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Mountains, Magic, and Mothers: Envisioning the Female Ascetic in a Medieval *Chigo* Tale

An increasing amount of scholarship on Shugendō has demonstrated the degree to which this religious practice permeated the spiritual and social life of the elite status groups in premodern Japan. Centered upon ascetic mountain practices, and exclusively male for many centuries, Shugendō was premised upon a deep-rooted belief in the sacred nature of mountains as liminal spaces linked to otherworldly realms, as vital sources of life energy and death.¹ Certain mountains—primarily in the Kii Peninsula—were envisioned as the mandalas of the Diamond and Womb Realms in Esoteric Buddhism and were the sites of physically grueling austerities (*shugen*) by male adepts known as *yamabushi*, literally those who “lie down in the mountains.” Shugendō’s cultural history was long obscured by the fact that during the Meiji period, similar to Shinto, its practices were forcibly isolated from Buddhism, causing it to be viewed with suspicion as a superstitious ascetic practice.² Its reliance upon secret practices and seemingly eclectic nature—Shugendō incorporates elements of *kami* worship, Daoism, and Esoteric Buddhism, among many other religious elements—have further complicated its historical recovery. Nevertheless, its widespread institutional presence and networks of practitioners continue to be brought into higher relief, and we now have a much more sophisticated understanding of how such mountain-based ascetic practices conditioned everything from popular folk belief to the daily activities of the ruling elite.³

This understanding applies to a wide range of premodern artworks as well. Images of Shugendō’s legendary seventh-century founder En no Gyōja, both painted and sculpted, were the focus of a broad array of ritual acts, and the figure of the *yamabushi* was a common presence within various painting traditions. Powerful warlords commissioned artworks substantiating their association with Shugendō, while early modern painters such as Yokoi Kinkoku (1761–1832) were avid practitioners whose numerous landscapes can be



1
Chigo first catching sight of minister's daughter, painting 3 of *The New Lady-in-Waiting Is a Chigo*, Muromachi period, 16th century. Two handscrolls; ink and colors on paper, 30.5 × 1166.1, 30.5 × 1258.1 cm. Current location unknown



2
Women put the finishing touches on the *chigo's* female disguise using blackened combs to pin up his long sidelocks. The woman combing his hair says reassuringly, "no one could possibly take you for a boy," painting 6 of scroll in fig. 1



3
The *chigo*, now the lady-in-waiting *Imamairi*, instructs the minister's daughter on the *biwa*. One lady praises his skills, while two others note his seemingly uncut sidelocks and unusual hair combs, painting 9 of scroll in fig. 1

understood as shaped by spiritual exercises at high altitude.⁴ Indeed, artworks have the potential of generating insights into the cultural history and reception of Shugendō not available through other means. This essay examines one such work, a medieval literary tale titled *The New Lady-in-Waiting Is a Chigo* (*Chigo Imamairi*).⁵ In particular it examines two illustrated handscroll versions of *The New Lady-in-Waiting*, a polychrome two-scroll set (FIGS. 1–13) and an incomplete but nearly identical work in the small-scroll (*koe*) format, executed in the monochrome ink-line (*hakubyō*) mode (see FIG. 15).⁶ What these handscrolls reveal about the relationship of Shugendō to cultural history is remarkable and unexpected. As I propose here, they demonstrate how communities of women in medieval Japan could imagine their own identities and circumstances according to the imagery, practices, and genealogies of a male-centered ascetic practice. Although such imaginings remained within the realm of fiction, they nevertheless are revealing of the ambiguous boundaries of Shugendō as a social phenomenon, and how it inflected pictorial culture and the representation of gender in medieval Japan.

The ink-line example of *The New Lady-in-Waiting* belongs to a group of late medieval *hakubyō* scrolls that were made primarily by and for female communities of readers/viewers, and whose subject matter and representational qualities can be understood through this context. As I have argued elsewhere, such scrolls were characterized by an emphasis on female characters (heroines, ladies-in-waiting, nurses); matriarchal lineages; dialogic inscriptions for female characters not found in their main texts; and pictorial details calling attention to childbirth, pregnancy, and domestic work.⁷ In the case of *The New Lady-in-Waiting*, these traits characterize both the monochrome and polychrome versions.⁸ The uniqueness of the literary tale upon which both handscrolls are based is underscored by the manner in which it varies the standard tropes of a common medieval literary genre known as the “acolyte tale” (*chigo monogatari*). Most acolyte tales recount an older male priest’s romantic longing for a boy attendant, who reciprocates this attention with affection and loyalty. In *The New Lady-in-Waiting*, however, it is instead a boy attendant’s desire for a young girl that constitutes the erotic axis of the narrative. Furthermore, it is the young girl that serves as the tale’s protagonist, one who participates in a quasi-ritualistic mountain ascent. I argue that her peregrinations within the tale negotiate a space for women within the representational structures of Shugendō. In disrupting the pictorial imagery associated with Shugendō, the paintings of *The New Lady-in-Waiting* offer new insights not only into the cultural legacy of this religious practice, but also into formations and representations of gender in medieval Japan, as well as traditions of picture making by and for women during the late Muromachi period.

The New Lady-in-Waiting

The New Lady-in-Waiting concerns an acolyte (*chigo*) of an abbot from Mount Hiei who falls hopelessly in love with the daughter of a court minister after

he accompanies the abbot to the girl's home and catches sight of her from afar (FIG. 1). The boy in fact becomes so lovesick that he refuses to return to the monastery and retires briefly to the home of his wet nurse. The nurse acts as the *chigo's* confidante, and after hearing his story she devises a complex scheme to unite the couple, which involves dressing the acolyte as a lady-in-waiting (*nyōbō*) (FIG. 2) and entering him into the young lady's service. Recently betrothed to the crown prince, the minister's daughter happens to be in need of distinguished female attendants. With the help of an exquisite lacquer box (a gift to the acolyte by his abbot master) and a heartbreaking story fabricated by the nurse concerning the death of a fictitious daughter, the acolyte in the guise of a lady-in-waiting joins the minister's household and comes to be called "Imamairi" (literally "arrived just now").⁹ The boy makes a pretty girl, and with his skills on the *biwa*, he charms the minister and his wife, eventually earning the daughter's trust to share with her precious moments of intimacy and friendship (FIG. 3). As the day of the girl's departure to the crown prince's palace nears, the boy at last confesses his identity and acts on his passionate desires (FIG. 4). The painting depicts the *chigo* in his lady guise approaching the girl's curtained bed, his long tresses trailing beautifully down his back. From then on the two are inseparable, spending both days and nights in her bed, while no one suspects a thing, not even the girl's mother, who is comforted that her daughter has found such a loyal companion (FIG. 5). When the girl soon realizes that she is pregnant, however, she becomes inconsolable over the possibility of disgracing her family should the crown prince find out (FIG. 6). To make matters worse, the *chigo* has been summoned back to his monastery, leaving both to despair over their separation.

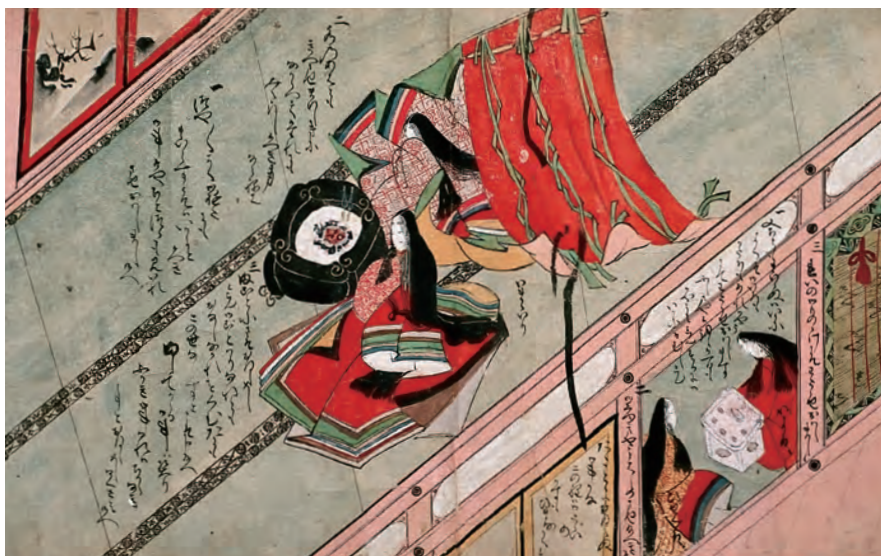
When the boy returns to the temple, the narrative shifts from a tale centered on the women's quarters in the minister's household—where the first thirteen paintings in the handscrolls are set—to a supernatural adventure in the mountains. It is at this point that the *yamabushi* character and elements of Shugendō enter the story. The *yamabushi* appears as a menacing figure who abducts the unsuspecting and lovelorn *chigo* as he sits alone on the veranda avoiding a boisterous banquet for the monks inside (FIG. 7). When news of an acolyte's abduction reaches the minister's household, the pregnant minister's daughter senses that it must be her lover who has been kidnapped and decides to end her life, secretly departing her residence and entering into the surrounding mountains. On her journey she encounters a *tengu*, birdlike creatures with beaks or long noses that frequently appear in the garb of *yamabushi* and become associated with mountain ascetics. The creature encountered by the female protagonist is no ordinary goblin, however, but a female *tengu* in the garb of a nun, called an *ama tengu*.¹⁰ This unusual figure is the mother of the *yamabushi-cum-tengu* who kidnapped the boy, and she agrees to shelter the girl for one night, but warns her of terrifying things to come (FIG. 8). She explains that her children are horrific creatures devoid of human emotion (*mono no aware*) and hides the girl in a cabinetlike shrine



