[22] the *Tateyama shō engi* 立山小縁起,[23] and the *Tateyama ryaku engi* 立山略縁起 'Abbreviated

16 Tengu are portrayed as human or half-bird creatures. Their characteristic trait is their big, long nose and red colour. Sometimes they are portrayed with a beak or wings. A text of the *Tengu sōshi* 天狗草紙 (13th century), which retells stories of fallen monks, indicates that they are related to ascetic practice and monastic life in the mountains. On the topic of Tengu and ascetic practice, see for example Wakabayashi (2012).

17 The legends about the opening of mountains retell stories of Buddhist or local deities that revealed themselves to a person who becomes the founder of a tradition of worshipping the deities at the mountain.

18 The topic of the restriction on women will be mentioned in the third chapter.

19 For information about the legends, see Takase (1981: 146), Fukue (2005: 16–17), Hirasawa (2012: 53–61) and Kimoto (1997, 1999).

20 They were compiled in the last half of the 13th century (Hirasawa, 2012: 53); see also Abe (2008: 324–40).

21 The content of the stories had already been formatted by the later Heian period. The oldest of *Irohajiruishō*'s manuscripts available nowadays were composed in the Kamakura period. However, parts of the forth scroll are scattered (Kimoto, 1997: 56; Gorai, 1991: 135).

22 It is the oldest recension which dates to 1779. It is with extensive damage (Hirasawa, 2012: 53). On *Tateyama Daiengi* and *Shōengi*, see Yasuda (1999: 44–54).

23 These recensions were handed down from 1853 (Hirasawa, 2012: 54).

foundation legends'.[24] Studies have suggested that the *Tateyama ryaku engi* were the versions utilized by the proselytizers from Ashikuraji during the explanation of mandalas that they performed around the country (Fukue, 2005; Hirasawa, 2012). The versions used by Iwakuraji survived in 'the Stories of the Tateyama Mandala' *Tateyama Mandala kaisecu wa* and in 'the Handbook of the Tateyama Mandala' *Tateyama tebiki gusa* 立山手引草.[25]

The story of the hunter

The origin legends of Tateyama contain accounts of the apparition of a deity in front of a hunter. Scenes from this tale are characteristic motifs of the Tateyama Mandala.[26] Because different combinations of apparitions illustrate the overlapping of local and Buddhist deities, the content will be retold in this section.

While *Ruijukigenshō* does not specify the hunter's name, the 10th scroll of *Irohajiruishō* (*Tateyama daibosatsu kenkyū honengi* 立山大菩薩顕給本縁起) gives him the name Ariwaka. Later documents from the Edo period mention Ariwaka and his son Ariyori. In these later texts Ariyori figures as the main character. The encyclopedia *Wakansansaizue*, for example, recounts the story as follows:[27]

> One night Emperor Monmu had a dream in which Amida Nyorai[28] revealed to him that if he assigns a man named Saeki Ariwaka as a ruler of Etchū Province,[29] it will bring peace to the land. After the emperor woke up, he obeyed the dream and named Ariwaka as ruler of Etchū. One day Ariwaka encountered a white hawk, which came flying from the south-east. The white hawk sat on his palm and from that time Ariwaka took care of the bird.

24 According to Hirasawa, this might be suggesting the existence of an earlier longer text. A recension belonging to the temple lodge Sōshinbō includes a note with the oldest date, in 1716, associated with the local foundation legend (Hirasawa, 2012: 54).

25 The recensions used for explanations of the Tateyama Mandala by Iwakuraji, compiled in *Tateyama mandara kaisetsu wa* (Takase, 1981:146) and *Tateyama tebiki gusa* (Fukue, 2005: 17), do not contain any explanations for motifs that are related to Ashikuraji. On *Tateyama Tebiki gusa*, see Hayashi (1984: 237–59).

26 The motif of a hunter opening a mountain is not peculiar to Tateyama. Similar stories are to be found in legends related to the mountains of Kōya, Nikkō and Hiko. Examples of such stories in English can be found for example in Gorai (1989) and Hori (1966).

27 I have paraphrased the account from a summary made by Fukue (Fukue, 2005: 17–18).

28 In Sanskrit Amitābha. The term *Nyorai* 如来 is the honorific title of an enlightened being.

29 Etchū Province *Etchū no kuni* 越中国 is a historical name of the province to which Tateyama belonged at that time. It covered the whole area of the current Toyama Prefecture.

The tale continues with the story about Aiwaka's son Ariyori. The scenes from the hunt are a common motif in the paintings.

> When Ariyori borrowed his father's hawk and went to hunt, the bird suddenly disappeared in the sky. Ariyori was unsuccessfully looking for the hawk, when he encountered Morijiri no gongen[30] who advised him to look for the hawk in the south-east direction. Following this advice Ariyori reached a deep forest. It was already dark and Ariyori stayed overnight in the mountains under rocks. The next morning Ariyori met an old person, who advised him where to look for the hawk. The old person introduced himself as Tachio Tenjin[31] of the mountain. Then Ariyori continued on his search deeper into the mountains, where he was attacked by a bear.[32] After Ariyori shot an arrow into the heart of the animal, the bear ran away. Ariyori followed the traces of the bleeding bear through the mountain to the cave of Tamadono *(Tamadono kutsu* 玉殿窟). When Ariyori entered the cave, instead of the bear he saw Amida accompanied by the two bodhisattvas: *Kannon and Seishi*.[33] Ariyori noticed that Amida's heart was pierced with the arrow. Amida explained to Ariyori that he was the bear and the hawk was Tachio Tenjin of Mount Tsurugi. He continued saying that he had revealed Hells and Paradises inside the Tateyama Mountains in order to save people living in the chaotic world, and waited for Ariyori. He urged Ariyori to become a Buddhist monk. Ariyori obeyed Amida's proposal and became a Buddhist monk with the new name Jikō.
>
> Then he built temples and shrines in Tateyama and it is said that he ascended to the Jōdō peak of Tateyama where he worshiped the Amida trinity and the twenty-five bodhisattvas.

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30 Deity of a deep forest. The term *gongen* 権現 indicates a deity of Buddhist origin manifested through local deities. This idea is linked with the *honji suijaku* thought, which was mentioned in the previous chapter. According to Takase (1977), *Morijiri no gongen* was worshipped in the place 新川郡森尻 (probably read as *Shinkawagun Morijiri*), which is today's town of Kamiichi 上市町, in the local shrine Kamido jinja 神度神社.

31 Takase (1977) claims that references to Tachio Tenjin are recorded in historical materials in which the deity appears under names such as Tachio gongen 力尾権現, Tōzan Tachio Tenjin 当山力尾天神, Tsurugisan Tachio Tenjin 剣山力尾天神 and Tachio Tenjin fumoto jinushi 力尾天神麓地主. According to Takase, this local deity ruled over the mountains including the peak of Mount Tsurugi. Moreover, the shrine Tachio jinja 力尾神社 and the temple Tachio tera (or Tachio ji) 力尾寺, located in Toyama, are dedicated to this deity (Takase, 1977: 223). Hirasawa (2012) argues that the character 力 used in the name of the deity in the *Wakansanzaiue* (1712) might be wrong. The character 力 is associated with another deity, Tajikarao. The encyclopedia *Wakansanzaiue* mentions Tachio Tenjin elsewhere as a local deity and Tajikarao as a manifestation of Fudō Myōō (Hirasawa, 2012: 22).

32 On the significance of the Asiatic black bear in the upland regions of Japan, see a study written by Knight (2008).

33 In Sanskrit Mahāsthāmaprāpta. He appears as an attendant of Buddha Amida together with Bodhisattva Kannon. Bodhisattva Seishi has been associated with the virtue of wisdom, while Bodhisattva Kannon has been associated with the virtue of mercy.

Another version comes from the *Tateyama ryaku engi*.[34] This version adds details to the story.

> The tale similarly begins with the assigning of Saeki Ariwaka 佐伯有若 to rule the Etchū 越中 area in the year 701 by the Emperor Monmu. Ariwaka ruled in accord with virtue. However, because he was missing a successor, together with his wife they decided to pray for a child for 37 days. On the last day, an old woman holding a golden stick and a white hawk in her hands appeared. She promised them a child and asked them to raise the white hawk together with the child.
> After this, Ariwaka's wife delivered a boy child whom they named Ariyori 有頼. Ariwaka looked after the hawk with great care. The tale then focuses on Ariyori at the age of sixteen. Longing to see the white hawk, one day he took the bird and went on a hunt. Yet, the white hawk flew far away. His father Ariwaka was informed about the situation and sent a message to Ariyori not to return home without the white hawk. Ariyori's retinue, shedding profuse tears, left him alone and returned back to his father. Ariyori spent a night in the eastern mountain and the next day looking for the hawk when he finally found him on a tree. After they were successfully reunited, all of the sudden a ferocious roaring bear appeared in front of them and the white hawk flew away again. Ariyori shot an arrow and pierced the bear's heart, but the bear ran away to the southeast. The white hawk flew away in the same direction as the escaping bear. Ariyori chased the two animals and spent another night in the mountain. That night he had a dream in which he saw an old woman who told him that the white hawk and the bear climbed the high peak of the mountain in the southeast. She advised him to follow the traces of the bear's blood. On the following day, Ariyori climbed the high mountain peak of Tateyama and came to a cave which the animals had entered. As he was approaching the cave he saw a light coming out of the cave. Surprised, Ariyori entered the cave where he saw a golden Amida Nyorai with the arrow in his heart. Amida was bleeding. Next to him was Fudō Myōō – the transformed white hawk.[35] Moreover, many buddhas and bodhisattvas were descending and flowers were falling from the sky. It was a scene of the Land of Bliss. Witnessing this scene, Ariyori cut his hair with his sword, threw away his bow and arrows, took off his hunter's attire and bowed his head. The buddhas and the bodhisattvas ascended back to the Land of Bliss on purple clouds. After that, Ariyori was left alone in pain and feeling weak, thinking

34 The story is from the temple lodge Sōshinbō 相真坊. It is paraphrased from a summary made by Fukue (Fukue, 2005: 20–27).

35 Fudō Myōō became important in Esoteric Buddhism and in the tradition of Shugendō. About the association between the worship of this deity and the Shugendō tradition in Tateyama, see Fukue (2005: 27). Worship of Fudō Myōō can be dated back to around the Heian period. Descriptions of this deity can be found in the Sutra of Dainichi *Dainichi kyō* 大日経 (724) and its commentary *Dainichi kyōsho* 大日経疏 (725–727). For more information about the worship of Fudō, see Miyasaka (2006) and Okada and Tsujimoto (1979).

of his sin of wounding the Buddha. He had repented of what he had done and made a decision to commit suicide *jigai* 自害. At that moment an anchorite, Yakusei (Yakusei sennin 薬勢仙人), appeared and gave him medicine for his weakness and worries. When Yakusei began to utter an incantation, an old Buddhist monk appeared in front of them, introducing himself as Jichō sennin 慈朝仙人. He revealed to Ariyori that Tateyama is a holy mountain encompassing nine paradises at its peak and 136 hells in its valley, rewarding good and punishing evil. He promised that Ariyori would be rewarded with endless blessings if he opened the mountain. Ariyori became a disciple of Jichō, changed his name to Jikō and practiced austerities. After he fulfilled a difficult 1000 days' ascetic practice of retirement inside a cave, he opened the mountain. Finally, he founded temples and in Ashikuraji he worshipped the triad of Amida, Shaka and Dainichi. He died at the age of 83.

Fig. 4: The apparition inside the Tamadono cave. Detail from a miniature copy of the Kisshōbō Tateyama Mandala (author's collection).

Based on the style of the language used in the legends compiled in *Tateyama ryaku engi* and their correspondence to the scenes depicted in mandalas affiliated with Ashikuraji, they were suggested to be the stories that might have been told during the explanation of the Tateyama Mandala (*etoki)* (Fukue, 2005: 19). For example, the story from the *Tateyama ryaku engi* describes how Ariyori entered the Tamadono cave facing the golden Amida bleeding from the wound caused by the arrow wound, and next to Amida was Fudō Myōō – the transformed hawk (Figure 4). Such a scene is depicted in twenty of the renderings of the Tateyama Mandala. To compare, the apparition inside the Tamanodo cave described in the version from the *Wakansansaizue* appears in only one mandala (from Saishōji).

The Realms of transmigration

The sacred topography of Tateyama also encompasses scenes inspired by the idea of the Six Realms of existence or transmigration:[36] Hell, Hungry Ghosts,

36 Another idea that has been identified within the scenes is the concept of the Ten Worlds *jikkai* 十界. In the four supplementary worlds dwell *shōmon* 声聞, *engaku* 縁覚, bodhisattvas and buddhas. The concept of the Ten Worlds (existing in all persons' hearts) adds four higher existences or 'worlds' to the Six Realms. The design of the Ten Worlds was copied and imported to Japan from China. It is common in the images of *Kumano kanshin jikkai mandala*, in which ten lines are stretching from the central character of *kokoro* 'heart' towards the Ten Worlds (or Realms). A significant idea of the cosmology of the Ten Worlds is that any person possesses the potential to attain Buddhahood (Kuroda, 2004). The paintings of the Kumano Mandala are dated to the 17th century. A text from the first half of the 14th century *Keiran shūyōshū* 渓嵐拾葉集 (referring to an unknown foundation legend) mapped the Ten Realms onto the Tateyama landscape. Because the textual reference to the Ten Realms mapped onto the Tateyama mountains predates the oldest surviving examples of the Kumano Mandala, it has been noted that the Ten Realms which may be recognized in the Tateyama Mandala were not necessarily inspired by the cosmology found in the Kumano Mandala (Hirasawa,

Animals, Humans, Asura and Heaven. In addition to beings from the Human realm such as pilgrims and religious professionals, scenes from the other realms that can be identified in the paintings of the Tateyama Mandala are introduced here, to demonstrate how they were situated in the topography of Tateyama.

Two beings are depicted in the upper part of the Tateyama Mandala floating above the Tateyama mountain peaks. Close to the scene are figures descending from heaven on clouds accompanying Amida (Figure 5). The scene is known as *raigō*.[37] It is commonly localized on the sides of Mount Jōdo 浄土山 or between the peaks of Mount Jōdo and Oyama 雄山. Amida is accompanied by Bodhisattva Kannon carrying a lotus pedestal,[38] and Bodhisattva Seishi. In other versions Amida descends together with the twenty-five bodhisattvas, but there are also images portraying twelve (including Seishi and Kannon it is fourteen), eight, six or five bodhisattvas accompanying Amida.[39]

The Asura Realm, or the Realm of fighting spirits, is located near Mount Tsurugi in some of the paintings, in others near the Blood-Pool lake, and alternatively, altogether remote from these spots. Scenes from this realm depict fighting warriors, and interestingly they also include a demon beating a drum and a male figure cutting his belly (Figure 6, Figure 7).[40] There are images portraying the scene with the fighting warriors and the figure performing *seppuku* in the Asura Realm in which the demon hitting the drum is missing (Figure 2, Figure 8 and Figure 9).[41] Alternatively, the demon hitting the drum accompanies the warriors

Fig. 5: Amida accompanied by the twenty-five bodhisattvas. Detail from a miniature copy of the Kisshōbō Tateyama Mandala (author's collection).

2012: 101–103). More details about *Kumano kanshin jikkai mandala* can be found, for example, in Kuroda (2004) and Takasu (2007).

37 The concept of *raigō* will be explained in more detail in the following chapter.

38 The pedestal is meant for a dying person who will be reborn in the Pure Land.

39 Takase (1981) has noted that the five-coloured cloud is common in depictions of the heavenly realm. However, in the case of the Tateyama Mandala such a cloud is depicted only in the image from Daisenbō (B). The clouds on which heavenly beings are descending from heaven in the Tateyama Mandala are mostly two-coloured.

40 In Japanese this act is known as *seppuku* 切腹 – an act commonly associated with the class of Japanese warriors. The scene is depicted in the paintings from Raigōji 来迎時 (late Edo period, dated before 1830, 4 parts), Tsuboi-ke A 坪井家 (dated before 1830, 4 parts), and Kinzōin 金蔵院 (4 parts, unknown date of production). The motif of the demon with a drum and the scene of *seppuku* are not particular to the Tateyama Mandala. They are depicted for example in the images of the Kumano Mandala: *Kumano Mandala Hon Kumano kanshin jukkai zu*, kept in Dairakuji (Edo Period, 18th century), the Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of History (Edo Period, 17th century), and in Rokudō Chinkōji (Muromachi Period, 16th century). Another example is *Hon Jizō jūō zu*, (property of Dairakuji, Edo Period, 18th century, 8th of 11 parts). For studies which take as their subject the *seppuku* and other acts of self-immolation and their association with rebirth, see for example Blum (2009) and Moerman (2007, 2005).

41 In the renderings of the Tateyama Mandala from Nishida-ke 西田家 (4 parts, unknown date of production) and Tōgenji 桃源寺 (4 parts, unknown date of production). The demon is also missing, for example, in the images of *Hon rokudō jūō zu* (kept in Shōzenji, 17th century, 3rd plate of 7) or *Ōjō yōshū e maki* (15th century, third scroll: Asura Realm).

but the motif of *seppuku* is missing.[42] Finally some of the paintings portray solely the fighting warriors.[43]

Within studies discussing the Six Realms, the Asura Realm has been somehow overlooked.[44] However, an analysis of the passage from the *Ōjō yōshū* addressing the Asura Realm revealed a reference to the drum and the tearing of bodies:

> 'Fourth, there are two explanations for Asura Realm. Those who are supreme dwell at the bottom of the ocean, north from Mount Sumeru. Those who are inferior dwell in the steep mountain, which is within the Four Great Islands. When thunder rumbles, they (the creatures in the Asura Realm) think it is the drum of gods, which causes great fear and trembling and grief (among them). Further, many gods intrude upon them, (and they) either tear their bodies or lose lives. And every day, three times, weapons appear from somewhere and hurt them, there is a lot of lamentation and suffering, there is so much of it, that I cannot explain all.'[45]

Fig. 6: Detail from the Kinzōin Tateyama Mandala originally published in the Tateyama Museum of Toyama (2011). Image reproduced with permission from the Tateyama Museum of Toyama.

Fig. 7: Detail from the Tsuboi-ke A Tateyama Mandala originally published in the Tateyama Museum of Toyama (2011). Image reproduced with permission from the Tateyama Museum of Toyama.

This passage of *Ōjō yōshū* may be seen as an explanation of the motif of the demon hitting the drum and the scenes of *seppuku*. In addition to this literary source of inspiration for the scene, the medieval tradition of warrior suicide may have played a role in the visualization of the Asura Realm. Therefore, in accordance with the explanation given by Wang (quoted above), the practice of *seppuku* seems to be a part of the contemporary '*world* picture'.

Hungry Ghosts are easily recognized in the paintings thanks to their protrusive bellies. They are trying to eat rice or drink water, but everything they touch changes to fire (Figure 3, Figure 8 and Figure 9). Their pitiful condition is the result of human greed, ignorance and avarice (Matsunaga and Matsunaga, 1972:77). They are damned to be hungry and thirsty unless a rite of merit transference is held on their behalf or food and drink are given to them in a ritual way in the *segaki* rite.[46] The ghosts are situated on the plateau

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42 For example, in the images of the Tateyama Mandala from Tateyama machi 立山町 (4 parts, unknown date of production), Senzōbō 泉蔵坊 (4 parts, unknown date of production), Etchū Tateyama kaizan engi dai mandala 越中立山開山縁起大曼荼羅 (kept in Toyama kenritsu toshokan, 4 parts, unknown date of production), Daisenbō B 大仙坊, (4 parts, unknown date of production), Ryūkōji 龍光寺 (4 parts, unknown date of production), Etchūshorin 越中書林 (1 part, unknown date of production), Hōsenbō 宝泉坊 (4 parts, 1858), Kisshōbō 吉祥坊 (4 parts, 1866), Tsuboi-ke B 坪井家 (4 parts, unknown date of production) and Saeki-ke 在伯家 (4 parts, unknown date of production).

43 These are the versions of the Tateyama Mandala from Itō-ke 伊藤家 (2 parts), Takeuchi-ke 竹内家 (4 parts), Shōnenji A 称念寺 (1 part) and Chūdōbō 中道坊 (4 parts).

44 An exception is a study of the 13th century rendering of *Rokudōe* from *Shōjuraigōji* made by Takasu (2005: 50–51), which touches on the topic.

45 This part is translated by the author based on the original text in Ishida (1970).

46 As was already mentioned on page 40, the rite has its origin in the story of Mokuren as described in the text of the sutra known as *Urabon kyō*.

known until the present time as *Gaki no ta* 餓鬼の田 the 'Fields of the Hungry Ghosts'.

Some motifs from the realm of the Hungry Ghosts were inspired by folk tales. An example of this is the scene of a hungry ghost who gives a white robe to a monk practicing his ascetic training in Tateyama. The hungry ghost asked the monk to show the robe to his daughter and to tell her to perform a rite *hokke hakkō* 法華八講 on his behalf (Fukue, 2005: 53).[47] The white robe is proof of their encounter. Yet another scene shows a hungry ghost who gives a sleeve of his robe to a monk as evidence of their encounter (Figure 3).[48]

Animals and partly human-partly animal bodies portrayed in the paintings around the realm of hell belong to the animal realm (Figure 3). A frequent motif in the Tateyama Mandala is an ox-headed monk (Figure 3, Figure 9). As with many other monks in didactic medieval tales, his ox head is punishment for making his living out of the offerings of believers (Hirasawa, 2012: 104, Fukue, 2005: 53–54). Such stories portray the animal realm as a space for retribution against clerics who failed to live respectable lives. However, it has also been noted that stories such as those of the travels through the Six realms and back described in the *Fuji no hitoana sōshi* (around the 17th century) and *Chōhōji yomigaeri no sōshi* 長宝寺よみがへりの草子 (dated between the 15th and 16th centuries) suggest a connection between rebirth in the animal realm and the guilt of attachment of parents to their children (Keller, 2006b: 191–193).

Like the other realms, the hells in Tateyama Mandala are localized in the real terrain of Tateyama within the valley with sulphur springs. In a like manner, the Blood-Pool Lake and the Cold Hell were identified with real lakes in the mountains, and the Sword (needle) mountain with Mount Tsurugi.

Fig. 8: Detail from the Tōgenji Tateyama Mandala originally published in the Tateyama Museum of Toyama (2011). Image reproduced with permission from the Tateyama Museum of Toyama.

Suffering in the hells

The mandalas depict scenes from the eight Great Hells, scenes from some minor hells, the trial in front of King Enma and the hells intended specifically for women or children. It is possible to identify sinners being crashed in between rocks, secured by chains, the damned tortured in the lakes, demons stretching out the tongues of sinners with pliers, demons grinding sinners inside a mortar, cutting

47 During the rite *hokke hakkō* 法華八講 the Lotus Sutra was divided into parts and recited. According to Moerman, it was one of the popular Buddhist ceremonies of the Heian period. The merit accumulated through the ceremony was transferred to the dead (Moerman, 2005: 57).

48 Presenting the robe or the sleeve of a robe of a deceased as proof of an encounter is a common motif in the medieval and early modern stories about helping the deceased. On similar motifs, see Tsusumi (1999) and Glassman (2009: 193).

Fig. 9: Detail from the Nishida-ke Tateyama Mandala originally published in the Tateyama Museum of Toyama (2011). Image reproduced with permission from the Tateyama Museum of Toyama.

them into pieces on a table, pouring liquids on the sinners' bodies or through their bodies, carrying the bones of the sinners in a pan, nailing and skewering the sinners' bodies, boiling them in cauldrons and sawing sinners in half, as well as children collecting pebbles and snake-like women and women soaked in the Blood-Pool Lake.

Scenes depicting sinners being cut into the pieces or boiled in the cauldrons represent scenes from the Hell of Revival. These scenes illustrate the punishment for those who killed (Fukue, 2005). Sinners here are smashed with a hammer or cut and boiled in a pot. Moreover, they are revived to undergo the pains repeatedly. In one of the minor hells of the Hell of Revival, there is a forest with trees of sharp twin-bladed swords (Matsunaga and Matsunaga, 1972: 107). This is a minor hell which is known as Sword (Needle) mountain (Hirasawa, 2012: 97–98; Tateyama Museum of Toyama, 2011). The paintings of the Tateyama Mandala portray Sword Mountain as Mount Tsurugi (Figure 9).

According to Matsunaga and Matsunaga, the main cause of suffering in the Black Rope Hell and its subdivisions is punishment for stealing, but also the use of 'objects of which an individual is unworthy or undeserving' (Matsunaga and Matsunaga, 1972: 86). One of the descriptions of the Black rope hell is as follows:

> '...black iron ropes are stretched across the mountains of the hell with boiling cauldrons placed beneath them. The demons of the hell force the sinners to carry heavy iron bundles on their backs and walk across the rope until eventually they topple and fall into the cauldrons below where they are boiled' (Matsunaga and Matsunaga, 1972: 86).

Such a scene is depicted in two images of the Tateyama Mandala (version from Kurobe kankō Co. Ltd. and Saishōji). However, in these renderings the ropes are secured on pillars instead of mountains. The sinners shown, each laden with a large stone on his back as they climb on the ropes.

Sinners who fall into the Hell of Assembly are guilty of killing, stealing and sexual indulgence. There is yet another hell related to the image of the swords. It is one of the minor hells called the Sword leaf forest. In this case, Mount Tsurugi is depicted with a beautiful woman near the mountaintop and the sinners climbing the sharp barbed surface of the mountain. An example of such scene can be found in the renderings of the Tateyama Mandala from Sōshinbō A, Kinzōin and Tsuboi-ke A. Driven by their lust, the sinners ascending to the top cut their bodies.

A similar scene, depicting a tree with a beautiful woman (or a man) on top, comes from the minor hell known as *Tōyōrin* 刀葉林. As in the Sword leaf forest, the sinners in their desire climb up and down the tree which cuts their flesh with its blade-like branches. Such a tree is depicted in the versions of the Tateyama Mandala from Kisshōbō, Hōsenbō and Etchū Shorin.

