Beyond the Sacred Boundaries: A Study on Female Exclusion at Mt. Ōmine

Li, Yuhong

Leiden University

Master of Arts Thesis

Beyond the Sacred Boundaries: A Study on Female Exclusion at Mt. Ōmine

Supervisor: Dr. Or Porath

Name: Yuhong Li

Student no.: s3264777

MA East Asian Studies (60EC)

Words: 14,157

July 1st, 2023

Abstract

This thesis examines the historical origins and contemporary implications of the women exclusion zone (*nyonin kekkai*) on Mt. Ōmine, a sacred site in Nara Prefecture, known for its Shugendō practices. Employing a comprehensive analysis incorporating Buddhist scriptures, official discourses, narratives of local religious groups, and further contextualizing within the sphere of modern social movements, the study situates the exclusion zone in a broad socio-cultural framework. It elucidates the shaping role of Buddhist doctrines in the zone's inception, while challenging the alleged 1300-year tradition, revealing its construction during the early modern period. Additionally, the thesis delves into the intricate dynamics between this discriminatory policy of female exclusion, the burgeoning tourism industry, and the ongoing human rights advocacy.

Keywords: Buddhism; gender exclusion; Mt. Ōmine; *nyonin kekkai*; Shugendō; tourism; tradition.

Table of Contents

Introduction

As a sacred site and part of the pilgrimage route in the Kii 紀伊 Mountain Range, which was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2004, Mt. Ōmine 大峯山 in Nara still retains a unique *nyonin kekkai* 女人結界 policy, which means that women cannot enter some parts of the mountain.[1] Local folk and religious groups in Mt. Ōmine claim that this female exclusion has been passed down for more than 1,300 years. Mt. Ōmine is famous as a sacred mountain for the founder of Shugendō 修験道[2], En no Gyōja 役行者, who practiced here, and it is said that when his mother tried to climb the mountain to see her son, she was warned by a large snake in the river not to climb the mountain, and the *nyonin kekkai* on Mt. Ōmine was formed after that (DeWitt 2013, 35).

However, the boundaries of this sacred domain, the part that surrounds the summit *sanjōgatake* 山上ヶ岳 of Mt. Ōmine in Nara, are not static, and in practice it is subject to constant change due to influences from many parties. For example, in 1872 the Meiji government called for the abolition of *nyonin kekkai*, a move that was seen as part of *shinbutsu bunri* 神仏分離, a policy that called for the separation of Buddhism and Shinto which were intertwined throughout Japanese history. This policy was met with resistance, a decision was made to retain *nyonin kekkai*, due to opposition from various religious groups (Suzuki 2022). Subsequently, in 1970, driven by the demands of tourism and forestry industries, the size of the exclusion zone was reduced to its present scale by local religious authorities. The change was further motivated by practical needs, as women frequently had to venture into areas previously

[1] Mt. Ōmine was not the first sacred mountain to enforce a prohibition against women. This precedence is held by Hieizan 比叡山, located in Kyoto, where such a ban was reportedly instituted around the 9th century. However, this restriction is no longer maintained on Hieizan (Suzuki 2021, 113).

[2] A syncretic religion that combines aspects of Buddhism and Shinto.

deemed off-limits due to the advancements in these sectors. In 2003, an organization called *Ōminesan nyonin kaihō o motomerukai* 大峯山女人開放を求める会 (Association for the Opening of the *nyonin kinsei* on Mt. Ōmine) which has been active ever since, was formed to oppose the World Heritage listing of Mt. Ōmine.

After the successful inscription of Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range, including Mt. Ōmine, on the World Heritage List in 2004, there has been a long debate on whether *nyonin kekkai* and *nyonin kinsei* 女人禁制 should be protected as a tradition or abolished as discrimination against women. The current entry for Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range in the UNESCO World Heritage List has no mention of *nyonin kinsei*.

The primary argument of this thesis is that as a component of female exclusion, the notion of *nyonin kekkai* is not a static or immutable construct. Rather, it is a concept that has evolved and transformed over time in reaction to social shifts and ongoing debates. In its early stages, it functioned predominantly as a doctrinal tool for female discrimination. As time went by, however, women began actively participating in various practices, notwithstanding the persistence of exclusionary policies. Today, the notion of *nyonin kekkai* finds itself under scrutiny, being evaluated for its alignment with contemporary values, traditional beliefs, and the discourse on gender discrimination. Moreover, the discussion around the history of *nyonin kekkai* should not be insular. As a tangible manifestation of a prolonged history of female exclusion, it should be examined alongside other spaces and historical narratives where women have been similarly marginalized. What becomes evident upon such examination is not an uninterrupted, unchanging history, but rather a more fragmented, sporadic and contested one.

In this thesis, I will conduct a multi-dimensional analysis from the perspectives of time and space using not only the example of the *nyonin kekkai* at Mt. Ōmine but also other histories of female exclusion to suggest that it is an oversimplification to categorize *nyonin kinsei* and *nyonin kekka*i as simply "traditional", or in other words, that a tradition stretching back 1300 years doesn't necessarily exist. Based on previous research, I will focus not only on the emergence of *nyonin kekkai* in Mt. Ōmine but also on how its boundaries have changed and the role of women in that change. Furthermore, I will delve into topics such as feminist activism, the impact of tourism, and how people of transgender experience have challenged the female exclusion policy.

In the first chapter, I will discuss how "*nyonin kekkai*" emerged in the worship of Japanese mountains, the subtle differences between the terms "*nyonin kekkai*" and "*nyonin kinsei*", and how the introduction of the *Blood Bowl Sutra* influenced the concept of impurity and pollution (*kegare* 穢れ), leading to the transition from temporary to permanent exclusion of women. Lastly, I will introduce the geographical location of Mt. Ōmine and its initial boundary of the women exclusion zone.

In the second chapter, I will explore issues such as the view towards and treatment of women in religious places on the sacred mountain through less-discussed examples like the *nyonindō* 女人堂 (a hall specially built for women where they are prohibited from the temple) and *bikuniishi* 比丘尼石 (a woman who violated *nyonin kinsei* and turned into a stone). In addition to this, the shifting of the boundaries of *nyonin kekkai* due to the activities of multiple actors will also be discussed.

In the third chapter, I will explore the confrontations between female and transgender

climbers who challenge the prohibition against them, and the local religious communities and villagers who uphold it. Additionally, this chapter also briefly turns to another sacred mountain to provide a comparative lens to the narratives of those advocating female exclusion at Mt. Ōmine. In concluding this chapter, I will discuss the potential dangers posed by the burgeoning Shugendō-related tourism industry in exacerbating the concept of female prohibition at Mt. Ōmine, a less-examined topic in current studies.

The main logic of the proponents of the *nyonin kekkai* at Mt. Ōmine tends to be that it is a tradition which has continued on Mt. Ōmine for 1300 years and it ensures the sanctity of this mountain. For instance, in 2004, the year Mt. Ōmine was entered as a World Heritage Site, Ōminezan Temple left a sign at the entrance to the climb which reads "This *nyonin kekkai* was never formed solely by us practitioners. It was created as a religious tradition over a period of more than 1,000 years by countless predecessors who found their spiritual home here while looking up at this sacred mountain".[3] In this interpretation, the precedent established by former religious practitioners seems to provide legitimacy to *nyonin kekkai*. But as DeWitt points out, in reality, the paradox is that "male mountain climbers with no religious affiliations were granted full access to the mountain"[4] (DeWitt 2013, 36). Furthermore, Suzuki argues that there are two dimensions to the notion of female impurity (*onna kegare* 女穢れ) on which *nyonin kekkai* is based: the physiologically based fear of blood and fertility, and the metaphysical level of fear of women who are outside the established order during menstruation or pregnancy. Thus,

[3] Original text: "この女人結界は、決してわたくし達修行者のみによって形作られたものではありません。この霊山を仰ぎ見ながら、ここに心のよりどころを見出した無数の先人達が、一千年あまりの時をかけて、宗教的伝統として作り上げてきたものであります".(*Asahi shinbun* 2019). See also (DeWitt 2015, 117; Suzuki 2021, 97, 247).

[4] More precisely, men face certain regulations when entering Mt. Ōmine, which will be discussed in the final section of Chapter 2.

women are considered to have negative attributes from a doctrinal perspective, while in a cosmological sense they often possess a certain spiritual power (Suzuki 2021, 159). On this point, Miyata (2010) points that *nyonin kekkai* is also an attempt to control the "spiritual power" (*reiryoku* 霊力) of women. As evidence, he mentions the so-called "*onna-kyōgen* 女狂言" performance of *yamabushi kagura* 山伏神楽, a form of Shugendō ritual dance (*kagura*) in the Tohoku region, in which female characters perceived as having spiritual powers shout to break the prohibition (*kekkai*) against women. In general, as posited by Suzuki (2021, 4-5), the complexity of *nyonin kekkai/nyonin kinsei* surpasses the simplistic binary perception of them, namely "preserving tradition" and "gender discrimination", which is continuously reinforced in mass media disputes.

Chapter 1

The Original Boundary

1

What is *Nyonin Kekkai* /*Nyonin Kinsei*?

First, it is necessary to make a conceptual clarification of the two terms *nyonin kinsei* and *nyonin kekkai* that will recur in this thesis. Although the two words are often treated as synonymous and equated with "female exclusion", there are actually semantic nuances that influence the usage preferences of different actors, such as the preference for *nyonin kekkai* in all three Buddhist (Shugendō 修験道) temples[5], where *nyonin kinsei* appears on only one road sign (Suzuki 2021, 97). While *nyonin* means women, *kinsei* has more of a forced "restriction" connotation, and the word *kekkai* has a Buddhist influence, referring to a sacred area where access is restricted (Suzuki 2021, 96; Kaneko et al. 2008, 588; DeWitt 2015, 11). Thus, the word *kinsei*, which implies coercion, prejudice, and exclusion of women by men, and includes male-dominated perspectives, has been avoided by the three Shugendō groups managing Mt. Ōmine. In contrast, those who oppose female exclusion tend to use the term *kinsei*. As DeWitt (2013, 35) writes: "these two terms, and the theoretical assumptions implied by their use, reveal the basic parameters of debate surrounding the practice of restricting women—tradition versus discrimination."