4
Four attendants remain fast asleep as Imamairi approaches the curtained bed of the minister's daughter to confess his love to her, painting 10 of scroll in fig. 1



5
Ladies read aloud and play *sugoroku*, while Imamairi and the minister's daughter lie together. The girl's mother peeks in on the scene, painting 11 of scroll in fig. 1



6
Imamairi consoles the girl after explaining that she must be pregnant. Two attendants in the doorway wonder if an evil spirit has caused their mistress's illness, painting 12 of scroll in fig. 1



7
Banquet scene on Mount Hiei. As the monks carry on, the chigo sits alone on the veranda reciting, "Like a cluster of bamboo amid grassy fields, I try to hide my love . . .," painting 14 of scroll in fig. 1



8
The minister's daughter meets the nun goblin, painting 16 of scroll in fig. 1



9
The goblin banquet. The nun goblin convinces the yamabushi to leave the chigo in her care, painting 17 of scroll in fig. 1

(*zushi*). From her hiding place the girl sees horrendous creatures of various forms, seated around the room drinking sake and eating flesh of indeterminate origin, skewered and roasted on the fire (FIG. 9). She notices an especially frightening-looking *yamabushi* and sees him remove, from a bundled cloth at his side, a human, none other than her beloved *chigo*.

The nun proceeds to convince her *yamabushi* son to leave the boy with her. He does so, but not without threatening to kill his mother should anything happen to the *chigo*. After the *yamabushi/tengu* depart, the nun goblin reunites the young lovers and explains her desire to enter the Buddhist path (FIG. 10). She professes a willingness to sacrifice her life in order to return the couple to the capital and instructs them to pray for her salvation should there be a sign of her demise. She then takes each one under an arm, tells them to close their eyes, and flies across the sky.

The nun goblin deposits the couple at the home of the boy's nurse (FIG. 11), where the minister's daughter later gives birth to a boy (FIG. 12). The nurse informs the abbot of the *chigo's* whereabouts and tells him about the girl, who, she explains, was also held captive by *tengu*. The priest, happy to ingratiate himself to the minister and his wife, who have been distraught over their daughter's disappearance, eagerly reports that she is alive and well. The *chigo's* bond with the daughter is recognized as being of an otherworldly caliber, and he is welcomed into the minister's family. He soon rises to the rank of lesser captain (*shōshō*), and ultimately to that of major general (*taishō*). All ends well for the couple and the minister's family; the minister's son is promoted to the rank of middle captain (*chūjō*), and the *chigo* and the young lady produce more beautiful and successful offspring, including a daughter who grows up to become an imperial consort. The final painting in the scroll (FIG. 13) depicts the happy household, with the *chigo* transformed into a handsome courtier in typical adult male attire, leaning leisurely against an armrest, while the minister's daughter lies by his side, elegantly shielded by a standing curtain. The couple looks blissfully happy, apparently enchanted by their toddler son with his outstretched arms. The spacious room in which this domestic idyll is set is decorated by extensive sliding door paintings, and populated by a sea of female attendants. To the right of the minister's daughter sits a wet nurse who holds tenderly to her chest an infant, perhaps the future imperial consort mentioned in the scrolls' penultimate line of text.

The oldest extant texts of *The New Lady-in-Waiting* are those found in these illustrated polychrome scrolls and the single *hakubyō* scroll, which can be dated stylistically to the late Muromachi period (roughly the mid-sixteenth century). Both illustrated versions show moments of artistic accomplishment alongside images that appear amateurish for their lack of precision and what might be called perspectival irregularities. The ink-line version, for example, exhibits a casual attitude toward the depiction of spatial depth, an abrupt juxtaposition of motifs rendered in starkly different ink textures, less than precise lines, and radically abbreviated architectural interiors—all hallmarks

of sixteenth-century *hakubyō* small scrolls, which stand in sharp contrast to the immaculately clean lines and consistency of scale and proportion of earlier *hakubyō* narrative paintings.

The polychrome scrolls too exhibit a deliberate unstudiedness, particularly in the rendering of architectural elements, which seems unconcerned with proportion and believability. On the other hand, the rendering of the figures, the individuation of elaborately patterned and vividly colored robes, and the fine attention to details in the room decoration of each interior scene represent a high point of late medieval picture making.¹¹ In this context, the less-than-precise architectural settings, as well as the excessively large but intricately rendered flowers and insects in the landscapes, and the unnaturally small child in the final scene, for example, offer a degree of stylistic humanization that only adds to the visually compelling character of these scrolls. The artist clearly shows a preoccupation and confidence with the Sino-Japanese ink painting tradition; virtually all of the paintings-within-paintings record different modes of Muromachi landscape depiction, with a clear predilection for ink wash, and the craggy blue mountain peaks seen frequently in the deep distance of Kano school landscapes.¹² Nevertheless, there seems to be no particular allegiance here to the professional schools of the Muromachi period, but as Miya Tsugio points out in an introductory note to these scrolls, the artist seems liberated from the strictures of the narrative painting tradition.¹³ The polychrome scrolls were likely executed by a semiprofessional painter, while the *hakubyō* scroll, because of its small format and lesser polish, is best attributed to an amateur artist.¹⁴

While *The New Lady-in-Waiting* bears an important connection to the acolyte-tale genre (to be elaborated upon below), it falls equally if not more within the category of courtly tales (*ōchō monogatari*) of the medieval period, stories characterized by a focus on a high-ranking courtier's household, a happy ending that celebrates aristocratic marriage, the attainment of courtly rank, and lineal prestige by means of proximity to the imperial house. Many such examples of Muromachi courtly fiction bear the imprint of a female attendant's perspective. This viewpoint is communicated in several ways, one of the most conspicuous being a focus on *nyōbō* (ladies-in-waiting) to the degree that they perform much of the action that drives the story's plot. *The New Lady-in-Waiting*, in which the nurse of the *chigo* enables the boy's romance, harbors him from the abbot for as long as possible, and then ultimately facilitates the reunion of the star-crossed lovers, could, on the basis of its plot alone, be called "a tale of a nurse" (*menoto monogatari*). And yet the illustrated picture scrolls of *The New Lady-in-Waiting* go beyond an emphasis on the wet nurse to create expanded roles for other female attendants in the minister's household who are barely mentioned in the text. This enhanced *nyōbō* presence is achieved through dialogic inscriptions embedded in the pictures (*gachūshi*) along with techniques of pictorial representation that recast the tale from the attendant point of view.