One more recurring scene from the Hell of Assembly in the Tateyama Mandala portrays the bodies of sinners being ground with a pestle inside a huge mortar by the demons (Figure 9).[49]

Those who, besides killing, stealing and sexual indulgence, drank intoxicants are punished in the Hell of Screams. Demons torture the sinners by pouring molten copper into their mouths which then flows through their bodies and burns their organs (Matsunaga and Matsunaga, 1972: 90). Scenes of a demon punishing a sinner by pouring a burning liquid into his or her mouth are portrayed in some images of the Tateyama Mandala.

In addition, sinners who beguiled others into drinking alcohol are burned inside an iron room in one of the minor hells (Fukue, 2005: 49; Tateyama Museum of Toyama, 2011). This hell is probably depicted in the scene portraying a room or a small roofed house on a rock with an iron entrance engulfed by fire (Figure 3). This motif is depicted in the renderings of the Tateyama Mandala from Zendōbō, Daisenbō A and Sōshinbō B.

The Hell of Great Screams is a place of torments for those who killed, stole, committed sexual indulgence, drank and lied. Using iron pliers, the demons pluck out the sinners' tongues which grow again and again, so their suffering has no end.[50] This scene is common in the Tateyama Mandala images (Figure 3, Figure 9).

The Hell of Incineration is designated for those with varieties of false views. For instance, those who rejected or denied the teaching about cause and effect (Matsunaga and Matsunaga, 1972: 94). According to Matsunaga and Matsunaga (1972), these sinners include those who set fires in order to please the fire god and hoped that in this way they would reach a deva heaven. Punishment for those who please the fire god is being forced to witness how their loved ones, such as their wives, friends and parents, burn in flames (Matsunaga and Matsunaga, 1972: 95).

Fukue mentions that in the Hell of Incineration, the demons skewer the bodies of the sinners and grill them (Fukue, 2005: 50). Such punishment appears in the text of the sutra *Bussecu Mokuren kyūbo kyō* 仏説目連救母経, according to which Mokuren finds his mother in the deepest hell skewered over a fire and burned (Fukue, 2005: 51). The story of Mokuren shows that the motif of punishment by skewering is also linked to the deepest of the hells – the Hell of No

49 Fukue suggests that the tools used for grinding represent sexual organs (Fukue, 2005: 47). In Japan, the process of making *mochi* (rice cake dough) is associated with the idea of reproduction, while the tools used for the production – pestle and mortar – are connected with the idea of sexual organs. (An example of such association may be seen in a Kabuki play called *Dango uri* 団子売り).

50 Hirasawa and Fukue have specified this place of punishment as *Jumuhenku* 受無辺苦 (Hirasawa, 2012: 91–92; Hirasawa, 2008: 10; Fukue, 2005: 49 and Tateyama Museum of Toyama, 2011).

Interval. Moreover, as Fukue has noted, scenes depicting Mokuren overlap in the paintings of the Tateyama Mandala with scenes depicting Ariyori facing the punishment of his mother skewered on a fork over the burning flames in the Hell of No Interval. Such overlapping of motifs serves as an example of a blend of local and Buddhist knowledge in the paintings as described by Wang.

Another scene from the Hell of No Interval depicts the figures of human bodies falling upside down to the flames or cauldrons (Figure 3). The sinners have been falling down to this place for 2000 years (Matsunaga and Matsunaga, 1972: 99). However, there is an alternative way of transport to this hell – a fire carriage (Fukue, 2005: 51). Demons pulling the fire carriages with the sinners are a frequent motif of the Tateyama Mandala (Figure 3, Figure 9).

Besides concrete scenes from hells, in some images of the Tateyama Mandala the space related to the hells is represented simply by flames. Alternatively, the hell is indicated by a legend with an inscription, or by combination of both the flames and the legend. These differences between the simplified and the rich versions have been ascribed to the different roles of the two villages associated with the Tateyama cult, presuming that the mandalas with the rich motifs were used in the proselytizing of the cult around the country (Hirasawa, 2012: 40).

This chapter has presented the Japanese way of visualizing the cosmological concepts interconnected with the real topography of the Tateyama Mountain Range. Scenes portrayed on the Tateyama Mandala are inspired by various Buddhist concepts, the texts of various sutras and legends projected onto the familiar terrain of Tateyama. However, besides these textual sources of inspiration and narrations, the mandalas also refer to various ways of influencing rebirth in the realms of samsaric existence. Among the motifs depicted in the images of the Tateyama Mandala are rituals such as *segaki*, the *Cloth Bridge Consecration rite*, *nagare kanjō* 流れ灌頂,[51] and the rites related to the Blood-bowl Sutra. These practices, related to endeavours to influence rebirth, are the focus of the next chapter.

51 It may be translated as 'flowing anointment' or 'flowing consecration', see an explanation later in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III: **THE TATEYAMA CULT**

This chapter will look at religious practices that aim to affect people's fate in the afterlife, and more narrowly at some religious practices intrinsic to the Tateyama cult. The case of this pilgrimage site will serve as an example of how such rituals and ideas have spread around the country. Furthermore, as the current work views religious practices also as a means of financial support for pilgrimage sites, this section introduces religious practices as linked to the conditions under which the Tateyama cult was sustained, declined and finally vanished.

Aspirations for rebirth in Heavens

One of the highly influential works in the context of concepts of the afterlife and ways of influencing the inexorable karmic doctrine is Genshin's *Ōjō yōshū*. Genshin completed this work in 985. His treatise on *ōjō* 'rebirth' influenced not only the imagination of hells but also the way of dying itself. This was because in his work Genshin included instructions for rituals enacted at the last moments before death which could have an impact on rebirth. They are known as deathbed practices. Moreover, *Ōjō yōshū* had its role in popularizing devotion to the belief that one could be re-born in 'the Pure land of Utmost Bliss in the west' (Horton, 2009; Stone, 2009).

Genshin was a leader of a society called *Nijūgo zanmai-e* the 'Twenty-five Samādhi society' on Mount Hiei. This society began a dramatic performance of *mukaekō* 迎え講 rituals. These were rituals during which a deathbed practice was enacted. Such rituals are strongly related to the idea of the Pure Land. Participants enact the scene of *raigō* 来迎 where a buddha descends from the heavens to welcome a deceased person and escort her to a paradise. It is very important

to perform such deathbed practice in the right way in order to achieve a pleasant rebirth in one of the paradises (Stone, 2009, 2007; Horton, 2009).[1]

Such a *raigō* scene depicting the descent of Buddha Amida with Bodhisattva Kannon and Bodhisattva Seishi, or of Amida accompanied by a retinue of twenty-five bodhisattvas, became a typical motif in the Tateyama Mandala.[2] Therefore this concept deserves some explanation.

According to studies by Horton (2009) and Ten Grotenhuis (1983), the concept of *raigō* has its origin in Central Asia and China and developed from an earlier idea of Buddha appearing to a person. This idea is known in Japanese as *genzen* 現前. The first text that used the term *raigō* was 'Sūtra of contemplating the Buddha of immeasurable life' *Kanmuryōju kyō* 観無量寿経 (Horton, 2009: 29; Ten Grotenhuis, 1983: 61).[3] This text seems to be relevant to the development of *raigō* because its commentary was quoted by Genshin in his instructions on deathbed ritual (Horton, 2009: 32). This sutra contains a story of an Indian prince who imprisoned and attempted to murder his parents. When his mother begged Buddha Śākyamuni for a hope for salvation, she had a vision of the paradises of the ten directions and she expressed her wish to be born in the Western Paradise. The Buddha revealed to her a practice of sixteen meditations (or contemplations) which would lead to a birth in the Pure Land.[4]

The main commentator on this sutra was Shandao, a Chinese patriarch, who lived in the 7th century. He explains a series of meditations (also contemplations) which lead to nine various degrees of birth in the Pure Land. Each of these degrees is associated with an image of *raigō* (Buddha coming to welcome and escort the deceased). However, in each of the births the image of *raigō* differs.

Ōjō yōshū, Horton (2009) argues, was the first text to focus on the *raigō* scene. The scenes of *raigō* were produced as painted images and were used in deathbed rituals. According to a description of one such ritual in *Ōjō yōshū*, the dying person would hold threads attached to an image of the Buddha at the moment of death (Horton, 2009:41).[5] Horton also notes that performing the *raigō* scene in

1 For more details about the practice of deathbed rituals and *mukaekō* rituals, see studies written by Stone (2009, 2007) and Horton (2009).

2 Sanskrit equivalents for the triad of Amida, Kannon and Seishi are: Amitābha, Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta.

3 Studies date the composition of this sutra to around the 5th century in Central Asia (Horton, 2009: 29; Ten Grotenhuis, 1983: 61). The concept of Amida appearing to or welcoming the deceased also appears in *Muryōju kyō* 無量寿経 (Sukhāvatīvyūha sūtra) and *Amida kyō* 阿弥陀経 (the Smaller Sukhāvatīvyūha sūtra), but not as the whole concept including escorting to the Pure Land (Horton, 2009: 29).

4 For images known as the *Taima mandala* depicting iconographic rendering of *raigō* based on this sutra, see Ten Grotenhuis (1983).

5 According to the Diary of Fujiwara no Munetada (12th century), a *Gōshō mandala* 迎接曼荼羅 (*gōshō* are mandalas depicting a *raigō* scene) was used during the *gyakushu sai* rite, while the Diary of

mukaekō rituals had moved from the original place of the society *Nijūgo zanmai-e* at Mount Hiei to Kyoto (between 966 – 1027) and to locations associated with death. Meanwhile, the rituals gradually took on various forms.

It is here, where we can observe a link between these rituals and the Tateyama cult – a locality associated with death and with a ritual known as the Cloth Bridge Consecration rite, specific for the village of Ashikuraji. The Cloth Bridge Consecration rite *Nunobashi* (or *Nunohashi*) *kanjō e* 布橋灌頂会[6], an important motif in the Tateyama Mandala, shares some characteristics of ritual enactments of Buddha Amida accompanied by the bodhisattvas welcoming a dead person who is reborn into a paradise.

Before turning to a further explication of the Cloth Bridge Consecration rite, some other rituals for women, aware of the blood pollution they cause and the terrifying fate assigned to such sin, will be discussed here.

Unblessed women

Because the female supporters were unable to take part in the ritual ascent of the mountain, the representatives from Tateyama distributed to them texts of the Blood-bowl Sutra (Fukue, 2005: 8; Kodate, 2004: 133). Women were not able to perform the mountain pilgrimage because they were not allowed to enter the mountains. This restriction called *nyonin kinsei* 女人禁制 or *nyonin kekkai* 女人結界 was not only the case in Tateyama but also for other worshipped mountains around Japan.[7]

Women turned to the Blood-bowl Sutra for help because they were worried about their afterlife. Formanek mentions that those who climbed Tateyama could help their female relatives by throwing a copy of the Blood-bowl Sutra into the Blood Pool at the top of the mountain[8] to save them from sufferings in the Blood Pool Hell (Formanek, 1998: 171). Moreover, Tateyama offered to women

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Taira Nobunori mentions *Amida Butsu jukkai mandala* 阿弥陀仏十界曼荼羅 (associated with the concept of the Ten worlds) as part of the rite (Kajitani, 1974: 85–86). For more information on deathbed practice inspired by *Ōjō yōshū*, see Stone (2009).

6 Also *Nunob(h)ashi daikanjō hōe* 布橋大灌頂法会.

7 In these expressions, *nyonin* stands for 'women', *kinsei* has the meaning of 'prohibited' and *kekkai* can be translated as 'enclosed world'. For information about the restriction, see Ushiyama (1996). He gives two reasons for such restriction: one was based on the idea of ritual purity – in this case, men also had to observe purification, for example at Mount Kinpusen in Kumano, by fasting before entering the mountain. Another reason was aimed at maintaining the monastic precepts. For restriction in Kumano see also Moerman (2005), and for Tateyama see Fukue (2005). Similarly, Ambros (2008) mentions the prohibition in Ōyama.

8 It is located at Murōdō, around 2500 metres above sea level.

the possibility to participate in purification rituals at the foot of the mountains and rituals such as *nagare kanjō* (flowing consecration) or the 'Cloth Bridge Consecration rite'.

In the ritual of *nagare kanjō* a wooden memorial stake was placed into the river on behalf of a woman who died in childbirth. It stayed in the river until the flowing water washed away its writing and the woman was then believed to be saved (Hirasawa, 2012: 138–139). In his description of *nagare kanjō,* Glassman (2009: 185) mentions some varieties in this practice such as floating banners, which were floated out to sea and rivers; standing short wooden slat-stūpas; and hanging a rope from the side of a bridge. The most common practice was the suspension of cloth on two or four poles above a river or along a roadside. This custom is also described by Kodate (2004) who notes that this ritual was performed in many variations. An example given by Kodate adds some details of the materials used in *nagare kanjō* such as the red colour of the cloth and the poles made from bamboo (Kodate, 2004: 133).[9] The practice of *nagare kanjō* can be also identified in the images of the Tateyama Mandala.[10]

The Cloth Bridge Consecration rite

The Cloth Bridge Consecration rite appears on the mandalas of the Ashikuraji filiation. Based on the mandalas and contemporary period documents, it is known that the rite took place in Ashikuraji, at the foot of the mountains, between the Enma Hall (the hall of King Enma) and the Uba Hall (the Hall of the mountain goddess Uba). The rite started in the Enma Hall with a ritual expiation of sins and continued by crossing the bridge, covered with a white cloth, between the Enma Hall and the Uba Hall. On their way to cross the bridge, the participants were guided by an escort group *indō shū* 引導衆. At the bridge, the participants met with a welcoming group *raigō shū* 来迎衆 and then both groups proceeded to the Uba Hall. After the participants reached the Uba Hall, a ritual was performed inside the hall. Then, the participants walked out from the Uba Hall, and accompanied by the priests, walked back via the Cloth Bridge towards the Enma Hall.

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9 Kodate explains that the ritual is also performed for the sake of the people who drowned or for those who have no living relatives to commemorate them (Kodate, 2004: 133).

10 The version of the Tateyama Mandala from the pilgrim lodge Nikkōbō日光坊 – Nikkōbō A – consists of a sole part depicting the wooden slats used in *nagare kanjō* and the Cloth Bridge rite. The wooden slats are also visible in the renderings of the Tateyama Mandala from: Tsuboi-ke B 坪井家, Saeki-ke 在伯家, Sōshinbō A 相真坊, Hōsenbō 宝泉坊, Kisshōbō 吉祥坊, Ryūkōji 龍光寺, Etchū Tateyama kaizan engi dai mandala 越中立山開山縁起大曼荼羅, Senzōbō 泉蔵坊, and Tateyama machi 立山町.

The origins of the rite are not clear. The documented history of the rite on the bridge dates to the year 1614. Documents from 1806 and 1614 both mention that the wife of Maeda Toshiie with the wife of Maeda Toshinaga paid a visit to the Uba Hall Middle Shrine at Ashikuraji and participated in a rite during which they crossed the 'bridge covered with white cloth' in 1614.[11] The circumstances of the observance of the rite at the bridge are not known. According to the Tateyama Museum of Toyama (2009: 46), it is possible that the wives came to perform a rite for the sake of the deceased Maeda Toshinaga, just as it is possible that they performed the rite for themselves as a pre-emptive act to avoid an unwanted rebirth, or to pursue a policy of appeasement regarding the priests from Ashikuraji.[12] Nevertheless, this is the first reference to a ritual covering of the bridge with cloth during a rite. The bridge appears in the documents simply as 'the bridge in front of the Uba Hall' or 'Ubadō Middle Shrine bridge', and also as *Ama no Ukihashi* 天の浮橋[13] (Fukue, 2006: 17; Hirasawa, 2012: 150). The name *Ama no Ukihashi* suggests an association with Shintō, however, the bridge was known under this name even at the time when the content of the rite points to its Buddhist character; only later on was the bridge referred to as 'the Cloth Bridge' (Fukue, 2006: 17). Fukue has also explained that although a reference to 'the Cloth Bridge in front of the Uba Hall' appears in a document from 1760, it was not until 1820, which was the year when the bridge was rebuilt, that the name 'Cloth Bridge' was established.

As already mentioned, the earliest reference to the rite is restricted to its name 'the Cloth Bridge in front of the Uba Hall'. There are no known details of the content of the rite until the year 1827. An analysis of twenty documents related to the rite within the time range of 1722 to 1859, made by Fukue (2006), revealed only that the rite was held during the autumn equinox and the documents also state that in 1840 the rite was accompanied by music.

Given the gaps in the records of the rite, it is difficult to claim any certain assessment of the influences on its enactment. Studies have noted that the name of the bridge, the name of the rite, as well as the content of the rite changed over time (Fukue, 2006; Hirasawa, 2012: 150; Averbuch, 2011: 16).[14] Analyses of the historical documents related to the rite revealed various associations such as its salvation aspect or ideas of pure lands, as well as practices of blood lineage linked

11 Fukue (2006: 16–17). See also Tateyama Museum of Toyama (2009: 46), Hirasawa (2012: 149) and Averbuch (2011: 16).

12 This was related to the historical military character of the Ashikuraji priests.

13 *Ama no ukihashi* is a mythological bridge that connects earth and heaven. By this name the bridge appears in the documents from 1722, 1795 and 1805 (Fukue, 2006: 16). The earlier document from 1674 mentions reconstruction of the bridge – Uba Hall Middle Shrine dated from the year 1590 (Fukue, 2006: 16; Hirasawa, 2012: 149).

14 For details, see Fukue (2006) and the Tateyama museum of Toyama (2009: 47–49).

to the Shingon tradition.[15] Furthermore, the rite was classified as a *gyakushu* rite (also known as a pre-emptive funeral).[16] Such rites, as was mentioned above, were associated with the afterlife but performed while the recipients of the merits were still alive (Gorai, 1991: 153–154; Hirasawa, 2012: 155). Practices of ritual death and rebirth indicate yet another influence – that of mountain veneration and the tradition of mountain asceticism known as Shugendō 修験道.[17] Moreover, the rite's connection to the worship of the local mountain goddess Uba provides an example of the mingling of local and Buddhist concepts.

Details from the historical documents analysed by Fukue demonstrate the heterogeneous aspects of the rite. The documents from 1842, for example, reflect the combination of Tendai Buddhist tradition and the esoteric Shingon tradition in the ritual (Fukue, 2006: 22). On the other hand, 'The Legend of the origin of the Uba of Tateyama' *Tateyama o Ubason ryaku yurai* 立山御うば尊略由来 suggests a role of the rite in protection of crops and also illustrates a combined Shintō and Buddhist character of the rite (Tateyama Museum of Toyama, 2009: 33–36). Fukue (2006) has suggested that the terminology used in the documents describing the rite indicates a Buddhist character of the ritual, specifically terms such as: *jōbutsu* 成仏 'become a buddha' or 'attain Buddhahood', *sokushin jōbutsu* 即身成仏 'become a buddha in this body' or 'to attain Buddhahood in this life' (1827), *kanjō shugyō* 灌頂修行 'consecration practice' (1827, 1832),[18] *gokuraku jōdo* 極楽浄土 western Paradise of Amida and *raigō* (1820, 1831).

The idea of *jōbutsu* emphasizes an association with the idea of rebirth. As expressed by Williams (2009: 217), it implies an escape from suffering in the hells and this world to a higher realm, often imagined as a Buddhist heaven or the Pure Land. Furthermore, according to one possible interpretation, the bridge represents a connection between this and the other world. The participants dressed in white attire are dead on a symbolic level and the group coming to guide them across the bridge represents Amida and his entourage escorting the deceased to the Pure Land. Such an understanding indicates a similarity with the *mukaekō* rituals described earlier.[19]

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15 Esoteric Buddhist tradition.

16 Translated as 'pre-emptive funeral' by Tanabe (1988: 40). Also referred to as a prophylactic rite (Glassman, 2009: 180).

17 For information about Shugendō in general, see for example books published in the edition of *Sangaku shinkō shi kenkyū saisho*, Sekiguchi (2009), Miyake (2001b, 2011), Miyake and Earhart (2001), Gorai (1989, 2008) and Lobetti (2014). The relation to the cult of mountains can be found in Hori (1966). See also Swanson (1981), whose study pays particular attention to the Yoshino-Kumano pilgrimage.

18 *Kanjō* is an expression used in Esoteric Buddhism (Fukue, 2006: 20).

19 The similarity with *mukaekō* rituals was noted by Hirasawa (2012: 152) and Averbuch (2011: 15). Both authors mention in this context a *mukaekō* ritual in Taima dera. The Cloth Bridge ritual has also been

However, the rite also seems to be related to the practice of ritual leading of the deceased to the other world known as *indō* 引導. Walter (2009) has stated that *indō* rites probably evolved in China and began as a Zen funeral practice in Japan. Later they were appropriated by other Japanese Buddhist traditions. In the Shingon tradition, such rites consist of an esoteric consecration rite called *kanjō* 灌頂.[20] Rituals of *kanjō*, which were originally performed to consecrate Indian kings, were adopted by Esoteric Buddhism and developed into rites of initiation, transmitting the dharma or ritual establishment of a connection with the Buddha. According to Walter, they became the most important aspect of the Shingon funeral rites, and Japanese Buddhist funeral rites in general (Walter, 2009: 267–268). Indeed, in the case of the Cloth Bridge Consecration rite the participants ritually established a connection with a deity. Moreover, according to Fukue, the rite served as a means of awareness of the Buddhahood innate to all people (Fukue, 2005: 113).

Besides the aforementioned similarities between the Cloth Bridge rite and *mukaekō* and *indō* rituals, the Cloth Bridge rite shows a characteristic of the Shingon *kechien* 血縁 (karma binding) rituals. This is because the rite has also been an opportunity to gain a promise of salvation by tying a karmic knot and establishing a blood tie *kechien* with Amida, Dainichi[21] or Uba (Averbuch, 2011: 13; Hirasawa, 2012: 178; Fukue, 2006: 15). To certify such a karmic knot, certificates of a blood lineage *kechimyaku* 血脈 were issued for the pilgrims to Tateyama. No certificates issued for the participants in the Cloth Bridge rite have survived, but woodblocks and envelopes for such occasions were preserved. Furthermore, documents of the Tateyama cult mention a distribution of the lineage certificates at the rite (Hirasawa, 2012: 156–157; Fukue, 2005: 109).

Fukue characterizes a *kechimyaku* as a charm which certifies an initiation into the proper way of a religious mystery (Fukue, 2005: 109). In his description of an Edo period Cloth Bridge rite, Fukue (2005) states that the charm was in a shape of a foldout bag imprinted with the words *kechimyaku* and *hennnyotennan* 変女転男 'transformation of a woman into a man'.[22] Inside the bag were 136 scrolls of the Blood-bowl Sutra. [23] Such a charm promised that a woman would

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compared to the *Ōkagura jōdo iri ritual* of the year-end festival *Hanamatsuri* in Okumikawa (Averbuch, 2011; Hirasawa, 2012; Gorai, 1991). Averbuch claims that the similarity is based on the element of purifying the path to the other world, while Hirasawa argues it is the term *Jōdō iri* (entering the Pure Land).

20 Sanskrit *abhiṣeka*. Some authors (Stone, 2009) have used the term 'esoteric initiation'.

21 In Sanskrit Mahāvairocana. The main Buddha of the Shingon tradition. This deity embodies the universe and is linked to the thought of the Mandala of the Two Worlds.

22 As was mentioned earlier, the idea of the transformation into a man was linked to the 'Sutra of Women Transforming and Achieving Buddhahood'. Averbuch suggested that this signified their spiritual male body (Averbuch, 2011: 16).

23 Gorai (1991) mentions that *henjōnanshi* 変成男子 (equivalent of *hennnyotennan*) and *ketsubon kyō charms* were given to pilgrims in Tateyama.

not fall into the Blood Pool Hell, and moreover, being reborn as a man, she could reach the Pure Land (Fukue, 2005: 109). Fukue (2005) has also argued that such practices indicate an association of the cult with the Shingon tradition. Similarly, Hirasawa (2012) associates the rite with the esoteric tradition, noting that the certificates contained a secret formula known as *hajigoku* (hell-sundering) and a magic formula used in Esoteric Buddhism, which eliminates sin or bad karma – *kōmyō shingon* 光明真言 (light mantra).[24]

Within the framework of rituals related to *kechimyaku* it should be mentioned that they have also been used in the Zen tradition of Buddhism as a special Zen lineage chart linking the newly ordinated precept to Śākyamuni Buddha. Through the Zen rituals of receiving *kechimyaku*, the participants were hoping for a magical transformation of karma (Williams, 2009: 217). Names of the participants were ritually connected to the Buddha by a red line symbol of the blood (and spirit) lineage. The *kechimyaku* were originally symbols of a lineage with the Buddha which was handed down from a master to a disciple. Later, however, (similarly to the *kōmyō shingon*) they became associated with the power of erasing evil karma and deliverance to a higher realm (Williams, 2009: 217).[25] Moreover, they too came to be used as magical talismans for participants in rituals. Because of such similarities, it is hard to specify the dominant tradition in the rite.

Scholars have also argued that the rite reflects a religious concept known as *niga biakudō* 二河百道 (two streams white path) (Gorai, 1991; Fukue, 2005).[26] The idea of *niga biakudō* is to be found in the sutra *Kangyōsho* 観経疏 (another name for *Kanmuryōju kyō*) in a section called *Sanzengi* 散善義 (Fukue, 2005: 115). The concept of *niga biakudō* uses an image of two river banks divided by a river as a metaphor for the Pure Land and this world. The northern stream of the river is filled with water and the southern stream with burning fire, yet there is a white path across the river, leading to the Pure Land. However, the pathway is thin as a string and those who look aside on their way might fall down. It was believed that those with heavy loads of sins would not be able to cross the bridge and would fall into the river below which was full of serpents, dragons and demons (Formanek, 1998: 172; Gorai, 1991: 182). Amida and Shaka, however, are calling

24 Also 'bright light mantra' (Walter, 2009: 250), 'the mantra of radiant light' (Stone, 2009: 66) or 'halo chant' (Williams, 2009: 214). It has also been used in death rites to empower sand and it is recited before and during the rite of sprinkling the sand on the body of the deceased person in the coffin, to ensure rebirth in the Pure Land (Walter, 2009: 253; Stone, 2009: 66).