It is generally believed that the practice of Buddhist temples built in the mountains to restrict women's access to certain areas predates the widespread dissemination and use of the

[5] The three temples with Mt. Ōmine as their practice site are: Daigoji 醍醐寺, Shōgoin 聖護院, and Kinpusenji 金峯山寺 (DeWitt 2015, 5).

terms *nyonin kinsei* and *nyonin kekkai.* From the second half of the ninth century onwards, the female exclusion from so-called "pure lands" (*Seijōchi* 清浄地) such as sacred mountains, or temples, began to appear in historical records and was established as permanent prohibitions in the eleventh century. In *Sōniryō* 僧尼令 (Code for monks and nuns), which came into force in 757, articles 11 and 12 clearly state that women are forbidden to enter the monks' quarters and men are forbidden to enter the nuns' quarters, and that women are punished for spending the night in monks' quarters while men are punished equally for spending the night in nuns' quarters.[6] Ushiyama (1990) suggests that *nyonin kinsei* originated from early monastic orders such as *Sōniryō*[7], and also argues that *Sōniryō* shows that the regulation of monks and nuns at that time was not unilaterally directed at women as it was later. However, from the 9th century onwards, as the balance between monks and nuns was disrupted with the reduction of nuns, coupled with the introduction of more Buddhist classics into Japan, discourses emphasizing the impurity of women (*kegare*) became popular, as will be discussed in detail in the subsequent sections. Dewitt (2015, 17), however, argues that the fact that monks often preached to nuns and that nuns were required to be ordained in the monks' order in addition to the nunnery shows that there were many connections between monks and nuns. DeWitt's examples attempt to show that Buddhist precepts (*ritsu*) 律 cannot fully account for the origin of female exclusion.

It can be observed that there are various perspectives on the origin of establishing boundaries and prohibiting women from entering "pure lands". These theories do not necessarily contradict each other. Whether it's the pre-Buddhist Japanese mountain worship

[6] For the original text and translation of article 11 and 12, see DeWitt (2015, 16) or Suzuki (2021, 98).
[7] Different from Ushiyama, Suzuki (2021, 99) argues that *nyonin kekkai* grew since the time when Buddhism was introduced to Japan and began to establish temples in the mountains (i.e., the second half of the 7th century), and that the practice merged with the Japanese mountain worship that regarded the mountains as a sacred area inaccessible to the general public.

that regarded the mountains as sacred and off-limits, or Buddhist precepts, it's difficult to individually extricate them from the comprehensive construction that excludes female.

As mentioned earlier, the terms *nyonin kekkai* and *nyonin kinsei* appear relatively late in the historical records. Suzuki (2021, 143) asserts that the term *nyonin kinsei* first appeared during the late Muromachi period, whereas *nyonin kekkai* emerged in the early Edo period. Based on Ushiyama's research (2005), the term *nyonin kekkai* initially appeared in the literary work *Uraminosuke* 恨之介, which was completed between 1614 and 1617. *Uraminosuke*, with its backdrop set against *nyonin kekkai* at mount Kōyasan 高野山 during that period, falls under the genre of *kanazōshi* 仮名草子. *Kanazōshi* is regarded as a transitional genre from the early Edo period to the later *ukiyo-zōshi* 浮世草子. Written in a mix of *kana* and *kanji*, its accessible narrative found popularity among the populace. The term *nyonin kinsei* appeared slightly earlier, initially surfacing at the end of the 15th century in the temple rules of the Buddhist temple Kōryūji (Ushiyama 2005, 36).[8] Suzuki (2022) posits that this period coincides with the dissemination of the *Blood Bowl Sutra* (*ketsubonkyō* 血盆経) in Japan, indicating that under the influence of the sutra's view of female impurity, particularly the impurity of blood, the exclusion of women shifted from temporary to permanent. Furthermore, the concept of female impurity extended beyond the Buddhist sphere, permeating the social level.

[8] Original text: "Within the gate of the Dharma realm, *nyonin kinsei* is enforced".「於法界門之内，女人禁制事」(Ushiyama 2005).

2

Kegare, and *Nyonin Kinsei* from Temporary to Permanent

While there are various perspectives on the origin of the concept of female impurity or pollution (*onna kegare* 女穢れ), it is undeniable that it has been significantly influenced by Buddhist thought.[9] *Nyonin kinsei*, or the exclusion of women based on the notion of female impurity, underwent a transition from temporary to permanent regulations. This ranged from temporary prohibitions, such as barring women from entering certain locations post-childbirth or during menstruation, to the complete ban on female presence in certain spaces. Suzuki (2021, 114) suggests that the inception of this transformation lies in the pertaining to various forms of "pollution" (*kegare*) becoming increasingly detailed and complex.[10]

In the *Jingi-ryō* 神祇令 section of the *Taiho* 大宝 Code, a legal code promulgated in 701 AD on national rituals, the emphasis on the exclusion of impurity or pollution (*kegare*) was already initiated (Yoshida and Uejima 2020). During the Heian-period, the auxiliary laws to the legal codes, namely the *Kōnin-shiki* 弘仁式, *Jōgan-shiki* 貞観式, and *Engi-shiki* 延喜式, progressively complicated and exacerbated the avoidance and exclusion of impurity and pollution in rituals. For instance, the *Kōnin-shiki* mentioned that individuals exposed to death and childbirth pollution had to self-isolate for 30 days and 7 days respectively.[11] Subsequently, references to menstrual pollution appeared in the *Jōgan-shiki* and *Engi-shiki*, although no specific duration was stipulated. These stipulations indicate that during these periods, the

[9] See Sakurai (1984) for an examination of *kegare*, *ke*, and *hare* as concepts in a state of dynamic interchange within social life.

[10] "The sophistication of restrictions" "規定の精緻化" (Suzuki 2021, 114).

[11] Original texts: "In all cases where one comes into contact with impurities, a person should observe a period of abstinence: in the case of human death, the period is thirty days; in the case of human childbirth, seven days; for the death of beasts, five days; and for their birth, three days".「凡触穢悪事応忌者、人死限卅日」「(人)産七日、六畜死五日、産三日」(Suzuki 2021, 179). See also Meeks (2020b, 3).

restrictions imposed on women based on notions of female impurity were temporary and possessed a certain degree of flexibility. Furthermore, they had not yet been entirely separated from the concepts of death and blood pollution. However, these restrictions eventually transitioned into permanent ones.

The transition of female exclusion (*nyonin kinsei*) to a permanent state began in the Kamakura period (Taira 1992, 390; Kawauchi 2006), and it was emphasized and popularized during the Muromachi period with the introduction of the *Blood Bowl Sutra* (Suzuki 2022, 154). The *Blood Bowl Sutra* is considered an "apocryphal" sutra (Ch. *weijing* 偽経 Jpn. *gikyō*) that developed in Chinese folk beliefs from the 10th to the 12th century, meaning that it imitates the writing style of Buddhist sutras translated from India although it actually originated in China (Grant 2011; Meeks 2020a, 2). The *Blood Bowl Sutra* describes a blood hell (*chi no ike jigoku* 血の池地獄) formed by menstrual blood and into which only women fall.[12] Regarding the blood hell described in the *Blood Bowl Sutra*, Meeks (2020a) points out two notable characteristics. First, hell is not a place of eternal damnation; individuals in hell can be redeemed once their karmic debt is fully repaid. Second, the hell in East Asian Buddhism is overseen by wardens who are responsible for determining the length of one's "sentence", reflecting characteristics of bureaucracy and hierarchy. Unlike the three auxiliary orders mentioned earlier, which were only influential among the nobility, the *Blood Bowl Sutra* became widespread among Japanese folk, making in-depth reference to a physiological phenomenon closely related to women's daily lives, reinforcing the idea of female sin and impurity, and further penetrating and reinforcing the conceptual link between "*kegare* and

[12] The original text of the *Blood Bowl Sutra* is very short, with less than 500 words. For a translation of the version widely circulated in China and Japan, see Meeks (2020a, 2–3).

women" and "women and hell".

A critical facet of the *Blood Bowl Sutra*'s pervasive influence in Japan is its problematic interpretation of female menstrual blood. Rather than merely acknowledging it as a form of pollution (*kegare*) like the three auxiliary orders, it exacerbates this notion by associating it with karmic transgressions and damnation in the so-called "blood hell" after death (Kawauchi 2016). The sutra also provides methods for women to avoid falling into the so-called "blood hell" after death. In fact, upon its initial introduction to Japan, it was primarily employed in mothers' funerals as a means to achieve salvation (Meeks 2020b, 2). "While there were certainly itinerant male teachers, as well as local male priests, who actively utilized the *Blood Bowl Sutra* in their teachings", according to Meeks, "it is clear that women were also important supporters and propagators of Japanese cults to the sutra. Over the course of the late medieval and early modern periods, cults to the sutra were expanded and popularized through popular storytelling traditions, especially *otogizōshi* 御伽草子 and *etoki* 絵解き.[13] The hell's incorporation into the *Kumano kanshin jikkai mandara*[14] used by Kumano *bikuni* was also an important factor in the visibility blood hell cults achieved in Japan…As the hell became increasingly well known, the number of religious sites that sought to identify themselves with the cult grew, further adding to the cult's visibility". (Meeks 2020b, 12).

In summary, the transformation of *nyonin kinsei* from temporary to permanent regulations evolved over several eras and was further cemented by the widespread propagation of the *Blood Bowl Sutra* during the Muromachi period. This apocryphal sutra of Chinese origin notably intensified the association between "female impurity" and damnation, infusing this notion with

[13] The former represents a popular literary form of the time, while the latter is a narrative illustration.
[14] A detailed picture of the different realms of Buddhism (including hell).

a stronger sense of karmic transgression. Despite the sutra's ostensible purpose to provide women with methods of salvation, it amplified the societal stigmatization of women's physiological processes. Over time, the sutra's influence extended beyond the nobility to the general populace, shaping societal perceptions of the so-called "female impurity".

3

Influence of Other Buddhist Doctrines

Kawauchi (2016, 30) critically notes that the *Blood Bowl Sutra* extends the perspective of women's "diminished" spiritual capacity, which inherently carries misogynistic undertones, into a viewpoint that underscores female sinfulness. It is crucial to acknowledge that this sutra is not the sole propagator of the exclusionary practices against women. There are other Buddhist scriptures and doctrines that have also significantly contributed to the perpetuation of these discriminatory restrictions.