10
The tearful reunion
of the minister's
daughter and the
chigo, painting 18
of scroll in fig. 1



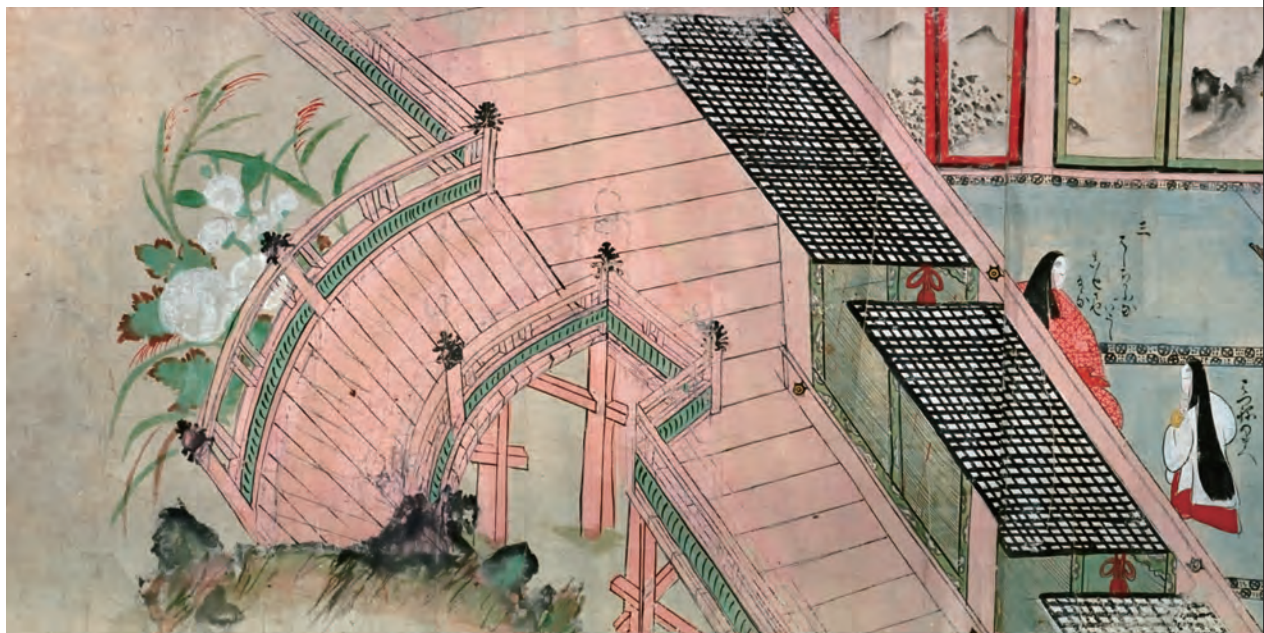
11
The *chigo*'s nurse,
seated before her
Buddhist altar, sutra
in hand, is startled by
a knock at the door.
Outside, the couple
asks her to open up,
painting 19 of scroll
in fig. 1



12
The minister's
daughter gives
birth at the home
of the *chigo*'s nurse,
painting 21 of scroll
in fig. 1

Nyōbō Stories

Even before one reads the dialogic inscriptions, *The New Lady-in-Waiting* scrolls telegraph an interest in foregrounding both major and minor female characters through the selection of scenes for illustration: twenty-one out of twenty-four paintings in the polychrome scrolls focus on women, nurses, and female attendants. Fourteen of these twenty-one revolve around activities and conversations being held in the women's quarters of the minister's household. On the surface, the numerous scenes that depict the familiar recumbent female attendants with long black hair cascading over bulky robes, stationed around square rooms, viewed from a steep bird's-eye-view perspective, seem visually repetitive, even redundant.¹⁵ Closer inspection reveals that these scenes provide the stages for the appearance of a large cast of supporting women. Thirty-four individual ladies-in-waiting, each identified by name, appear within the fictional rooms of the mansion and the wet nurse's residence. The number and variety of titles are unprecedented in medieval picture scrolls and contrast sharply with the few named attendants in the main text: the nurse of the minister's daughter called Saishō, another attendant named Chūnagon, and the daughter of the *chigo's* wet nurse, a woman called Jijū. These three characters appear in the paintings as well, but also showcased are serving women from the upper, middle, and lower ranks of attendants, providing interesting source material for the history of women's names and titles.¹⁶ To give but one example, *The New Lady-in-Waiting* scrolls depict lower-ranking attendant girls with names derived from chapter titles of *The Tale of Genji*.¹⁷ The use of such names might be attributed to the creative imagining of a fictional aristocratic household were it not for an actual *nyōbō* etiquette manual from the late sixteenth century prescribing the use of *Genji* names for lower-ranking women.¹⁸ In this way



the polychrome scrolls and the *hakubyō* version, which bear nearly identical labels for the women, animate the world of medieval ladies-in-waiting like few other medieval texts.

The dialogue that comes forth from these characters, through conversations that enhance the primary story, add humorous asides and even provide subtle metanarrative commentary that further enlivens the world of the ladies' chambers.¹⁹ In a lively vernacular inflected by Muromachi-period court-lady language (*nyōbō kotoba*), higher ranking *nyōbō* admonish others to attend to their duties, as in the first painting, where Kasugadono tells a reluctant Shintaiyudono to put aside her lute long enough to tune the strings of the lady's koto. At several points in the pictorially embedded dialogues the women respond to the state of their mistress's body, the results of her illnesses, heartache, and pregnancy, and offer alternative solutions to the abbot's incantations. The women boil water and find ways to ward off possessive spirits, as in the second painting, or they facilitate the childbirth and fetch medicine (*osenjimonō*), as in the twenty-first painting (FIG. 12). Details of daily life such as the use of cosmetics arise in one scene where a lesser-ranking woman named Kiku no Mae comments on and applies teeth-blackening mixture (*ohagurome*) to hair combs, with the familiar paraphernalia of bowl, kettle, and brush laid out before her (painting 6) (FIG. 2). Most of these exchanges are lighthearted, with the women bantering back and forth, chiding and even criticizing each other to humorous effect. In one scene from painting 11 (FIG. 5), ladies in one group are oblivious to their surroundings, absorbed in reading aloud from tales, while another group neglects their charge, being immersed in a competitive round of *sugoroku* ("double sixes"). Even when the girl's disappearance incites the minister's household to despair, a lady named Jibukyōdono reveals that she can hardly keep from laughing at the appearance of Horikawadono's nearly contiguous



13
The *chigo*, now dressed as an adult male courtier, and the minister's daughter with their children amid a flourishing household, painting 24 of scroll in fig. 1



eyebrows (painting 20). The entire scroll ends on a humorous note in painting 24 (FIG. 13), when one of the attendants ponders the strange familiarity of the lady's husband (the former *chigo*), whose face and voice remind her of someone she has met before.

This kind of *nyōbō* commentary in the inscriptions of *The New Lady-in-Waiting* marks this work as part of a group of picture scrolls from the sixteenth century that convey similar content and sentiment. Moreover, these dialogues are not the spontaneous additions of voices to pictorialized characters on the part of an inspired scribe; they are premeditated textual interventions that even utilize their own intertexts, namely references to other dialogic inscriptions on pictures from completely different narrative handscrolls. The conversation that takes place in painting 3 (FIG. 1), where the *chigo* observes the minister's daughter and her ladies, is a case in point. One woman proclaims that blossoms in their fallen state are even more appealing than those in full bloom on the branch (*hana wa sakari yori mo, chiru koro ga omoshirou sōrō*). This sentiment bears a striking resemblance to the pictorial dialogue on the sixteenth-century *hakubyō* scroll *A Wakeful Sleep* (*Utatane sōshi emaki*). There, a remark that fallen flowers in the lady's garden are even more beautiful than blossoming ones can be both metaphorical (alluding to the superiority of new verses to old ones) and allusive, the line being adapted from a particular passage from a spring scene in the "Tamakazura" chapter of *The Tale of Genji*.²⁰ In *The New Lady-in-Waiting*, another comment goes so far as to challenge Sei Shōnagon's famous dictum that links spring with the dawn and the autumn with the evening, championing instead the evening glow of this spring night in the lady's garden (*haru no akebono wa mōsedomo, tadaima no yūbae wa tatoen kata naku omoshirou sōrō zo ya*). The poetic allusions in this scene further resemble *A Wakeful Sleep* in the tendency to posit the depicted ladies-in-waiting as able poets, knowledgeable of a shared literary past of female authors. The emphasis on ladies-in-waiting in this story is undeniable, while the images and dialogue reveal an even more intense focus on attendants, developing a parallel narrative about the lives of women who live and work in the women's quarters, rounded out visually by detailed scenes of childbirth and female intimacy. In this context it is not difficult to imagine how the work

14
Ladies-in-waiting and *chigo* interacting within an aristocratic household, detail of *A Wakeful Sleep*, Muromachi period, 16th century. Handscroll; ink on paper, 16.4 × 1087.3 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC: Purchase (F1961.8)

reimagines the generic *chigo* tale; in the hands of these scroll creators we find a less-than-subtle critique of a reified narrative template about elder male priests and their boy lovers.