25 According to Williams, this shift seems to have its beginning in Tokugawa Sōtō Buddhism.

26 Gorai refers to the same name of a bridge 'the Cloth Bridge' *Nuno hashi* at Mount Haku and stresses the similarity with *niga biakudō* rituals. An interpretation presented in an information pamphlet from the event in 2014 likewise introduced the ritual as related to the idea of rebirth in the Pure Land, *mukaekō* rites and the idea of *niga byakudō*.

on those who cross from the river banks. Only those with faith can pass. The faith in Amida and Shaka will help them to cross via the white pathway.[27]

Scholars have also viewed the rite as a journey to death, to paradise and back to this world based on similarities with Shugendō rituals (Gorai, 1991; Fukue, 2005; Tateyama Museum of Toyama, 2009; Hirasawa, 2012). The similarity is based on a classification of Shugendō rituals as *gishi saisei* 擬死再生 – rituals imitating death and rebirth, by Gorai Shigeru. Participants in Shugendō rituals enter a mountain area which is seen as the other world including hells and paradises. Entering a mountain area represents symbolic death. Austerities that are practiced on the mountains purify the practitioners and expiate their sins. When they leave the mountains they are re-born.[28] This symbolism has been actually enacted in embodied practices. In such a view, crossing the bridge, similarly to the ritual entering of a mountain area, is a symbolic passage from this world to death followed by a return to life.[29]

Uba

Although the aforementioned classifications convey the impression that the Buddhist tradition acquired dominance over the ritual, it also seems there was not a unified way of enacting the rite. One characteristic of the ritual which cannot be overlooked is a mixture of traditions, among them a connection with the local mountain deity Uba. As mentioned above, the participants at the Cloth Bridge rite were establishing a 'blood tie' with Amida, Dainichi or Uba.

Worship of Uba[30] has been an integral part of religious practices in Ashikuraji. Uba – a local deity of Ashikuraji – has been categorized as a mountain deity (mountain goddess) *yama no kami* 山の神 (Fukue, 2005) or an old woman of the mountain *yamanba* 山姥 (Hirasawa, 2012). Fukue (2005: 102) has argued that the

27 This explanation can be found in Fukue (2005) and Gorai (1991). This idea was also depicted in the *niga byakudō* paintings. This type of image shows two bodhisattvas at the river banks standing on the sides of a bridge leading over the stream of water and fire. According to Gorai, it is Amida who will save those who have faith. Further, the river is full of dragons and the pathway is thin as a string (Gorai, 1991: 182). The dragons in the river are depicted in some images of the Tateyama Mandala.

28 On this kind of interpretation of practices in Tateyama, see for example Formanek (1993: 171). In the mounatins of Dewa Sanzan and Yoshino-Kumano area, during the period of seclusion in the mountains the participants proceed through the Ten Worlds (the Ten Realms of transmigration) including the three evil realms *akudō*: the Realm of Hell, Hungry Ghosts and the Realm of Animals. While being ritually dead and reborn, they pass through the past, present, future, and the symbolic worlds of the Womb and the Diamond mandala (Watanabe, 2015: 3).

29 The passage through mountains during the Shugendō rituals is not limited to one interpretation. The mountain also represents the mother of the participant who is reborn inside the mother's womb and grows into a newborn.

30 Also *Onba, Unba* or *Umba*.

worship of Uba in Ashikuraji connects two characters of this deity; as a mountain goddess, she was linked to the veneration of the mountain Dainichidake 大日岳 (one of the peaks in Tateyama), as a water deity *mizu no kami* 水の神 she figured in the veneration of mountain rivers. Sculptures of Uba that have survived in various localities around Japan suggest that this type of mountain deity was not worshipped solely in Ashikuraji.[31] However, there are no traces of Uba worship in Iwakuraji.

During the Edo period, sculptures of Uba were worshiped in the Uba Hall in Ashikuraji. The portrayal of the Uba Hall as one of the motifs on the Tateyama Mandala images reflects the importance of Uba in the cult of Tateyama. Uba is depicted as an old woman with wide open eyes, sagging breast, in a sitting position with one knee raised and one leg crossed under her body. In some of the mandalas the sculptures of Uba are visible inside the Uba Hall. However, the number, the size or the expression of the Uba sculptures in the paintings varies. In a similar manner, references to the sculptures differ in the surviving documents. The oldest of the extant sculptures, inscribed with the year 1375, is currently kept in the Tateyama Museum with other Uba sculptures from the Uba Hall. Because the Uba Hall was destroyed, some of the Uba sculptures are still kept in the Enma Hall, in Ashikuraji.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Fukue identifies an overlapping of the motifs from the stories of Mokuren and Ariyori in the scenes from the Avici hell depicted in the paintings of the Tateyama Mandala. Studies of the *Tateyama daiengi* foundation legends have demonstrated the same combination in the story of Ariyori (Jikō).[32] In these accounts Uba figures as the mother of Ariyori (Jikō) and falls into the Blood Pond Hell. After Ariyori (Jikō) performs a rite to save her from the hell, she transforms herself into Uba (in the earlier version) or Nyoirin Kannon (in the later version of the legend).[33]

When the cult of the Ten Kings spread in the area, the character of Datsueba blended with the character of Uba (Hirasawa, 2012; Fukue, 2005).[34] In the images of the Tateyama Mandala, Datsueba is portrayed close to the Uba Hall in a style similar to that typical of the renderings of Uba. Associations of these two characters

31 See for example Fukue (2005).

32 Texts of the legend from Issankai (the earlier version) and from Senzōbō (the later version) (Hirasawa, 2012).

33 Because she was a local deity of Ashikuraji, her identity as Ariyori's mother is missing in the texts of *Tebikigusa* from Iwakuraji. Moreover, Iwakuraji disputed some of Ashikuraji's interpretation of Uba. While Iwakuraji's document *Tateyama tebikigusa* agrees with Uba/Datsueba's location near the Sanzu River, it also claims that considering her to be the tutelary deity of *Tateyama daigongen* is a misstatement (Hirasawa, 2012: 172).

34 The first legends manifesting the influence of the Cult of the Ten Kings on the Tateyama cult are considered to be *Ubadō dai engi* うば堂大縁起 (1779) (Tateyama Museum of Toyama, 2009: 43).

are also reflected in some of the Tateyama legends. Examples of this can be seen in the records of the legends *On-Ubason engi* 御うば尊縁起, which introduce Uba as a tutelary deity of *Tateyama daigongen* 立山大権現[35] – Amida, Shaka and Dainichi. According to the legends, while a child is inside her mother's body, Uba becomes a grandmother of the child and lends the child 7 pieces of a 9 *shaku* (30.3 cm) long placenta. When the person encounters Uba again, at the time of death, this time she appears as Datsueba near the Sanzu River (*Sanzu no kawa*) and makes a claim on the placenta borrowed during the pregnancy.[36] This story is followed by a fable about Ashoka's daughter. After she died, she reached the Sanzu River where she encountered Datsueba (Uba), who threatened her by taking off her robe. After this, Ashoka's daughter was revived, observed a *Nunohashi kuyō* rite at *Iwahashi* and finally she was reborn in the Tusita heaven. The story from *Ubason engi* was retold by Ashikuraji *shūto* (representatives of the Tateyama cult) to motivate potential participants at the Cloth Bridge rite (Tateyama Museum of Toyama, 2009: 44).

This idea of meeting Datsueba in the afterlife near the Sanzu River appears in the Scripture on Jizō and the Ten Kings *Jizō jūō kyō* and its commentary *Jūō kyō santanshō*. Based on the belief that Datsueba will ask those who face her at the Sanzu River for their robes, some practices developed to be ready for this encounter. This belief was ritually expressed, for example, in the practice of wearing a robe with imprinted sutras and charms or of enclosing such a robe with the deceased. People from Ashikuraji produced robes known as *kyōkatabira* 経帷子 (sutra robe). These robes were sewn by women from Ashikuraji from the cloth used in the Cloth Bridge rite. After the robes were sewn, men from Ahsikuraji imprinted them with various sutras and charms and the Ashikuraji *shūto* were selling them on their rounds through the country during visits to supporters of the Tateyama cult. Wearing or having such robe at hand secured an easy encounter with Datsueba (Fukue, 2005: 117–119; Tateyama Museum of Toyama, 2009: 44).

The two characters of Datsueba and Uba also meet in a ritual performed in Ashikuraji on the ninth day of the second month – the day on which festivals for the mountain deity were held around Northern Japan (Hirasawa, 2012: 170).[37] This rite, called *meshikae* 召し替え, is a ritual change of garments worn by Uba

35 *Dai* stands for 'great' and *gongen* expresses the concept of *honji suijaku*, which was mentioned before. In this case the local deity Uba is a local appearance of the original Buddhist triad: Amida, Shaka and Dainichi.

36 The story is retold in Tateyama Museum of Toyama (2009: 44). In a similar way, legends known as *Tengu dairi*, dated to the early 16th century, describe Datsueba as a guarantor of safe childbirth. She lends the newly born child a 'placenta cloth' *enakin* 胞衣巾. This item must be returned to her when they meet again on the bank of the Sanzu River (Glassman, 2009: 185).

37 The ritual for the mountain deity is still performed by men from Ashikuraji, however, it takes place on the 9th day of March. Women still perform the ritual exchange of the robes for the Uba statues in the Enma Hall on March 13th.

sculptures.[38] On this occasion a new robe for Uba was produced by women aged over sixty years.[39] By making a new robe for Uba, the women secured a safe encounter with Datsueba at the Sanzu River, when their death would come. It was suggested that based on such merit transfer, the rite of changing the robe of Uba sculptures may be interpreted as a pre-emptive ritual for one's own death *gyakushu kuyō* (Tateyama Museum of Toyama, 2009; Hirasawa, 2012).

The textual, along with the pictorial references to Uba underline her importance in the Tateyama cult affiliated with Ashikuraji. What is interesting is the association that the Tateyama *shūto* made between the characters of Uba, Datsueba and the Cloth Bridge rite. This element is noteworthy in the interpretation of the rite because it complements its above-mentioned Buddhist aspects. The example of the Tateyama cult also illustrates that religious practices, even at one site, were not homogenous throughout the premodern period.

Sustaining strategies

Painted images of the Tateyama Mandala were introduced to the people of the Edo period by representatives of the Tateyama cult who were wandering to distant places, visiting the cult's supporters and spreading the cult around the country. Scenes from this pilgrimage site were presented not just visually but they were accompanied by verbal explanations and stories.[40] This system of cult proselytizing stimulated its progress throughout the 18th century into the 19th century.

The system of relations that developed between the pilgrimage site, its proselytizers and supporters was not unique to Tateyama. Such a distinctive system of activity developed at many Japanese pilgrimage sites during the late 17th century (Ambros, 2008: 6).[41] Ambros (2008), in her comprehensive study on the Ōyama cult,[42] describes the development and activities of religious specialists who played

38 The practice now differs from the way it was performed in the Edo period. The details of the historical practice before the Edo period are not known. For more detail, see Tateyama Museum of Toyama (2009: 37–44).

39 This age, viewed as a boundary between this life and the afterlife, was a time of preparation for death. It is also an age of menopause, which may be seen as another reason why women were allowed to take part in the rite for the otherwise jealous mountain goddess. On the jealousy of the mountain goddess, see Hirasawa (2012: 163).

40 According to Hirasawa there are no known materials containing instructions for explanations of the images of the Tateyama Mandala. She is inclined to conclude that the explanations were partly improvised and partly adhered to some instructed form (Hirasawa, 2012: 45). See also Hirasawa (2012: 61).

41 A similar system was established at sites such as Kumano, Ise Shrines, Mount Fuji, Mount Haku, Dewa Sanzan and Ōyama.

42 Ōyama is a mountain in the Kantō area (an area of eastern Japan with Tokyo in its centre).

a central role in the popularization of mountain cults and pilgrimage sites (Ambros, 2008: 5). Religious specialists of this kind were known as *oshi* 御師. They were usually married owners of family lodgings for pilgrims visiting the mountain pilgrimage site (Ambros, 2008: 5). As Ambros noted, *oshi* in many cases derived from shrine priests and mountain ascetics, and so they were regarded as a subcategory of those groups; however, these professions do not characterize their roles as itinerant proselytizers. Every year they set up for a journey to close and distant places during which they visited supporters of the mountain cult (Ambros, 2008: 5).

Indeed, supporters of the Tateyama cult inhabited a wide area, extending to the Shinano 信濃 province (today's Nagano Prefecture), Owari 尾張 (the western part of present Aichi Prefecture) and even from such remote places as Edo 江戸 (present-day Tokyo) (Fukue, 2005; Hirasawa, 2012). In the case of Tateyama, the role of itinerant proselytizers was performed by representatives of the Tateyama cult known as *shūto* 衆徒 – owners of the pilgrimage lodgings in Ashikuraji village.[43] They undertook regular visits during the wintertime when it was not possible to set out on the pilgrimage because the mountains were not accessible.[44] During this journey, representatives of the Tateyama cult enjoyed the hospitality of their supporters, to whom they distributed amulets, white kimonos[45] and also medicaments, chopsticks and fans. On this occasion they also collected donations (Fukue, 2005: 8).

Ambros (2008) mentions regional differences that developed within the *oshi* systems by giving examples of *onshi* in the Ise Shrines, and *oshi* and the category of *sendatsu* 先達 – pilgrim guides from the Kumano area. While the *oshi* in Kumano provided lodging and ritual prayers, the *sendatsu* were acting as mediators between the *oshi* and the pilgrims (Ambros, 2008). Similarly, a division of roles took place in Tateyama. Responsibilities and rights for the two villages, Ashikuraji and Iwakuraji, involved in the cult of Tateyama were clarified after a trial which took place in 1711 (Fukue, 2005: 14; Hirasawa, 2012: 33). The trial ruled on the

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Similarly to Tateyama it was a well-known pilgrimage site in the Edo period.

43 The term *shūto* which will be used through this work is taken from the Museum of Tateyama and the numerous works of Fukue. As for the studies written in English: Hirasawa (2012) uses the term 'priests'. While Averbuch (2011), Glassman (2009) and Gorai (1991) use terms related to the tradition of Shugendō such as *oshi* and *sendatsu* (pilgrim guide).

44 Fukue states it was in the time of agricultural inactivity (Fukue, 2005: 8). Kodate notes that it was during the winter time when the mountains were inaccessible because of snow (Kodate 2004: 133). The area of the pilgrimage route is covered with snow from November until May.

45 A white kimono is designated for dead people, but it was also used during the pilgrimage in the mountains. The white colour of the kimono was probably used to symbolize death and rebirth during the pilgrimage journey. The same clothing is used by some groups of mountain ascetics today. Figures of the pilgrims in white clothing are also depicted in the Kumano Mandala and the Fuji Mandala (see, for example, Arichi, 2006: 343 and Moerman, 2005).

responsibilities and rights to spread the cult around the country as well as the right to access the mountain. As a result, people from Ashikuraji were in charge of visiting cult supporters and inviting pilgrims to Tateyama, while people from Iwakuraji were guiding the pilgrims through the mountains.

Nevertheless, in the later Edo period, *shūto* from Iwakuraji also gained the right to visit supporters of the cult and to receive donations for reconstruction of the temple buildings (Fukue, 2005: 10). Thus, representatives of both centres of the Tateyama cult would tour the country on determined routes (Formanek, 1998: 167). On the occasion of the visit they invited people from the neighbourhood to join a gathering where they displayed the Tateyama Mandala (Fukue, 2005: 9; Kodate, 2004: 133). In the style of narration they used, called *etoki*, the Tateyama Mandala served as a support in an effort to introduce the Tateyama cult to the audience. Besides this didactic function of the Tateyama Mandala, the gatherings at the houses of supporters of the cult were used as an opportunity to invite the male audience for a visit to Tateyama and to participate in the seasonal rituals and pilgrimage. Formanek's study of the Tateyama pilgrimage (1993) informs us that the laymen were promised by Tateyama *shūto* that:

> 'By ritual ascent of the mountain with the concomitant physical exhaustion, they would experience the torments of hell already during their lifetime and thereby reduce the weight of their sins. After having toured the Hells they would reach the *zange-zaka*, or Penitence Slope, where by confessing, they would further reduce their sins, until they finally reach the summits where they would experience the pleasures of the Pure Land and thereby obtain the promise of being reborn there.' (Formanek, 1998: 171).

Pilgrims thus experienced ritual rebirth on their way through the mountains and at the same time they were guided through the mountains following the legendary path of the founder Ariyori.

Uba as well as the Cloth Bridge rite are associated with Ashikuraji, which lost the right to guide male pilgrims through the mountains. In order to deal with this situation, Ashikuraji turned to women visitors (Hirasawa, 2012: 179). An interesting point in this enterprise is the tendency to associate Uba with the protection of women, which is also reflected in the transformation of the foundation legends (Hirasawa, 2012: 163).

Hirasawa has pointed to the contradiction of Uba's role associating her with women in the Cloth Bridge rite, and her early character as a mountain deity worshipped by hunters, therefore linking her with men. Her study also denoted the absence of a connection between the Uba character and protection of women before the Edo period; such a role was attributed to her only later when the cult began to provide special services for women. She suggested that development of

the cult towards women-orientated rituals might be related to Ashikuraji's loss of access to the mountains (Hirasawa, 2012: 179). The old pilgrimage path connecting Ashikuraji with the starting point of the mountain ascent was obstructed by a new road to the Tateyama hot springs completed in 1814. The road disconnected Ashikuraji from the pilgrimage path. Another disadvantage for Ashikuraji was caused by special exhibitions of treasures of Iwakuraji's temples and shrines known as *degaichō* 出開帳.[46]

What is of particular importance here is that the economic situation may have influenced the effort of Ashikuraji to appeal to women visitors (Hirasawa, 2012: 154) as well as the effort of Iwakuraji to organize special exhibitions. Similarly to Hirasawa, other studies have noted the significance of Ashikuraji's economic situation in the context of providing the Cloth Bridge Consecration rite for women and its promotion around the country (Hirasawa, 2012; Fukue, 1998; Averbuch, 2011). The economic situation of Tateyama and the strategies which developed to sustain the cult also suggest that the mercantile activities were part of the activities of religious centres already in the pre-industrial time.

Tateyama was not an exception. The situation was similar for other types of religious institutions in the Edo period. As was noted by Hur (2007), Buddhist temples which were economically insecure 'resorted to the business of prayer or votive rites, which generated income in form of prayer fees, donations, alms-giving' or the sale of amulets and talismans (Hur, 2007: 8). Elsewhere Hur likewise interprets *kaichō* as a 'lucrative means of public fundraising', a type of income to which many temples turned in early modern Japan (Hur, 2009: 45). Besides these sources of income, Hur (2007) mentions the popularity of 'miraculous Buddhas and Bodhisattvas' that were attracting crowds of visitors and pilgrims in the Edo period. The success of such activities 'owed much to the religious fashion of the time' (Hur, 2007: 9). By the same token, such promotional and commercial activities were important to the sustainability of the Tateyama cult.

In her study, Ambros (2008) addresses the issue of scholarly inclinations to interpret the mercantile activities of *oshi*, such as distributing of gifts together with talismans, as degeneration of the religious professionals connected to the cult. As she remarks, 'the mercantile activities of the *oshi* were not necessarily linked to a degeneration of the profession but were linked to their religious functions and helped them reaffirm their social networks' (Ambros, 2008: 8).

46 They began in 1819. The practice of exposition of sacred icons that are not seen by the public under normal circumstances is known as *degaichō or kaichō* 開帳. It was also frequently found in other areas during the Edo period (Reader, 2014: 4–5), for example, in the area of Chichibu and Tokyo. For more information, see Reader (2014) and Kornicki (1994). The same development is documented for the Ōyama cult, which already in the 17th century focused on providing rituals and display of sacred images (Ambros, 2008: 117).

Similarly to Ambros, Reader (2014) has been critical of approaches which view the mercantile activities as a degradation of religion. His criticism has been aimed in the direction of academic studies which tend to see commercialism as a negative trait of religion, particularly in the field of pilgrimage studies:

> '..., there has been a frequent tendency to treat the commercial dimensions of pilgrimage and its involvement with the marketplace as little other than disjunctions from the core issues in the field. Examples abound of how academic studies have portrayed the commercial, promotional and material domains of pilgrimage, especially in the modern day, as somehow contradictory to the "true" nature of pilgrimage' (Reader, 2014: 11).

Illustrating his analysis from cases concerning world pilgrimage sites, and paying special attention to Japan and pilgrimage in Shikoku, Reader demonstrates that the commercial and promotional activities of the pilgrimage sites may be viewed as 'essential and intrinsic features of pilgrimage, rather than intrusive external disjunctions to it' (Reader, 2014: 19).

Moreover, Reader has stressed that comfort gradually became part of the pilgrimage experience, which worked as an allurement for visitors to pilgrimage sites. Similarly, the study of Tsushima (2012) shows that inclusion of leisure activities in the mountain shrine visits was well established among Japanese people already in the 19th century.

In accordance with this line of analysis, studies of Tateyama have stated that the tastes of pilgrims were changing during the 19th century and that people were not coming to Tateyama for austerities, which were part of the ascent to the peaks of Tateyama, but preferred to visit the holy places at the foot of the mountain, where they got married or enjoyed its *onsen* 温泉 (spa) (Fukue, 1998: 70–72; Averbuch, 2011: 17). Such dynamics have also been shown by Formanek (1998) in her study of the Tateyama pilgrimage. Based on examples from 19th century pilgrimage accounts, Formanek demonstrates the institutionalization and commercialization of pilgrimage in the Edo period, when it had lost much of its ascetic character and with pleasure seeming to be as important, if not more important, than the religious goal.

Reader, however, warns against views that reduce pilgrimage into a consumerist endeavour. Rather, as he says, commercial agencies 'have been instrumental in the shaping of the pilgrimage market' and should be seen as 'formatting elements within the structure of pilgrimage' (Reader, 2014: 111). This, he reasons, is because they have widened the numbers of people who may participate in a pilgrimage.

Vanishing of the cult

In an effort to sustain the Tateyama cult, the pilgrimage villages responded to the 'taste' of current visitors by offering special services in addition to religious benefits. However, the situation of pilgrimage sites became complicated in the Meiji period because of the new government's political intervention in the structure of religious institutions in Japan. These reforms were aimed at weakening the state's ties with the Buddhist system that had supported the previous Tokugawa regime (Ambros, 2008: 207).

As a reaction against Christianity, the previous Tokugawa government established a certification system which proved association of a person with a temple. Beginning in 1613 with bans on Jesuit priests,[47] the Tokugawa government used Buddhist temples to monitor the populace through this temple certification system *terauke seido* 寺請制度. This system enabled those who underwent an inspection at a Buddhist temple to prove their non-Christian identity. Gradually, Japanese people were required to undergo a temple certification at the Buddhist temple with which they were affiliated (Hur, 2007: 14–15).[48] The system reached almost universal enforcement in 1671 (Cowell, 2009: 295; Rowe, 2011: 21). The annual temple certification system was the first step to the *danka* system, which provided financial support to Buddhist temples from the temple supporters, in Japanese known as *danka* 檀家.[49] This system of certification later anchored the connection between temple supporters and temples through the funerary services (Hur, 2007: 16–17).

In the spring of 1868, the new Meiji government opted to raise Shinto above Buddhism in order to reverse the reliance on Buddhist temple registration by the previous regime (Ambros, 2008: 207). With an aim of advancing Shinto as the state creed, a series of separation edicts *shinbutsu bunri rei* 神仏分離令 – disassociating Buddhism from Shinto shrines and worship – were issued by the new government (Rowe, 2011: 23). It was an attempt to establish a system with unity of rites and politics (Ambros, 2008: 207). The edicts which resulted in the suppression of Buddhism (Rowe, 2011: 21; Ambros, 2008: 207) had an impact on religious practices that combined Shinto and Buddhist tradition, such as the Tateyama cult.

The *danka* system continued in the Meiji era, but the family registration law from 1872 *jinshin koseki* 壬申戸籍 officially abolished temple certification and

47 The 'Order to expel the padres' *bateren tsuihōrei* 伴天連追放令 (Tamamuro, 2009: 16).

48 Hur (2007: 16) stresses that the registration of those who were inspected by a temple was executed by village or ward officials.

49 Hur (2007: 9) warns that the *danka* system is mistakenly translated into English as 'temple parish system', but while 'parish' indicates affiliation based on geographical setting, *danka* is not restricted by the location of the temple and its supporter. For more on this system, see Tamamuro (2009).

moved families outside of temple control (Rowe, 2011: 23–24). The new regime then destroyed the economic bases of Buddhist institutions by confiscating temple lands and undermining the temples' bonds with supporters of their cult by instituting Shinto shrine membership with supporters *ujiko* 氏子. Nevertheless, both the disassociation of *kami* and Buddhas and the suppression of Buddhism were processes that varied on the regional and local levels (Ambros, 2008: 208).

In the case of Tateyama, for example, in 1869 the Kaga domain authorities demanded reorganization of the Tateyama cult. The name of the shrine *Tateyama gongen* was replaced by the new name *Oyama jinja*. The Buddhist images and the Uba Hall were to be removed and the shrine precincts reorganized (Hirasawa, 2012: 187). Religious representatives from both villages were to become Shinto shrine priests and to stop identifying themselves as Buddhist monks, but they refused to do so and abandoned the role of priests completely (Hirasawa, 2012: 187). The Tateyama Mandala images depicting the Shinto deities (the versions from Sakaki-ke and Hōsenbō) illustrate the effort to sustain the cult in the Meiji period (Hirasawa, 2012: 191).

Another effect of the Meiji period reforms was that many temples were deprived of a critical source of income. Land reform efforts designed to end tenant farming and lead to an equitable distribution of land, further reduced the landholdings of most temples. In the following period, the temples were forced to rely on income from the performance of rituals such as funerals (Covell, 2009: 293). Moreover, after the Second World War, shrines and temples started to face a decline in the number of households who supported them financially.

In this critical condition in which religious institutions and pilgrimage sites found themselves in the 20th century, it becomes interesting to find out how these sites sustain or are reviving religious practices today. As illustrated above, the cosmology of hells which developed into rituals associated with wishful rebirth became insufficient in attract pilgrims and sustain the Tateyama cult. The fate of other pilgrimage and mountain sites related to religious practices was going in a similar direction. In their analyses of secularizing tendencies along with the decline in religious affiliation in contemporary Japan, some authors have turned their attention to funeral services as a way to fund Buddhist temples (Hur, 2007; Rowe, 2001; Covell, 2009). Taking this trend into consideration, the next chapter will focus on alternative ways of sustaining the mountain sites.

