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Mountain Mandalas: Shugendō in Kyūshū is an extensive study on three spatial foci in Japan: the Usa-Hachiman shrine temple complexes and Kunisaki peninsula, both in Ōita, and Mt. Hiko, now between the Fukuoka and Ōita prefectures. Central to the book is shugendō, a group of practices, often ascetic, which are rooted in Buddhism (especially Esoteric), Daoism and the cult of local deities (kami), practitioners of which are called yamabushi.

At the core of the study is geography: Grapard investigates how these spaces were conceptualized and rendered sacred by various social and religious actors throughout history. The volume belongs to the series ‘Bloomsbury Shinto Studies’, an aim of which, according to its website, is to ‘help to dispel the widespread misconception that Shinto is intrinsically related to Japanese nationalism’. It is certainly successful in this aim: by highlighting the composite and even international nature of a Shintō cult related to specific territories, Grapard challenges the nativist idea that there exist in Japan sacred spaces which were sacred from prehistory and worshipped continuously until the present. He convincingly argues for finding discontinuities in apparently unchanged cults, linking the understanding of sacred spaces to conscious cultic programs dependent on specific political and economic conditions. The cult to which most of the volume is dedicated revolves around the deity Hachiman, and is well chosen: while his identity was once inextricably connected with Buddhism (so much so that Hachiman had the appellation of bodhisattva, Jp. bosatsu), Hachiman came to be regarded as one of the chief deities of a purportedly native Shintō, and eventually employed in imperialistic propaganda. Grapard’s focus on a ‘peripheral’ space, away from the political centres of the country (Kansai first and Edo/Tōkyō later) also allows him to challenge the idea that innovations in medieval and pre-modern religion originated from these centres, and to advocate instead for a constant interchange across regions.

The book is divided into four chapters, arranged chronologically: the first chapter focuses chiefly on the Nara (710–794) and Heian periods (794–1333), the second covers the middle ages, roughly from the twelfth to sixteenth century, the third investigates rituals and peregrinations in the long pre-modern era, and the fourth addresses Meiji (1869–1912) and post-Meiji innovations. An afterword, entitled ‘From Spatialities to Dislocation’, addresses the challenges that the three aforementioned sites face in the contemporary world.

The first chapter is entitled ‘Shūgendo and the production of social space’. A large section investigates the relation of the Hachiman cult to the Korean immi-
grant lineages powerful in the Kyūshū area, arguing for this as a centre of cultural and economic exchanges with continental East Asia. Buddhist missions to China departed from Kyūshū; Hachiman’s counsel on these travels was sought by way of oracles, which ultimately led to the Usa-Hachiman complex, from which the oracles were emitted, becoming a powerful religious centre, capable of settling or giving rise to conflicts at courts and receiving state sanction and funding. This powerful position changes abruptly at the end of the Heian period, where the instalment of the military government in Kamakura saw Mt. Hiko and Kunisaki lose their independence to the Tendai institutions of the Shogōin and the Onjōji, in Kansai, and the Usa-Hachiman complex fall under the control of the Iwashimizu-Hachiman complex in Kyōtō. A crucial argument emerges from this first chapter: that the geographical position of an institution is not only defined by the physical space it occupies, but also by its economic position in that space.

The second chapter analyses ritual practices. Particular attention is given to the ritual procession called gyōkōe, involving icons of Hachiman travelling through various shrines auxiliary to the Usa-Hachiman shrine. Here Grapard examines the process of crafting the effigies involved in the procession, produced in Kansai using raw material from Kyūshū. The ritual is presented as not only an economic enterprise but also a political one, linking the capital to Kyūshū through the production of icons. The next section of the chapter moves on to narratives (especially origin narratives) relating to Mt. Hiko. The role of star lore in these narrations is discussed at length, and actual sightings of meteors are correlated to narrations on divine apparitions. This section relies on the work of Edward H. Schafer,¹ who has investigated similar phenomena in Chinese religion. The following sections of the chapter focus on Mt. Hiko’s geography, and especially on the specific spiritual practices and abstinences tied to the various areas of the mountain, which turn Mt. Hiko into a sacred precinct (kekai). The perimeter is ‘made’ through a ritual peregrination called daie gyō (or oomeguri gyō), performed annually by various cultic groups on Mt. Hiko. Grapard relates this cosmological and doctrinal division of space to the perception of time: zones with specific prohibitions and practices make it so that time is perceived differently at various altitudes, with the prohibition of agriculture in certain areas constituting an abstraction from the ‘normal’ time implying economic production. The zones in which the mountain is divided are also shown to demarcate social confines, in a manner which is ultimately conservative: purity prohibitions on some sites prohibit access to some social categories, thus making yamabushi the ‘guardians’ of pre-existing power systems enforced through the division of space.