The *Lotus Sutra* (*Hokkekyō* 法華經), a Buddhist scripture of significant influence in Japan, encompasses misogynistic narratives declaring that women must undergo a gender transformation to male before they can become Buddha. For example, it includes a passage stating that "the female body is impure and is not a suitable vessel for the Dharma".[15] Additionally, the text recounts the story of a seven-year-old dragon girl who, after transforming into a male, received a prophecy from Buddha Shakya 釈迦, assuring her future attainment of Buddhahood. Underlying these narratives is a Buddhist concept known as the "five hindrances for women" (*nyonin goshō* 女人五障). However, it is crucial to distinguish this from two other

[15] Original text: "女身垢穢、非是法器 (女身は垢穢にして、これは仏法の器に非ず)". (Suzuki 2021, 117).

seemingly similar terms, namely the general "five hindrances" (*goshō* 五障) in Buddhism and the "five hindrances and three obediences" (*goshō sanjū* 五障三従), a concept that integrates Confucian thought.

According to the research of Taira (1992, 409), the discourse of the "five hindrances for women" (*nyonin goshō*) first appeared in Japanese literature in 883 AD. It posits that due to the karmic transgressions of women, they are barred from becoming five types of beings: a buddha, a wheel-turning holy king (*tenrin jōō* 転輪聖王), a demon king (*maō* 魔王), a Brahma King (*bontennō* 梵天王), and a Śakra[16] (*taishakuten* 帝釈天).[17] The phrase "five hindrances and three obediences", which integrates the "five hindrances for women" with the concept of "three obediences", outlines the expectations for women to obey their father before marriage, their husband after marriage, and their son in old age. This concept has its roots in Confucian thought. The term began to appear in literature from the ninth century and its influence extended beyond the Buddhist clergy, permeating other social strata (Taira 1992).

Another Buddhist doctrine that has influenced the exclusion of women in Buddhist practices posits women as a source of temptation for men engaged in Buddhist cultivation. This is particularly tied to the emphasis on the precept of "avoiding sexual misconduct" (*fujainkai*, 不邪淫戒), which Ushiyama (1996) contends was one of the most valued precepts among early Buddhist practitioners.[18] In an effort to maintain celibacy, male monks began to exclude

[16] Emperor of the heaven of thirty-three gods.

[17] According to *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*, the general "five hindrances" (Skt. *nīvaraṇas* Jp. *goshō*) are the five major obstacles to the practice of the Buddha's teachings, which are as follows: "sensuous desire, anger, sloth and torpor, excitability and anxiety" (Bowker 2003).

[18] The precept of "avoiding sexual misconduct" (*fujainkai* 不邪淫戒), along with four other precepts, collectively form the "five precepts" (*gokai* 五戒), which are mandatory for lay followers to observe. The remaining four precepts are: the precept against killing (*fusesshōkai* 不殺生戒), the precept against stealing (*fuchūtōkai* 不偸盗戒), the precept against false speech (*fumōgokai* 不妄語戒), and the precept against intoxicants (*fuonjukai* 不飲酒戒). See also "Śīla." in Bowker (2003).

women from their places of practice. As discussed in the first section of this chapter, this perspective may neglect the interactions that existed between monks and nuns during that period. In 2003, the three temples managing Mt. Ōmine, in their publication commemorating the 1300th anniversary of the death of En no Gyōja, the founder of Shugendō, asserted that the reason for maintaining the prohibition against women was to uphold the precept of "avoiding sexual misconduct".[19] This narrative deliberately downplays the discourse around female impurity and the "five hindrances for women". By focusing on the precept, the temples' narrative shifts the conversation away from these more controversial aspects of religious doctrine and practice.

4

The Location of Mt. Ōmine, the *Kekkai*, and the Role of Shugendō

As part of the Kii Mountain Range, Mt. Ōmine and its surrounding areas, replete with numerous temples and pilgrimage routes, have been recognized as Japan's twelfth World Heritage Site. The region's characteristic abundance of mountains and hot springs have not only served as a spiritual haven for adherents of Shugendō, including En no Gyōja who initiated his ascetic practices here, but also continue to attract a multitude of contemporary tourists and mountaineers. As depicted in the images presented by Japan Agency for Cultural Affairs in their introduction to the country's World Heritage Sites, the initial impression one might receive from this location is perhaps that of an unbroken chain of mountains.

[19] See: *En no gyōja sen sanbyakunen goonki kiroku hensan iinkai* 役行者千三百年御遠忌記録編纂委員会. 2003. *Shin jidai ni muketa shugen sanhonzan no kiseki 新時代に向けた修験三本山の軌跡*. Kokushō kankōkai 国書刊行会, 109.

Figure1: The Japan Agency for Cultural Affairs' webpage introducing the Kii Mountain Range.

Indeed, given the expansive area that spans across the prefectures of Wakayama, Nara, and Mie, coupled with a complex network of hiking trails, local governments and tourism groups within the Kii Mountain Range have embarked on a concerted effort to consolidate and promote a diverse array of tourism resources, such as temples, onsen, and hiking routes, to maximize their appeal following the successful inscription as a World Heritage Site (Carter 2021). On the official promotional website managed by the Shingū 新宮 City Tourist Association in Wakayama Prefecture, the ancient pilgrimage route known as the Ōmine *Okugake-michi* 大峯奥駈道, which forms a link between the Kumano 熊野 region where Shingū is situated and the Yoshino 吉野 region that hosts Mt. Ōmine, is distinctly marked in orange. The mountain Sanjōgatake[20] and the temple Ōminesan-ji 大峯山寺[21], which continue to uphold a policy of

[20] In a narrower sense, Sanjōgatake is considered to be Mt. Ōmine itself, while the term "Mt. Ōmine" can also refer to the entire surrounding mountain range in a broader context.

[21] The temple Ōminesan-ji at the summit of Sanjōgatake is jointly managed by five temples in the surrounding area beneath the mountain: Kizōin 喜蔵院, Ryūsenji 龍泉寺, Chikurinin 竹林院, Tōnanin 東南院, and Sakuramotobō 桜本坊. (DeWitt 2015, 5). Along with the three influential temples mentioned earlier—Daigoji, Shōgoin, and Kinpusenji— often referred to as the "*Shugen sanbonzan* 修験三本山", these eight temples collectively decided in 2000 to abolish the policy of women exclusion on Mt. Ōmine. However, they subsequently reversed this decision.

female exclusion, are situated in the northern section of this orange-marked route.

Figure 2: Pilgrimage route summary including Mt. Ōmine (orange-marked route), as presented by the Shingū City Tourist Association.

Situated in the southwestern foothills of Mt. Ōmine (Sanjōgatake) is a village named Dorogawa 洞川, home to Ryūsenji, one of the entities managing Ōminesan-ji. Dorogawa acts as a convergence point for a diverse range of visitors, from Shugendō practitioners and modern-day climbers retracing the pilgrimage route, to tourists in search of hot springs. Although female exclusion (*nyonin kekkai*/*nyonin kinsei*) from the Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range isn't explicitly addressed on the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs' World Heritage Sites overview or the official World Heritage List website, the local tourism association in Dorogawa doesn't appear to view this as a topic to be sidestepped. In the meticulously crafted hiking sightseeing routes provided by the local government organization called Dorogawa Spa Tourism Bureau (*Dorogawa onsen kankō kyōkai* 洞川温泉観光協会), the locations of the three gates "*nyonin kekkai mon* 女人結界門" are clearly indicated on the map.

Figure 3: The three "*nyonin kekkai mon*" are highlighted with blue boxes.

From the map, it can be discerned that the three "*nyonin kekkai mon*" are positioned along the route leading to the Ōminesan-ji temple at the summit of Sanjōgatake, which stands at 1719 meters. The area enclosed by these three gates delineates the region of Sanjōgatake that is off-limits to women. In fact, the current boundaries were established after a significant downsizing in 1970 (Suzuki 2021). As mentioned on the Dorogawa Onsen Tourism Bureau's page introducing the bridge *Seijō ōhashi* 清浄大橋[22] (the location of the leftmost *nyonin kekkai mon* in Figure 3), prior to 1970, the women's exclusion zone began from *Hahakodō* 母公堂[23], which is 1.5 kilometers further west from the current location. Due to local economic

[22] The term *seijō* translates to "pure", thus indicating that the placement of the gate *nyonin kekkai mon* at this location continues to perpetuate the underlying notion of female impurity.

[23] Translated as "Mother's Hall", it is believed to be the place where En no Gyōja's mother, Shiratōme 白専女, waited for her son to return from his mountain ascetic practices. Sakuramotobō preserves a wooden statue of her made in the 14th century, known as the Hahakozō 母公像(Mother's Statue). For more details, see the Sakuramotobō's official page: https://sakuramotobou.or.jp/about/ennogyojas-mother.html.

development, women working in tourism and forestry often had to enter the so-called exclusion zone. Consequently, in 1970, local temples, representatives of Shugendō followers, and local elders collectively decided to shrink the women's exclusion zone to its current location. Furthermore, Suzuki (2021, 244) highlights another significant event that contributed to the contraction of the exclusion zone's boundaries. This was the World Expo hosted in Osaka in 1970. In response to the event, the Kinki Nippon Railway Company, tasked with transportation responsibilities, sought to capitalize on the growing popularity of mountain hiking among urban dwellers, which notably included a rising number of female enthusiasts. The company's initiative to promote tourism activities on Mt. Ōmine played a pivotal role in the decision to reduce the size of the women exclusion zone.

The intricate network of pilgrimage routes and the abundance of temples in this mountainous region of Japan provides a vivid illustration of the deep-rooted and long-standing development of Shugendō. This tradition, which has been practiced for centuries, has significantly influenced the prevalence of concepts and practices excluding women (Miyake 2001). Given the historical and cultural significance of Shugendō, it is necessary to delve into the reasons why its practitioners chose to establish their stronghold in such a hilly and remote area. This decision was not arbitrary but stemmed from the deep-seated religious and philosophical beliefs held by Shugendō practitioners.

Prior to the development of Shugendō, Buddhist ascetics in the mountains often sought to expiate their sins through the transcription of the *Lotus Sutra* (Suzuki 2021, 134). This practice, known as *tosō* 抖擻[24] was believed to purify the mind and lead to spiritual enlightenment.

[24] The term derived from the Sanskrit word "Dhūta", it signifies self-purification through ascetic practices. For more details, see "Dhūtanga." entry in Bowker (2003).