CHAPTER IV: **IN THE NAME OF RELIGIOUS-CULTURAL HERITAGE**

Among the striking traits of the present religious arena in Japan is an overlapping of religious and environmental issues and the debate on World (or Cultural) Heritage.[1] This chapter focuses on the process by which religious practices have started being ascribed with a cultural value. As a consequence of such evaluation, the same fusion of Shinto and Buddhism which was seen as an image of anti-progress and as a non-modern trait of Japanese religion by the Meiji government in the beginning of the 20th century becomes an acknowledged value recognized by the international community in the 21st century.

This trend is observable in present-day Tateyama. The first part of this chapter therefore places the case of re-enactment of an ancient ritual in Tateyama as well as religious practices related to the tradition of Shugendō into the framework of the debate on the concept of cultural heritage.

Some examples are given here to demonstrate that in the process by which religious practices became acknowledged as a cultural value, nature figures as a connective element in the relationship between religion and culture. The key word of this relationship is a unique cultural heritage of co-existence with nature.

1 This trend is not limited to Japan, it has been observed globally. See for example Aike (2015).

The case of Tateyama

The village of Ashikuraji, which played a crucial role in the Tateyama cult during the Edo period, became the object of studies made by Averbuch (2011) and De Antoni (2009) from which the account of the current work benefits. Averbuch carefully explains the economic and political conditions under which the Cloth Bridge rite has been re-enacted in Ashikuraji. Her study informs about the delicate issue of presenting the religious rite as a cultural event in order not to violate the Japanese law of separation of religion and the state. In addition, De Antoni, building on Appadurai's concepts, examines the role of the Tateyama cult in the process of creating local identity and community. Her work, focusing on the process of construction of identity and community in Ashikuraji, illuminates the reproductions and signification of narratives about the 'cult of Tateyama' with a positive value of the 'traditional' based on the previous social-economic dynamics of the village.[2]

Borrowing Appadurai's concept of *locality*, the current work extends the analysis of re-enactment of the Cloth Bridge rite discussed by Averbuch (2011) and it also touches the topic of commodification of religious practices.

Continuing practices in Ashikuraji

The Cloth Bridge rite is not the only practice related to the Tateyama cult that takes place in Ashikuraji. Every year on March 13th, ritual exchange of the robe for Uba, known as *meshikae*,[3] continues to be performed by local women in the Enma Hall (Figure 11). The ritual exchange of the robes is performed by the local Association of Women and attracts the attention of researchers, newspapers and local broadcasters (Figure 10). In the Edo period, the ritual was performed exclusively by women older than 60, but now the restriction is not strictly kept.[4] The new robes for the Uba statues are ritually sewn by hand – in a simple style of sewing without tying a knot, which is a style of making robes for the deceased (Figure 12, Figure 13). The robes are then taken to the local shrine Oyama jinja 雄山神社. Participants form a row and the procession moves from the Enma Hall towards the local shrine accompanied by the sound of a traditional drum

2 In a similar way Matsui (2012), for example, shows how the cultural value attributed to the Nagasaki heritage site attracts visitors and on the other hand causes changes in the self-reflection of Nagasaki groups.

3 *Meshikae* 召し変え was already introduced in the section above devoted to Uba.

4 I observed the ritual in 2013 and 2016. I was allowed to participate in the sewing of the new robes for the statues of Uba in the Enma Hall.

Fig. 10: Meshikae in 2014. Photograph by author.

(Figure 14, Figure 15). The robes are ritually purified there. The shrine priest chants texts and participants come to place a green branch of the sacred *sakaki* tree[5] decorated with white paper streamers as an offering for the kami (Figure 16). At the end everybody drinks the sake[6] served by the priest. The robes are then moved back to the Enma hall where a Buddhist ritual is held (Figure 18). While a Buddhist priest chants ritual texts, a wooden box containing a bowl of burning incense powder, fresh incense powder and a space for money donation is handed over by the participants. Each of the participants adds two pinches of the incense powder into the burning incense and donates money inside the circulating box. When the Buddhist ritual is over, one of the local women changes the robes of the statues placed on the altar. This moment catches the attention of the media. After the statues are dressed in the new garments, all the participants enjoy lunch inside the Enma Hall (Figure 21).[7]

5 A branch of the *sakaki* 榊, an evergreen tree (*Cleyera japonica*), is used in Shinto ritual offerings.

6 This Japanese alcoholic beverage, which is produced from fermented rice, is commonly used as a ritual offering.

7 The ritual is well documented by the Tateyama Museum of Toyama, see for example Tateyama Museum of Toyama (2009).

Fig. 11: The Enma Hall. Photograph by author.

Fig. 12: Sewing robes for the Uba statues (2014). Photograph by author.

The ritual of changing the robes of the Uba statues is preceded by another ritual gathering devoted to *yama no kami* on March 9th. In this case, only men gather in the precincts of the Shinpi jinja 神秘神社, which is a prayer hall *kigan-den* 祈願殿 of the local shrine Oyama jinja. On this occasion participants from the village and people enrolled in forest-related work come to ask the *yama no kami* for protection. In Ashikuraji it has been believed that if somebody enters the mountain before this ritual, the person will be at risk of a bear attack or an avalanche.[8]

The participants gather early in the morning at 5 am, bring some offerings for the *yama no kami* (including sake), make a monetary offering into an offertory box and light candles. Meanwhile the priest from Oyama jinja chants texts, signalling the beginning and ending of the chanting by beating a drum. The participants then present branches of the sacred *sakaki* tree to the kami and share sacred sake. At the end, large round rice cakes are distributed among the participants.

8 Information about this ritual comes from notes made by observers – representatives from the Tateyama town education committee, NHK (a national broadcaster), a local broadcaster, two local newspapers, as well as a conversation with one of the participants.

Fig. 13: A sample of the robe. Photograph by author.

Fig. 14: The procession moving towards the local shrine (2014). Photograph by author.

Fig. 15: The traditional drum. Photograph by author.

Fig. 16: The offering of *sakaki* (2016). Photograph by author.

Fig. 17: The priest from the Oyama jinja (2016). Photograph by author.

Fig. 18: The Buddhist ritual (2014). Photograph by author.

Fig. 19: Changing of the robes (2014). Photograph by author.

Fig. 20: Statues of Uba inside inside the Enma Hall. Photograph by author.

Interestingly, none of these continuing traditions became chosen as a local identity-creating ritual. That privilege was ascribed to a vanished ritual – once lost.

Re-enactment of the Cloth Bridge rite

As mentioned before, this ritual was popular in the Edo period, and was held for those who were not allowed, or were not able, to make the pilgrimage to the Tateyama Mountain Range. The re-enactment of the ritual was held for the first time in 1996. In a conversation with a researcher from the Tateyama Museum I was informed that the idea of re-enactment came from the former museum director – Yonehara Hiroshi. The idea was introduced to the Tourist Association of Tateyama town and discussed with the local people of Ashikuraji village.

Averbuch's study (2011) gives details of the negotiations about the re-enactment between the Tateyama town and Toyama Prefecture officials, Tateyama Museum and representatives from Buddhist sects who were asked to perform the rite. The rhetoric used by the organizers of the event in Tateyama illustrates

Fig. 21: The lunch inside the Enma Hall (2014.) Photograph by author.

how the concept of 'cultural event' has replaced the religious character of the ancient ritual.[9] As Averbuch has explained, the Cloth Bridge rite was renewed with the objective of investing the town with 'economic energy (*machi okoshi* 町起こし)' (Averbuch, 2011: 28). 'Aware of the risk in using government money for religious purposes' (Averbuch, 2011: 27), the organizers introduced the ritual as a *furusato* 古里 (故郷) tradition and as a cultural festival. In the editorial of the official report on the festival, they listed among the goals the promotion of Tateyama cultural heritage around Japan, and stated that the religious ceremony, which had not been practiced for 136 years, was revived as a 'local identity-creating' ritual. Furthermore, in the editorial they referred to the revived wisdom of their predecessors.[10]

Since 1996, the ritual has taken place six times in Ashikuraji village of Tateyama town, located in Toyama Prefecture. I participated in the re-enactment of the ritual in September 2014 (Appendix 2). The event was organized by local people, The Tourist Association of Tateyama town, and the local newspapers

9 On this topic see also Averbuch (2011).

10 *Dai 11 kai kokuminbunkasai Tateyama machi jikkō iinkai* (1997).

Kita Nihon Shimbun in co-operation with Japan Railways (JR).[11] JR made a special promotion under their campaign *Otona no kyūjitsu* 大人の休日 (Adult Holidays) aimed at people over 60 years old. Twenty participants out of 82 were attending the ritual via this special offer. Potential participants could apply via the internet but also through the local newspaper *Kita Nihon Shimbun* using a reply postcard. The ritual was later broadcast on the national television channel and the article in *Kita Nihon Shimbun* covered part of the first page inside the newspaper.

Interestingly, the rhetoric of the organizers has been changing from the original 'cultural festival', and later 'healing ceremony', to the rhetoric of 'spiritual culture'.[12] The organizers of the ritual in 2014 were looking for participants seeking peace of mind, emotional support and those who were interested in 'spiritual culture' or 'traditional culture' (Figure 23). The newspaper *Kita Nihon Shimbun* (2014a) referred to the event with the headline '3800 people touched (might be translated as felt) the belief culture', and characterized the rite as 'a look into one's heart (mind)' (Figure 24).

The Museum of Tateyama figures as an advisor for the event. The museum in its advertisement pamphlet challenged potential visitors to 'deepen their understanding of Japanese history and culture through the world of the Tateyama cult and nature' and called for participants who 'want to learn about the connection between the people of Tateyama and nature' (Figure 25). In the same spirit, a special exhibition of the Tateyama Mandalas by the Tateyama museum was held in 2011 with the aim of demonstrating to the current generation the lost sense of approaching nature (Tateyama Museum of Toyama, 2011: 3). The rhetoric of the museum and event organizers shows a discursive framework which stresses Japanese history, cultural heritage and connection with nature.

Neither the relationship with nature nor the topic of traditional culture, however, echoed in the narrations of the participants. The participants in previous re-enactments[13] as well as those whom I could talk to directly expressed diverse reasons for participation. A young participant with whom I talked was related to the village as a seasonal worker (finishing the season). She wanted to show her gratitude for completion of the working season in Tateyama and to say goodbye to the area. Another was motivated by a suggestion from a researcher at the Ta-

11 Tsushima (2012) situates the beginning of the interaction of the railways and the pilgrimage sites to the Showa era (1935 or 1950). He claims that the tradition of inclusion of leisure activities in mountain shrine visits might be seen as a reason behind expectations of interest from modern Japanese people in the mountain pilgrimage places and profit from the side of the management of the private railway companies.

12 For development of the rhetoric of the organizers of the ritual up to 2009, see also Averbuch (2011).

13 Averbuch (2011) demonstrates the religious character of narratives about experiences during the previous rituals.

Fig. 22: The poster in 2014.

Fig. 23: Information about the event (the poster in 2014).

立山・布橋灌頂会

自らの心 見つめ直し

女人衆 すがすがしい表情

3800人 信仰文化に触れる

Fig. 24: The newspaper article.

teyama Museum. There was also a participant from Korea, taking part in the rite for the purpose of her research.

Another reason was a birthday – a woman who participated in the rite for the second time expressed her intention to participate for each lived decade of her life. For the first time she crossed the bridge when she was twenty years old. This time it was her 30th birthday. Two other participants described their feelings about the ritual to me. They were stressing that the official term used for the campaign describing the rite as 'healing' is not an appropriate description of the experience they had. More than just a healing or an emotionally powerful feeling, as it was suggested by the organizers, they referred to it as a deeper, inner, religious *shūkyōtekina* 宗教的な experience.

The descriptions from participants referred to such feelings as: 'My mind (heart) has been cleansed (purified)' *kokoro ga arawareru kimochi* 心が洗われる気

Fig. 25: The Tateyama Museum poster.

持ち, and a fresh experience *shinsenna keiken* 新鮮な経験. Still another participant said that the moment of the ritual when the participants are exposed to light after praying in the darkness 'soaked into her mind (heart)' *kokoro ni shimimashita* 心にしみました.[14] A local woman who participated in one of the previous re-enactments confessed to me that at the moment of crossing the bridge she found herself in a surprising silence – all of a sudden all the sounds were suppressed, the sound of the crowd, river, music – describing it as 'a strange feeling' *fushigina kimochi* 不思議な気持ち.

An article in the local newspaper *Kita Nihon Shimbun* (2014b) focused on a 68 year old participant from Fukushima – an area hit by a massive earthquake in 2011 followed by a nuclear disaster. She was impressed by the Cloth Bridge ritual held in 2011. Worried about her future, she decided to participate in the ritual to clear her mind in 2014. She described that she could feel how strength sprang up inside her when she resigned herself to Tateyama nature and the tones of music during the ritual and expressed her feeling of calm.

The organizers as well as the media offered to the observers and also to the participants an idealized image of a healing ritual for women who are seeking peace of mind. Yet the presence of media during the whole ceremony in Enma Hall as well as in Yōbōkan, with reporters interviewing the participants before they entered the Enma Hall and the positioning of volunteers along the stairs leading to the bridge in order to guide the steps of the participants, signified a performance-like event. Moreover, to give a good visual impression, the participants were carefully instructed to walk in a synchronized way across the bridge at a set pace. In some aspects this accords with Reader (2014) who, giving an example from the Shikoku pilgrimage, demonstrates that the attempt to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site includes imposing an idealized image of tradition on a site.

Indeed, the ritual was successfully registered as a 'future heritage project' by the National Federation of UNESCO Associations in Japan in 2012. On this occasion, a cultural foundation called Santori medialized the *Nunohashi kanjō e* via its public channel as a ritual 'not strictly in a religious sense', at the same time adding that women come to pray for 'healing' *iyashi* 癒し. Despite downplaying the religious character of the ritual, the narrator explained that by crossing the bridge the participants repeat the meaning of entering the other world of Tateyama and noted the similarities with a ritual walking through mountains performed by *yamabushi*.[15]

14 Reactions reported in the TVNet3 broadcast, later also broadcast via the national channel NHK.

15 A ritual entering and walking through mountains during which the participants pay homage to sacred places, worship deities, practice austerities and are ritually reborn. This video is available online at Santory Net 3 channel (2014).

The discrepancy between the original intention of the organizers to create a performance-like event and the reactions of the participants showing religious experiences has been analyzed by Averbuch (2011). Averbuch (2011) has interpreted this gap between the politics of re-enactments and the reactions of women through the relations between religion and the state in contemporary Japan.

De Antoni's work (2009), theoretically anchored in the Appadurai's concepts, does not analyze the re-enactments of the Cloth Bridge ceremony. The current work finds Appadurai's concepts of *locality* with regard to the nation-state useful, specifically in the analysis of the inconsistency in descriptions of the rite. In his work, Appadurai notes that:

> 'Locality for the modern nation-state is either a site of nationally appropriated nostalgias, celebrations, and commemorations or a necessary condition of the production of nationals' (Appadurai, 2010: 190).

He goes on claiming that:

> 'it is nature of local life to develop partly in contrast to other neighbourhoods, by producing its own contexts of alterity'.... 'contexts that might not meet the needs for spatial and social standardization that is prerequisite for the disciplined national citizen' (Appadurai, 2010: 191).

In such an understanding, the official rhetoric would represent *locality*, and the reactions of the participants may be seen as the 'contexts of alterity' mentioned by Appadurai.

Elsewhere Appadurai refers to 'the powerful tendency for local subjectivity itself to be commoditized' (Appadurai, 2010: 192). Indeed, the rite on the bridge became so popular that according to a representative from the Tateyama Museum, a 'mini version' of the *Nunohashi* is held every year for around twenty participants as part of the JR campaign *Otona no kyūjitsu*.[16]

Moreover, this ritual was introduced overseas as a part of *Nuit Blanche* – a cultural event dedicated to art – held annually in Paris since 2002. This all-night event is located in over twenty places around the city. In October 2015, one of these stages presented the Cloth Bridge rite. On this occasion, the same priest who officiates the rite in Ashikuraji, accompanied by a group of Japanese *gagaku* 雅楽 musicians, was brought to Paris to perform the rite for the Parisians.[17]

16 Twenty participants is considered as 'mini' only now; the first re-enactment had the same number of participants.

17 This event had the support of the Japanese Ministry of Trade and the Economy. Besides the Cloth Bridge rite, *anime* works of the Toyama Prefecture were presented to the visitors.

Fig. 26: Participants crossing the bridge. Photograph provided by the Tateyama town office.

Interestingly the Japanese internet media reported on this event as a 'traditional rite of praying for rebirth in paradise'[18] and as a 'traditional healing ritual' re-enacted in Paris,[19] while the French internet media described the ritual as an 'inner journey' or a 'journey of life',[20] linking it to the Zen tradition which they interpretted as the 'quintessence of Japanese culture'.[21] As mentioned above, it is hard to interpret the history of the Cloth Bridge rite within one particular religious tradition. Even in the short history of its re-enactment, the ritual has been performed under Shingon as well as Tendai Buddhist guidance.

The representation of the rite by the French and the Japanese media evokes other concepts from Appadurai – of *mediascapes* and *ideoscapes*. Appadurai uses these terms to describe imagined ideas about communities (the other community as well as the home community), the role of the media in producing images of the world and the distribution of these images among populations. In the case

18 Available online at David (2015a). This description was quoted online at David (2015b).

19 Available online at Best Broadcast Toyama Television (2015), Uozumi (2015) and Visual Industry Promotion Organisation (2015).

20 Available online at Camélia (2015).

21 See, for example, online at Japan facile (2015), Hibbs (2015), Observatoire (2015), Renard Urbain (2015), and Lamuse (2015).

Fig. 27: The spectators. Photograph provided by the Tateyama town office.

of the Cloth Bridge rite it is not only information that moves trans-locally via the media, but the whole ritual being de-territorialized. However, the interpretation of the rite has been accommodated to the new locality and imagination of the French people about Japanese religious culture.

From the perspective of the consumer society, it is possible to say that rituals once associated with secure passage through the afterlife and merit transference, have been re-branded. The Tateyama cult is now being introduced as a sustainable religious practice. The practice of changing the robes for Uba and the ritual held for the *yama no kami* have survived; however, they have been inscribed with the new concept of cultural tradition. The Cloth Bridge ritual has been associated with the immaterial quality of cultural tradition, as well as with spirituality, and healing.

Reviving the ritual in 1996 was not originally associated with healing or spirituality, as was understandable from the aims of the organizers of the first event. That came later, as a response of the organizers to the reactions of participants.[22] Averbuch, in the conclusion of her study, claims that:

> 'In the modern re-enactment of the *Nunohashi kanjōe* we witnessed an attempt to sponsor a Buddhist ritual through government funding, by shifting its categorization

22 For this see also Averbuch (2011).

> from 'religious ritual' to 'traditional culture'.' And raises a question if this is a lonely example or 'a new trend of transforming Buddhist rites into 'traditional culture'' (Averbuch, 2011: 49).

The case of Tateyama is not a rarity. Religious practices introduced as ancient cultural heritage appear, for instance, in the rhetoric of Japanese religious groups, local governments striving for promotion of regions, Non-Profit Organizations (NPO), the media and UNESCO. The following section demonstrates the inclusion of religious practices in practices recognized as cultural heritage, as well as a tendency to present them as sustainable practices.

The Japanese sense of nature

In 1990 Japan signed the World Heritage Convention. As a country which had long experience in the protection of intangible heritage, Japan took a key role in the re-thinking of the concept of 'cultural heritage', its definition and boundaries (Sand, 2015; Inaba, 2005).[23] The process of re-evaluation of this concept can be seen as a good example of religious practices being appreciated for their cultural value. According to UNESCO:

> 'Cultural heritage ... includes traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts.'[24]

By introducing a concept of cultural heritage that includes rituals along with 'knowledge and practices concerning nature', UNESCO offered space for the inclusion of places of Japanese religious practices and rituals on the World Heritage List. Based on this concept of cultural heritage, Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range were inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2004. The official website of UNESCO informs that:

> 'The property consists of three sacred sites including precincts and buildings of temples and shrines in the heavily forested Kii Mountains, and a complex pattern of tracks and paths that link the sites together. These component parts are essential for demonstrating the religious framework of Shintoism (rooted in the ancient tradition of nature worship in Japan), Buddhism (introduced to Japan from China and the

23 The concept of intangible heritage was introduced into Japan's formal modern heritage preservation system in 1950 (Inaba, 2005: 48).

24 Intangible Cultural Heritage. Available online at UNESCO (2003a).

> Korean Peninsula), and Shugen-dô (the Shugen sect) which was influenced by the former two faiths. The three sacred sites with their surroundings demonstrate high degree of integrity. Also the pilgrimage routes, as part of the extensive cultural landscape, at present retain a significant degree of integrity.'
> 'Together, the sites and the forest landscape of the Kii Mountains reflect a persistent and extraordinarily well-documented tradition of sacred mountains over the past 1,200 years.'
>
> 'The Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples in the Kii Mountains, and their associated rituals, bear exceptional testimony to the development of Japan's religious culture over more than a thousand years.'[25]

In addition, in 2013, Mount Fuji was inscribed on the World Heritage List as a sacred place and source of artistic inspiration according to the following criteria:

> 'The majestic form of Fujisan... has inspired a tradition of mountain worship from ancient times to the present day. Through worship-ascents of its peaks and pilgrimages to sacred sites around its lower slopes, pilgrims aspired to be imbued with the spiritual powers possessed by the gods and buddhas believed to reside there. These religious associations were linked to a deep adoration of Fujisan that inspired countless works of art depicting what was seen as its perfect form, gratitude for its bounty, and a tradition that emphasised co-existence with the natural environment. The series of sites are an exceptional testimony to a living cultural tradition centred on the veneration of Fujisan and its almost perfect form.'[26]

Among the arguments for the cultural value of the Kii Mountain Range and Mount Fuji that support their inscription on the World Heritage List are religious practices such as: 'ancient tradition of nature worship', 'a living cultural tradition centred on the veneration of Fujisan' and the 'tradition of mountain worship'. In addition, the arguments underline the value that Japanese people put on co-existence with the natural environment and its association with religion.[27]

Furthermore, studies suggest that before its consideration within the concept of cultural heritage, the discourse about the harmonious co-existence of the

25 World Heritage List. Available online at UNESCO (2004).

26 World Heritage List. Available online at UNESCO (2013).

27 Further examples are those nominated for inscription on the representative list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity such as 'Nachi no Dengaku' a religious performing art held at the Nachi fire festival, nominated in 2012 (Nomination file no. 00413); and 'Sada Shin Noh' sacred dancing at the Sada shrine at Shimane, nominated in 2011 (Nomination file no. 00412).

Japanese people with the natural environment played an important role in the concepts of *furusato* and *satoyama* (里山).

Catherine Knight (2010), exploring the concepts of *furusato* and *satoyama*, demonstrates the overlapping of their visual imagery. She explains that 'whereas the idea of *furusato* appeals to the Japanese sense of 'belonging' and having a place of comfort and peacefulness to return to, *satoyama* appeals to the Japanese conviction that they are people that have traditionally lived in harmony with nature, and *satoyama* is a model of such harmonious coexistence in practice' (Knight, 2010: 436). Knight shows that within Japanese academic discourse on the purported love for nature, *satoyama* epitomizes the ideal human nature relationship (Knight, 2010: 435–436).

Moreover, these concepts figure prominently in popular and media discourse, for example in the programming of the state broadcaster NHK and content of the *Mainichi shinbun* newspaper, as well as in materials outlining government policy and initiatives, such as those of the Ministry of the Environment and prefectural government (Knight, 2010: 426–430).

An example of such an initiative is the current project of the United Nations University called *The International Partnership on the Satoyama Initiative* supported by the Ministry of Environment. It has been described as follows:

> 'The Satoyama Initiative is a global effort to realize societies in harmony with nature, through promoting the maintenance and rebuilding of socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes, for the benefit of biodiversity and human wellbeing.'[28]

Scholars associated with this project have discussed the ways to connect policy and science with traditional knowledge, local wisdom, and the culture of *satoyama*.[29]

The concepts of *furusato* and *satoyama* have been included in this study for a better understanding of the rhetoric of cultural heritage, in which love for nature is introduced as a tradition inherited from ancestors. The academic debate on changes in values attributed to heritage has also focused on the concepts of *furusato* and *satoyama* and their later commercialized versions within the patterns of consumption and mass tourism since the 1980s (Brumann and Cox, 2010; Ivy, 1995; Knight, 2010; Robertson, 1991, 1998). Indeed, as was seen in the previous section, the concept of cultural heritage and the concept of *furusato* were actively deployed in the rhetoric of the organizers of the re-enactment of the Cloth Bridge Consecration rite in Ashikuraji.

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28 The outline of the Satoyama Initiative is available online at United Nations University (2009).

29 This was the topic of the international conference on local knowledge of traditional *satochi* and *satoyama* (socio-ecological production landscapes; SEPLS) held in Komatsu City, Ishikawa Prefecture in 2014. More details are available online at United Nations University (2014).

The official rhetoric emphasizing the cultural character of the rite in Ashikuraji seems to be in contrast with the experiences of the participants who have stressed the religious character of the rite. It is interesting in this context that Japanese religious groups themselves actively wrap the religious character of their activities within the rhetoric of cultural heritage and tradition.