A *Chigo* Tale for Girls

Chigo, or young acolytes of Buddhist monks, were the focus of several medieval narratives collectively known today as *chigo* tales, or *chigo monogatari*.²¹ The mid-sixteenth-century scrolls of *The New Lady-in-Waiting* date to a time when the *chigo*-tale genre and specifically the *chigo* character were familiar enough to have become material for parody or narrative manipulation.²² The plots of *chigo* tales usually center on an attachment between an older priest and a young boy that develops into an intensely emotional and ultimately spiritual bond, one often depicted as eternal and karmic by the overdetermined death of the younger partner and an ensuing spiritual awakening by the elder monk. The youths of *chigo* tales, with their long hair, pale complexion, and red lips, were exalted in these texts as possessing an ethereal beauty that apparently was just as appealing to female readers and viewers. *The New Lady-in-Waiting* subverts the standard plot by removing the *chigo* figure from the monastic purview and recasting him as the male lead in a heterosexual courtly romance. While *The New Lady-in-Waiting* is unique in its sustained response to the acolyte-tale genre, there is a scene of female characters playfully incorporating the *chigo* into their own milieu in the *hakubyō* scroll of *A Wakeful Sleep* (FIG. 14). Its final image depicts the happy aristocratic household of reunited lovers and includes a lone *chigo* among the *nyōbō* in their apartments, with one lady expressing (via inscribed dialogue) how unusual it is for the boy to be joining them in a shell match.²³ The conspicuous inclusion of a long-haired acolyte in the painting of *A Wakeful Sleep*, never mentioned in the main text, suggests a self-conscious awareness of the *chigo*-tale genre and a spirited expression of desire by the female characters (stand-ins for female readers) to have a *chigo* of their own, a wish fulfilled by *The New Lady-in-Waiting*.

If we were to take the view of Bernard Faure that *chigo* tales helped legitimize what were in actuality predatory relationships between powerful older monks and vulnerable young boys,²⁴ *The New Lady-in-Waiting* might be seen as a work that imagines the liberation of the *chigo* from the clutches of a nefarious clergy. The scroll is less than subtle in its negative portrayal of Buddhist monks, a view encouraged not only by the *chigo*'s own reluctance to return to the monastery on several occasions, but by a deliberate editing of the scroll text to exclude any signs of mutual affection between the boy and the abbot.²⁵ The Edo-period text in the Iwase Bunko Library includes, for example, a teary-eyed and joyful meeting when the abbot and the *chigo* are at last reunited after the latter's abduction. The language here is reminiscent of that used to describe the mutual affection between monk and acolyte in *chigo* tales, which seems to sanction such relationships. The text of the



Muromachi-period illustrated scrolls is largely identical, but lacks to the point of grammatical awkwardness the one line describing their happiness at being reunited.²⁶ Any trace of reciprocal affection between boy and monk is thus absent, while the text then jumps straight to a boastful comment by the abbot about the power of his own prayer.

Boastfulness was the primary trait that could set a Buddhist monk on the path to transformation into a goblin, or *tengu*, and the illustrated scrolls seem to imply this connection between monks and *tengu* elsewhere through the parallel depiction of two banquet scenes, one by the monks on Mount Hiei (FIG. 15), and one by the *yamabushi/tengu* in the mountains (FIG. 9). The painting of the monks' banquet scene itself provides yet another example of a disapproving view of the clergy; an obstreperous monk pulls the hair of a boy, while another demands a dance performance. Such scenes of harassment are a far cry from the elegant musical soirees depicted in the illustrated acolyte tales from the late-medieval period, such as *The Mountain (Ashibikie)*, or *Long Tale for an Autumn Night (Aki no yo no naga monogatari)*.²⁷ Rather than being a passive participant in the monks' festivities, the protagonist *chigo* in *The New Lady-in-Waiting* removes himself from the gathering, sits on the veranda, and thinks longingly of his lady love.

In this way *The New Lady-in-Waiting* seems to bestow a degree of agency to the normally passive *chigo* character, especially as he becomes the pursuer and voyeur of the young lady and her attendants, the standard role of the ideal male protagonist (FIG. 1). In this pivotal scene, however, the *chigo* may technically be the spectator, but he is equally on view. Rather than the usual voyeur's pose turned away from the scroll's viewer, the boy is depicted with his face to us and situated between a profusion of flowering cherry trees. The painting seems to be an explicit pictorial reference to the scene in *Long Tale for an Autumn Night* (FIG. 16) in which the *chigo* is first observed by the monk, who likens him to a delicate flower. In both paintings the boys stand between flowering trees, their hair tied back, and wearing red clothing. The viewer assumes the role of the spying monk and enjoys a clear look at the ethereal *chigo*, who is at once a spectator and the spectacle. The *chigo's* typical identity as an object of desire thus remains intact as a female audience takes ownership



15

Banquet scene on Mount Hiei, detail of *The New Lady-in-Waiting Is a Chigo*. Muromachi period, 16th century. Handscroll; ink on paper, 13.7 × 786.9 cm. Current location unknown

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over this character. In *The New Lady-in-Waiting* it is in fact a triumvirate of decisive female characters—the minister’s daughter, the wet nurse, and the nun goblin—who take matters into their own hands and rescue the *chigo* from his *yamabushi* abductors and the degradations of monastic life.

Considering the numerous *nyōbō*-centered scenes in the illustrated scrolls of *The New Lady-in-Waiting*, and its reworking of the *chigo* tale from a female perspective, it should come as less of a surprise that the work attempts to negotiate a place for female characters within another tradition that was completely out of bounds for women, that of Shugendō.

The Culture of Mountain Asceticism

Before examining how *The New Lady-in-Waiting* scrolls engage the Shugendō culture of their time, it is necessary first to present some of the basic tenets of mountain asceticism and the embryological symbolism it employs, which will be central to the later analysis. A consideration of the image of the practitioner (*yamabushi*) and evidence of Shugendō practice and belief in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries will also help establish the contemporary visual culture of Shugendō, a familiarity with which *The New Lady-in-Waiting* takes for granted.

Despite the syncretic and secretive nature of medieval mountain asceticism, certain visual artifacts can be identified as distinctly Shugendō-related. The most numerous are sculpted and painted images of the Nara-period thaumaturge and mythical founder of Shugendō, En no Gyōja, created within communities of practitioners (*shugenja*).²⁸ The two other most important figures within a *shugen* pantheon are Zaō gongen and Ācala-vidyārāja (J. Fudō myōō). Zaō was a deity conjured by En no Gyōja from a rock on Mount Kinbu in the Yoshino district of Yamato province, who came to be seen as a transformation body, or the “provisional manifestation” (*gongen*) of the Tathagata Śākyamuni (J. Shaka nyorai) or the bodhisattva Maitreya (J. Miroku bosatsu). As a deity sprung from the rock during En no Gyōja’s practices on one of the central peaks of the Shugendō cult, Zaō became the natural focus of worship and belief among mountain ascetics. Ācala-vidyārāja, one of the Five Wisdom Kings of the Womb World of Esoteric Buddhism, occupied a central role in an offertory

rite of Shugendō, performed specifically for this deity, in which the *shugenja* attempts to become identified with him, harnessing Ācala's powers for himself. Numerous Shugendō sites thus enshrine Ācala images as their *honzon*, or central deity of worship. The image that came to represent Shugendō better than any other, however, was the *shugenja* or *yamabushi*. By performing "austerities in the mountains" (*nyūbu shugyō*), *yamabushi* were said to acquire special powers, enabling them to act as healers, diviners, and prayer leaders.

In Buddhist terms, the mountain ascetic's acquisition of such powers was overlaid with the idea central to Esoteric Buddhism that enlightenment in this body (*sokushin jōbutsu*) was possible.²⁹ The journey through the mountain was conceptualized as a process of birth and rebirth through the Six Realms and was expressed symbolically as a process of fetal gestation.³⁰ This symbolic return to the womb was coupled with the entrance into the Womb World Mandala, which the mountain could represent. But as Helen Hardacre has pointed out, the mountain ascent was not a simple reenactment of the birth process, uterine birth being deemed far from unambiguously positive in Buddhist thought. Rather, the focus for the male ascetic is on the "reemergence from this womb, 'reborn' in the sense of being newly endowed with esoteric knowledge and powers."³¹

The *yamabushi* became immediately recognizable in large part through his costume and paraphernalia, which were laden with religious, and reproductive, symbolism.³² Most distinctive were the small black cap (*token*); a surplice unique to Shugendō with six tassels or pom-poms (*yuigesa*); and the conch shell (*hora*) blown as a trumpet to signal to practitioners. All of these objects are related to Mahavairocana (J. Dainichi), the central figure of the Womb World Mandala, while the portable wooden box (*oi*) carried on the back and containing objects of worship, scriptures, and ritual tools was symbolic of the Womb World Mandala, or the womb itself. *Oi* carried by *shugenja* are thus symbols of an embryo growing in the mother's womb, and a rope attached to the conch shell (*hashirinawa*) could symbolize the umbilical cord, in addition



16
Monk first catching sight of the *chigo* Umewaka, scroll 1, painting 2, detail of *Long Tale for an Autumn Night*, Muromachi period, late 14th century. Three handscrolls; ink, color, and gold on paper. Scroll 1: 31.1 × 993.8 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Funds from various donors, by exchange, Fletcher Fund and Dodge Fund, 2002 (2002.459.1)

to the rope of Ācala. A rectangular container called a shoulder box (*katabako*) was sometimes placed over the *oi* and represented its counterpart, symbolizing a Diamond Mandala, and the two together the union of the two mandalas. Other items were related to Ācala, such as the sword (*shiba-uchi*) worn at the practitioner's side, used to cut wood for the fire rite, and a symbol of Fudo myōō's role as a destroyer of evil.