However, with the widespread dissemination of Shugendō in the 13th century, the objective of these mountain practitioners underwent a significant shift. Instead of focusing on the expiation of sins, they began to strive towards achieving "*sokushin jōbutsu* 即身成仏"[25] or attaining Buddhahood in the body. This concept, which is central to Shugendō, emphasizes the possibility of achieving enlightenment in one's current lifetime, rather than in future rebirths. Influenced by Esoteric Buddhism, a branch of Buddhism that emphasizes mystical rituals and mantras, Shugendō followers began to perceive the mountains as a "mandala" (Skt. Maṇḍala Jp. *mandara* 曼荼羅)[26], a spiritual and ritual symbol representing the universe. In this context, the mountains were seen not just as physical landscapes, but as sacred spaces imbued with spiritual significance. To realize Buddhahood (*jōbutsu*), Shugendō practitioners engaged in a variety of rituals that simulated death and rebirth within these sacred mountains. These rituals, which often involved rigorous physical challenges and meditation, were believed to help practitioners overcome their earthly desires and attachments, leading them towards spiritual liberation.[27]

Local religious groups and other supporters of the female exclusion policy on Mt. Ōmine tend to emphasize the significance of maintaining this policy in upholding Buddhist doctrines and centuries-old traditions. However, this narrative is notably selective, often downplaying elements such as the doctrine of female impurity and five hindrances for women in Buddhism, the shifting boundaries of the exclusion zone, the influence of various actors, and even the

[25] See also Hardacre (1983) on *sokushin jōbutsu*.
[26] See "Maṇḍala": "A symbolic pictorial representation of the universe, originating in India but prominent in Tibetan Buddhism. It is visualized in the context of Tantric ritual." (Bowker 2003).
[27] In order to achieve *sokushin jōbutsu*, practitioners of Shugendō go through ten states of existence in the mountains. For details, refer to the research conducted by Blacker (1965), who has firsthand experience in participating in Shugendō.

wavering attitudes towards the policy's continuation.

Chapter 2

The Changing Boundary

1

Historical Background and Early Changes

Although local religious groups in Mt. Ōmine assert that the exclusion of women is a tradition spanning over one thousand three hundred years, historical evidence to substantiate this assertion is lacking. The contention made by the Shugendō factions that En no Gyōja, a legendary figure predating the Nara period, established the rules for female exclusion lacks consistency. En no Gyōja only began to be venerated as the first ascetic practitioner in Mt. Ōmine during the middle of the Kamakura period (Suzuki 2021, 307). It is known that female Shugendō practitioners, including those in Mt. Ōmine, were once allowed to enter the mountains for ascetic practices.[28] Records of women participating in mountain asceticism can be found in some sacred mountains until the Kamakura period. These records often document so-called scandals or controversial incidents where both men and women violated the precept of "avoiding sexual misconduct" (*fujainkai*) in the ascetic field. This suggests that even in the absence of explicit policies excluding women, the precept was still in place. For instance, Ushiyama's (2015) historical research on Mt. Hōkidaizan 伯耆大山 reveals that during the Kamakura period, both monastic and lay practitioners, regardless of gender, were permitted to undertake ascetic practices within the mountain. In this context, instances of so-called *danjo*

[28] There are also sacred mountains where the exclusion of women has never been implemented, such as Hikosan 彦山 in Kyushu, which will be discussed in detail later.

wagō 男女和合, which refers to sexual relations between men and women, were discovered within the mountain temples, causing significant controversy. Ushiyama interprets these violations of monastic precepts as a crucial turning point that led temples, which previously did not enforce female exclusion, to adopt the practice of *nyonin kinsei*. Therefore, it's plausible that over time, the permissible altitude for women's entry into sacred mountain areas was progressively lowered, with the designated areas moving further away from the mountain peaks. The responses from religious organizations across different mountains were not uniform, varying in both timing and intensity, indicating the absence of a singular, top-down decision or change.

After the implementation of the exclusion against women, the Shugendō groups at Mt. Ōmine and other sacred mountains faced a practical issue: how to manage both the ascetic practices of female adherents and the visits from regular female worshippers within the mountains. Against this backdrop, dedicated worship places for women were established outside the exclusion zones of these mountains. As previously mentioned in Chapter 1, on Mt. Ōmine, this place is referred to as the *Hahakodō*. Various legends, each assigning its own aura of mystique, surround this location. One story is that it is the place where En no Gyōja's mother, Shiratōme, parted ways with her ascetic son[29], another story posits it as the location where Shiratōme encountered a serpent that hindered her progress while she was venturing into the mountain in search of her son. Designated locations for women, who were unable to ascend the mountains for ascetic practices and worship due to the female exclusion policy, have been established in nearly all sacred mountains (Ushiyama 2005). These places are often referred to

[29] See footnote 23.

as *nyonindō* 女人堂 (women's hall). Accompanying the presence of these *nyonindō* are the so-called *bikuniishi* (nun stone) 比丘尼石, which are said to be the petrified forms of women who dared to transgress the female exclusion boundary.

To this day, next to the *Hahakodō* in Dorogawa, the original female exclusion boundary stone marker (*nyonin kekkai hi* 女人結界碑), which was replaced by the new gate *nyonin kekkai mon* when the exclusion zone was reduced in 1970, remains preserved. The *Hahakodō* now primarily welcomes visitors who come to pray for safe childbirth and fertility, offering *omamori* お守り (amulets) and *haraobi* 腹帯 (belly bands) (Suzuki 2021, 242).[30]

Intriguingly, the aforementioned narrative surrounding the origins of the *Hahakodō* asserts that Shiratōme, En no Gyōja's mother, encountered a large serpent while searching for her son in the mountains. This tale has been recorded in a guidebook on the historical heritage of Tengawa 天川 Village, the superior administrative body of Dorogawa, compiled in 2007 (Tenkawamura tenkawa o manabu kai 2007, 24). The story aligns fundamentally with the narratives presented on the Tengawa Village government's webpage and the Dorogawa Spa Tourism Bureau's introduction page.[31] Within this narrative, the emphasis lies on the filial piety of En no Gyōja, who was concerned for his mother's safety, attempting to offer an indirect, alternative explanation for the female exclusion policy through supernatural elements (a massive serpent) and an emphasis on filial duty. Significantly, this narrative omits both

[30] The *haraobi* is a traditional Japanese belly band used during pregnancy. It is believed to provide both physical support and spiritual protection.

[31] As quoted from Tenkawa Village government's web page: "母「白専女(しらとうめ)」が危険な山に入らないよう建てた「女人入山禁止の結界門」が 1300 年以上今も守り続けられている「女人禁制」の始まりであり、これは役行者の母を思う優しい心の現れです". (My translation: The boundary gate forbidding women to enter the mountain was erected by En no Gyōja with the intention to prevent his mother, 'Shiratōme', from venturing into the dangerous mountain. It was the beginning of the 'prohibition of women', a rule that has been upheld for over 1300 years and is a testament to En no Gyōja's gentle and caring heart for his mother). See https://www.vill.tenkawa.nara.jp/tourism/spot/5173/.

Buddhist precepts and any doctrines or ideas related to female impurity.

While in many local religious groups' narratives, the origin of these landmarks is often traced back over a thousand years in conjunction with the establishment of the *nyonin kekkai*, investigations into historical documents suggest that the creation of the *nyonindō* and *bikuniishi* likely began in the Edo period (Ushiyama 2015). This aligns with the historical context of the Edo period, during which religious activities were tightly controlled under the *Bakuhan* 幕藩 system, resulting in increased challenges for women participating in religious life. The temporal difference in the establishment of the *nyonindō*, *bikuniishi*, and the *nyonin kekkai* indicates that the intensity of the female exclusion was not uniformly enforced and likely underwent a process of strengthening prior to the modern era. The *nyonin kekkai*, being a tangible object marking the boundary, appeared earlier, while the *bikuniishi*, which attempted to reinforce this regulation and served as a deterrent, appeared later. These three tangible elements collectively constituted the system that excluded women from sacred mountains.

2

Modern Alterations

The changes to Mt. Ōmine's female exclusion zone during the process of Japan's modernization and throughout the 20th century, as viewed through the lens of various institutional interplays, have been extensively studied. This will not be reiterated here, but a few key events will be highlighted for historical context.

In March 1872, as part of its efforts to showcase modernization, the Meiji government issued Edict No. 98 (*Dajōkan fukoku kyūjūhachigō* 太政官布告九八号), abolishing the

female exclusion policy on sacred mountains. A key catalyst for this decision was the exhibition held in Kyoto that same year.[32] The government's primary concern was that foreign couples visiting the exhibition might wish to climb the sacred mountains in Kyoto and the surrounding area. If foreign women were denied access due to the female exclusion policy, it would undermine the "civilizing and enlightening"(*Bunmei kaika* 文明開化) image that the Meiji government was striving to project (DeWitt 2015, 67; Suzuki 2021, 197–98).[33]

The early Meiji period was marked by a series of "*Shinbutsu bunri* 神仏分離" policies, which favored the separation of Shinto and Buddhism, a stance against Buddhism, and the elevation of Shinto to a state religion. (Josephson 2019). These policies created a highly challenging situation for Buddhist temples and the syncretic Shugendō tradition. Following the issuance of Edict No. 273 in September 1872, which ordered the abolition of the Shugendō sect (*Shugen-shū haishi rei* 修験宗廃止令), Shugendō was absorbed into the Tendai and Shingon sects of Buddhism.[34] This move was part of the Meiji government's efforts to reorganize and eliminate so-called zōshū 雑宗 (minor or mixed sects) (Hayashi 2001, 117).

In face of the vehement opposition from the Buddhist community, the Meiji government decided in 1878 to leave the choice of maintaining or abolishing the female exclusion policy to the respective Buddhist communities of each sacred mountain. This led to differing outcomes across localities due to the interplay of various power dynamics. Distinctly, in 1873, Mt.

[32] The 1872 Kyoto exhibition recorded a total of 38,634 Japanese visitors, while there were only 770 foreign visitors. Those foreign visitors who managed to enter Kyoto, through the complex procedure of obtaining permission from their respective consulates located in Osaka and Hyōgo, were documented to have visited Lake Biwa, but no records of them climbing mountains exist (Kudō 2008, 91–94).

[33] Both Suzuki and Dewitt utilize the account of Osamu Zenitani 銭谷修, born in 1917 and a former chief representative of Ryūsenji. While this account is notably representative, it does not conclusively explain why the Meiji government lifted the prohibition of women from sacred mountains.