Recent studies on Japanese religions have not avoided the discourse about cultural heritage and the co-existence with nature as constructed by Japanese religious groups (Aike, 2015; Azegami, 2015; Dessi, 2013; Rambelli, 2001). In his study of the sacred forests of Shinto shrines, Azegami (2015), building on historical research, proves that the Shinto shrine landscape as it is perceived nowadays was constructed at the beginning of the 20th century. By the same token, Aike (2015) discusses the topic of the sacred shrine forests linking it with a global trend 'to redefine sacred sites as ecological resources in need of conservation'. He points to a new paradigm which presents Shinto as a 'primordial tradition of nature worship (sometimes referred to as "animistic"), said to contain ancient ecological knowledge on how to live in harmonious coexistence with nature' (Aike, 2015: 213). Indeed, Ugo Dessi has argued that the Japanese themselves decisively contribute to the rhetoric of a very common stereotype about Japanese people and their love and reverence for nature, allegedly deriving from an unspecified spirituality and ancient religious heritage (Dessi, 2013: 48).[30]

Dessi argues that the progressive reforestation policies implemented from the mid-seventeenth century onwards cast doubt on the claim about the explicit and reflexive concern of pre-modern Japanese culture and Shinto for ecology. Another question regarding this issue was raised by Rambelli (2001), who argues that pre-medieval ideas of the sacredness of trees were often borrowings from Chinese and other continental cultures. His research provides insight into the politics of power of the religious institutions and their attempt to sacralize the very important material with which they were building their temples and shrines (Rambelli, 2001: 43–59).

Studies have not omitted the attitudes of Japanese religious groups towards environmental issues, or their cooperation with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and non-profit organizations (NPOs). Ugo Dessi describes the involvement of Shinto religious groups and new religious movements in environmental activism. He relates them to other phenomena like the promotion

30 Dessi gives examples of such rhetoric within the context of Shinto by presenting some pamphlets, booklet guides published by The Asssociation of Shinto Shrines Jinja Honchō and a text written by a Shinto scholar named Sonoda Minoru. The rhetoric referring to a special connection between Shinto and nature is used as an argument by Jinja Honchō for the active involvement of Shinto in debates regarding environmental issues (Jinja Honchō texts in Dessi, 2013: 48–50).

of inter-religious dialogue, macrobiotics, and the emergence of a new religious political party in Japan. He interprets them as attempts to reassert a new role in a globalized society, in other words as part of the globalization process (Dessi, 2013: 148–149). Dessi explains that these activities are variously conducted at the denomination level through inter-religious cooperation, and through the establishment of NGOs and NPOs.

The above mentioned studies have identified the special relationship between Japanese religion and nature as an important factor in the rhetoric of Japanese religious groups, focusing on the creators of the rhetoric coming from religious groups, NPOs and Non-Governmental Organizations. Other studies, such as Reader (2005) and Mori (2005), paid attention to how religious followers, members, or participants in the activities of such institutions react to or interpret the rhetoric of cultural-religious heritage. By the same token, the following case of Dewa Sanzan shows that such rhetoric works as one of the possible strategies used by the actors at mountain sites to gain the attention of visitors, but also demonstrates the diversity of motivations among the participants.

Mediating Shugendō

The mountains of Dewa Sanzan (Three mountains of Dewa province) – Mount Haguro, Mount Gassan and Mount Yudono – are located in Yamagata Prefecture in the northeastern region of Japan. Dewa Sanzan has a long history as a centre of the mountain cult and Shugendō.[31] Shugendō practitioners, also known as mountain ascetics, are called *yamabushi* 山伏. Their practices involve austerities and physically demanding mountain climbing, which are called *shugyō* 修行 or *gyō* 行. It is difficult to clearly differentiate Shugendō as a separate category, as the practices are a combination, among others of Buddhist, Shinto and Daoist elements and can be observed among a variety of Buddhist and Shinto groups.

Similarly to the Tateyama and Kumano areas, a system of pilgrim guides and lay believers also developed in Dewa Sanzan. The lay believers formed confraternities known as *kō* 講.[32] Like the Tateyama *shūto,* the *sendatsu* based at the village of Tōge, at the foot of Mount Haguro, guide those who come to undertake austerities in the mountains of Haguro, Gassan and Yudono.[33]

31 For information on Shugendō in Dewa Sanzan, see for example, Miyake (2000), Iwahana (1996, 2003) and Earhart (1970).

32 See Miyake (2005), and study by A. M. Bouchy on the Atago confraternities (Bouchy, 1987).

33 It seems that the terminology describing the professional practitioners assigned to guide pilgrims through mountains was not uniform. In the case of Tateyama these guides were known as *shūto* (Fukue, 2005) and in Dewa Sanzan as *sendatsu* (Miyake, 2005) or *shugenja* 修験者 (Sekimori, 2005).

Fig. 28: Hachiko Hall at the top of Mount Haguro. Photograph by author.

In this area Shugendō practices are to be found in Buddhist temples as well as Shinto shrines or lodging houses run by *sendatsu* called *shukubō* 宿坊. Sekimori (2005) notes that before the reorganization and conversion to the Tendai Buddhist sect in 1641, the Haguro temple-shrine area had no particular sectarian affiliation and Yudono was under the Shingon Buddhist influence. This development of affiliation became more distinct due to the changes in the Buddhist temples and shrines system which took place in the Meiji era. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, beginning in 1868, the Meiji government issued a series of separation edicts *shinbutsu bunri rei*.[34] The edicts disassociated Buddhism from Shinto shrines and worship, which had an impact on religious practices that combined Shinto and

According to Sekimori (following Miyake, 2002), in Kumano these guides were called *oshi*, while the role of *sendatsu* (*shugenja*) was to bring the pilgrims to the *oshi* (Sekimori, 2002: 209). However, Ambros (2008) (following Shinjō) claims that *sendatsu* were acting as pilgrimage guides in Kumano, while *oshi* provided ritual prayers and lodging for the pilgrims (Ambros, 2008: 6). The tradition of lay supporters of the Dewa Sanzan cult still exists in Tōge. The pilgrims pay visits to the three mountains. For the historical data see, for example, Miyake (2005) and Sekimori (2002).

34 More details about the topic of *shinbutsu bunri* may be found in Tsuji et al. (1983, 1984). More details about the Meiji reforms in Haguro can be found e.g. in Sekimori (2005).

Buddhist traditions such as Shugendō.[35] This new regulation turned the temple-shrine area of the Dewa Sanzan into a Shinto domain. Similarly to Tateyama, this included restriction of the use of the name '*gongen*' for the Main shrine at Mount Haguro, disposal of Buddhist images and tools, and reinterpretation of practices related to the shrine. Under such circumstances, ritual entering of the mountain area in the autumn '*Aki no mine*' 秋の峰 (autumn peak) – the most important ritual of Shugendō, which during the Edo period represented progress from spiritual darkness towards Buddhahood via the Ten Worlds (Ten realms) – became a ritual assuring protection of crops and avoiding disasters (Watanabe, 2015: 4). Restrictions caused by the separation edicts related to Shugendō practice came to an end after the Second World War in 1945 (Watanabe, 2015: 4).

Nowadays, *Aki no mine* seems to be a popular practice (Sekimori, 2005). There were 100 participants in the ritual seclusion in the mountains in autumn 2015, during my visit to the shrine precincts at Mount Haguro. The interest in participation is so great, that the shrine – organizer of the ritual – needs to set limits on the number of participants.[36]

As mentioned earlier, it is hard to differentiate Shugendō from other religious traditions because the boundaries are blurred. Furthermore, each locality has its own original style and interpretation of Shugendō practice. Within the framework of this book, the interesting point about Shugendō groups is the rhetoric which is used in promotion of Shugendō religious practices. Shugendō professionals typically present Shugendō as rooted in a traditional form of Japanese religion which views humans as a part of nature. This is interpreted as knowledge inherited from ancient predecessors. Participating in Shugendō practices serves as a way to re-connect with nature and also with one's own culture.

A religious representative of the temple Kinpusenji 金峯山寺 in the Yoshino mountain area Tanaka Riten, for instance, claims that:

> 'The mountain ascetic practice of Shugendō is deeply rooted in the hearts of Japanese people which has its foundation in ancient beliefs. For that reason, this practice is an experience which ought to be suitable for Japanese people. It is possible to say that the roots of the Japanese people's love for mountains are in the world of Shugendō' (Tanaka, 2014: 11). [Translated by author] (Appendix 1, note 1)

35 The Buddhist temples of Kōtakuji and Kongōjuin located outside the shrine precincts, were not directly affected by the reforms (Sekimori, 2005: 212). These Buddhist temples are not analyzed in the current work.

36 The ritual of *Aki no mine* is organized separately in Dewa Sanzan by both the Buddhist and the Shintō affiliated groups. For details about the rituals see, for example, Lobetti (2014: 108–116) and Earhart (1970: 113–136).

Fig. 29: Yamabushi in front of the main shrine of Mount Haguro. Photograph by author.

A promotional video presenting Shugendō at Mount Hōman[37] (located in Fukuoka, Kyūshū) also relates the tradition of Shugendō to ancient predecessors. Similarly, a DVD informing about pilgrimages to Mount Ishizuchi[38] (one of the sacred Shugendō sites in Shikoku) introduces Shugendō by referring to Japanese spiritual culture and linking it with the view of nature inherited from ancient times as old as the Jōmon period (12000 – 2000 BCE).[39]

Similar ideas have also echoed in attempts to revitalize the mountain site of Dewa Sanzan. In the interview that I made with a representative of the Dewa Sanzan Shrine of Mount Haguro, I asked how they attract the interest of the present generation. The priest replied that they are facing a problem of aging generations of believers and supporters of the shrine. Therefore, they are trying to appeal to the present generation through the ascetic mountain practices of *shugyō*. They try to direct the attention of the younger generations to nature, in

37 Onoboru (2013) *The Shugendoh* ザ修験道.

38 Ishizuchi jinja (unknown year) *Ishizuchi kodō o yuku* 石鎚古道をゆく.

39 This rhetoric is not particular to Shugendō, it has been shared by Shintō representatives. On this topic, see for example Aike (2015: 217). Moreover, as was mentioned above, Shugendō representatives themselves might fall within the Shintō tradition.

an effort to teach the young to feel gratitude towards nature for life. 'Nature and kami are the same. Love for nature and love for kami are closely linked.' [Translated by author] (Appendix 1, note 2)

However, it should be noted that although Shugendō representatives may seem to engage with the values of the contemporary society via the self-interpretation as a tradition associated with knowledge concerning nature-related practices, other religious traditions might not look at the aspects of Shugendō practices as equal. After the ban on practices that combined Buddhist and Shinto traditions was lifted, the resurgence and revitalization of Shugendō practices have not been immediately welcomed by existing religious groups.[40]

Retreat

One of the pilgrimage lodgings, located at the foot of Mount Haguro, in the village of Tōge, offers the option of a three-day experience of *shugyō*. In August 2014, I observed and participated in such a three-day *shugyō* experience in one of the *shukubō* (Appendix 3).[41] A *shukubō* is not an institutional type of religious centre in the sense of a temple or a shrine, although they are related. It is part of an agglomeration of lodging houses which still keep the tradition of accommodation and guidance in the mountains for pilgrims and supporters of the Dewa Sanzan cult.[42]

At the end of the third day, participants were discussing their experiences, motivations and feelings about the retreat. Among the speeches that I could hear, the majority of the 26 participants mentioned sessions in Jiyū Daigaku as the source of information about the Shugendō retreat. I found out later that Jiyū Daigaku (Freedom University) is an NPO located in Tokyo. Among other subjects it offers seminars on art and culture. The yearly newsletter of the web-magazine 'The Earth of Free Green', published by Jiyū Daigaku informs readers about the topics of seminars held in the current year.[43] Among the topics of seminars held in 2013 were lectures on Shugendō, titled 'Yamabushi and

40 This was the case, for example, in Nikkō. This information comes from a conversation with a member of the Shugendō group in Nikkō and from an interview with the leader of a Shugendō group located in Kanuma.

41 The interpretation and practice of this *shukubō* might be viewed critically from the side of the local Buddhist temples. I met with such reactions.

42 There are currently 34 *shukubō* in Dewa Sanzan connected to a temple or a shrine. *Shukubō* representatives do not keep celibate, they have settled down at the foot of the mountain and perform the traditional role of the *sendatsu* and spread the cult of Dewa Sanzan. For information on *shukubō* in Haguro see e.g. Sekimori (2005).

43 Available online at Jiyūdaigaku (2013).

Shugendō – the technique of listening to the life of the forest'. The lectures were part of a series of seminars in which scholars and religious representatives gave presentations on topics related to environmental issues. The sessions brought together NPO, religious movements and academia. Presenters at the sessions included a *yamabushi*, a lecturer representing Japanese folklore studies, a lecturer from the All Japan Young Buddhist Association, and a lecturer from the Meiji University Institute of Life.

One of the reactions by participants to the seminar series illustrates that the rhetoric of the unique Japanese connection to nature was used by presenters and also gained the attention of some participants:

> 'As I felt like I want to learn about Japanese old source of religiosity, the concept of the seminar sessions corresponds to it.' [Translated by author] (Appendix 1, note 3)

> 'Japan should be proud of Shugendō that worships the great nature and its idea that "people are truly part of nature"'. [Translated by author][44] (Apendix 1, note 4)

For people who participated in the retreat, the experience and motivations were diverse – one of the participants for example participated after her relative, who had an experience of a Shugendō retreat, mentioned it as a part of a joke, that she should try Shugendō as a form of diet. Because she felt that she was eating too much, it caught her interest.[45] Another participant was motivated by the passing of her father. Yet another wanted to walk in the white garments worn by *yamabushi*. However, the motivation which echoed among the newcomers most was an "unknown" experience of the mountains. One participant expressed her wish to learn, how the experience of a common person climbing a mountain differed from the experience of a *yamabushi* climbing a mountain. Another participant explained that hiking and walking in the mountains was not a new kind of experience for her. What she wanted to gain was an "unknown" experience of the mountains. Yet another participant said she had heard the presentation of the pilgrim guide in Jiyū Daigaku and she was impressed by how 'cool' the old man was. She continued saying that she had always liked hiking and walking in the mountains, but she wanted to get to know 'herself as Japanese' *nihonjin toshite jibun*日本人として自分.

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44 Available online at Jiyūdaigaku (2013).

45 During the retreat, participants are allowed to eat only three times a day briefly. Dietary food consisted of soya beans paste soup poured into a bowl with a small portion of rice and vegetables such as two slices of cucumber. Food was eaten in silence and as fast as possible – approximately within five minutes. Food was available in the evening and in the morning after waking up at 4:30am. On the second day the lunch consisted of two rice balls is eaten after climbing to Mount Gassan. The dietary food was served again in the evening, and in the morning on the third day. After morning ablution and climbing to Mount Haguro the shugyō was completed and *shōjin ryōri* lunch was served with sake.

The following reactions may be read on the social network that serves for communication among participants after the retreat:

> 'Being in my first year of *yamabushi shugyō*, I am intuitively convinced that *yamabushi* who have been here from the ancient times have played an important role in the revival of Japanese spirituality ... Through *shugyō*, I could experience connection with nature, connection with people and the richness of what is within such connection.' [Translated by author] (Appendix 1, note 5)

These reactions demonstrate that some participants actively used the rhetoric of the unique Japanese connection to nature and its relation to spirituality or Shugendō. However, these examples do not represent sufficient data to make any generalizations.

During the retreat the participants were not allowed to talk and there were no lectures or any explanations connected to this kind of rhetoric. The pilgrim guide talked briefly three times during the retreat. I attended a lecture given by the pilgrim guide later, in spring 2015 in Tokyo, where I heard his speech about respect for nature and co-existence with nature originating in ancient Japanese history. I understood that such rhetoric was part of the information about Shugendō shared in the lectures that participants attended at Jiyū Daigaku or gained from other sources about Shugendō.

It is likely that such rhetoric is not restricted to the NPOs or religious representatives. I do not presume, however, to argue further about the involvement of other actors using such rhetoric. As Reader (2006), for instance, demonstrated in his examination of the mass media and their portrayals of pilgrimages in Japan, the media construct positive images of pilgrimage sites and in that way they have contributed to increased interest in pilgrimages. Nevertheless, as Reader explains, the media are most likely to be positive about pilgrimages within the context of heritage, tradition and culture, and can be detached from overt associations with religious phenomena such as faith (Reader, 2006: 27). As Reader adds, this has been a recurrent theme in the theories of being Japanese, known as *Nihonjin ron* 日本人論.

What this section has documented is the social interactions between the religious representatives constructing the rhetoric and their listeners. This is not to conclude that Japanese people in general, or all participants at *shugyō* share the view presented by the rhetoric. Nevertheless, such a paradigm becomes a motivation for participation in religious practices such as pilgrimages, and it has been noted by scholars (Reader, 2005, 2009; Mori, 2005) that it does not mean that the participants are stripped of any religious experiences. The aim here was to stress how such rhetoric has been constructed and used in the promotion of

a Shugendō site. This section has demonstrated a small part of the rhetoric flow between religious sites, NPO and the listeners who visit the holy sites and actively participate in religious practices, even though not necessarily being religiously motivated.

The interesting point which the observation of the retreat reveals is the emergence of practitioners who are not necessarily associated with any temple, shrine or *shukubō*. Another notable detail is an affinity among the participants for new (one-time) experiences as well as an orientation towards such groups among the religious representatives.

A tendency to present the Tateyama Cloth Bridge rite as a healing practice (*iyashi no* 癒しの), which may be seen as a reaction towards the busy working lifestyle of people (as one of the participants explained to me during the Tateyama Cloth Bridge rite), as well as the endeavour – observable in the cases of both Tateyama and Dewa Sanzan – to demonstrate new values such as cultural heritage and co-existence with nature, together suggest a trend to re-brand religious practices in accordance with current values. This brings us to the topic of the consumer society.

CHAPTER V: **RELIGIOUS PRACTICES IN THE CONSUMER SOCIETY**

To approach the current visitors and consumers, mementos of the Tateyama cult have been used in producing goods such as printed shirts with motifs from the Tateyama Mandala and table cloths with the same patterns, while legends about the opening of Tateyama introducing the story of Ariyori, Ariwaka and Uba were published in the form of a comic book (Figure 30). These products are sold in hotels and transportation stops such as stations of the cable car – reminders of the past pilgrimage path.

The use of these commodities as souvenirs is an example of how aspects of a once popular religious cult became reshaped. Although commodities such as talismans, amulets or medicaments were part of the Tateyama cult already in the Edo period, the current form of making available commodities linked to the Tateyama cult is different. They are no longer associated with any protection or benefits. They have been reshaped in accordance with the current trends of consumerism and as such they serve as useful tools in regional promotion.

As was mentioned above, the commercial aspects of pilgrimages were identified by authors already in the 19th century. Studies have also demonstrated that actors from the Japanese pilgrimage sites were involved in promotional and mercantile activities. In the same fashion as pilgrims in the Edo period, the present pilgrims to mountain sites are charged for their participation in religious practices. The expenses for taking part at the Cloth Bridge rite, for example, were 20,000 yen and price of the retreat in the village of Tōge was up to 27,000 yen.[1]

In their book *Religion in the consumer society*, Gauthier and Martikainen (2013a) illustrate the presence of consumption in religion and also explain the nature

1 The given information about prices is as of the year 2014.

Fig. 30: Products designed with images from Tateyama Mandala. The comic book inspired by the Tateyama legends (in the bottom part). Photograph by author.

of consumption, situating it within economic and marketing theories. Like the above-mentioned studies considering mercantile and commercial aspects of Japanese pilgrimage sites (Tsushima, 2012; Ambros, 2008; Hur, 2007; Formanek, 1998), Gauthier and Martikainen have situated consumption and the phenomenon of the consumer society within the process of modernization in around the late 19th century. They identify consumption as one of the means of modernization: 'the world was to be modernized partly through consumption' (Gauthier and Martikainen, 2013a: 9). Moreover, they criticize the approach of authors for whom 'pointing to economics and using economic terminology end the discussion, as if the very mention of the market and its automatic adjustment of supply and demand were self-explanatory' (Gauthier and Martikainen, 2013a: 16). The reason for their criticism is that such a simplified approach leads most authors to regard commoditization of religion as a degradation or devaluation of religion. Gauthier and Martikainen also warn about disassociating the economic aspects of religion from the social context. They demonstrate the social aspects of consumption using the example of brands and branding of products, stressing that 'consumerism is about identification, not satisfaction' (Gauthier and Martikainen, 2013a: 18). Seeing consumerism as satisfaction of customers' demands is an approach of the classical economic model which they criticize. Furthermore, they add criticism of rational choice theory arguing that 'products are not made to compete in rational terms' (Gauthier and Martikainen, 2013a: 9).[2] While other authors (Matsui, 2012; Reader, 2014; Askew, 2008; Carrette and King, 2005) have considered the commodification or branding of religion, Gauthier and Martikainen have touched the topic of commoditization in the religious area. In this context, they have explained 'the turn towards marketing techniques which were increasingly oriented toward brand image management and lifestyle advertising which associated products to certain immaterial qualities such as attitudes, values, feelings and meanings' (Gauthier and Martikainen, 2013a: 10). In this view offered by Gauthier and Martikainen, Japanese mountain sites appear as an area where various identity makers, ideals, experiences, authenticity or values and lifestyles are marketized and consumed.

From the perspective of marketization related to consumption or consumerism, it becomes interesting to ask what image of religious practice is offered to potential participants. More specifically, what kind of immaterial qualities are religious practices associated with in order to appeal to current

2 This trend is observable in marketing theories, which moved from the traditional model towards the experiential model of consumer behaviour. See Schmitt (1999). In the view of the traditional model, customers consider the benefits of a product or service. Contrary to such a simplistic view, Schmitt (1999) has proposed to extend the view of purchasing decisions to include the emotional and irrational aspects.

generations? The previous chapter already touched on some social realities which associated religious practices with new immaterial qualities. As could be seen in the aforementioned examples, among such values are cultural heritage and the sustainability of religious practices. The following section extends these observations.

Culinary curiosity and healthy lifestyle

The Japanese law for the protection of cultural properties[3] includes folk-cultural properties which can be intangible – such as manners and customs related to food. *Washoku* 和食 – Japanese traditional dietary cultures – were inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2013 based on the following argument:

> 'The element is a diverse dietary culture that remains localized. It contributes to promotion of good health, reinforcement of social cohesion and the building of a sustainable society based on knowledge and practices related to nature.'
>
> 'In daily life, WASHOKU has important social functions for the Japanese to reaffirm identity, to foster familial and community cohesion, and to contribute to healthy life, through sharing traditional and well-balanced meals.'[4]

The interweaving of culture with practices related to nature is a recurrent theme applied in this case to gastronomy. In accord with the idea expressed by Gauthier and Martikainen (2013a: 18), aspects of social life are being re-branded, in this case according to the taste of UNESCO standards.[5]

Hence, along these lines Japanese food has been introduced at the food exposition in Milan.[6] According to the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the introduction of Japanese food in Milan was based on the thought that:

> '"Japanese food" and "Japanese culture" represent an original dietary culture which is healthy and which values co-existence with nature as well as Japanese tradition, while enjoyment of this food does not end with the sense of taste but extends to the

3 The law defines categories of cultural properties. It was established in 1950 and originated in 1897 (Inaba, 2005:49).

4 This information can be found in the Nomination file no. 00869: 'Washoku, traditional dietary cultures of the Japanese, notably for the celebration of New Year'.

5 A similar tendency has been noted by Reader (2014) and McGuire (2013) in their studies of localities related to the Shugendō tradition.

6 The exposition was titled 'Expo Milano 2015: Feeding the planet, energy for life!'. More information is available at Expo Milano (2015).

Fig. 31: Sacred cedar tree called Jiji Sugi at the precincts of Mount Haguro. Photograph by author.

Fig. 32: Dietary lunch served during the retreat. Photograph by author.

> pleasure of sight or smell. Its deliciousness, beauty and pleasure can be tasted through the five senses'.[7] [Translated by author] (Appendix 1, note 6)

Visitors to the food exposition in Milan could enjoy the *shōjin ryōri* 精進料理 – a vegetarian dish which does not contain fish or meat – prepared personally by a chef from Dewa Sanzan. While preparing the food, the chef was video-recorded by a cameraman dressed in the *yamabushi* attire.[8] It has been introduced as a part of the tradition and culture of the Tsuruoka region to European markets.[9] According to a representative of the Japanese gastronomy promoted in Milan, the exhibitors assumed that the taste of *shōjin ryōri* would satisfy the taste of the Europeans who are interested in spiritual culture.[10]

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7 The plan for the Expo in Milano 2015 (page 7) is available online at the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (2013).

8 Video from the Milan expo is available online at Milano Expo All Japan Media Distribution Services (2015).

9 Tsuruoka is the administrative centre of the Yamagata Prefecture and the closest city to the Dewa Sanzan mountain area. Before 2015 the *shōjin ryōri* from Tsuruoka had already been introduced, for example, in Paris and Budapest.

10 Source: Milano Expo All Japan Media Distribution Services (2015).

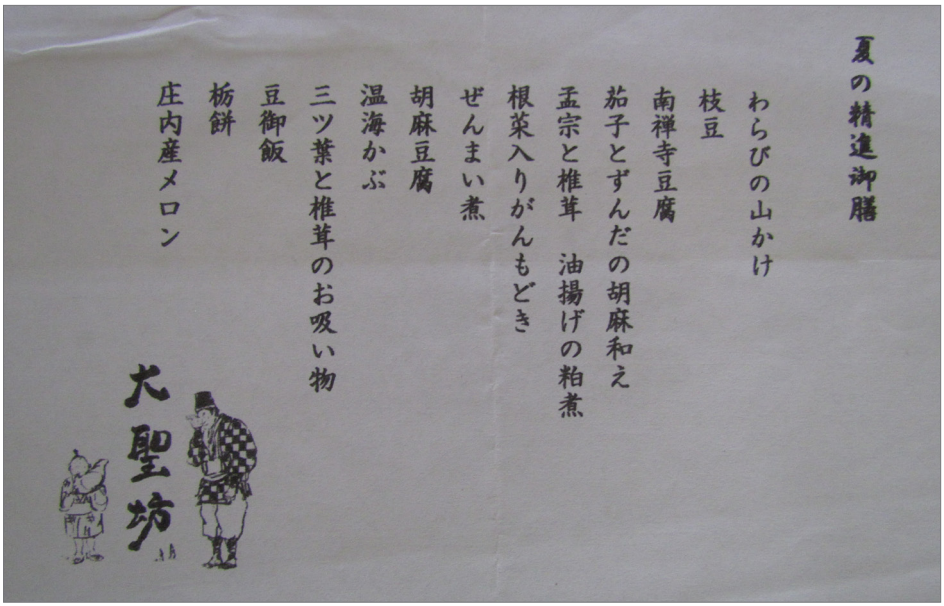

Fig. 33: Description of the dietary lunch menu. Photograph by author.