With the help of this distinctive physical appearance, by the late Muromachi period the *yamabushi* had become a type ready for impersonation, and in the case of *The New Lady-in-Waiting*, for becoming important characters in the plots of narratives. Entries from 1416 and 1419 in Fushimi no Miya Sadafusa's *Diary of Things Seen and Heard* (*Kanmon nikki*), describe the reactions of people in the capital to seeing practitioners on their way into the mountains fully garbed with their *oi* and the other features of the costume, as well as one layman donned in the costume of a *yamabushi* drawing quite a crowd.³³ A famous fictional impersonation of *yamabushi* appears in *The Drunken Ogre* (*Shuten Dōji emaki*), illustrated by Kano Motonobu (1477–1559), where the mountain ascetic becomes aligned with the warrior hero Raikō. He and his band of men rescue the women of a village being imprisoned by the monstrous ogre Shuten Dōji, and they do so by first donning the costumes of mountain ascetics (FIG. 17). The *yamabushi* had by the early sixteenth century become conflated with an image of martial prowess, an aspect that no doubt appealed to actual members of the military class.

A perfect example is the shogunal administrator and de facto military ruler of the Muromachi government in the 1490s, Hosokawa Masamoto (1466–1507). It was widely commented upon that Masamoto was immersed in magico-religious practices and that he would don the garb of the *yamabushi* and join mountain ascetics in their journeys to distant provinces.³⁴ An eyewitness account from 1493 describes how Masamoto received from a *yamabushi* by the name of Shinsen'in Kōsen (active late fifteenth century) instruction in "the way of *tengu*" and worshipped the warrior Minamoto no Yoshitsune (1159–1189) at



17
Kano Motonobu (1477–1559), Raikō and his men donning the *yamabushi* costume, scroll 1, painting 4, detail of *The Drunken Ogre*, 16th century. Three handscrolls; ink, colors, and gold on paper, 33.1 × 1699.9, 2048.6, and 2648.7 cm (respectively). Suntory Museum of Art

Kuramadera.³⁵ Kuramadera is the mountain temple where Yoshitsune was said to have learned magical swordsmanship from a *tengu* king, as celebrated in literary and dramatic accounts.³⁶

For warriors such as Hosokawa Masamoto, Shugendō promised religious and supernatural empowerment; practitioners were said to be able to exorcise demons, divine the future, heal illnesses, walk on swords and fire, and fly through the air. The donning of a *yamabushi* costume allowed men like Masamoto not only to project the image of a menacing figure possessing supernatural powers but, in such a guise, also to avail himself of political opportunities through Shugendō's regional networks of practitioners. The description of Masamoto's involvement in Shugendō reveals the extent to which the *yamabushi*, *tengu*, and feared warrior could be equated to create a powerful composite image. This image is nowhere better embodied than in a handscroll project that Masamoto most likely commissioned in 1495, *Origins of Religious Austerities at Tsukiminedera* (*Tsukiminedera konryū shugyō engi emaki*).³⁷ The references to *shugen* practice are explicit in this scroll, ranging from the term *shugyō* in the title of the work, to numerous details in the text and paintings, such as scenes of a group of *tengu* in *yamabushi* attire frolicking in the vicinity of Ācala on the sacred peak (FIG. 18). The painting not only evokes the mountain settings of ascetic rituals but makes tangible the imaginary world that *shugenja* sought to inhabit.

The appeal of Shugendō for certain men such as Hosokawa Masamoto must have lain equally in its homosocial nature. Muromachi-period sources acknowledge Masamoto's sexual proclivities for young men and his aversion to women to the extent that he never married or attempted to produce his own heir, but adopted his sons. Moreover, Masamoto's *shugen* practice at Kuramadera, in which he worshipped Yoshitsune, and his magical military training by the great *tengu* were in a sense real-life reenactments of a story popularized on the Noh stage at that time tinged with homoerotic overtones. In the play, *Kurama tengu* (based on the *Gikeiki*, or *Chronicles of Yoshitsune*),



18

Tosa Mitsunobu (active ca. 1462–1520), *Origins of Religious Austerities at Tsukiminedera* (detail), 1495. Two handscrolls; ink, colors, and gold on paper, 34.3 × 1005.1 cm, 34.6 × 1078.8 cm. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC: Purchase (F1961.24)

a *yamabushi* who is later revealed to be the great *tengu* meets the youthful Yoshitsune. As Carolyn Anne Morley has described, their exchange in which lines are shared bears “tenderly erotic overtones characteristic of the commencement of a love affair.”³⁸ The Noh play encapsulates the intensity of male-male relationships in the practice of mountain asceticism, its masculine military character, as well as the ontological ambiguity of the *yamabushi* (at once human and animal), as a dangerous creature who could transform into a *tengu* and vice versa.³⁹

In light of the use of embryological symbolism in the rituals of Shugendō, there emerges a clear picture of a male-centered practice that not only excludes women, but takes over their maternal, reproductive role and creates a form of autogenesis, of a birth without the mother. It is the male *yamabushi* who ascends the mountain and symbolically reenacts the birthing process, assuming the male and female role. While the *yamabushi* in art, literature, theater, and in reality excluded women and even diminished their reproductive role, women did not necessarily take this lying down. There is evidence to suggest that women writers and/or readers had the opportunity to re-appropriate their maternal role from the *yamabushi* at least in the realm of illustrated fiction.

Mountain Prohibitions and Female Resistance

Ironically, although a great many mountains are associated with female *kami*, and though the topography of a mountain could be overlaid with symbolic imagery borrowed from female anatomy, the majority of sacred peaks were off-limits to women in premodern Japan. The designation of specific sacred areas from which women were prohibited from entering was known as *nyonin kekkaï*, a term and concept operative within Buddhist sanctuaries since the ninth century.⁴⁰ Notions about the impurity of women from which such prohibitions stemmed only became more entrenched as time went on, with the circulation in the fourteenth century, for example, of the *Blood Basin Sutra* (*Ketsubonkyō*), which described a specific hell into which women would be sent for defiling the world with menstrual blood. Enryakuji on Mount Hiei, the temple of the acolyte in *The New Lady-in-Waiting*, was one of the earliest and most celebrated sites for proscriptions against women on its peak.

Despite the widespread knowledge of the prohibition, examples of women expressing their desire to ascend a sacred peak or actually attempting to cross the boundary into sacred grounds are not uncommon in Japanese legend and literature. In narratives of restriction and of female resistance to it, women blatantly argue against the prohibition when they are inevitably warned against stepping onto hallowed ground. In *An Account of the Sākya House from the Genkō Era* (*Genkō shakusho*, ca. fourteenth century), for example, the nun Tōran attempts to climb Mount Kinbu and suggests that her adherence to the precepts should earn her the right to ascend, despite her status as a woman.⁴¹ Such narratives frequently involve mothers, and specifically mothers

of Buddhist patriarchs, as in a sixteenth-century illustrated book of the tale known as *Priest Karukaya* (*Karukaya*). A mother attempts to climb Mount Kōya with her son in order to find her missing husband and protests when she is denied entry, arguing for the significance of women as the mothers of men, and stating that even the founder of the temple on Mount Kōya, Kōbō Daishi (Kūkai, 774–835), “didn’t come from the crotch of some tree or some patch of reeds. Even he was born from the body of a humble woman.”⁴² In a later version of *Priest Karukaya*, the woman’s invocation of Kōbō Daishi segues to the story of the patriarch’s aged mother. She too was prevented from entering Mount Kōya, and expresses her disagreement, stating that she had not had a menstrual period for forty-two years, was therefore no different than a monk, and should be allowed to enter the sacred grounds. In response, Kūkai asks his mother to walk over his monastic stole that he spreads over a rock, and when she does so, her menstrual flow begins again, the stole bursts into flames, and she is carried aloft.