[34] For the original text of Edict No. 273, see the related study by Hayashi (2001, 122-123).

Ōmine—contrary to other sacred mountains like Mount Kōya which terminated its female exclusion zone in 1905—saw the relevant organizations in the villages of Dorogawa and Yoshino at its foot deciding to uphold the female exclusion policy (Suzuki 2021, 231). In 1878 the Meiji government ambiguously situated the "legality" of the female exclusion policy within the framework of "sectarian regulations" (*shūki* 宗規), thereby emphasizing their non-public nature and tacitly granting temples with a certain privilege. Among the many sacred mountains given such discretionary powers, the preservation of the female exclusion zone on Mt. Ōmine was more the result of random circumstances than a deliberate choice. This element of arbitrariness has been conveniently overlooked or bypassed by those seeking to construct a seamless and unvarying historical narrative of Mt. Ōmine.

The areas surrounding Mt. Ōmine were incorporated into the Yoshino-Kumano National Park in 1936, and Dorogawa was also included in 1965. The discovery of hot springs in this region at the end of the 20th century, and the area's subsequent attempts to attract tourists and residents by promoting Shugendō experiences and World Heritage status in the 21st century, in an effort to counteract population decline, will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three.

3

Two Layers of Authority

In the contemporary context, when discussing the so-called "official" stance on the female exclusion zone, it is important to recognize that a unified official discourse may not exist. Rather, at least two narratives seem to be at play. Firstly, as previously mentioned, there is the Japanese government's approach, which tends to sidestep the topic of female exclusion,

particularly in external communications, such as in the promotion of World Heritage sites. (Dewitt 2020). Secondly, there is the perspective of the local government, which does not regard the discussion of this issue as taboo and indeed continues to implement the practice of female exclusion in certain contexts.

In fact, debates over the female exclusion in Mt. Ōmine predate the 21st century discussions around the Kii Mountain Range's application for World Heritage status. As early as 1936, when efforts were made to incorporate Mt. Ōmine into the Yoshino-Kumano National Park, discussions regarding the potential abolition of the mountain's female exclusion zone had already begun. The central points of disagreement between advocates and opponents of abolishing the female exclusion policy hinge on two major considerations. Firstly, the potential economic repercussions regarding visitor numbers for tourism and pilgrimage to Mt. Ōmine form a key issue. Those in favor of abolition posit that this would allow access to half of the population, potentially increasing visitorship. Conversely, those opposed argue that eradicating the female exclusion zone would risk the sanctity and unique allure of Mt. Ōmine, consequently undermining motivations for visitation. The second facet of the debate relates to the public nature of the female exclusion practice. Supporters of abolition contend that, in a modern state, it is fundamentally unsustainable to bar women from a part of a national park—deemed a "public" space. Conversely, detractors view the female exclusion as a long-standing "tradition" that has significant value and thus, should be preserved (DeWitt 2015, 98–103; Suzuki 2021, 253–54).[35]

[35] The arguments of both opposition and advocacy groups were synthesized from the viewpoints and writings of Miyagi Shinga 宮城信雅, the head of Shōgoin Temple at the time, and Kishida Hideo 岸田日出雄, the relevant government official involved in the establishment of the Yoshino-Kumano National Park.

This enduring debate originated when the Meiji government delegated the authority to decide on the female exclusion policy to local religious groups. The discussion has continued through the 20th century and remains unresolved today. Specifically, in the case of Mt. Ōmine, a conclusive agreement is yet to be reached. Thus, even as the local government and Japanese national authorities align in their objective of harnessing the cultural heritage of Mt. Ōmine to bolster tourism, they manifest markedly different public communication strategies. In stark contrast to the reticence of the national government concerning the issue of female exclusion, local initiatives—like the organization of one-day Shugendō experiences—explicitly denote in their promotional material that participation is confined to males. This point will receive a more in-depth exploration in Chapter 3.

4

Gender-Specific Restrictions

It's important to note that Mt. Ōmine doesn't allow unrestricted access for men. As discussed earlier, the prohibitions specifically aimed at women—those pertaining to childbirth and menstruation—are likely derived from more ancient taboos around death and blood impurity.[36] Thus, these notions of impurity are not entirely eliminated when it comes to men. This means that men cannot enter Mt. Ōmine arbitrarily or under any given circumstance. The rules on men visiting sanjōgatake on Mt. Ōmine stipulate that access is permissible exclusively from May 3rd to September 23rd annually. The opening of the mountain is heralded by the "*toake-shiki* 戸開式" (door opening ceremony) on May 3rd, whereas the "*tojime-shiki* 戸閉

[36] Tonomura (2007) conducted a study exploring the nexus between the *ubuya* 産屋, a hut used for secluding expectant mothers in premodern Japan, and the concepts of menstrual and childbirth impurities.

式” (door closing ceremony) on September 23rd signals the closure of Mt. Ōmine. In addition, although there are no special requirements for the public to participate in activities such as the Mt. Ōmine Shugendō one-day experience, it is generally understood that there are certain expectations prior to making a pilgrimage to the mountain. Typically, a period of approximately seven to ten days is observed for abstaining from meat, sexual activity, and the use of open flames, a practice known as *shōjin kessai* 精進潔斎 (ascetic purification) (Miyake 2001).

The existence of asymmetrical gender-specific restrictions is not an isolated phenomenon observed only in Mt. Ōmine. Similar prohibitions or exclusions targeting women can be found in various other sectors, including the fishing industry, the construction field (particularly in tunnel construction), nuclear power plants, and even on the sumo wrestling stage. These prohibitions share a connection with notions of female impurity, which are difficult to trace to a specific origin. As illustrated in the studies by Suzuki (2021, 15-95) on sumo wrestling and Tonomura (2007) on *ubuya*, this connection tends to undergo an “invented” process in early modern times. During this process, the discontinuous and variable historical realities are obscured and misrepresented as a unified, continuous, and unchanging historical narrative. A clear demonstration of this phenomenon is how Mt. Ōmine claims that the prohibition against women originated 1300 years ago when En no Gyōja first arrived at the mountain. Such instances of gender-based exclusion remain a source of contentious debates in contemporary Japanese society.

Chapter 3

Beyond the Boundary

1

Women, Transgender People and Romanticization

The 20th century witnessed occasional attempts by women to challenge the female exclusion policy and ascend Mt. Ōmine.[37] These efforts appear to fall into three distinct periods: pre-war, during the American occupation, and post-war. One of the earliest recorded attempts dates back to 1902, when a daughter of a shrine official at Katsuragi 葛城 shrine reportedly climbed the mountain with men. However, the first deliberate endeavor to breach the women's prohibition—which was lifted by the Meiji government—emerged in 1929. This was when two women, Okada Matsue 岡田松江 and Ishiwatari Hide 石渡秀, sought to climb Mt. Ōmine from its southeast side (marked by the blue square in figure 3). Detected mid-ascent, they were persuaded to descend by woodcutters who found them. The *Osaka Asahi Shinbun* 大阪朝日新聞, a major newspaper at the time, reported this incident as the earliest known female ascent since the repeal of the female exclusion policy (Suzuki 2021, 251). A noteworthy revelation came in 1937 when a man admitted to escorting women up the mountain during the prohibited season—outside the allowed period of May 23rd to September 23rd—on two separate occasions. Their ascent took place via the southeast side, also known as Kashiwagi 柏木. This path, often termed the *urayama* 裏山 (back mountain), offered greater concealment compared to the *omoteyama* 表山 (front mountain), the western Dorogawa and

[37] Dewitt (2015, 130-134) and Suzuki (2021, 250-252) have documented the incidents involving female ascents during this period.

the northern Yoshino (the two other blue squares in figure three). This hint of secrecy suggests that additional, undocumented instances of women scaling Mt. Ōmine from this side during the off-limits period might have occurred.

During the mid-1930s, amidst controversy, the integration of Mt. Ōmine—with its persistent women exclusion zone—into the Kumano Yoshino National Park accelerated the expansion of national infrastructure into its peripheral regions, including Dorogawa. This included the advancement of public transport services like bus lines. This infrastructural development set the stage for the influence of post-war tourism on Dorogawa and the exclusion zone, leading to events such as the reduction of the exclusion zone in 1970.

In 1946, an ascent attempt by an American woman ignited significant controversy. An employee of the General Headquarters (GHQ)'s Natural Resources Section, known as Pero, was invited by Keikichi Matsuyama 松山啓吉, a staff member of the Occupying Forces Service, to join a mountaineering expedition advocating for the removal of the female prohibition on Mt. Ōmine. This group, comprising dozens of journalists along with Japanese female teachers and students, amounted to over twenty participants. As they started their ascent from the lesser-known *urayama*, or the Kashiwagi direction, more than 300 local residents gathered in protest. The local representatives managed to persuade the climbers to refrain from their ascent, invoking the sanctity of a religious tradition that had endured for 1300 years. Eventually, the U.S. forces stationed in Nara released a bilingual notice in Japanese and English. This notice, prominently displayed at Mt. Ōmine's primary climbing entrances, was used by local religious communities to symbolize the mutual recognition by the occupying forces and the local religious community of the female prohibition as a "religious tradition" (DeWitt 2015,

137–39; Suzuki 2021, 257–59).

During the post-war era, there was a steady, albeit not overwhelming, rise in the number of women attempting to climb Mt. Ōmine, challenging the established women exclusion zone. This surge coincided with the broader mountaineering boom that began in the 1950s. This period also marked a transformative phase for Dorogawa, which had traditionally served as a hub for Shugendō practitioners embarking on their pilgrimage to Mt. Ōmine. The rising tourism industry attracted a multitude of visitors, many of whom were recreational climbers rather than traditional pilgrims. This shift in visitor demographics was a critical factor leading to the contraction of the Mt. Ōmine female exclusion zone from *Hahakodō* to the *Seijō ōhashi* bridge in 1970, as previously mentioned.

An event that has received scant scholarly attention to date occurred in November 2005, when a group of over thirty individuals, including transgender people and women opposing the exclusion zone, attempted to forcibly climb Mt. Ōmine. One of the organizers of this initiative was Ida Hiroyuki 伊田広行, a lecturer at Ritsumeikan University at the time. Having secured the participation of more than thirty individuals, the group convened at the women exclusion zone gate near the Dorogawa *Seijō ōhashi* bridge early in the morning on November 3, 2005. Approximately 100 villagers, who had been forewarned of the group's intentions, arrived to prevent their ascent (some news reports cited the number of villagers at 50). After a one-hour stalemate, most of the aspiring climbers dispersed, leaving only three women determined to press on. This incident garnered extensive media coverage at the time, providing a rich array of perspectives and stances. In this context, through a compilation and analysis of various news reports, an attempt is made to unravel these diverse viewpoints and understandings.