In Dewa Sanzan this food is viewed as yet another aspect of local *yamabushi* culture. Indeed, the tradition of keeping the precepts regarding food was strictly kept at Dewa Sanzan. According to a record from 1873, priests in this area have never eaten fish, fowl or even eggs.[11]

As I was informed at the Dewa Sanzan Shrine:

> Y*amabushi* culture together with Japanese history are embedded in *shōjin ryōri*. It has been prepared for hundreds of years by *yamabushi*. It is through the food that Dewa Sanzan will be shown to the world – because food is not religion, it is something that everybody anywhere can feel in the same way. There are people who have not experienced such food, a typical experience of the Japanese food is sushi or tempura,[12] but *shōjin ryōri* also represents Japanese culture. According to a representative of the shrine it was surprising food for the foreigners who had an opportunity to taste it at world exhibitions. As he pointed out, it is healthy because it is made of vegetables. Furthermore, each piece has a different taste. When foreigners taste such food, they taste Dewa Sanzan and maybe they would like to come to visit the site. He expressed

11 See the record from the diary of Nishikawa (1836 – 1906), translated to English in Sekimori (2005: 218–219). According to the record, even though the priests were laicized they kept these precepts because they were afraid of breaking the admonishment of the *kami*.

12 Japanese food prepared from vegetables, fish or other seafood that has been buttered and deep fried.

Fig. 34: Dewa Sanzan brochure.

his wish to have visitors from abroad who would make their own experience of the place and feel it.[13]

With the idea that exchange of knowledge on preparation of *shōjin ryōri* would help represent the typical food within and outside of the prefecture, a '*shōjin ryōri* project' began in 2012 in the village of Tōge.[14] On this occasion, family recipes were exchanged between wives who otherwise kept them only within the family.

An interesting point in the presentation of the *shōjin ryōri* at the European market is that it has been introduced, in accordance with the current trend, as a healthy product of high quality, balanced and nutritious as well as traditional. Linking this traditional food to a healthy lifestyle and co-existence with nature shows that the traditional dietary food has been redefined according to the modern mentality.[15] Moreover, in a similar way to the presentation of the Tateyama ritual in Paris, in this case the food related to local religious practices has become an exported item adapted to the imagination (in Appadurai's sense) of expected European spiritual tastes.

Another notable point in the presentation of *shōjin ryōri* abroad was the stress which was put on sensory perception. The use of such tactics coincides with the point made by Thrift (2008: 39) about the importance of the senses in new ways of producting commodities, as well as the remark made by Gauthier and Martikainen about marketing techniques associating products with immaterial qualities, namely to feelings.

Continuing with the view of religious practices from the perspective of the human body, the next section looks at the role of the body and sensory interactions in religious activities.

Importance of body and senses

In localities where I observed and participated in religious activities the body and senses played an important role. The common constituent of both the Shugendō retreat and the re-enactment of the ritual in Tateyama was a suppression of visual attention. In Tateyama, the participants of the ritual crossed the

13 This part is paraphrased from an interview with a representative of the Dewa Sanzan Shrine.

14 Information available at: Cradle (unknown year).

15 The focus on eating habits resembles the case of the participant at the retreat in Dewa Sanzan. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, she was motivated by her desire to change her eating habits. The dietary motivation for participating in *shugendō* has also been mentioned by a *sendatsu* from a different mountain site whom I interviewed. It also figures in the promotion of some Shugendō *(shugyō)* sites, as will be demonstrated.

Cloth Bridge blindfolded. This was accompanied by acoustic sounds which were appealing to the auditory sense. It was an impressive part of the ritual.

The sense of smell was challenged at the Shugendō ritual *nanban ibushi* 南蛮燻し in which a sort of incense consisting of rice hulls and red peppers was burned in a small enclosed room. This incense produced a strong and heavy smell that affected breathing and irritated the eyes. At the end of the ritual, the participants were crying and coughing with a sharp sound. I talked to the participants who were near me during the practice. They were not aware of any meaning of this practice.[16]

Bodily experiences in Shugendō include walking and soaking in an extremely cold mountain river, standing under a waterfall, climbing in heavy rain, and walking on fire. Such interactions with nature are part of the embodied religious practices of Shugendō. Within the scholarly approach to Shugendō and other religious practices performed in the Japanese mountains, the body has been left somehow out of focus, with the exception of the work *Ascetic Practices in Japanese Religion* (2014) by Tullio Frederico Lobetti, in which he delineates ascetic practice as a bodily experience. In his approach, the body in these practices is the primary locus of transmission of the ascetic 'embodied tradition'.

Embodiment has become the central theme in recent anthropological, cultural and landscape studies. Debates have focused on the binary of the semiotic approach concerned with representation or meaning, and the phenomenological non-representational approach concerned with embodied performances, performativities or affects (e.g. Csordas, 1993; Ingold, 2011; Jackson, 2013; Kohn, 2013; Thrift, 2008; White, 2014; Wylie 2007). While the former views the body as a cultural text, the latter focuses on embodiment and 'being in the world'.

Ingold, for instance, criticizes 'a tendency to treat body praxis as a mere vehicle for the outward expression of meanings emanating from a higher source in culture' (Ingold, 2000: 169). Elsewhere Ingold (2001) describes a process of learning as 'guided rediscovery' through which novices gain an immediate experience.

Ingold's view of the perception of the environment is applicable to *shugyō* praxes in the mountains. Bodily praxis is an essential element of this tradition.

16 One of its Buddhist interpretations is to experience the Realm of Hell. See for example, Earhart (1970: 124). Practices enacted during the Shugendō pilgrimage bear complicated symbolic meaning reflecting the rebirth of the participants. The transformation of *yamabushi* is not restricted to a narrative but it is enacted in embodied practices such as simulating dwelling in a womb and being reborn in an actual space that represents this. According to Earhart 'there seems to be no end of the doctrines and symbols which can be applied to any specific ceremony' (Earhart, 1970: 129). Earhart himself relies in his interpretations of rituals on the explanations of Japanese scholars Shimazu, Togawa and Miyake, combining them with his own experience during the autumn fall peak. He admits that 'there is no single line of development from conception moving gradually through gestation to a final climax of birth. Rather a complex array of those symbolic actions is intermixed in separate rites. This complex symbolism continues until the end of the fall peak' (Earhart, 1970: 130).

It is not to say that participants do not want to know the meaning,[17] but rather that performances are not only secondary effects of some higher meanings. The bodily knowledge is not communicated via texts or words.

Sendatsu often say that they want people to experience Shugendō and that in order to gain an experience they need to feel it or taste it. A representative from Dewa Sanzan, for instance, talked about an endeavour of the shrine to attract the younger generation through *shugyō* performed in the mountains of Dewa Sanzan and to let the participants remember it and feel it. He explained that this cannot be learned via words but through bodily experience. It can be gained by climbing or getting splashed by a waterfall (Appendix 1, note 7). In addition, during the exhibition which was held in Milan, visitors had an opportunity to taste the *yamabushi* food, and also to try to blow a *horagai* – a large conch shell used during Shugendō rituals. Even the promotional poster depicting the precincts of Dewa Sanzan in the background said 'Experience Tsuruoka'.

Shugendō as a bodily experience has been emphasized by some *sendatsu* in order to attract the interest of the current generation whose lifestyle is viewed as not incorporating the body into everyday practices. The above-mentioned religious representative of the Kinpusenji temple, Tanaka Riten, notes that just as people can clean their minds and hearts through the practice of *zazen*[18] and meditation – which he claims is now popular – in the case of Shugendō it is possible to achieve the same effect by using one's body while walking (Tanaka, 2014: 10). He calls for people to try this practice of *shugyō*. He adds that the reason why this practice of Shugendō is sought nowadays is that we only use our intellect in the modern lifestyle.

The pilgrim guide from the place where I joined the retreat seems to take a non-representational approach to Shugendō and its ascetic training.[19] Like Tanaka, he also appeals to the current generation which uses only the intellectual, rational way of thinking. He is convinced that people feel comfortable during the ascetic training in spite of its physical challenge, because they have to think physically. That is why it takes place in the middle of nature. The aim is to connect people with nature again. Participants are not allowed to speak during the three-day training, because they are required to understand what they can gain with their body.[20] He realized that it is impossible nowadays to fully return

17 I witnessed how they were trying to understand their experience by searching for information on the internet.

18 *Zazen* 座禅 is a form of seated meditation associated with Zen Buddhism.

19 The following information comes from an interview with the pilgrim guide, source: ©2013 LUXUREARTH. Available online at Luxurearth (2013).

20 The idea of learning through one's body is not solely specific to this pilgrim guide. A similar

to the ancient Japanese worldview; instead he aims for a 'new return' to what is a natural way of being in the world.

One of the participants who took part in the Shugendō retreat with me, described her bodily experience in her reaction on the social network:

> In this kind of experience of making my own way through the strong river current, I was paying more attention to the pleasure of being able to move freely my own body, then to struggle against bushes hanging in my way...It's a real pleasure to mingle with the rhythm of nature...I enjoyed the discoveries of using my body. I have never thought of how useful might be basic body exercise of usual ballet practice on a mountain. Both, muscle fever and pain were at zero level...since I think about 'me as a body', all the *shugyō* practice seems joyful and there was not a single thing I would call painful or hard. [Translated by author] (Appendix 1, note 8)

In her reaction above, the participant described how the hardship was eliminated for her when she let her body think, in accordance with the interpretation of the pilgrim guide. Her case is only one possibility among many. I met mostly with reactions that the *shugyō* experience was really a 'hardship'. Nevertheless, in spite of the danger and physical difficulties intrinsic to the character of the Shugendō pilgrimage, Japanese people have been interested in the experience of Shugendō.

Situating the tendency of pilgrim guides to stress bodily experience in Shugendō practice within the social context, in this case within consumer society, enables the researcher to see the appeal that religious practices gain from being 'isolated from the webs of meaning in which they were previously inscribed and integrated into new networks' (Gauthier and Martikainen, 2013a: 16). Thus, Shugendō practice – a way to acquire super-powers, to gain afterlife-merits or this-worldly benefits – becomes a physical activity which is so important for the current generation. It is within the reality of everyday working life, in which bodily engagement is limited, that sensory perceptions and embodied practices became so important in presenting religious practices related to Shugendō to potential participants. In this manner, the bodily experience during Shugendō practices has been integrated into the context of the everyday experiences of the current generation.

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concept was described by Schattschneider (2003) in her study on ascetic practice at Mount Akakura.

Benefits – riyaku 利益

The bodily experience of the participant described above relates to the idea of hardship, which is an intrinsic trait of *shugyō*. The eradication or marginalization of hardships and dangers has been seen as an allure of the pilgrimage by some authors (Reader, 2014: 98). Indeed, such a development might be observed from the macro-level point of view, and the case of Tateyama illustrates such a tendency. Yet, my observation of *shugyō* practices suggests that people are interested in certain bodily engagements in religious practices, which are dangerous or hard.

The gaining of benefits is among the traditional values associated with the hardship of *shugyō* experience.[21] One of the reasons Japanese people accept the challenge of Shugendō might be to make a sacrifice of danger or hardship in order to receive some benefit in return, for example, a benefit of protection.[22]

To illustrate the sacrifice of hardship in order to gain a benefit, an example of the Shugendō ritual of walking on fire, which I joined in the Nikko area, will be given here.[23] In addition to members of a local Shugendō group, some non-members – three elderly people from a nearby village and four young people from Tokyo – also took part in the ritual in 2015. Among those who came from Tokyo was a young woman. She had heard about the ritual walking on fire from her friend, himself a member of the local Shugendō group, and she asked two male friends to accompany her. She explained to me the reason why she participated. It was her *yakudoshi* 厄年 – an unlucky year.[24] Walking on fire is one of the practices that could protect a person in her unlucky year. Participants from the nearby village were also walking on fire. They were given a charm known as *ofuda* after the ritual to gain the benefit of protection.

Another example is the practice of standing under the waterfall known as *taki gyō* 滝行. *Taki gyō* became a theme of an advertisement campaign. Posters and billboards depicting a famous pop star standing under a waterfall in a white robe with her hands in a praying gesture were used for the advertising

21 Gaining of benefits is one of the characteristic traits of Japanese religion according to Reader and Tanabe (1998).

22 Accepting the danger as a sacrifice in order to gain a benefit is also known among other religious cultures such as Catholics (see, for example, Eade and Sallnow, 2000: 21–23).

23 The Shugendō group performing the ritual is located in Kanuma (Tochigi Prefecture). It was founded 30 years ago and gathers at a temple called Sannōin. This group should not to be mistaken for another Shugendō group in Nikkō named Kōunritsuin located in Nikkō Rinnōji temple buildings.

24 An unlucky year is linked to a specific age. Information on risky ages can be found in Japanese shrines. Young women aged 19 or 33 or 37 are in danger, along with men who are 25, 42 and 61 years old. The ages of 33 in the case of women and 42 in the case of men are viewed as the riskiest. For more information on *yakudoshi* see, for example, Lewis (1986).

Fig. 35: Mobile operator campaign. Photograph by author.

campaign of a mobile operator in 2014. When I asked about the meaning of the images, I was told that after being unsuccessful to win in a competition, the pop star made a public commitment to undergo a *taki gyō* as a way to fulfil her desire. The images depicted her with the slogans: 'Making a vow to win the first place' and 'I don't like not being the first' (Figure 35). This example is given here because it demonstrates the general understanding among Japanese people that by (the hardship of) standing under a waterfall one can gain the benefit of reaching a goal.

Ritual ablutions related to the New Year celebration are yet more examples of the popularity of such austerities. These ablutions were broadcasted on television channels and covered in newspapers in January 2016. Zero Channel News 24, for instance, reported on about a hundred participants walking on fire in Hiroshima Prefecture. The news channel showed the participants, united in prayers, who were walking on fire barefoot to pray for health and family safety in the new year. The participants gave their impressions, describing an inner purification experience[25] (Appendix 1, note 9).

25 Available online at News24 (2016)

水温0.4度「エイッ」

滝に打たれ寒修行する人たち（21日午前、富山県上市町で）＝細野登撮影

大寒の21日、北アルプス・立山連峰の麓にある大岩山日石寺（富山県上市町大岩）で、滝に打たれて身を清める寒修行が行われた。

午前7時半の気温は0度で滝の水温は0.4度。白装束の男女約40人が雪を踏みしめ、本堂裏の6本の滝（高さ約6㍍）に入っていった。ホラ貝の音と般若心経を唱える声が響くなか、修行者らは滝に打たれながら「エイッ、エイッ」と気合を入れていた。

三重県四日市市から長女と参加した理容師小林美智子さん(64)は「身が引き締まる思い。また今年1年、頑張ろうという思いが強まった」と話した。

靖国爆発音で韓国人再逮捕

火薬取締法違反容疑

靖国神社のトイレで爆発音がした事件で、警視庁公安部は21日、韓国人の全旭漢（ジョン・ウクハン）被告(27)（建造物侵入罪で起訴）を火薬取締法違反（所持、消費）容疑で再逮捕した。

発表によると、全被告は昨年11月23日、東京都千代田区の靖国神社南門付近のトイレで黒色火薬を詰めた鉄パイプ4本を所持し、このうち3本の火薬を燃焼させた疑い。調べに対し、「逮捕された理由はわかるが、話したくない」と供述しているという。全被告は都内のホテルで時限式発火装置を組み立てたとみられる。

社長ら女2人を詐欺容疑で逮捕

花のレンタル事業への投資名目で現金をだまし取ったとして、警視庁が押し花教室運営会社「フラワーライフ」（東京都渋谷区）の

逮捕していたことが捜査関係者への取材でわかった。同庁は、同社が首都圏の主婦を中心に高配当をうたった投資話で会員を募り、50億円以上を集めていたとみて解明を進める。

捜査関係者によると、2人は2012～14年、実態

発注見通しが公表された2011年7月8日、工事の割り振り案を決定。幹事社は同年8～9月に実施された12件の入札の数日前に、シミュレーショ

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Fig. 36: The Article in Yomiuri Shinbun.

Iwate broadcast news IBC focused on a karate group performing *taki gyō* as a form of cold training in January 2016. Twenty participants begged in this way for an improvement of health. The same karate group was described by Morioka Times news in 2009, on this occasion depicting a schoolboy who was praying for academic improvement.[26]

Yomiuri Shinbun also published news of about forty participants soaking in cold water (0.4 degrees C) in a six-metre high waterfall located in the Tateyama Mountain Range. According to the news, the ascetic practitioners guided by the sound of *horagai* 法螺貝 (a conch shell) were chanting a sutra (*Hannya shin gyō* 般若心経) and entering the waterfall with the exclamation 'Ei!'(Figure 36).

These reports suggest the popularity of religious practices in which hardship is an intrinsic characteristic. Notable also is the fact that compared to the re-enactment of the *Nunohashi* rite, in these cases, the reports do not conceal the religious practice behind the veil of culture, probably because the above-mentioned New Year's ablutions were not government-related events. Moreover, via the comments of the participants, Japanese readers learned about various benefits that could be gained through the ablutions. Within the framework of this book it is these benefits that are viewed as immaterial values associated with religious practices.

Along with the values that have been attributed to these austerities, the variety of the styles in which these practices are performed has been extended and adjusted to trends in present-day society. In addition, internet communication has influenced the interaction between providers of religious practices and participants.

Mediatization

Mountain pilgrimage sites promote themselves at present through the internet. Even religious practices related to Shugendō, which have been considered a form of secret knowledge, are now included in promotional materials such as DVDs, documentaries and online videos posted by providers of *shugyō*. Interviews with Shugendō professionals confirmed that the internet and social media profiles have been initiated and are used to raise the number of participants in Shugendō.[27] The emergence of online communication has provided not only access to information about religious practices but also enabled new ways of creating or maintaining contacts between religious institutions and people.

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26 Available online at Morioka Times (2009).

27 Interviews were made with Shugendō professionals in Dewa Sanzan and in Nikkō. The Nikkō Shugendō group located in Kanuma, regularly updates information and pictures on the internet. Their social media profile gives information about events and also serves for communication between the members. However, information about upcoming events is distributed to members by the postal service.

For example, in the case of the *shugyō* retreat described above, the communication was done via social media. A communication group consisting of *shugyō* participants has been created on the social network. It serves for communication, sharing of impressions from the *shugyō*, and invitations to some events relevant to the topic of *shugyō*, such as presentations by the *shugyō* guide. According to my conversation with the representative from the Dewa Sanzan Shrine, the initiation and invitations for such presentations come from people who have experienced Dewa Sanzan, such as the participants at retreats, who want to share information about their experiences. This was also the case of the presentation given by the guide from Dewa Sanzan which I joined in Tokyo. The invitation came via the communication group created on the social network after the retreat. It was shared in this way by one of the participants at the retreat. It seems that this new style of communication between the religious institution and participants is replacing the former visits to supporters of the mountain cult by *sendatsu* during their journeys around the country. This process maybe viewed as an example of mediatization because it is the media that shapes the style of communication between providers of religious practices and participants.

This pattern of mutual relations between the hyper-mediatization of culture, consumption and consumerism has also been noted by Gauthier and Martikainen (2013a: 2). Yet another characteristic of the consumer society besides the mediatization is a tendency to bestow on people the power of choice.

Choose your experience

According to Gauthier and Martikainen, the tendency to present religion as a realm of multiple choices with which the potential participant may identify is typical for a consumer society. Indeed, this trend is observable in Japanese religion today. A Nichiren Buddhist temple in Chiba Prefecture, for example, came up with a smart idea to 'personalize' charms. The commercial for this product explains: 'In today's Japan modern lifestyles have diversified the peoples' wishes and concerns'.[28] In an attempt to respond to this situation, the temple priest decided to improve the traditional style of charms, which he felt, no longer responded to the present needs of the people. Traditional charms usually cover: business success, love, academic excellence, health and prosperity, road safety, household safety, physical strength, safe delivery or fertility. These however, are not sufficient anymore. Therefore, the personalized charm enables multiple combinations of wishes, each assigned a characteristic pattern in the

28 The video is available online in English; see Fujimoto (2015).

shape of a symbol or an ornament. New personalized charms cover wishes like: bed-wetting prevention, arousing sexual desire, not getting bald, stopping snoring, becoming popular or becoming super cute.[29]

The merits of Shugendō practices have also been attributed a variety of choices. According to Tanaka (2014), the benefits of Shugendō are variable: it can be touching (emotionally), healing or spiritual. It might also serve as a means of gaining religious experience which cannot be achieved in daily life. Furthermore, contrary to the persisting restrictions on women in Shugendō, there are also sites which now offer versions of the Shugendō practices exclusively to women, for example, in Yoshino and Dewa Sanzan. Information publicized on the internet about sites providing some type of *gyō* is widespread and does not end with groups devoted to Shugendō. Especially the *taki gyō* represents an abundant area of choices for those who are interested, or who simply wish to try something new.

Taki gyō can be found as a recommendation for people under stress, as a chance to have a new experience, and as a way of curing health problems, but also as a self-purification practice or a 'power spot'.[30] Providers offer to those who are interested in water ablution a choice of a night version of *taki gyō*, portraying the waterfall surrounded by candles.[31] Yet another variation is a group experience of *taki gyō*. Some sites that target female participants even recommend *taki gyō* for couples before marriage, or as a form of diet.

As an effect of these new trends, the concept of rebirth that historically played a crucial role in the rituals is being re-interpreted to conform to the current way of thinking. Thus, the recommendation of waterfall ablution for those who want to be *reborn* is listed in the same category that appeals to those who want to 'change themselves', 'to get to know the unknown part of oneself', 'crack out of one's shell', or 'those who seek more self-confidence'.

What follows are examples of offers from providers of *taki gyō* practices which serve as illustrations on a variety of choices that are offered to potential participants.

Ashigara shugen society *Ashigara shugen no kai* 足柄修験の会, for instance, recommends *taki gyō* for those who:

> Lack motivation
> Feel their everyday life is boring

29 The promotional video depicts a transvestite disclosing her wish to become super cute.

30 The 'power spot' is a Japanese expression which refers to a place with an unusual power, energy or blessing.

31 This experience is offered by Tsubaki ōjinja, located in the Nagano area. Here they refer to the *taki gyō* as *misogi* みそぎ, which is an equivalent term used by other sites as well for the same action.

Wish to make a surprise
Want to go on a diet
Want to play a *batsu* game 罰ゲーム.[32]

The price for first-timers is 9,000 yen, and from the second visit it declines to 6,000 yen.[33] In the case of a so-called 'wedding surprise *taki gyō*', the cleansing in the waterfall is recorded and the final video serves later as a proof of one's decision to propose. The video is meant as a surprise for the future bride. The price for purification in such cases rises to 18,000 yen per person.

Located high in the mountains to the west from the Chichibu pilgrimage site is a mountain shrine *Mitsumine jinja* 三峰神社. The shrine has a long tradition of wolf worship and at present it also provides the *taki gyō* experience. I participated in one of its waterfall rituals with my classmates in 2015 as part of our excursion to the Mitsumine and Chichibu mountain area – localities easily reachable from Tokyo. Guided by a local *sendatsu* we ascended from the Mitsumine shrine to the waterfall. After we changed into white robes (or, alternatively, for our male classmates into a piece of white cloth evoking the sumo outfit called *fundoshi*) we performed a series of chants for the local *kami*, accompanied by gestures and movements imitating the rowing of a boat. Exclaiming 'Ei!' and symbolically cutting the space with our hands, we could enter into the waterfall lake. We soaked in the cold water and echoed the chanting of the *sendatsu*. After the cleansing under the waterfall we walked out and made the same sets of movements and gestures again while repeating the chants of our guide.

In this example, the *taki gyō* was performed under the careful direction of our guide who explained to us that our gestures were imitating the rowing of a boat which is a vehicle used by the *kami* to descend from the heavens to mountain peaks. The *sendatsu* asked us before we started our *shugyō* to perform this religious practice solemnly according to his guidance. Even though our motivations might have been different from religious aims, everybody participated soulfully. In spite of the solemnity, we were allowed to take pictures.[34] The *sendatsu* even took a picture while we were inside the waterfall lake (Figure 38) and near the waterfall after we finished the chanting.

The perspective of 'The taki gyō society of Mitsumine' *Mitsumine taki gyō no kai* 三峰滝行の会 is different from the one described above in that they state

Fig. 37: Posters promoting Akame shijūhachi waterfalls.

32 This is a game in which the one who loses has to do something embarrassing. *Batsu* means a penalty.

33 Information from the Ashigara shugen society internet page is available at Geocities (unknown year).

34 Taking pictures during *shugyō* practices is usually forbidden.

Fig. 38: Taki gyō experience in the Mitsumine mountains. Courtesy of the sendatsu.

their clients are not standing under the waterfall for any specific religious purpose.[35] The profile of the society includes information about the proficiency of the *taki gyō* superviser in the field of psychology. The approach of this society is psychological. What they provide is mental support. The therapy is offered to those of the current generation who feel lost in the stressful society in which they are living. The society offers the *taki gyō* for those who:

- Want to have a new experience
- Want to be more resistant to stress
- Want to dispel a gloomy feeling
- Want to change themselves: which includes 'to be reborn', to be self-confident, to improve emotional strength, to get out of one's shell
- Want to know themselves better: including receiving the energy of nature, or drawing out a hidden talent, or want to feel the power of a waterfall
- Want to be healthy

However, it is also for those who:

35 Information from the internet page of the society, available online at Mental support room (1997 – 2013).

– Have an interest in *sangaku shinkō* (mountain worship)
– Wish to perform *shugyō* or self-purification
– Want to purify their minds and bodies

The internet page of the society informs readers that there is no single correct purpose for *taki gyō*. People have to try and find their own style. The waterfall accepts everything. It will reflect people the way they are in a way they do not notice in their everyday lives.