Although such narratives allowed female characters to voice protestations to the boundaries imposed upon them, they seem to air these arguments only to demonstrate their fallibility, as all of these potentially transgressive figures are ultimately reformed and brought under monastic control, never to see the top of the mountain. In other versions of the *Karukaya* story, for example, Kūkai’s mother becomes a nun and takes up residence just outside the *kekka* boundary. Such narratives urge women to be content at the foot of a mountain and to utilize separate sites established for worship, sites such as the “women’s Kōya” temples, or the temple that memorializes the mother of En no Gyōja, which stands at the limit of the *kekka* still enforced today on the western side of Mount Ōmine. The enshrinement of mothers beyond the sacred grounds, and through narratives that ultimately support restrictions on women, works to resolve the issue of the “dilemma of mothers in the male monastic lineage.”⁴³ As Max Moerman has described, stories of mothers subdued by priestly sons solve the problem of a looming matriarchy through a process of inversion, whereby the mothers of priests are transformed into their sons’ disciples and purified through death.⁴⁴ The tendency to confront directly the problem of mothers, or more precisely, motherhood, is even more apparent in the use of womb imagery throughout Shugendō practice, in which men employ explicit anatomical symbolism to borrow metaphorically the creative power of birth.

Despite the thorough institutionalization of the maternal within the Buddhist patriarchy and Shugendō practice, there are traces of defiance on the part of women toward both attempts to supplant their natal role and the restrictions against them. Place-names on sacred mountains, such as the “nyosho zenjō no oitate” (literally “[place from which] women performing religious practices are to be chased”) on Mount Fuji,⁴⁵ suggest that women continued to follow in the footsteps of Tōran and Kūkai’s mother despite the threat of removal. When it comes to illustrated tales, traces of female

resistance appear in highly imaginative forms, specifically within picto-literary art forms that have a high probability of having been written and viewed by women. Here women could envision themselves on the mountain, reenacting fictitiously the ascent that was off-limits to them in reality.

The Monstrous Maternal

The New Lady-in-Waiting recasts the masculinist *yamabushi* and *tengu* image as the province of women, with the nun goblin at the pinnacle of a monstrous matriarchy (FIGS. 19, 20). The minister's daughter encounters the nun goblin in a chilling scene as she wanders in the mountains and as night begins to fall. It is a pivotal meeting, and in the framework of the *chigo*-tale genre, it resembles the first encounter between the monk and the boy who will eventually prompt his religious salvation. While in the context of mountains populated by *yamabushi* and *tengu*, the meeting evokes the legend of the Kurama *tengu*, where the goblin instructs the adept. Here the woman has lost her way as she herself explains; she is literally someone who "does not know the path" (*michi shiranu mono*), and it is the nun goblin who will prove to be her savior. When it grows dark, the girl catches sight of a faintly flickering light, makes her way to a thatched hermitage, and knocks repeatedly. A gravelly, frightening voice says, "Who's there?" (*Ikanaru hito zo*), to which the young woman answers: "Please shelter me here, just tonight" (*Kore ni yadokasasetamae, koyoi bakari*). Then a nun emerges, as tall as a bamboo tree, with a long beak, and waving a flaming torch. In the inscribed pictorial dialogue the nun goblin replies, "This is not a place to shelter humans." But the young girl persists: "No matter what kind of place it is, please just let me stay. I have lost my way." The nun goblin then relents, saying, "Although frightening things are in store, you can stay for one night."

The painting depicts the young woman clutching her red robe as she comes face-to-face with the nun goblin amid a remarkable setting of rugged mountain peaks and gigantic boulders with multilayered facets defined by ink and mineral pigments of blue and green. The women stand on what appears to be flat ground, while the rough-hewn rocks and crags seem to encroach upon them as though metamorphosing with tectonic force before our eyes. The nun goblin is depicted toward the bottom of the painting, her size ambiguously rendered; a tree in the foreground seems dwarfed by her presence, suggesting that she is of inhuman dimensions. The lines depicting the nun's robes are as jagged and oblong as those used to describe the contours of the rocks around her, while an overhanging cliff connects to her back, making her one with her adamantine surroundings. Bright red and shades of orange define the nun's two hands, one holding the flaming torch and the other cupped in front of her face as though shielding herself from view. She is depicted in profile, affording the viewer a glimpse of a sleepy eye and one bulbous red cheek, from which emerges the sharply hooked beak of a flesh-eating bird of prey.⁴⁶



19
Detail of nun goblin
(see fig. 8)



20
Detail of nun goblin
(see fig. 10)

In the next section of text we learn that the creature the minister's daughter observes that night are the nun's progeny, as she refers to them as her children; she is, in other words, a kind of *yamabushi* genetrix. Assertions of lineal descent usually made through exclusively male *yamabushi* imagery are here allocated to a powerful matriarch, who outwits her sons, reads minds, and flies through the air. In other words, the nun goblin possesses the magical powers sought after by the mountain ascetic. With these frightening powers and her large beak she could be said to represent the quintessential "phallic mother," the omnipotent, uncastrated being that Freud suggested children identified with before the prohibition of the mother's body by the father.⁴⁷ The jagged rocks around the nun only visually enhance her potential ferocity and capacity for dismemberment.

Here, however, it is the nun herself who is dismembered. Her death is an agonizing one, prefigured by the scene of flesh eating by her sons at her home and by her own anatomy. Rather than the mother who devours her young, it is she who is consumed by them. Her demise, as she is literally eaten by her sons, is as frightening and graphic as anything in medieval literature. After the couple had been returned to the capital, a swarming flock of crows soars through the sky. The girl sees that the crows have chewed up and dropped a feathery arm of the nun goblin. One can only wonder about the reception of such a figure by medieval female viewers. Given the ideals of courtly femininity espoused in the era, it seems likely that the figure might have repulsed or terrified, or even appeared humorous to readers, rather than served as a source of vicarious empowerment. The terrifying figure of the nun goblin is, however, soon rehabilitated in the tale. Although menacing in appearance, the nun quickly becomes aligned with the female protagonist, and could even be interpreted as the alter ego of the *chigo's* nurse, who orchestrates the couple's reunion. Moreover, the female reader who might identify with the nun never has to see her monstrous counterpart punished or killed, as it all happens offstage. Instead, the final image of the nun is the vision of her in

the dream of the minister's daughter in which her appearance has completely transformed. Having been deeply saddened by the death of the *ama tengu*, the *chigo* and the minister's daughter dedicate memorial services on her behalf. Eventually the girl dreams of the nun riding a purple cloud, looking beautiful now, and being reborn in the Inner Sanctum of the Fourth Heavenly Realm (*tosotsuno nain ten*).⁴⁸ Through her death the nun achieves the bodhisattva ideal and dies for the sake of others, which in Buddhist terms is the best possible outcome, while in the process being reconstituted into a figure of beauty.

Reappropriating the Womb

The tale's female protagonist ascends both worldly and otherworldly heights, as she seems to achieve a kind of rebirth herself. On a cold night with freezing wind blowing in the trees she sets out and enters into the wilderness. She treads deeper and deeper into the mountains, ascending a steep slope until her feet are in pain. Her arduous trek through the mountains can be experienced vicariously as a *mineiri*, or mountain entry, normally off-limits to women. Her aching feet and weary body recall the austerities that mountain ascetics would endure as they ascend a sacred peak. In the text she even spies mountain men on her way, signaling to readers that she has indeed transgressed the boundaries of *nyonin kekkai*.

More striking, however, is the way in which the narrative allows the female character to re-appropriate the embryological symbolism of *yamabushi* practice. Instead of carrying a symbolic womb, the *oi*, on her back like a *yamabushi*, the woman in this story, it should be recalled, performs the entry into the mountain while pregnant. This emphasizes her inherent reproductive capacity; instead of carrying the symbolic womb she is in a sense a walking womb. In the words of Helen Hardacre, describing twentieth-century female mountain ascetics and their altogether different experience of pilgrimage, "The power to be gained from such an exercise is not alien to one's own nature, but represents a recapture of its origin and fullest expression. The devotee is not the opposite of that source, but a microcosm of it."⁴⁹ In an almost uncanny resemblance to this sentiment, the sixteenth-century scroll presents the woman as microcosm of the Womb World mountain, and here the protagonist not only dares to cross the line into the mountains but represents its naturalization for female believers.

In a further echo of the birthing process, while at the nun goblin's house, the girl hides in a womblike shrine-cabinet, depicted prominently in painting 18 (FIG. 10). It is a black-lacquered object in the shape of a Buddhist shrine with a large dais. The door from which the girl has just emerged is open, and from the cavity's size it is clear that she would have huddled there in the fetal position as she watched the goings-on. Her emergence from the black shrine rehearses the birthing experience, while the shrine/womb modeled after Buddhist architecture is nothing less than sacred. The actual birth of the girl's child takes place in the nurse's home, not the terra incognita of the mountain

or even the minister's house, but a neutral place important for establishing a return to normalcy as the narrative winds down.