According to a report by *Kyōdō Tsūshin* 共同通信, from October 2005 onwards, the "*Ōminesan ni noborou jikkō iinkai* 大峯山に登ろう実行委員会" (Committee for the Ascent to Mt. Ōmine), orchestrated by Ida and other co-organizers, had begun recruiting participants nationwide. They had notified Goji-in 護持院[38] about their plan to ascend Mt. Ōmine in November. However, the plan was met with disapproval. It seems that from the very beginning, the core objective of the committee was not to stubbornly insist on climbing the mountain but to stimulate a wider discourse on the justification of the gender-exclusive zone. The *Mainichi shinbun*'s Nara edition 毎日新聞奈良版 quoted the committee saying, "We have no intention of insisting on climbing at all costs. We want to instigate a deeper discussion surrounding the diversity of gender".[39] Similarly, one of the participants, Morimura Sayaka 森村さやか, who is legally identified as male but self-identifies as female, expressed to Mainichi shinbun's Nara edition, "Even if we are unable to ascend the mountain, if it contributes to the debate on sexuality, then it would be a significant achievement".[40]

On the website of the "Association for the Opening of the *nyonin kinsei* on Mt. Ōmine" (*Ōminesan nyonin kaihō o motomerukai* 大峯山女人開放を求める会), it is reported that both Ida and Morimura attended a symposium hosted by the organization on October 9, 2005. This organization, as noted in the Introduction of this study, was established in 2003 in direct opposition to Mt. Ōmine' s nomination as a World Cultural Heritage site. During the symposium, Ida and Morimura explicitly espoused their non-violent principles and expressed

[38] Goji-in refers collectively to the five parent temples managing Ōminesan-ji, see footnote 21.
[39] Original text from *Mainichi shinbun* (2005a): "実力行使をしてまで登るつもりはない。性の多様性を巡る議論を深めるきっかけにしたい".
[40] Original text: "山に登れなくても、セクシャリティーに関する議論に一石を投じることになれば". (*Mainichi shinbun* 2005a).

a hope for an expansion of human rights awareness not based on the "simplistic assumption that religion equals misogyny, but rather through relationships that deeply engage with one another at a profound level".[41]

As reported in the Nara edition of the *Mainichi shinbun*, out of the approximately 100 villagers who sought to hinder Ida's group near the entrance of the exclusion zone on November 3rd, about 30 were women. Sumiya Tomiko 角谷トミ子, the head of the Dorogawa Village Women's Association (*josei no kai* 女性の会), argued that the prohibition on women is "a tradition that the villagers have painstakingly preserved. If it were a matter of gender discrimination, we would be the first to protest".[42] Masutani Genichi 桝谷源逸, the district chief of Dorogawa, was quoted by the *Mainichi shinbun* Osaka edition articulating a similar sentiment: "The prohibition against women is not about gender discrimination, but a tradition our ancestors have safeguarded. The livelihood of the villagers has been closely tied to caring for the Shugendō practitioners. We request patience until consensus can be reached with the temple and the local community".[43] These justifications left the group of over thirty climbers puzzled and unconvinced. Similarly, their own inquiries, which included questions about the basis for female exclusion and how the prohibition should address transgender individuals, were met with insufficient responses from the representatives of Dorogawa.

Indeed, it is apparent that there was a significant disconnect between the two parties, with little common ground reached. Notably, Masutani's explanation encompasses two primary

[41] Original text: "宗教＝女性蔑視と片づけるのでなく、深層部分でふれあう関係性の上に人権意識の広がりがもたらされるのではないか". (Ōminesan nyonin kaihō o motomerukai 2006).
[42] Original text: "(女人禁制は)住民が必死で守ってきた伝統。女性差別なら、私たちがまず反対する". (*Mainichi shinbun* 2005b).
[43] Original text: "女人禁制は女性差別ではなく先人たちが守ってきた伝統。住民は行者の世話で生活してきた。寺や地元の合意ができるまで待ってほしい". (*Mainichi shinbun* 2005c).

justifications for the preservation of the women exclusion zone. The first is the common refrain by proponents of the exclusion zone that it represents an important "tradition". The second justification is more intertwined with the economic realities of Dorogawa; the local economy substantially depends on Dorogawa serving as a gathering point for Shugendō practitioners who seek to climb Mt. Ōmine, as well as those who engage in religious practices in the mountain. Therefore, the potential risk that the dissolution of the women exclusion zone may strip the mountain of its so-called "sacredness", could subsequently lead to serious economic implications for Dorogawa. Consequently, the question arises as to whether the rapid expansion of the tourism industry in recent years could mitigate Dorogawa's economic reliance on Shugendō practitioners, thereby paving the way for a reconsideration of the women exclusion zone. However, the answer to this question may not be positive, a point which will be further elucidated in the third section of this chapter.[44]

2

Hikosan: An Exception to Female Exclusion?

Even though this thesis primarily centers on Mt. Ōmine, it's crucial to acknowledge that the degree of female exclusion can differ, even among Shugendō sacred mountains—places deeply influenced by Buddhist philosophy and perceptions of female impurity. For instance, Hikosan, which has never upheld a permanent ban on women, offers a valuable case.

Located in Fukuoka Prefecture, Hikosan, another sacred mountain in the Shugendō

[44] The existence of female Shugendō practitioners may serve as another factor influencing the persistence of the female exclusion zone, as examined in Kobayashi's (2017) study, which investigates the tendency for romanticization of female Shugendō practitioners by external and academic communities.

tradition, has been documented in various texts such as the 13th-century "*Hikosan ruki* 彦山流記" and the 18th-century "*Chiritsuboshū* 塵壺集"[45]. In *Hikosan ruki*, which details the origin of Hikosan as a sacred mountain, a Shugendō practitioner seeking shelter from the rain on Hikosan is depicted as being tempted by a woman, the manifestation of the Eleven-headed Kannon (*Jūichimen Kannon* 十一面観音). The practitioner, who deems the clothing handed to him by the woman as "impure" and refuses to wear it, considers his mouth "pure" as it's used for chanting scriptures, and he attempts to kiss the woman (Suzuki 2016).

The 18th-century text, Chiritsuboshū, records a policy at Hikosan during that time that prohibited both ordained and laywomen from worshiping during their menstrual periods (Ushiyama 2016). Based on Buddhist doctrines of female impurity, this restriction did not extend to a permanent policy against women - there was no "everlasting" sacred border barring women. These two texts suggest that notions of impurity could be more nuanced than commonly understood, potentially differing based on distinct contexts or even organs, though a comprehensive discussion of this complexity is beyond the scope of this thesis. The intention of this brief exploration is to emphasize the fact that the practices of female exclusion differ among sacred mountains, being implemented with varying degrees of severity, nuances, and across different time periods. Therefore, a unified so-called "tradition" related to this practice may not exist.

3

Publicity through Exclusion: Tourism Dynamics

Since the post-war period of rapid economic growth in Japan, regions surrounding Mt.

[45] See Suzuki (2016) for a detailed study on *Hikosan ruki* and *Chiritsuboshū*.

Ōmine, such as Dorogawa, have continually faced population outflow. Under the "*Chihō sōsei* 地方創生" (regional revitalization) strategy, led by Japan's Cabinet Office and Cabinet Bureau, with local governments as the primary actors, these regions proposed to develop tourism and rejuvenate their local economies using labels like World Cultural Heritage, Kumano Yoshino National Park, and birthplace of Shugendō. Indeed, Shugendō-related content has emerged as a "brand" in the cultural consumption associated with Mt. Ōmine. (Carter 2019; 2021).

Situated within Tenkawa Village, the Dorogawa district's regional revitalization plan can be located on the official website of the Cabinet Office's "*Chihō sōsei*" initiative. The plan, formulated in 2021, largely revolves around the development of the tourism sector. The document notes that in 2019, the Dorogawa district welcomed approximately 280,000 tourists, but an overwhelming majority of these visitors did not stay overnight—only 15% opted for accommodation in the area. Consequently, the average expenditure per visitor remains relatively low, at only 2,900 yen. Despite a substantial annual influx of tourists, this low expenditure per capita translates to a modest contribution to the local economy. (Tenkawa-mura 2021).

Simultaneously, Dorogawa confronts emerging challenges. As per Masutani, Dorogawa's district chief's remarks in 2005 (mentioned in this chapter's first section), Shugendō practitioners, especially those participating in group activities[46], have been crucial in supporting and maintaining Dorogawa's economy. However, a noticeable decline in the number of these practitioners presents a considerable threat to Dorogawa's income sources. Moreover, Dorogawa's forestry industry—once a pillar of its economy and a significant factor

[46] These groups are referred to as *kō* 講, and the plan mentions that some of them have existed since the Muromachi period.