Taki gyō is also offered by a NPO as an 'eco tour' to the Akame shijūhachi waterfalls in Mie Prefecture.[36] The slogan of the campaign offers to 'calm one's mind and purify one's body' and 'clean yourself by getting splashed by the waterfall'. [Translated by author] (Figure 37) The campaign poster refers to the Akame shijūhachi waterfalls as a place sacred to Shugendō since ancient times and describes it as a power spot. Information about the tour on the internet includes a photo story depicting a group of young girls as they hike, change their clothes and enjoy the waterfall, and in a contemplative posture under the waterfall. Those who are interested may choose from several courses in various combinations of the *taki gyō* with meditation experience, outdoor yoga experience, lunch and bathing. Prices for the courses range from 8,000 to 11,000 yen.

A lodge located near Mount Mitake, which also focuses on *taki gyō* experiences, demands the participants keep a few rules connected with the waterfall experience (Roman, 2016). They are, for example, asked to avoid intercourse before the practice and asked not to look back on the way to the waterfall. As this place offers guidance in both the Japanese and English languages, and it is possible to make a reservation via booking.com (a provider of accommodation services for travellers), it has become popular among foreigners.[37]

The examples given here suggest an orientation towards the one-time experience type of client – those who respond to a trait of consumption which was noted by Appadurai: 'modern consumption seeks to replace aesthetics of duration with the aesthetics of ephemerality' (Appadurai, 2010: 85). Such representations of *taki gyō* also correspond to the view expressed by the representative from the Dewa Sanzan who noted that food and *shugyō* are not offered as religious items (in the sense that receiving of religious services may reflect a long-term relationship between participants and providers). They are both something to be experienced, something to try.

The aforementioned ways of presenting religious practices show that, as in the other areas of life in the current era, the religious area has been marked by con-

36 This information can be found online at Akame48taki (2008).

37 Information about the experience is available online at Roman (2016). More information about the lodging can be found at Komadori (unknown year).

sumerism. Moreover, those mountain sites, with their long uninterrupted historical tradition of Shugendō, are appreciated as more authentic among the professional *yamabushi*. Acquiring the professional status of *sendatsu* in such places is costly. Therefore, not everybody can afford to practice in such Shugendō sites, giving them an aura of exclusivity. It seems, then, that there is a parallel between the evaluation of sites providing religious practices and the concept of brands.

Conversations with participants at the rituals demonstrated that the 'appeal' for religious practices is still alive. The emergence of new values ascribed to religious practices, however, does not imply that their characteristics, such as interacting with the supernatural, have diminished. I learned from the personal stories of Shugendō practitioners that the decision to choose Shugendō as part of one's life is hard to narrow down and explain by a rational choice theory, to the appeal of self-realization or the desire for a catchy lifestyle. In my analysis, personal life stories and particularities can be viewed as additional determinants of engagement in religious practices. There are personal lifestories in which Shugendō practitioners were 'chosen', contrary to the idea of actively 'making a choice'. These cases involve spiritual experiences related to mediums, shamans or other spiritual mediators. Yet others might come to the life-path of religious practices in the mountains through social networking – for example, as a shared activity with one's best friend from high school. Other cases are those of engagement in religious practices related to activities such as a school's sports day or purchasing a new car that must be ritually purified. These aspects are important parts of contemporary religious practices in the mountains. However, they reach beyond the scope of this work.

CONCLUSIONS

Some historical and current examples of religious practices from mountain religious sites have been used throughout this work with the aim of examining ways that religious practices have been sustained in mountain areas. In this endeavour attention has been paid to the impact of consumerism on this process.

As practices related to notions of the afterlife have lost their allure, the examples presented here confirm the current tendency to re-brand religious practices, promoting them in accordance with the current life-styles and values. Considering the current orientation of consumer society towards identification with products, another aim of the book had been to specify immaterial values associated with the examined religious practices.

These examples indicate that current thinking about cultural heritage as well as ecology figure as immaterial qualities associated with religious practices. Interestingly, the case of the Cloth Bridge rite illustrates that a discrepancy between the official rhetoric and the statements of participants may lead to a broadening of the immaterial qualities associated with a religious practice. As could be seen, immaterial qualities such as spirituality and healing have enriched the original characteristics of the rite. Furthermore, re-enactment of the Cloth Bridge rite in Paris and presentation of *shōjin ryōri* overseas indicate that immaterial qualities associated with religious practices are being adapted to the taste of spectators abroad.

Learning from the approaches which draw attention to the body, part of this work has attended to religious practices in the mountains as arenas without a specified creed, meaning, or belief and has recognized the observed religious practices as embodied, with attention to sensory experiences in religious practices. However, contrary to studies related to the concept of embodiment, the current work situates such sensory experiences in relation to consumerism. In this context, the world of Shugendō reveals some new strategies that providers of

Shugendō practices use to make them interesting for the current generation. It has been noted in this respect that the traditional benefit of acquiring of super-powers via ascetic practices has been reinterpreted in our time. Although bodily experience is still crucial in Shugendō, it is introduced in a new light. Shugendō providers argue that this bodily experience is in contrast with the everyday experiences of the typical contemporary, rationally thinking individual who lacks physical activity. In this way, the benefit of gaining super-powers appears as an unknown possibility of perceptions inherent to the human body. Moreover, arguments linking the bodily experiences during Shugendō with lack of physical activity point to yet another immaterial quality associated with religious practices – a healthy lifestyle.

The examples of the mobile operator advertising campaign and news reports about New Year ascetic practices demonstrate that motivations for performing religious practices, such as obtaining a variety of benefits including protection against disease and bad luck or securing success, have not diminished. However, at the same time, new values associated with religious practices indicate that the current generation, used to scientific explanations in the field of human health, reacts positively to the associations of religious practices with a healthy lifestyle. Hence, participation in a religious practice is not only about its supernatural effects resulting, for instance, in protection against disease, but also about its 'natural' effects (e.g., consuming healthy food or engaging in physical activity) resulting in a healthy physical condition.

Moreover, the examples of *taki gyō* practices give a broader perspective on the immaterial qualities associated with current religious practices. While traditional qualities including health benefits, sacrifice or reaching and attaining goal still exist, *taki gyō* has been portrayed through a wider variety of choices and experiences, including romance, amusement, power or energy spot, therapy, healing, relaxation and inspiration. Furthermore, the examples of promoting religious practices such as *taki gyō* illustrate new ways of medialization, as well as commoditization in the religious sphere. At the same time, these practices exemplify the expanding range of options for involvement in religious practices that participants may choose from.

The research also illustrates a trend of one-time, experience-oriented participants. A one-time experience stands in contrast to the declining prevalence of long-time affiliation of individuals with religious institutions. Since Japan is a country with falling active membership in religious institutions (Rowe, 2011; Covell, 2005), such observations interlock with academic debates on secularism, post-secularism (Gorski, 2012) and the resurgence of religion (Riesebrodt and Konieczny, 2005). My analysis, however, does not view this trend as either secularization or the opposite, an emergence of a more religious generation, but

rather as the emergence of consumer-like interactions between participants and providers of religious practices. Moreover, the new forms of interaction between participants and providers via the media indicates mediatization in this area.

I have considered the situation of mountain religious practices from the economic point of view with a focus on consumerism, as the book mainly builds on Gauthier and Martikainen (2013a). However, further analysis in future research could take into consideration the first volume of their work (Gauthier and Martikainen, 2013b), which concentrates on religion in relation to the political sphere, specifically with ideas of neoliberalism and governance. Despite its limitations, I hope that this book can contribute to the understanding of the vibrant Japanese religion and that it succeeds in revealing more about the current transformation of society.

APPENDIX 1: **ORIGINAL VERSIONS OF TRANSLATIONS FROM JAPANESE**

note 1: 「しかし、とにかく修験道の山修行というは日本人の心に深く根着した古来の信仰をベースにしているがゆえ、もっとも日本人にフィットする体験のはずです。山が大好きな日本人のルーツは修験道の世界にあるといっていいでしょう。」

note 2: 「神様と自然一緒なんですよ。だから、自然を愛することは、神様を愛することつながっていくと いう。」

note 3: 「自分としては、日本の古い源宗教性について、学びたいと感じてましたので、この連続講座のコンセプトニーズにあっている。」

note 4: 「「人間はあくまでも自然の一部である」とし、大自然をあがめたてまつる修験道の思想は、日本が世界に誇るべきものだと思います。」

note 5: 「山伏修行一年生の私 では、検証不足かもしれませんが、古来から存在していた山伏は、日本精神性の復興に大きな役割を果たすと直感的に確信しています。」「修行を通じて自然のつながり、人とつながりその間にある豊かさを体験できたから。」

note 6: 「「日本食」や「日本食文化」は、自然との共生や日本の伝統を大切にしながら、 味覚のみならず、色彩などの視覚、香りなどの嗅覚、しつらえや空間にまでこだ わった、美味しさや、美しさ、楽しさを五感で味わう健康にも良い独自の食文化 である。」

note 7: 「やまぶ修行であったり、神社の区の山でいろんなことを、が体感する体で覚える、体で感じるということを若い人たちに感じてもらって、神社というより自然というか、われわれが生かせているんだという、自然をこういうと愛するか、自然をすきに

なるということをすすめています。」「言葉で伝わらないので。きてもらって、たとえば石段登ったり、月山登ったり、滝にうたれたり。。。」

note 8: 「澤登りは今まで経験したことのない、探検のごとき、道無き茂みをかき分けて修行の時よりも自由に身体を動かせることの楽しさに、木の枝にのり上下にゆさゆさと揺れていたら。
自然のリズムにまじってゆくのは本当に楽しいことです。それが上手くゆくために、身体の使い方を工夫するのが楽しかった。　また、普段練習しているバレエの基本の身体の使い方がこんなにも山で役立つとはおもいませんでした。筋肉痛も疲労もゼロです！『私は身体だ』と思ってからは全ての行に対して向き合う事が楽しくなり、辛い修行は一つもありませんでした。」

note 9: 「心が洗われるというか。本当に頭の中が空っぽになるので、きれいなこころになるような気がする。」

APPENDIX 2: **THE CLOTH BRIDGE CONSECRATION RITE**

There were 85 participants in the rite in 2014. In the morning between 7:00 and 9:00, all the participants gathered in the gym of the local elementary school. NHK television journalists were waiting in front of the school entrance to interview the participants.

In the gym, we were changed into the white robes with the help of local women. Each of the participants was assigned a number which we found with white garments and belts prepared for us on the floor of the gym. The belts were of green, blue, orange and burgundy colours. We brought our own undershirt *hadajuban* 肌襦袢, prayer rosary *juzu* 数珠 and special socks for the sandals *zōri* 草履. Those who were dressed were waiting at a table with drinks. Some of participants asked me to take pictures with them.

Later we encountered a Shingon Buddhist priest who instructed us about the ritual. He explained how to respond to the prayers during the rite in the Enma Hall and how to cross the bridge in a three-steps-pause pace. Then we were divided into two groups and at 9:15 a bus took us to the Enma Hall. There we encountered journalists again. They were asking about our impressions and where we come from.

The rite began in the Enma Hall. We entered the Enma Hall and sat in *seiza* 正座 position (with legs folded underneath one's tighs) on designated spots marked by our numbers. The ritual in the Enma Hall lasted twenty minutes, from 10:20 to 10:40. There were eight Buddhist priests present in the Enma Hall. Two of them handed to each of us a spice seed which we inserted between our teeth. They also distributed among us spice powder which we placed into our left palm. We covered the powder inside our palms with our right hand and flipped our palms over three times. Then we spread the powder over our chests. This was a purification part of the *zange* 懺悔 (confession) ritual. We departed Enma Hall and gathered outside. Then we formed three rows, put on straw hats and covered our eyes. However, by looking down we could still have a glimpse of the pathway. We proceeded from the Enma Hall down the stone stairs known as *Myōnen saka* 明念坂 to the

Fig. 39: Ritual in the Enma Hall. Photograph provided by the Tateyama town office.

Fig. 40: Participants led by the indō group. Photograph provided by the Tateyama town office.

Fig. 41: Encounter of the indō group with the raigō group. Photograph provided by the Tateyama town office.

Fig. 42: Ritual in the Yōbōkan. Photograph provided by the Tateyama town office.

Fig. 43: Participants receiving kanjō 灌頂. Photograph provided by the Tateyama town office.

Cloth Bridge. Assistants were guiding our steps all the way down the stairs. After a short stop in front of the bridge we began to walk across the bridge led by a group of priests, a *yamabushi* and musicians. We were walking according to the instructions in a three steps pace 'left-right-left' accompanied by *gagaku* music and chants. Between 11:00 and 11:30 we met with a group of priests coming towards us from the other side of the bridge. We crossed the bridge led by the group and proceeded to the Yōbōkan 遥望館 (another hall). There we sat on the floor in *seiza* position and took off the straw hats. Our eyes were still blinded by the cloth. This time we could not see anything as it was dark inside the room. At that point the hall resonated in chanting of *nenbutsu* 念仏 and other prayers – based on which prayer the participants felt comfortable with (this was in accordance with the instructions given to us by the Buddhist priest in the morning). The chanting and the sounds of instruments grew stronger until the point when a bell rang quietly. Then we were allowed to take off the cloth wrapped over our eyes. At that moment the wall of the hall rose up revealing the view of the Tateyama Mountain Range. After a short contemplation, two Buddhist priests approached each participant with a stick to provide a powder *kanjō* (consecration). The ceremony in the Yōbōkan was performed from 11:45 to 12:10. After a short speech by a priest, we were led across the bridge back towards the Enma Hall where we came across the journalists again.

We were transferred to the elementary school around 12:30 by buses. After that, we changed our clothes and ate a lunch-box. The food was a special vegetarian meal made from vegetables and rice. As we were ritually re-born, it was prepared in the same style as a *hōji* 法事 – burial feast. Each of us received amulets and cookies depicting an image of a blindfolded woman participant in the straw hat with the bridge in the background.

APPENDIX 3: **RETREAT**

I reached the village of Tōge by local bus on August 1st. I met two other women participants on the bus. We realized we were going to the same retreat after we got off the bus at the same bus stop. We walked down the main street looking for our lodge together. We entered the lodge with greetings and found some other participants inside a large tatami room, where we signed a list of participants. Parts of *yamabushi* garments were piled separately on the floor of the room. Each of us took one piece of the clothing from the piles and found herself a place inside the room. We sat ourselves next to each other. There was still time to go to eat before we started with *shugyō*.

Around noon there were 16 women and 10 men participants. Among the women was one participant who had some experience with *shugyō*. This was her third time in Dewa Sanzan, but the first time in this lodge. She introduced herself as a *yamabushi* even on her name card, which also contained information about her profession as a voice actress. This woman assisted all of those who did not know how to put on the *yamabushi* attire. Especially difficult was the head cover folded in a specific style.

One of the participants was accompanied by her fifteen year old daughter. The mother was raised in a Catholic Japanese family but currently lives in Morocco. It was not her first time on the retreat, she had taken part in *shugyō* 25 years before. The young daughter – the youngest member of our *shugyō* group – was assigned the role of *Utachi*. She would call 'Utachi' loudly each time we were setting out, while we replied 'Uketamau' (I accept). We received three types of prayer texts which we carried with us all the time (Figures 47, 48).

The *shugyō* started at 1pm with chanting of the prayers inside the lodge. Then we walked out and lined up in two rows, beginning with the women and ending with the men. Our first destination was the Haguro Shrine. The path to the Haguro Shrine leads through the shrine precincts located at the foot of the

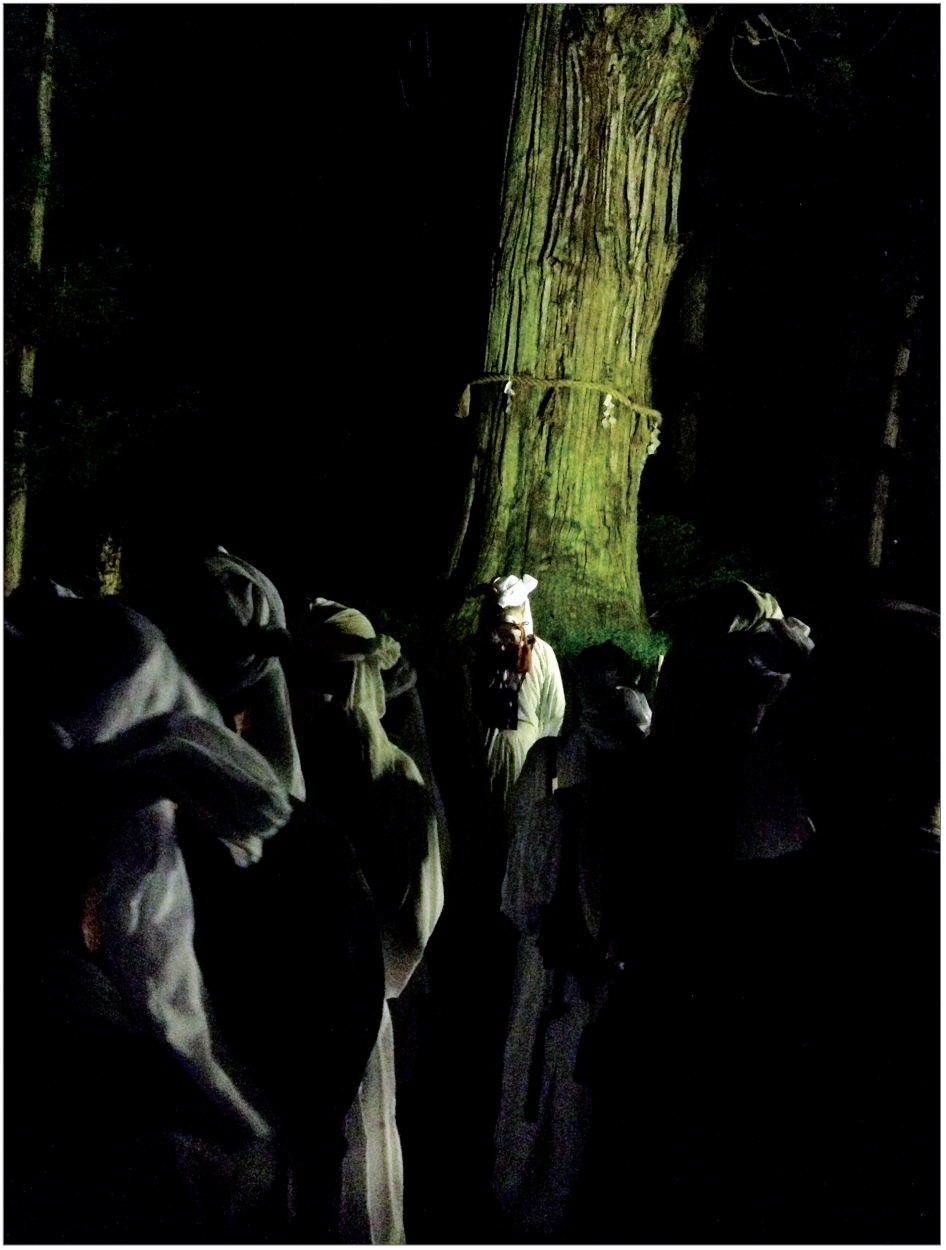


Fig. 44: Praying in front of the sacred cedar tree. Photograph by author.

Fig. 45: A sacred spot at the top of Mount Gassan. Photograph by author.

mountain stairs. The stairs consist of 2466 stone steps which we ascended at a brisk pace. On our way to the shrine we were chanting the prayers as an expression of a reverence for the sacred spots such as a five-storied pagoda, small shrines and a cedar tree more than a thousand years old known as 'the Old man cedar' (Figure 31). Our guide made a few stops to let us catch our breath and to drink some water. We were lucky to have cloudy weather. The ascent on a hot sunny day would be more exhausting. At the peak of Mount Haguro we entered the Hachiko Hall and paid homage to Hachiko – the founder of the Dewa Sanzan tradition (Figure 28). For 500 yen we were allowed to see a special exhibition of an image of the founder. (The money was collected to support the region of Fukushima after the big earthquake in 2011.) We descended the stairs and walked back to the lodge around 5pm. We rested for around an hour and a half and then we practiced *zazen* with meditation for around 10 minutes.

After the short meditation we had our evening meal – one scoop of miso (soya bean paste) soup, a scoop of rice and two slices of pickled cucumbers. *Sendatsu* showed us how to eat the meal. We were supposed to eat it as fast as possible, within around 2 to 5 minutes, in silence. Each participant received a set consisting of two small bowls, a small plate and a cloth. After we finished the food, we poured water into our bowl and rinsed it. We poured the same liquid into the next bowl and at the end we drank that liquid. Then we wrapped our set into the cloth.

After 7pm we gathered in front of the lodge and set out for an evening walk around the village area for around an hour and a half. After that, we walked to a suburb of the village where we took a bow facing Mount Gassan.

Then we returned and chanted prayers in front of two altars inside the lodge, repeating the texts around 10 times. After the chants finished, the women and men separately entered a small house located outside the building where we were sleeping. We walked into a small room on the second floor and sat on the tatami floor. Our guide was sitting on the floor behind our backs. He lit rice hulls mixed with red peppers[1] inside a brazier which induced coughing and teary reactions among the participants who were trying to chant the prayers but had problems with breathing properly. After a few minutes we were allowed to leave the room and walked back to the lodge. The *shugyō* of the first day was over around 11pm.

The following morning, we woke up to the sound of a conch shell (*horagai*) blown by our guide at 4am. We got up, sat for *zazen* meditation for around 10 minutes, ate breakfast quickly and got inside a bus. The bus took us to the entrance gate of Mount Gassan. We set out for our journey towards the peak of

1 The specific content of the mixture was described by Earhart (1970).

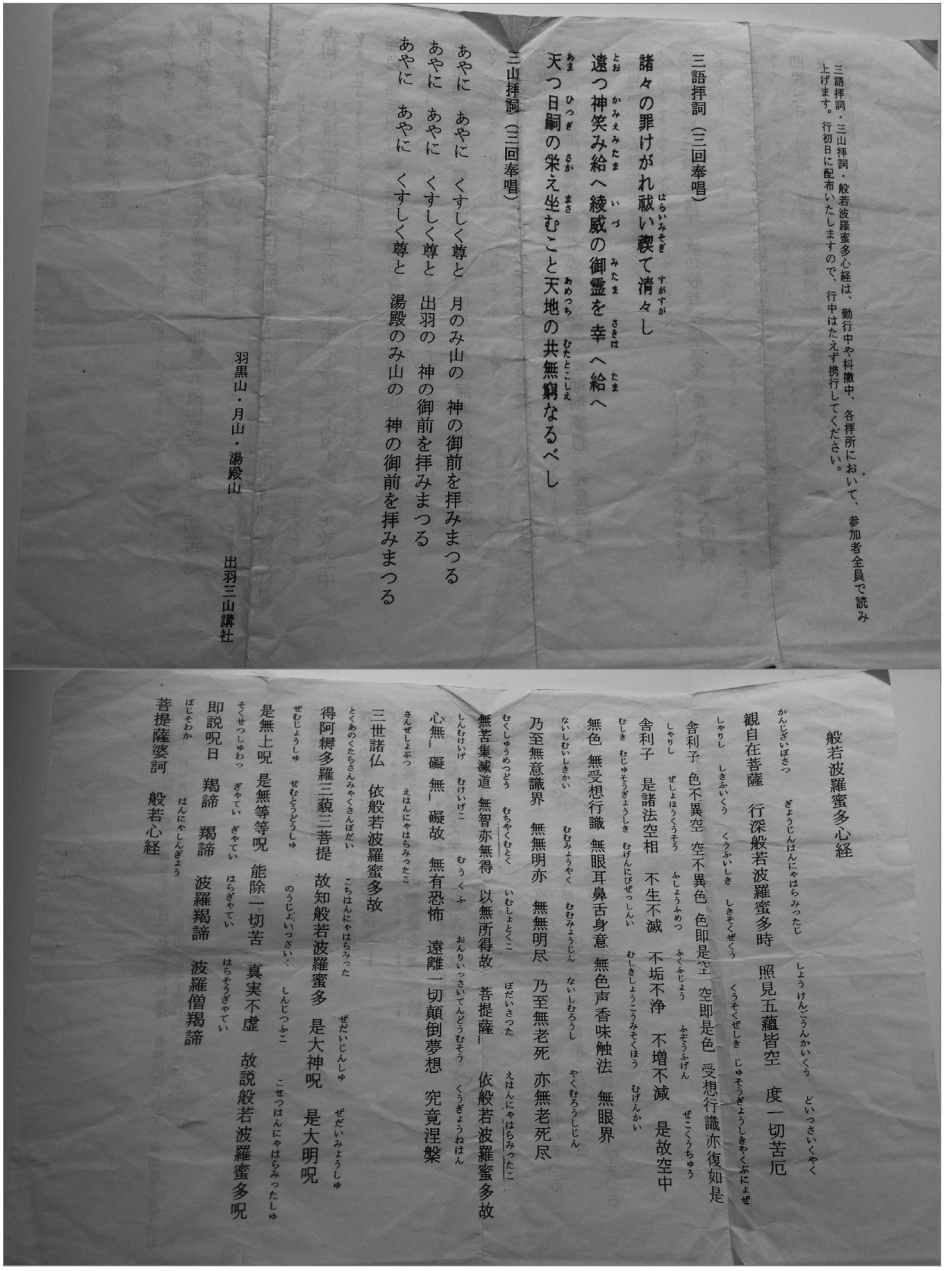
Fig. 46: Praying at Mount Gassan. Photograph by author.

Mount Gassan. We walked in silence which was interrupted only by the sound of a bell tied to the waist of our guide and the tapping of our pilgrim sticks. We chanted the prayers at sacred spots and in front of the shrine on the summit of Mount Gassan. Just below the summit, we stopped to pray for the victims of the big earthquake. Ten thousand copies of sutras are buried at this place of worship for the victims. During a short break at the peak of the mountain we entered a shelter. There we each ate two rice balls. After the break for food, we began to walk towards Mount Yudono passing through valleys and via a demanding steep descending path which featured a ladder leading to a river. When we reached the river, we drank from a fresh cold stream. We continued walking via a pathway of river boulders which resembled a dried river basin until we reached the sacred site of Yudono. There are no shrines or temples – the natural shape of a sacred rock is worshipped at this place. The sacred rock is believed to be the body of kami *shintai* 神体. Everybody has to enter this site barefoot and to pass a ritual known as *oharai*. We released white paper cutouts in the shape of simple human figures into the water current.[2] Then we revered the *kami* with our chants and walked on the sacred boulder, washed by a trickling stream of hot water. We drank from the shrine *sake* and we departed the Yudono site.