The New Lady-in-Waiting concludes only when the patriarchal order has been restored, when the women come down from the mountain and the *chigo* descends from the mountain temple, and all take their rightful places in the minister's household and court society. In this way, the *chigo* seems ultimately in the service of the patriarchy, recast as the hero of a heteronormative romance, itself dressed up in the guise of female desire. The unorthodox *ama tengu* too assumes the role of sacrificial victim normally undertaken by *chigo* in their tales. Considering the ultimately patriarchal charge of the narrative, there was no other alternative for the nun goblin, being much too powerful a female to be left alive exercising her magic in the mountains. Patriarchal social norms are rarely entirely subverted, nor, given their investment in the system, would female readers or writers want them to be. For the brief duration of this narrative, however, readers and viewers may experience a mountain ascent, enter a realm where mother goblins reign, and begin to envision the female ascetic.

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1 The writings of Miyake Hitoshi offer important insights into various aspects of Shugendō; in English see Miyake, *Shugendō: Essays on the Structure of Japanese Folk Religion*, ed. with introduction by H. Byron Earhart (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2001).

2 Gaynor Sekimori, "Review: Shugendō: The State of the Field," *Monumenta Nipponica* 57, no. 2 (2002), 207–27.

3 One recent volume of essays captures particularly well the pervasiveness of Shugendō in late medieval culture, Kawasaki Tsuyoshi, ed., *Shugendō no Muromachi bunka* (Tokyo: Iwata Shoin, 2011); also see Bernard Faure, Max D. Moerman, and Gaynor Sekimori eds., *Shugendō: The*

History and Culture of a Japanese Religion, special issue of *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 18 (2009).

4 Patricia Fister, "The Impact of Shugendō on the Painting of Yokoi Kinkoku," *Ars Orientalis* 18 (1988), 163–95.

5 Hereafter referred to as *The New-Lady-in-Waiting (Imamai)*, as it appears on the box label of the *hakubyō* scroll version (see below). The title's translation follows Sachi Schmidt-Hori, "The New Lady-in-Waiting Is a *Chigo*: Sexual Fluidity and Dual Transvestism in a Medieval Buddhist Acolyte Tale," *Japanese Language and Literature* 43, no. 2 (October 2009): 383–423." I wish to thank the author for generously sharing her article before its publication, and Professor Paul Atkins for bringing her work to my attention.

6 The complete story is illustrated in the polychrome handscrolls through a total of twenty-four paintings and texts (twelve sections in each scroll) in a standard-size scroll format (30.5 × 1166.1; 1258.1 cm). The single *hakubyō* small scroll (13.8 × 756.0 cm) is incomplete, with only six paintings, including paintings 4, 11, 12, 14 (texts and paintings), paintings 3,

13 (paintings only), and one fragment of inscribed dialogue (*ga-chū-shi*) from painting 10 mounted between paintings 12 and 13; several paintings have been mounted in the wrong order, and painting 11 was left only partially completed. The texts and the dialogic inscriptions in both scroll versions are largely the same, and together they represent the oldest extant rendition of the story. For full black-and-white reproductions of the polychrome scrolls and a transcription of their texts, see Okudaira Hideo, ed., *Otogizōshi emaki* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1982), 77–87; and Matsumoto Ryūshin, *Muromachi jidai monogatari taisei*, suppl. 2 (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1988), 205–33. Black-and-white images of both scrolls' painting sections, transcriptions of their texts, and introductory thematic essays appear in Abe Yasurō et al., *Chigo Ima monogatari emaki, ehon kenkyū shiryōshū* (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Bungaku Kenkyūka, Hikaku jinbungaku kenkyūshitsu, 2010), privately published in 2011. The research and writing of the present article and the 2009 talk upon which it was based were completed before this recent publication could be consulted.

7 Melissa McCormick: "The *Utatane Sōshi Emaki* and Representations of Female Subjectivity in the Muromachi Period," *Transactions of the International Conference of Eastern Studies*, no. 42 (1997): 45–70; "Tosa Mitsunobu's *Ko-e*: Forms and Functions of Small-Format Handscrolls in the Muromachi Period (1333–1573)" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2000); "Genji no ma o nozoku: Hakubyō Genji monogatari emaki to nyōbō no shiza," trans. Maki Kaneko, in *Genji monogatari o ima yomitoku 1: Egakareta Genji monogatari*, ed. Kawazoe Fusae and Mitamura Masako (Tokyo: Kanrin Shobō, 2006), 101–29; and "Monochromatic Genji: The *Hakubyō* Tradition and Female Commentarial Culture," in *Envisioning "The Tale of Genji": Media, Gender, and Cultural Production*, ed. Haruo Shirane (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 101–28.

8 The third and only other known version of the tale is the Edo-period *Chigo Ima*, a three-volume illustrated book (*Nara ehon*) in the collection of the Iwase Bunko Library in Aichi prefecture. For the text, see Yokoyama Shigeru and Matsumoto Ryūshin, eds., *Muromachi jidai monogatari taisei*, vol. 9 (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1981), 248–69; and Ichiko Teiji, ed., *Mikan chūsei shōsetsu*, vol. 12 of *Koten bunko* (Tokyo: Koten Bunko, 1947), 64–101. This version differs slightly from the picture scrolls, and most importantly does not include the extensive pictorial dialogue and commentary found in both scroll texts. An introduction to the tale, its relationship to other genres of medieval literature, including the acolyte tale, and a full translation of the Iwase Bunko version are found in Schmidt-Hori, "The New Lady-in-Waiting Is a *Chigo*." For comparisons of the Iwase Bunko text to that of the two scroll versions, see Abe Yasurō et al., *Chigo Ima monogatari emaki, ehon kenkyū shiryōshū*.

9 Female attendants newly introduced into service were commonly called "Imamairi,"

a name they could keep long after arriving; the most famous example would be Imamairi no Tsubone (d. 1459), the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimasa's (1436–1490) nurse and later mistress, who committed suicide in exile after being blamed for the stillborn birth of Yoshimasa's daughter by his wife Hino Tomiko (1440–1496).

10 The paintings of the nun goblin in the polychrome scrolls may be the only extant medieval pictorializations of *ama tengu*. Even literary references to this type of *tengu* are rare, but one lively story appears in *Tales of Times Now Past* (*Konjaku monogatari shū*, ca. early 12th century), vol. 20, in a story about an abbot named Jōden from Ninnaji, who discovers an *ama tengu* in the worship hall attempting to steal a box containing a monk's robe. He chases her out of the hall, and she flies to the top of a Zelkova tree. When the monk intones a Buddhist prayer, the nun falls to the ground, whereupon they tussle over the box. The nun breaks off the edge of the box and then runs away. See Mabuchi Kazuo et al., eds., *Konjaku monogatari shū*, vol. 4 of *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* (Tokyo: Shōgakkō, 2000), 150–52. This story is mentioned in Haruko Nishioka Wakabayashi, "Tengu: Images of the Buddhist Concepts of Evil in Medieval Japan" (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1995), 41.

11 The room décor is another element that firmly roots these scrolls in the Muromachi period, namely the appearance of the horizontal hanging scroll of an ink painting of a waterfall in the alcove (*tokonoma*) of the young lady's room (FIG. 4), as noted by Miya Tsugio in entry no. 17 in Okudaira, *Otogizōshi emaki*, 64. The alcove arrangement in the nurse's abode in painting 19 (FIG. 11) in the polychrome set is an even surer giveaway of a Muromachi date; it shows a Chinese-style flower vase, incense burner, and crane-shaped candleholder arranged before a painted Buddhist triptych as

prescribed in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century manuals on alcove decoration.

12 The sharp blue crags first appear in the background of paintings-within-paintings in the scrolls, then become the ominous setting for the narrative itself as the action shifts to the mountain abode of the nun goblin. The handscroll viewer thus has the sensation of entering into the precipitous atmosphere of a Muromachi landscape painting as she or he journeys into the mountains with the female protagonist.