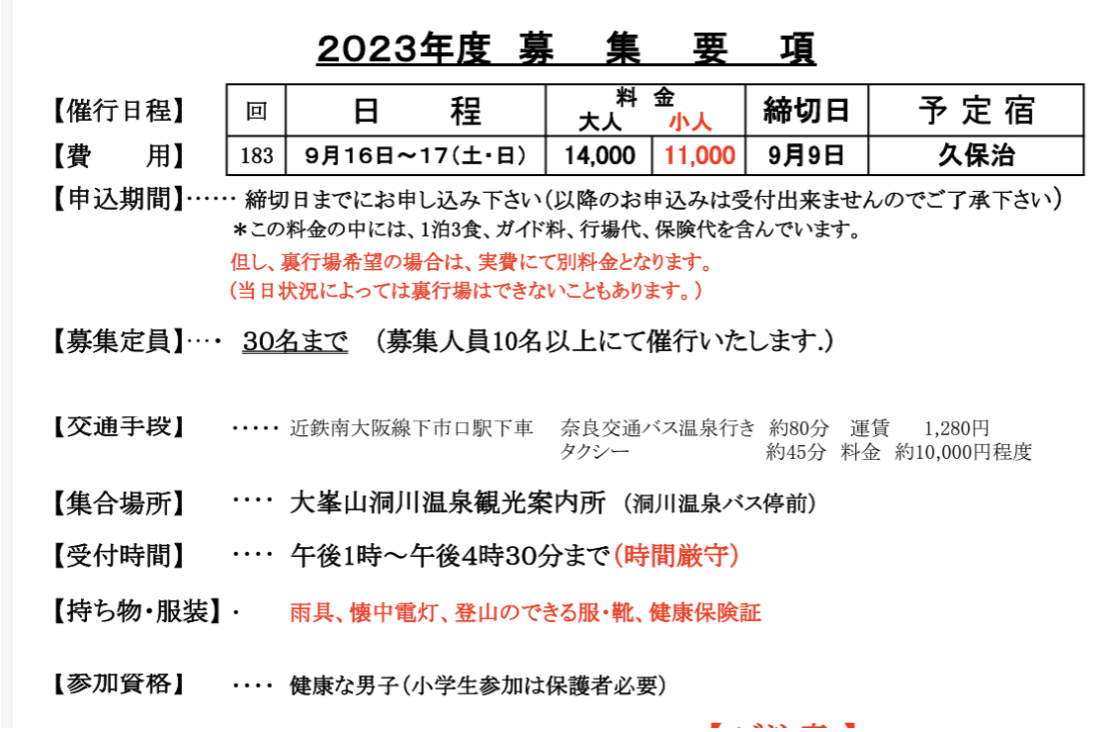
behind the decision to contract the women exclusion zone in 1970 (to allow more women to participate in forestry work)—is now also in decline. Predominantly due to price competition from larger corporations, the district's small-scale, less competitive forestry industry struggles to attract and retain workers. (Tenkawa-mura 2021).

Recognizing these factors, the revitalization plan accentuates tourism, specifically focusing on increasing the number of tourists staying overnight and attracting more foreign visitors, as the primary driver for Dorogawa's regeneration. As such, "cultural experiences" (*bunka taiken* 文化体験), distinguished from natural ones, are deemed the core attraction of the Dorogawa region. Among these, Shugendō experiences are regarded as having the most potential for development. This is not only because Mt. Ōmine claims that it's the birthplace of Shugendō, but also because visitors participating in these cultural experiences would necessarily have to stay overnight in Dorogawa, which could also boost the average spending per visitor. Additionally, an increase in foreign tourists could fill the void during the weekdays when there are fewer Japanese visitors.

In terms of developing the "Shugendō experience", the policy of excluding women cannot be bypassed. The plan points out that previous countermeasures, which were put in place due to the decline of the Shugendō practitioner groups known as *kō*, have not been effective. It is stated that "PR efforts are being made to target young women by selling a retro atmosphere, but this is not interacting with the local narrative".[47] This statement implicitly suggests a conflict between the goal of attracting female tourists and promoting Shugendō as the main cultural experience. Therefore, under the goal of developing Shugendō as a cultural experience,

[47] Original text: "レトロな雰囲気を売りに若い女性をターゲットにした PR を行っているが地域の物語と相互せず".(Tenkawa-mura 2021, 2).

the adherence to the prohibition of women, unique nationwide, is even endowed with new motivations. In the most recent promotion for the 2023 Shugendō one-day experience, it is still evident that women are not permitted to participate. In the promotional material for the "*Ōmine-san yamabushi shugyō ichinichi nyūmon* 大峯山山伏修行一日入門" event (One-day initiation into mountain ascetic practice at Mt. Ōmine), which is set to take place from September 16 to 17, 2023, and is organized by the Dorogawa Spa Tourism Bureau, the eligibility criteria explicitly state "healthy men" (*kenkōna danshi* 健康な男子).



2023年度 募 集 要 項

【催行日程】 【費 用】

回	日 程	料金 大人	料金 小人	締切日	予定宿
183	9月16日～17(土・日)	14,000	11,000	9月9日	久保治

【申込期間】…… 締切日までにお申し込み下さい(以降のお申込みは受付出来ませんのでご了承下さい)
＊この料金の中には、1泊3食、ガイド料、行場代、保険代を含んでいます。
但し、裏行場希望の場合は、実費にて別料金となります。
(当日状況によっては裏行場はできないこともあります。)

【募集定員】… 30名まで (募集人員10名以上にて催行いたします.)

【交通手段】 …… 近鉄南大阪線下市口駅下車 奈良交通バス温泉行き 約80分 運賃 1,280円
タクシー 約45分 料金 約10,000円程度

【集合場所】 …… 大峯山洞川温泉観光案内所 (洞川温泉バス停前)

【受付時間】 …… 午後1時～午後4時30分まで(時間厳守)

【持ち物・服装】・ 雨具、懐中電灯、登山のできる服・靴、健康保険証

【参加資格】 …… 健康な男子(小学生参加は保護者必要)

Figure 4: Requirements stating that only healthy males can participate.

In the book by travel writer Kimura Satoru (2022, 168), themed on "dark tourism", it is recorded that he witnessed quite a number of tourists who specifically came to see the gates of women exclusion in Mt. Ōmine. For instance, a group of men took selfies in front of the *nyonin kekkai mon*, excitedly exclaiming, "Here it is, here it is, it's unbelievable!".[48] At a time when

[48] Original text: "ここだここだ、ありえね～". (Kimura 2022, 168).

local governments need Shugendō-related activities as a cultural experience to revitalize the declining Dorogawa, and the women exclusion boundaries have become somewhat of a spectacle, lifting the ban seems to be fraught with challenges.

Conclusion

The first chapter of this thesis begins by distinguishing between the nuanced differences in the origins and usage preferences of "*nyonin kekkai*" and "*nyonin kinsei*". This is followed by a discussion of how Buddhist precepts acted as pivotal influences in the formation of the women exclusion policy. Subsequently, the chapter explores the genderization of impurity concepts and its ensuing effect on shaping gender-specific taboos, which led to the development of policies that explicitly exclude women. The *Blood Bowl Sutra*'s introduction and propagation played a catalytic role in this transformation, with the *Lotus Sutra* and other Buddhist precepts also playing a part in this discussion. Concluding the first chapter, the thesis delves into the geographical significance of Mt. Ōmine as a key node within the intricate network of Shugendō sacred mountains and pilgrimage routes, while also probing the rationale behind Shugendō practitioners' preference for mountainous areas as their ascetic domains.

The second chapter commences with an examination of the demarcation process of the women exclusion zone, followed by an analysis of how alternatives such as the *nyonindō* (women's hall) and *bikuniishi* were leveraged to construct an exhaustive narrative of female exclusion. The latter part of this chapter traces the historical trajectory of the women exclusion zone, detailing its initial abolition by the Meiji government and the subsequent ambiguous latitude granted to local temples. This ambiguity serves as a precursor to the current dichotomy in official discourse at the national and local government levels. To enhance the understanding of the intricacies associated with sacred mountain regulations, the rules applicable to men upon entering sacred mountains are also addressed. The chapter concludes by highlighting the

continued prevalence of female exclusion in contemporary Japanese society, demonstrating that it extends beyond the confines of mountain asceticism.

The third chapter shifts focus to the 20th century, discussing the continued challenges to the Mt. Ōmine exclusion policy posed by women and transgender individuals. In addition, the potential impacts of Dorogawa's economic pivot towards tourism on the women exclusion zone are examined.

Broadly, this thesis focuses on several critical aspects. Firstly, it considers the *nyonindō*, the *bikuniishi*, and the boundaries of the women exclusion zone as a cohesive unit for examination. Secondly, it scrutinizes the narratives of local residents and Shugendō temples concerning the origin and legacy of the women exclusion zone, particularly their emphasis on the filial piety of En no Gyōja and their tendency to downplay the contentious notion of female impurity. Lastly, it delves into the analysis of incidents involving transgender individuals attempting to ascend Mt. Ōmine, and the evolution of tourism in Dorogawa.

Bibliography

Blacker, Carmen. 1965. “Initiation in the Shugendo: The Passage through the Ten States of Existence.” In *Initiation*, 96–111. Brill.

Bowker, John. 2003. “Dhūtanga”. In *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*. Oxford University Press. Accessed March 22, 2023. https://www-oxfordreference-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/display/10.1093/acref/9780192800947.001.0001/acref-9780192800947-e-1982?rskey=9MfgDq&result=1981

———. “Maṇḍala”. In *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*. Oxford University Press. Accessed March 22, 2023. https://www-oxfordreference-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/view/10.1093/acref/9780192800947.001.0001/acref-9780192800947-e-4551.

———. “Nīvaraṇas”. In *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*. Oxford University Press. Accessed March 21, 2023. https://www-oxfordreference-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/view/10.1093/acref/9780192800947.001.0001/acref-9780192800947-e-5258.

———. “Śīla”. In *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*. Oxford University Press. Accessed March 23, 2023. https://www-oxfordreference-com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl/view/10.1093/acref/9780192800947.001.0001/acref-9780192800947-e-6803.

Bunkachō 文化庁 (Japan Agency for Cultural Affairs). n.d. “Kii sanchi no reijō to sankeimichi 紀伊山地の霊場と参詣道” Bunka isan onrain 文化遺産オンライン

(Cultural Heritage Online). Accessed March 15, 2023. https://bunka.nii.ac.jp/special_content/hlinkA.

Carter, Caleb. 2019. “Adding Value (with Limits): Pilgrimage and Women’s Exclusion in Japan’s Sacred Mountains.” *Hualin International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 2 (2): 1–30.

———. 2021. “Gendai shugendō no shūkyō shakaigaku: sangaku shinkō no seichi yoshino kumano no kankōka to bunka shigenka 現代修験道の宗教社会学−山岳信仰の聖地「吉野・熊野」の観光化と文化資源化 (The Religious Social Study of Contemporary Shugendō: Tourist Development and Cultural Consumption of Mountain Worship at the Sacred Sites of Yoshino and Kumano), by Amada Akinori 天田顕徳”. *Journal of Religion in Japan* 10 (1): 89–95.

DeWitt, Lindsey. 2013. “Lifting the Barrier: Women’s Access to Sacred Mountains in Japan.” *KYOTO JOURNAL*, no. 78: 34–37.

———. 2015. *A Mountain Set Apart: Female Exclusion, Buddhism, and Tradition at Modern Ōminesan, Japan*. Los Angeles. University of California.

———. 2020. “World Cultural Heritage and Women’s Exclusion from Sacred Sites in Japan.” In *Sacred Heritage in Japan*, 65–86. Routledge.