From Yudono we kept walking to yet another sacred spot. We left the main road descending to a river. Women participants took off their lower garments and continued dressed in the upper part of their attire (with a small backpack where we kept spare upper garments and spare underwear) through the mountain river. The stream was extremely cold. Following our guide, we arrived at a waterfall where we practiced the *taki gyō* (standing and praying under the waterfall). Before entering the waterfall, we repeated a set of movements which recall rowing a boat while directing our arms to the left and to the right. This was followed by acting as if we were pressing an imagined 'sphere' in between our palms at the level of our waists. Each of us then entered a waterfall pond and exposed our bodies to the stream of falling water while praying. Women and men participants split into two groups entering two separate streams of the waterfall. After the waterfall ablution we changed into our spare upper attire and underclothes. We walked back through the river and returned to the road. Then we carried on walking down the main road for not more than 20 minutes to a big *torii* gate (marking the shrine area) where we took a group picture.

Around 4pm we got into a bus which was waiting for us at a parking lot nearby. The bus took us back to the lodge where we rested and dried our white top garments. Then we practiced *zazen* meditation and ate a quick meal. After it became dark, we gathered in front of the lodge and started walking in the

2 The white paper cutouts represented our unwell bodily condition, which should be cured through the *oharai*.



三語拝詞・三山拝詞・般若波羅蜜多心経は、勤行中や斜懺中、各拝所において、参加者全員で読み上げます。行初日に配布いたしますので、行中はたえず携行してください。

三語拝詞（三回奉唱）

諸々の罪けがれ祓い禊て清々し
遠つ神笑み給へ綾威の御霊を幸へ給へ
天つ日嗣の栄え坐むこと天地の共無窮なるべし

三山拝詞（三回奉唱）

あやに　あやに　くすしく尊と　月のみ山の　神の御前を拝みまつる
あやに　あやに　くすしく尊と　出羽の　神の御前を拝みまつる
あやに　あやに　くすしく尊と　湯殿のみ山の　神の御前を拝みまつる

羽黒山・月山・湯殿山

出羽三山講社

般若波羅蜜多心経

観自在菩薩　行深般若波羅蜜多時　照見五蘊皆空　度一切苦厄
舎利子　色不異空　空不異色　色即是空　空即是色　受想行識亦復如是
舎利子　是諸法空相　不生不滅　不垢不浄　不増不減　是故空中
無色　無受想行識　無眼耳鼻舌身意　無色声香味触法　無眼界
乃至無意識界　無無明亦　無無明尽　乃至無老死　亦無老死尽
無苦集滅道　無智亦無得　以無所得故　菩提薩埵　依般若波羅蜜多故
心無罣礙　無罣礙故　無有恐怖　遠離一切顛倒夢想　究竟涅槃
三世諸仏　依般若波羅蜜多故
得阿耨多羅三藐三菩提　故知般若波羅蜜多　是大神呪　是大明呪
是無上呪　是無等等呪　能除一切苦　真実不虚　故説般若波羅蜜多呪
即説呪曰　羯諦　羯諦　波羅羯諦　波羅僧羯諦
菩提薩婆訶　般若心経

Fig. 47–48: The texts of the prayers and songs used during the retreat. Photograph by author.

darkness, equipped with a few lanterns, to a small shrine located outside the village. From the small shrine we continued to the precincts of the Haguro shrine, at the foot of Mount Haguro, stopping near the cedar tree and the five-storied pagoda to chant prayers. We returned to the lodge around 9pm. After chanting the prayers, we went through the tough experience of smoke one more time. That day we went to sleep after a short speech from our guide at around 11pm.

On the third day, the sound of the conch shell woke us up again at 4am. We set out for a walk to the river, passing through the precincts of the Haguro shrine. We took off our lower garments behind one of the shrines and afterwards we repeatedly practiced the movements resembling the rowing of a boat, followed by the gestures of pressing an imagined sphere in between our palms. Then we entered the river from the left side of a bridge and immersed ourselves in the water. In that position we were chanting our prayers. The river temperature felt very comfortable, compared to the waterfall, as it was not so high in the mountains. After we changed our garments we began to ascend the stairs towards Mount Haguro again. Our pace was a little more relaxed this time with fewer rest breaks. We entered the main shrine at the mountain peak where we received *oharai*. A white automatic curtain separated us from the rest of the shrine interior. We were sitting in the *seiza* position and we had to bow with our heads touching the floor. Then a Shinto priest approached us by touching our backs with golden tins attached to stripes hanging from a stick. We were offered the shrine sake and afterwards we started a quiet descent to the village of Tōge. Upon our arrival at the lodge yard, each participant jumped over a small fire with a loud cry.[3] Our *shugyō* was over and we received a certificate of accomplishment and special wooden amulets *(o)fuda* from the Dewa Sanzan Shrine. After a bath at the nearby spa, we had lunch at the lodge. A special dietary meal, prepared by the wife of our guide, known as *shōjin ryōri* was served (Figure 32). We shared sake from a huge plate which was handed around from participant to participant. Meanwhile, each of us spoke briefly about his or her motivation for the participation in *shugyō* and our impressions from the retreat.

3 This cry represents the first cry of a newborn child. In the case of Shugendō it is the cry of a newborn *yamabushi*.

RÉSUMÉ

Les pratiques religieuses dans les montagnes japonaises

De la fuite des enfers vers les pratiques saines, durables et spirituelles de la société de consommation.

Le présent livre renoue avec mes recherches antérieures sur des pratiques religieuses dans les montagnes japonaises. La valeur des montagnes dans le contexte de la religion japonaise est soulignée par le fait que l'Académie japonaise des sciences a introduit la catégorie spéciale du « culte de montagne » pour décrire ce type des pratiques. Du point de vue religieux les montagnes japonaises représentent un espace remarquable dans lequel il est possible de communiquer avec une variété d'êtres, de divinités, de puissances, de *kami* et, comme c'est un espace associé aux concepts d'après-vie, également avec les morts. Les pratiques religieuses, y compris les pèlerinages en montagne et les pratiques ascétiques, qui se sont développées en même temps que ces concepts, permettent de renverser la destinée inexorable dans l'au-delà.

Afin d'illustrer ce développement, le livre présente au lecteur le site de la chaîne de montagnes Tateyama, située dans l'actuelle préfecture de Toyama. Se voyant au centre du culte de montagne qui s'est développé dans cette région, Tateyama était un site de pèlerinage populaire en forte progression entre le 18e et 19e siècle. Ce qui caractérise le culte c'est l'existence des objets visuels appelés mandalas de Tateyama qui illustrent les pratiques et les idées religieuses du culte de Tateyama.[1] Examinés par des spécialistes dans une perspective historique

1 Le terme « culte de Tateyama » est utilisé comme un équivalent du terme japonais Tateyama *shinkō* 立山信仰.

(Fukue 2005, Hirasawa 2012), les mandalas représentent une source précieuse de données sur le développement des pratiques religieuses visant à influencer la vie après la mort. Néanmoins, le présent travail traite le sujet en tenant compte de l'état actuel des pratiques locales et en considérant les tendances sociétales du 21e siècle. En ce sens, le culte de Tateyama fait date dans le développement historique des pratiques de montagne.

Dans ce contexte, il est intéressant de constater que pendant la période Edo (1603 – 1867), quand la popularité des pèlerinages a atteint son apogée, la situation économique des sites de montagne tels que Tateyama a causé des changements de caractère des pratiques religieuses : par exemple, les fournisseurs des pratiques religieuses se sont davantage concentrés sur les adeptes féminins. Ce développement a été démontré par quelques études sur la religion japonaise de la période Edo (Hirasawa 2012, Hur 2009). En même temps, comme d'autres auteurs l'ont noté (Formanek 1998, Tsushima 2012, Reader 2014), les motivations des pèlerins ont aussi changé avec leur inclination progressive au confort et à la relaxation durant les voyages.

Cependant, l'intervention du gouvernement Meiji aux alentours de 1868 a bouleversé la situation des sites de pèlerinage de montagne. L'impact ultérieur de la Seconde guerre mondiale, l'urbanisation, les nouvelles technologies, mais aussi les nouveaux types de loisirs, ont transformé les sites religieux de montagne actifs en lieux dépeuplés avec une population vieillissante.

Les années 1980 ont provoqué un essor des pèlerinages suivi par un déclin 20 ans plus tard (Reader 2014). Au 21e siècle, les mandalas de Tateyama – objets religieux expliquant les tortures aux enfers mais aussi les rituels promettant la re-naissance dans un paradis ou la voie pour atteindre l'état de Buddha – suscitent toujours l'admiration des observateurs. Néanmoins, de nos jours, ils sont aussi admirés en tant qu'objets d'une valeur culturelle. Fait intéressant, un rituel dépeint dans ces mandalas évoquant la re-naissance dans un paradis a été restauré. De plus, cette pratique religieuse a été, par la suite, exportée à l'étranger comme un article culturel important. Il faut souligner le fait que ce n'est pas le seul cas d'exportation de la culture religieuse japonaise. Ainsi, le présent travail contribue au débat universitaire en abordant le sujet de la banalisation des pratiques religieuses[2], de même que les efforts du maintien ou de la restauration des pratiques religieuses. Les exemples observés dans les sites de montagne montrent un intérêt durable pour les pratiques religieuses concernées parmi la population japonaise.

La façon dont les fournisseurs des pratiques religieuses se sont adaptés aux

2 La banalisation (en anglais *commoditization*) est le processus au cours duquel un bien qui a une valeur économique et qui se distingue en termes d'attributs (d'unicité ou de marque) finit par devenir une simple commodité standardisée sans spécificité aux yeux des consommateurs.

conditions changeantes révèlent des changements sociaux liés au consumérisme. Une question se pose alors : De quelle façon le consumérisme influence-t-il le maintien ou la restauration des pratiques religieuses dans les sites de montagne ? Pour analyser un tel sujet, les théories du changement social basées sur le consumérisme ont fourni la méthodologie nécessaire. L'analyse présentée dans ce livre a bénéficié principalement du travail de Gauthier et Martikainen *Religion in consumer society* dans lequel ils affirment que nous vivons dans des sociétés consuméristes où le consumérisme est un ethos culturel dominant (Gauthier and Martikainen 2013a: xv).

Le livre est divisé en cinq chapitres. Les trois premiers présentent au lecteur les concepts et pratiques liés aux montagnes qui se sont développés au Japon sous l'influence du bouddhisme et qui attiraient des visiteurs dans les sites religieux de montagne jusqu'à la période Edo. Pour illustrer les phénomènes, l'attention a été portée sur la localité de Tateyama dont l'exemple démontre jusqu'à quel point les concepts et les pratiques analysés étaient importants pour les fournisseurs des activités religieuses s'efforçant de maintenir le culte de montagne. Certaines pratiques religieuses qui attiraient les visiteurs dans le passé sont encore effectuées de nos jours mais leurs interprétations actuelles révèlent quelques nouveautés. La vue d'ensemble historique des éléments de diverses traditions religieuses permet une meilleure compréhension du changement d'interprétation lequel peut être observé dans les pratiques religieuses actuelles. Cette partie est suivie par deux chapitres qui traitent les moyens du maintien et de la restauration des pratiques religieuses de montagne au 21e siècle.

Le premier chapitre est consacré à la re-naissance en tant qu'une notion importante de la vie après la mort. D'abord, quelques textes continentaux sont présentés traitant les concepts cosmologiques liés à l'au-delà, ainsi que des textes d'origine japonaise pour démontrer l'enrichissement continu des notions de vie après la mort par des idées introduites du continent. L'un des nouveaux concepts cosmologiques est représenté par l'idée des enfers divisés en subdivisions. Ceux-ci sont décrits dans les textes continentaux comme horizontaux ou distribués verticalement, chauds et froids, et chacun d'entre eux est doté d'un nom spécifique.

Les histoires de *Nihon ryōiki*, textes compilés entre la fin de la période Nara (710–784) et la période Heian (794–1192) ont servi d'exemples des textes d'origines japonaises.[3] Les histoires racontant les expériences de l'au-delà sont considérées d'être écrites d'après les histoires tibétaines chinoises (cf. Berounsky 2012). Ce qui est intéressant dans les histoires japonaises c'est le fait que la personne

3 Bien que les textes originaux aient probablement été compilés au 8e siècle, la version existante date du 9e siècle.

décédée qui est damnée aux enfers non seulement témoigne de la douleur et de la souffrance mais subit également sa propre expérience corporelle d'enfer. En fait, ces histoires révèlent une topographie unique du monde de vie après la mort : elles parlent de trois destins alternatifs symbolisés par trois chemins, elles décrivent aussi un champ, une colline et une large rivière. Le motif d'une colline représente un élément intéressant, suggérant une relation entre les montagnes et l'au-delà dans le contexte japonais. Une colline divisant ce monde de l'autre monde apparaît dans les textes *Kojiki* du 8e siècle (le premier rouleau) et *Nihon shoki*. Les contes dans *Nihon ryōiki* décrivent le monde de la vie après la mort avec un souverain qui est parfois anonyme et parfois appelé Enma. Le personnage du roi Enma est devenu un des dix juges de l'au-delà – un nouveau concept qui a été introduit au Japon du continent. Le motif du souverain dans le *Nihon ryōiki* suggère que les contes de *Nihon ryōiki* ont été écrits avant que le motif des dix rois n'ait été présenté au Japon. Les notions de six royaumes de transmigration et du culte des dix rois sont au centre de la deuxième partie du chapitre. Ces concepts illustrent le déplacement des notions de l'au-delà vers une idée de punition post-mortem ou bien de récompense liée au comportement individuel. Ils se reflétaient dans les pratiques religieuses du transfert du mérite. Les Japonais ont recouru à ces rituels et pratiques pour éviter les souffrances d'enfers et atténuer la punition imposée à leurs proches. Ces concepts et pratiques peuvent être identifiés dans des matériaux textuels et visuels. La partie finale du chapitre se concentre donc sur les thèmes de six royaumes de l'existence ainsi que sur d'autres types de re-naissance qui apparaissent dans des œuvres visuelles.

Le deuxième chapitre aborde la caractéristique générale des notions de la vie après la mort dans cette localité spécifique de la chaîne de montagnes Tateyama. Afin de démontrer comment ces notions ont fusionné avec la connaissance locale, les peintures du Mandala de Tateyama sont introduites. Ces mandalas englobent à la fois les concepts présentés dans le premier chapitre, les notions locales et les pratiques reflétées dans l'espace géographique de la chaîne de montagnes Tateyama. Il s'agit des peintures de dévotion qui ont circulé parmi les disciples du culte de Tateyama. De ce fait, les images du Mandala de Tateyama constituent une source fondamentale pour appréhender les différents aspects religieux du culte de montagne durant la période Edo. Les enfers occupant un espace significatif dans les représentations du Mandala de Tateyama, il est possible de dire qu'elles démontrent aussi une relation entre le culte de montagne au Japon et la visualisation des enfers._

Aussi, la typologie du Mandala de Tateyama est discutée et son rapport aux peintures *hensō* (ang. *transformation tableaux*). Certaines légendes locales sur le fondateur de la tradition d'adoration des divinités dans les montagnes sont également mentionnées, connues comme les légendes de « l'ouverture de la mon-

tagne ». Comme les motifs de ces contes représentent les thèmes caractéristiques du Mandala de Tateyama, on parle des scènes des six royaumes de l'existence incluant les scènes des huit grands enfers qui peuvent être identifiées dans les peintures du Mandala de Tateyama.

Tout en s'appuyant sur l'étude de Wang (2005), ce livre soutient que l'analyse des représentations visuelles ne peut pas être limitée à la correspondance entre un thème d'une source textuelle et une scène sur le Mandala de Tateyama. Ces représentations visuelles font preuve à la fois des inspirations textuelles, des légendes régionales ainsi que des pratiques religieuses locales.

Le troisième chapitre étend le débat sur les rituels liés aux aspirations à la renaissance dans les royaumes suprêmes. Ainsi, l'attention est portée sur les rituels effectués à Tateyama et la façon dont ils ont été promus dans le pays. En premier lieu, on se penche sur les scènes du *raigō* représentant un bouddha descendant du ciel pour accueillir une personne décédée et l'accompagner dans le paradis. Le concept de *raigō* apparaît comme un thème caractéristique dans les peintures du Mandala de Tateyama tout en jouant un rôle important dans le rite connu comme la « consécration du Pont de tissu ». Ensuite, on explique les relations entre le concept *raigō* et les rituels connus sous le nom *mukaekō* qui font partie des pratiques de lit de mort ; aussi, les rituels servant à atténuer les souffrances subies par les femmes dans l'au-delà. En fait, les femmes étaient confrontées à l'insécurité dans l'au-delà parce que l'on croyait que le corps féminin n'est pas capable d'atteindre l'état de Buddha et/ou qu'il est pollué suite aux accouchements et aux menstruations. Parmi les autres causes de la souffrance féminine dans l'après-vie, on peut trouver la mort de l'enfant, la jalousie ou la stérilité. Les exemples des pratiques permettant aux femmes d'éliminer l'impureté causée par le sang, sont les rites liés au sutra connu sous le nom « Sutra du bassin de sang ». D'autres façons d'influencer la re-naissance dans le royaume de l'au-delà étaient les rituels connus sous le nom *nagare kanjō* ou « consécration du Pont de tissu ». Le rite est analysé dans le but de démontrer ses aspects hétérogènes et la difficulté de spécifier la tradition religieuse dominante. La partie dédiée à la déesse de la montagne locale connue sous le nom d'Uba met en évidence le mélange des éléments bouddhistes et locaux dans le culte de Tateyama.

Ce chapitre porte également sur les pratiques religieuses perçues comme des moyens pour soutenir les lieux de pèlerinage. Par conséquent, le rite de la consécration du Pont de tissu est examiné en détail, ainsi que son rôle pour la sécurité financière du culte. En effet, le fait que le culte a été orienté vers les rituels pour les femmes indique que les activités mercantiles faisaient partie intégrante des activités des lieux de pèlerinage de montagnes. Enfin, on retrace l'intervention politique qui a transformé la structure religieuse de Tateyama, de même que d'autres sites religieux, et la disparition finale du culte de Tateyama.

Les chapitres quatre et cinq ouvrent la question des nouvelles valeurs attribuées aux pratiques religieuses. Le chapitre quatre montre comment les pratiques religieuses ont été dotées d'une valeur culturelle. C'est dans le cadre de ce procès que le concept d'héritage culturel a été appliqué pour promouvoir les sites de pèlerinage. Afin de démontrer ce procès, la recherche a été menée dans des sites de montagne. Le premier exemple est le rite de la consécration du Pont de tissu qui a été restauré à Tateyama en tant qu'évènement culturel (le soutien financier d'un évènement religieux étant contre la loi). En outre, ce cas illustre la divergence entre la rhétorique officielle et les réactions des participants.

Cette partie aborde également le sujet de la banalisation des pratiques religieuses en prenant en considération le concept de *locality* d'Appadurai. Ainsi, le rite de la consécration du Pont de tissu a été introduit dans le cadre de la *Nuit Blanche* à Paris, l'évènement culturel annuel dédié aux arts. Le rituel a été effectué pour les Parisiens par un prêtre et des musiciens japonais. Ce qui est intéressant, c'est que les médias japonais en ligne ont informé de cet évènement comme d'un « rite traditionnel de prière pour re-naître au paradis » ou d'un « rituel de guérison traditionnel » réalisé à Paris, alors que les médias en ligne français décrivaient ce rituel comme un « voyage intérieur » ou comme un « voyage de la vie » lié à la tradition Zen qu'ils interprétaient comme la « quintessence de la culture japonaise ». La présentation du rite par les médias français évoque d'autres concepts d'Appadurai – des *mediascapes* et des *ideoscapes*. De plus, ce n'est pas seulement l'information qui est communiquée trans-localement, mais le rite complet qui est déterritorialisé. Cependant, l'interprétation du rite a été adaptée à la nouvelle localité (*locality*) et à l'imagination des Français sur la culture religieuse japonaise. Tenant compte des caractéristiques de la société de consommation, il est possible de dire que les rituels autrefois associés à un passage sûr à travers l'au-delà et le transfert du mérite sont devenus des images commerciales. De nos jours, le rituel est présenté comme une tradition culturelle dotée d'une dimension spirituelle et curative.

Par la suite, le discours actuel sur la relation des Japonais avec la nature est mentionné lequel est la clé pour comprendre le processus qui a permis l'émergence des pratiques religieuses en tant qu'une activité associée à des valeurs culturelles. Les pratiques religieuses effectuées en harmonie avec la nature sont perçues dans ce processus comme un héritage religieux-culturel apprécié par les institutions internationales telles que l'UNESCO. Pour illustrer la rhétorique utilisée dans les groupes religieux japonais, l'exemple du site Dewa Sanzant est proposé. Enfin, il est démontré que cet héritage culturel est une des valeurs immatérielles associées aux pratiques religieuses.

Le dernier chapitre traite le thème des nouvelles valeurs attribuées aux pratiques religieuses en se concentrant sur la société de consommation et sur les

types des valeurs immatérielles, telles qu'expériences, qui sont associées aux pratiques religieuses, afin d'attirer de nouveaux adeptes. Ainsi, le cas du repas traditionnel végétarien *shōjin ryōri* est mentionné qui a été introduit sur les marchés européens en tant qu'une partie intégrante de la tradition et de la culture de la région Tsuruoka. En 2015 le repas a été présenté au salon gastronomique de Milan : Les exposants ont supposé que le goût du *shōjin ryōri* s'accorderait avec celui des Européens qui s'intéressent à la culture spirituelle. Reste à marquer que le *shōjin ryōri* a été introduit sur les marchés européens en accord avec les tendances actuelles, comme un produit de bien-être de haute qualité.

Ensuite, le rôle du corps et des interactions sensorielles dans les activités religieuses sont étudiés. Il s'avère que l'expérience corporelle est importante dans la présentation des pratiques religieuses liées à Shugendō : l'expérience corporelle vécue durant cette pratique devient une possibilité d'éprouver les perceptions inhérentes au corps humain. En fait, l'aspect corporel des pratiques ascétiques est mis en contraste à la fois avec la réalité du travail quotidien qui manque de corporalité et avec la rationalité accentuée de la génération actuelle. Ainsi, les pratiques de Shugendō sont associées aussi avec la promotion de la santé.

L'épreuve est aussi une caractéristique intrinsèque de Shugendō. D'après certains auteurs (Reader 2014), l'éradication ou la marginalisation des épreuves et du danger ont été interprétées comme un essai d'attirer les pèlerins. Pourtant, l'observation des pratiques suggère que les gens sont intéressés par des engagements corporels dangereux et/ou difficiles. Par conséquent, le sujet des récompenses obtenues suite à la réalisation des pratiques religieuses est exposé. Effectivement, l'une des raisons pour laquelle les Japonais acceptent le « défi » du danger (par exemple marcher sur le feu) ou de l'épreuve est l'espérance d'obtenir des récompenses (par exemple la protection), ce qui reste, d'ailleurs, l'un des trait caractéristique de la religion japonaise (Reader et Tanabe 1998).

Le rôle d'Internet dans le partage des informations sur des pratiques religieuses est discuté par la suite. L'attention est portée sur la relation entre la médiatisation[4] et la façon dont les fournisseurs des pratiques religieuses communiquent avec leurs adeptes. Dans ce contexte, la communication en ligne s'établit comme un nouveau moyen pour maintenir la relation entre les fournisseurs des pratiques religieuses et les adeptes.

Enfin, le dernier chapitre montre la variété de choix offerte à un pratiquant potentiel dans les sites religieux. Une attention particulière est accordée à la pratique du *taki gyō* (qui consiste à se tenir assis ou debout sous une chute d'eau) pour illustrer la banalisation des pratiques religieuses. *Taki gyō* est aussi recommandé aux personnes stressées, ou bien il est conçu comme une opportunité

4 En ce sens, le terme médiatisation désigne le processus par lequel les médias façonnent la religion dans la société actuelle.

d'avoir une nouvelle expérience, comme un moyen pratique de soigner les problèmes de santé, mais également comme un moyen d'auto-purification ou un lieu de pouvoir. Suite à ces nouvelles tendances, le concept de re-naissance qui a joué un rôle crucial dans les rituels est en train d'être réinterprété afin de correspondre aux mentalités actuelles. Ainsi, la recommandation, pour ceux qui veulent re-naître, de se purifier sous une chute d'eau est classée dans la même catégorie avec les appels à « se changer soi-même », « découvrir le méconnu en soi-même », « sortir de sa coquille » ou « trouver plus de confiance en soi-même ».

Les façons actuelles de présenter les pratiques religieuses illustrent donc les nouvelles tendances en cours, tout en suggérant que les adeptes se penchent vers une expérience unique. Le phénomène correspond d'ailleurs aux principes de la société de consommation. Néanmoins, l'émergence des nouvelles valeurs attribuées aux pratiques religieuses n'implique pas que le caractère des pratiques, telle que l'interaction avec le surnaturel, s'est transformé. Les conversations avec les participants aux rituels ont démontré qu'un tel « appel » aux pratiques religieuses est toujours vivant.

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LIST OF FIGURES

Religious practices in the Japanese mountains

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Published by the MASARYK UNIVERSITY, Žerotínovo nám. 617/9, 601 77 Brno, CZ
in the monographic series **Opera Facultatis philosophicae Universitatis Masarykianae (Spisy Filozofické fakulty Masarykovy univerzity)** / No. 486

Editor in charge / doc. Mgr. Jana Horáková, Ph.D.
Editor in chief / doc. Mgr. Katarina Petrovićová, Ph.D.
Editorial assistant / Mgr. Vendula Hromádková
Photos / Zuzana Malá, Martin Hladík (www.martinhladik.com)
Edition graphic, cover design and typesetting / Mgr. Pavel Křepela

First published / 2019
Number of copies / 200
Printing and bookbinding / Tiskárna KNOPP s.r.o., U Lípy 926, 549 01 Nové Město nad Metují

ISBN 978-80-210-9197-9
ISBN 978-80-210-9198-6 (online : pdf)
ISSN 1211-3034
https://doi.org/10.5817/CZ.MUNI.M210-9198-2019

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