The next chapter reinforces the idea that sacred space is also thoroughly managed social space, this time taking account of changes that occurred in the sixteenth and seventeenth century: the advent of the Tokugawa regime, a new-found interest in the worship of local deities, Confucianism and kokugaku (the philological and literary study of Japanese classics) shaped the institution of new rituals and the abandonment of others. The section dedicated to Mt. Hiko presents a discussion of

rituals, along with textual material where this is available. Central matters are again how rituals established or confirmed social hierarchies, and how the production of materials related to the rites involved local or imported manufacture. A lengthier analysis might have made a book already packed with information less easy to wield, however one suspects that much information had to be cut away from this section, which can only dedicate a couple of pages for each ritual. Where archival material is discussed, Grapard takes account of the materiality of the available manuscript copies; such is the case for the long section on the Hachiman Usa-gū gotakusenshū, a collection of Hachiman oracles collected in the fifteenth century. Most of the section of this chapter devoted to the site of Usa-Hachiman is in fact centred on oracles, becoming a fitting continuation of the first chapter. In the sections that follow great space is afforded to the mineiri, the ritual ‘mandalized peregrinations’ and austerities performed in caves related to the cult of the Buddha of the future, Maitreya; the locations of these pilgrimages are now lost.

The last sections take up the historical narrative centred on Kunisaki from the previous chapter, discussing pilgrimage routes followed by the yamabushi throughout the Muromachi to Edo period. These peregrinations were eventually disrupted by a key event: appropriated by the ‘tourism industry’ of the seventeenth century, they were taken over by lay people. Another key aspect of Grapard’s analysis of sacred spaces is thus revealed: while a practice might remain typologically the same throughout time (i.e. a peregrination remains a peregrination), this continuity is only apparent: the ritual landscape changes completely when its actors, along with their understanding of the land, change.

The final chapter begins at the end of the Edo period, when yamabushi were enlisted by the fief of Satsuma to participate in the rebellion which eventually led to the imperial restoration of 1868. Grapard shows how, ironically, the instalment of a new government in Tōkyō had dire consequences for the institution of yamabushi and their highly combinatory practices. In 1868 an imperial decree prohibited the combined worship of Buddhas and bodhisattvas with local deities (kami). This was to be a fatal blow for the yamabushi of Mt. Hiko; as an effect of this ‘separation of Buddhas and kami’ (Jp. shinbutsu bunri), Mt. Hiko was officially re-categorized as a residence of local deities with no relations to Buddhist cults, and placed under the authority of the office for the administration of ritual and shrine affairs (jingikan), in Tōkyō. This preceded the 1872 formal abolishment of shugendō by the government, which saw the yamabushi of Mt. Hiko relinquish their practices and revert to lay life. As for the Kunisaki peninsula, the Meiji reforms led to most of its temples being destroyed or disappearing for lack of funding, with their treasures burned or displaced. If in the Kunisaki area ritual peregrinations have been revived from 1959 (with Grapard himself joining one revival), Usa has faced utter devastation in modern times: most of its cultic centres have fallen into disrepair after having been abandoned.

The book ends with an afterword. In it is shown how the Meiji adoption of the Gregorian calendar meant that the ritual calendar became based on this rather than the earlier lunar calendar, causing a temporal displacement. Indeed, displacement
is a central theme of the whole of *Mountain Mandalas*: most of the rites and peregrinations described in the book, which once flourished, have been abandoned. Many pilgrimage centres cannot be retraced, and — with the loss of temple archives — so has much material pertaining to the origin of shrines. With his painstaking historical reconstruction, Grapard takes on the responsibility of recording and unearthing these practices. Particularly commendable is his endeavour to reconstruct the lost paths of pilgrimages via GPS imaging.

*Mountain Mandalas* is a marvellous effort and the culmination of many years of work. Grapard’s agile prose makes weighty material comparatively easy to navigate; this, along with the wide, almost encyclopaedic span of the volume, makes it the ideal source, in a Western language, for the study of cultic sites in Kyūshū.