Dorogawa onsen kankō kyōkai 洞川温泉観光協会. 2013. “Dorogawa wōkingu mappu 洞川ウォーキングマップ”. Accessed March 23, 2023. http://www.dorogawaonsen.jp/info/154/.

———. 2013. “Hahakodō 母公堂 ”. Accessed April 10, 2023. http://www.dorogawaonsen.jp/sightseeing/168/.

———. 2023. “2023 Ōmine-san yamabushi shugyō ichinichi nyūmon 2023 大峯山山伏修行一日入門”. Accessed May 19, 2023. http://www.dorogawaonsen.jp/topics/2450/.

En no gyōja sen sanbyakunen goonki kiroku hensan iinkai 役行者千三百年御遠忌記録編纂委員会. 2003. *Shin jidai ni muketa shugen sanhonzan no kiseki 新時代に向けた修験三本山の軌跡*. Kokushō kankōkai 国書刊行会.

Faure, Bernard. 1998. *The Red Thread: Buddhist Approaches to Sexuality*. Vol. 1. Princeton University Press.

Gerhart, Karen M. 2018. *Women, Rites, and Ritual Objects in Premodern Japan*. Brill.

Grant, Beata, and Idema, Wilt L. 2011. *Escape from Blood Pond Hell: The Tales of Mulian and Woman Huang*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Hardacre, Helen. 1983. “The Cave and the Womb World.” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 149–176.

Hayashi Jun 林淳. 2001. “Meiji go-nen shugenshū haishi-rei o meguru ichikōsatsu: tendai・shingon e no kinyū mondai 明治 5 年修験宗廃止令をめぐる一考察--天台・真言への帰入問題”. *Zen kenkyūjo kiyō 禅研究所紀要*, no. 30: 117–27.

Josephson, Jason Ananda. 2019. *The Invention of Religion in Japan*. University of Chicago Press.

Kaneko Yukiko 金子幸子, Kuroda Hiroko 黒田弘子, Sugano Noriko 菅野則子, and Yoshie Akiko 義江明子. 2008. *Nihon joseishi daijiten 日本女性史大辞典*. Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 吉川弘文館.

Kawauchi Kyōshō 川内教彰. 2006. “Ketsubonkyō juyō no shisōteki haikei o megutte 『血盆経』受容の思想的背景をめぐって.” *Bukkyōgakubu ronshū 仏教学部論集* 100 :

15-36.

Kimura Satoru. 2022. *Fu kinshinna tabi fu no kioku o meguru “dāku tsūrizumu” 不謹慎な旅　負の記憶を巡る「ダークツーリズム」*. Gen shobō 弦書房.

Kobayashi Naoko 小林奈央子. 2017. “Sacred Mountains and Women in Japan: Fighting a Romanticized Image of Female Ascetic Practitioners.” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 44 (1): 103–22.

Kudō Yasuko 工藤泰子. 2008. “Meiji shoki kyōto no hakurankai to kankō 明治初期京都の博覧会と観光”. *Kyoto kōka joshi daigaku kenkyū kiyō 京都光華女子大学研究紀要 = Research Bulletin of Kyoto Koka Women’s University* 46 (December): 77–100.

Meeks, Lori. 2020a. “Women and Buddhism in East Asian History: The Case of the Blood Bowl Sutra, Part I: China.” *Religion Compass* 14 (4): n/a.

———. 2020b. “Women and Buddhism in East Asian History: The Case of the Blood Bowl Sutra, Part II: Japan.” *Religion Compass* 14 (4): n/a.

Miyata Noboru 宮田登. 2010. *Kegare no minzukushi: sabetsu no bunkateki yōin ケガレの民俗誌：差別の文化的要因*. Chikuma gakugei bunko ちくま学芸文庫. Chikuma shobō 筑摩書房.

Miyake Hitoshi 宮家準. 2001. *Shugendō: sono rekishi to shugyō 修験道：その歴史と修行*. Kōdansha gakujutsu bunko 講談社学術文庫. Kōdansha 講談社.

“Naze tsuzuku? ōmine-san nyonin kinsei, hantai no shimin, mamoru jūshoku なぜ続く？大峯山女人禁制　反対の市民、守る住職”. *Asahi shinbun dejitaru* 朝日新聞デジタル. July 2, 2019. Accessed April 1, 2023. https://www.asahi.com/articles/ASM642PQ0M64PFIB001.html.

“Nyonin kinsei no ōmine tozan mezasu Sei dōitsusei shōgai no danjo-ra 女人禁制の大峰登山目指す　性同一性障害の男女ら”. *Kyōdō Tsūshin* 共同通信. November 2, 2005.

Ōminesan nyonin kaihō o motomerukai「大峰山女人禁制」の開放を求める会. 2006. “Shinpōjiumu ‘nyonin kinsei’ no yukue kaisai シンポジウム「女人禁制」のゆくえ開催”. Accessed June 5, 2023. http://www.on-kaiho.com/action/diary/bn2006_01.html.

———. 2011a. *Gendai no nyonin kinsei-seisabetsu no kongen o saguru 現代の「女人禁制」―性差別の根源を探る*. Osaka kaihō shuppansha 大阪：解放出版社.

———. 2011b. “Otoko ga tsukutta shinwa ‘nyonin kinsei’ ‘Ōminesan’ ni nobotta josei no intabyū kara” “男がつくった神話「女人禁制」-「大峰山」に登った女性へのインタビューから.” *Buraku kaihō 部落解放 / 解放出版社* 編, no. 647: 86 ~ 93.

Sakurai, Tokutaro. 1984. “Folk Religion and the Regulation of Social Life: The Interrelationship of KE, KEGARE and HARE.” *駒澤社会学研究 = Komazawa Journal of Sociology*, March, p62-77.

Sakuramotobō 桜本坊. n.d. “En no Gyōja Hahakozō 役行者母公像”. Accessed March 26, 2023. https://sakuramotobou.or.jp/about/ennogyojas-mother.html.

“Sei dōitsusei shōgai: morimura-san ra, ‘nyonin kinsei’ ōmine tozan ni chōsen 性同一性障害：森村さんら、“女人禁制”大峰登山に挑戦”. *Mainichi shinbun naraban* 毎日新聞奈良版. November 3, 2005a.

“Sei dōitsusei shōgaisha: nyojin kinsei no nara, ōmine-san no nyūzan, jimoto ni motomeru 性同一性障害者：女人禁制の奈良・大峰山の入山、地元に求める”. *Mainichi shinbun ōsakaban* 毎日新聞大阪版. November 4, 2005c.

Shingū kankō kyokai 新宮観光協会 (Shingū City Tourist Association). n.d. “Kumano kodō

熊野古道". Accessed March 17, 2023. https://www.shinguu.jp/kumanokodo2.

Suzuki Masataka 鈴木正崇. 2016. "Shugen reizan no engi ni kansuru kousatsu: 'hikosan ruki' o yomu 修験霊山の縁起に関する考察：『彦山流記』を読む". *Girei bunka gakkai kiyō: girei bunka 儀礼文化学会紀要：儀礼文化*, no. 3・4 (March): 51–70.

———. 2021. *Nyonin kinsei no jinruigaku-sumō kegare 女人禁制の人類学——相撲・穢れ・ジェンダー*. Kyoto: hōzōkan 京都: 法蔵館.

———. 2022. "nyonin kinsei to sangakushinkō 女人禁制と山岳信仰". *Tetsugaku 哲學* 149: 145–79.

Taira Masayuki 平雅行. 1992. *Nihon chūsei no shakai to bukkyō 日本中世の社会と仏教*. Hanawa Shobō 塙書房.

Tenkawa-mura 天川村. 2021. "*Chiiki saisei keikaku dorogawa-chiku machizukuri keikaku 地域再生計画 洞川地区まちづくり計画*". Naikaku kanbō naikakufu chihō sōsei sōgō saito 内閣官房· 内閣府地方創生総合サイト. Accessed April 13, 2023. https://www.chisou.go.jp/tiiki/tiikisaisei/dai63nintei/plan/b364.pdf.

"Tenkawa-mura, Ōmine-san: dentō? sabetsu? gyappu ōkiku 'nyonin kinsei' nyūzan meguru hanashiai 天川村・大峰山：伝統？差別？ギャップ大きく 「女人禁制」入山巡る話し合い". *Mainichi shinbun naraban 毎日新聞奈良版*. November 4, 2005b.

Tenkawamura·tenkawa o Manabu kai 天川村· 天川を学ぶ会. 2007. *Tenkawamura gaidobukku 天川村ガイドブック*. Tenkawamura 天川村.

Tenkawamura yakuba 天川村役場. N.d. "Hahakodō 母公堂". Accessed April 12, 2023. https://www.vill.tenkawa.nara.jp/tourism/spot/5173/.

Tonomura, Hitomi. 2007. "Birth-Giving and Avoidance Taboo: Women's Body versus the

Historiography of “Ubuya”.” *Nichibunken Japan Review*, 3–45.

Ushiyama Yoshiyuki 牛山佳幸. 1990. *Kodai chūsei jiin soshiki no kenkyū 古代中世寺院組織の研究*. Bogo sōsho 戊午叢書. Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 吉川弘文館.

———. 1996. “‘Nyonin kinsei’ sairon ‘女人禁制’再論.” *Sangaku Shugen 山岳修験*, no. 17 (November): 1–11.

———. 2005. “‘Nyonin kinsei’ no seiritsu jijō to rekishi teki igi o meguru saikentō ‘女人禁制’の成立事情と歴史的意義をめぐる再検討”. *Kagaku kenkyūhi hojokin kenkyū seika hōkokusho 科学研究費補助金研究成果報告書*.

———. 2016. “Sangaku reijō ni okeru nyonin kinsei to sono tokushitsu - nyonin dō to bikuni ishi no kentō o chūshin ni -山岳霊場における女人禁制とその特質 - 女人堂と比丘尼石の検討を中心に - ”. *Kagaku kenkyūhi josei jigyo kenkyū seika hōkoku-sho 科学研究費助成事業 研究成果報告書*.

Yoshida Kazuhiko 吉田一彦, and Uejima Akira 上島享. 2020. *Nihon shūkyōshi o toinaosu 日本宗教史を問い直す*. Nihon shūkyōshi = History of Japanese Religions 日本宗教史. Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 吉川弘文館.