13 Interestingly, the polychrome *New Lady-in-Waiting* scrolls lack the mist bands commonly associated with narrative illustrations by artists of the professional Tosa and Kano schools of painting and that also appear frequently in a formulaic manner in scrolls and illustrated books by unknown painters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

14 The identities of artists of anonymous Muromachi picture scrolls remain difficult to discern, but certain signed and dated works provide important benchmarks. Similarities to the *Monochrome Tale of Genji Scrolls* in the Spencer Collection of the New York Public Library (dated to 1554) and the *Matsuhime monogatari emaki* in the Tōyō University Library Collection (signed and dated to 1526) allow for the dating of other *hakubyō* and amateur small scrolls to the mid-sixteenth century. The intriguing *Tale of Autumn Showers* (*Shigure monogatari emaki*, dated to 1520) in the Heisandō Collection is a three-scroll polychrome work of a courtly narrative tale signed by a woman artist that opens up the possibility of semiprofessional female artists behind a range of Muromachi scrolls. See Tokuda Kazuo, "Otogizōshi *Shigure* Eishō 10-nen emaki no shōkai to honkoku," in Ishikawa Tōru, ed., *Miryoku no Nara ehon, emaki* (Tokyo: Miyai Shoten, 2006), 191–245; Sano Midori, "Shigure emaki," *Kokka* 1323 (January 2006): 22–26; and Akiko Yamagata,

"An Orphan's Fortune and a Milk Sister's Loyalty: An Introduction and Translation of *Shigure monogatari*" (MA thesis, Regional Studies—East Asia, Harvard University, 2010).

15 This visual redundancy no doubt prompted the illustrator of the Edo-period *Nara ehon Chigo Ima* in the Iwase Bunko Library to include fewer such scenes; the polychrome scrolls contain six more paintings than the eighteen illustrations found in the illustrated book: paintings 2, 7, 9, 12, 13, 21, all *nyōbō*-centered and filled with pictorial dialogue.

16 The corresponding rank of women's titles could vary, but in general they were divided into three ranks (*jōrō*, *chūrō*, and *gerō*) largely equivalent to the *kugyō*, *tenjōbito*, and *jige* ranks of the courtly class. See Kuwayama Kōnen, "Muromachi jidai ni okeru kuge nyōbō no koshō," *Josei shigaku* 6 (1996): 3.

17 Tomboyish names incorporating "Saburō" (third son), such as "Yadorigi Saburō" (*Genji* chapter 49) and the more neutral "Hatsune no Mae" (*Genji* chapter 23) appear in paintings 20 and 24 in the polychrome set.

18 *Ōjōrō on'na no koto*, in *Gunsho ruijū*, vol. 18, Buke bu, pt. 2, vol. 411 (Tokyo: Keizai Zasshisha, 1893–94), 663.

19 McCormick, "Tosa Mitsunobu's Ko-e," 182–217; McCormick, "Genji no ma o nozoku." For some of the linguistic differences between the inscribed dialogue and the main text in the polychrome scrolls of *The New Lady-in-Waiting*, see Someya Hiroko, "Emaki ni okeru honbun to gachūshi hikaku no kokoromi: 'Chigo ima monogatari emaki' no baai," *Gobun*, no. 121 (2005): 132–41.

20 This scene in *A Wakeful Sleep* is examined in McCormick, "Tosa Mitsunobu's Ko-e" and "Genji no ma o nozoku." Someya Hiroko, in "Emaki ni okeru honbun," 140, points

out how this line about the fallen flowers in *The New Lady-in-Waiting* is identical to the pictorial commentary in an Edo-period scroll, *The Tale of Sumiyoshi*, showing how the texts of pictorial commentary may have borrowed from each other. The text of *A Wakeful Sleep* is, however, much closer in date and production circumstances to *The New Lady-in-Waiting* scroll. For the text of the Sumiyoshi scroll, see Ueno Eiko, "Tokiawamatsu Bunko zo 'Sumiyoshi monogatari emaki' (yonkan) ni tsuite," *Jissen kokubungaku* 51 (1997): 59–84.

21 See Margaret H. Childs, "Chigo monogatari: Love Stories or Buddhist Sermons?" *Monumenta Nipponica* 35, no. 2 (1980): 127–51; Paul S. Atkins, "Chigo in the Medieval Japanese Imagination," *Journal of Asian Studies* 67, no. 3 (2008): 947–70; and Schmidt-Hori, "The New Lady-in-Waiting Is a Chigo."

22 The self-conscious use of the genre and the character in fifteenth-century narratives is discussed in Melissa McCormick, "Breaking the Inkstone: An Acolyte Tale for a Young Shogun," chapter 5 of *Tosa Mitsunobu and the Small Scroll in Medieval Japan* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 171–205.

23 Kōkōnodono says: "On chigo wa kai o mochi to asobashi soroekashi. Keshikarazu ya."

24 Bernard Faure, *The Red Thread: Buddhist Approaches to Sexuality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 270–74.

25 Schmidt-Hori argues precisely the opposite, that *The New Lady-in-Waiting Is a Chigo*, as found in the Edo-period text, offers a completely neutral if not positive attitude toward the relationship of the boy and the abbot. As I will show, the paintings, dialogic inscriptions, and the textual editing or scribal omissions in the Muromachi illustrated scrolls reflect an

altogether different attitude. Because of the similarity of the texts in the two illustrated handscroll versions and the longer Edo-period illustrated book, I am presupposing a common earlier text upon which the Edo book was based and from which the Muromachi scrolls were selectively copied. It is more than plausible that the calligrapher of the handscrolls omitted short phrases and eliminated numerous poems from a longer text (a common practice), especially given the less-than-natural flow of the language without those particular passages.

26 The longer version in the Edo book, with the excerpted line in brackets, is: "When the wet nurse told the abbot about the *chigo*'s reappearance, he rushed down from the mountain. [Now crying, now laughing they reminisced about their past together.] The abbot thought 'the power of prayer is indeed effective, as is my own brilliance.'" (*Chigo no ideki tamaeru yoshi, mōshi no hosekereba, yama yori, isogi owashite, [nakimiwaraimi, arishi koto mo katari awasuru ni] nori no chikara, munashi karanu ni koso to waga kōmyō ni zo, oboshikeru*); for the Edo-period text, see Yokoyama and Matsumoto, *Muromachi jidai monogatari taisei*, vol. 9, 265–66; and for the scroll text transcription, see Okudaira, *Otogizōshi emaki*, 141.

27 Consistent with its more positive portrayal of the clergy, the Edo-period illustrated book of *The New Lady-in-Waiting* shows not a boisterous banquet, but a subdued tête-à-tête between the *chigo* and the abbot, with two solemn monks in the foreground.

28 The earliest extant sculpture of En no Gyōja dates to the Heian period, but the majority of sculpted and painted examples are of the Kamakura and Muromachi periods, a time when Shugendō sects were becoming increasingly well organized. The most comprehensive reference for images of En no Gyōja and

- Shugendō visual artifacts is *En no Gyōja to Shugendō no sekai: Sangaku shinkō no hihō*, ed. Osaka Shiritsu Bijutsukan (Tokyo: Mainichi Shimbunsha, 1999).
- 29** Miyake, *Shugendō*, 78–98, 122–27.
- 30** Miyake, *Shugendō*, 78–98, 122–27. Also see Helen Hardacre, “The Cave and the Womb World,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 10, nos. 2–3 (1983): 149–76; and Bernard Faure, “Climbing Mount Analogue: The Embryological Discourse of Shugendō” (paper delivered at Columbia University, 27 April 2008).
- 31** Hardacre, “The Cave and the Womb World,” 154.
- 32** The following descriptions of the *yamabushi* costume elements are taken from Miyake, *Shugendō*, 80–84.
- 33** See the *Kanmon nikki* entries for Ōei 26 (1419) 7/14 and Ōei 23 (1416) 8/9; cited in Murayama Shūichi, *Yamabushi no rekishi* (Tokyo: Hanawa Shobō, 1970), 306–7.
- 34** Masamoto’s *shugen* practice and its political implications are explored in Suegara Yutaka, “Hosokawa Masamoto to Shugendō: Shisen’in Kōsen o chūshin ni,” *Harukanaru chūsei*, no. 12 (1992): 64–69.
- 35** Karahashi (Sugawara) Arikazu (1448–96) reported to Kujō Hitatsune (1468–1530) on Masamoto’s activities at Kuramadera; see the entry for Meiō 3 (1494) 9/24 in Hisatsune’s diary, *Gojigen’in-dono ki*, in vol. 2 of *Kujōke rekisei kiroku*, in *Zushoryō sōkan*, 148; cited in Morita Kyōji, ed. *Sengokuki rekidai Hosokawashi no kenkyū* (Osaka: Izumi Shoin, 1994), 26–27.
- 36** An excellent account of the Kuramadera legend and the conflation of the *yamabushi* and *tengu* in medieval theater is Carolyn Anne Morley, *Transformation, Miracles, and Mischief: The Mountain Priest Plays of Kyōgen* (Ithaca, NY: East Asia Program, Cornell University, 1993).
- 37** Takagishi Akira links this work to Masamoto’s *shugen* practices and a variety of complex political connections; see his *Muromachi ōken to kaiga: Shoki Tosa-ha kenkyū* (Kyoto: Kyoto Daigaku Gakujutsu Shuppankai, 2004), 345–84; and most recently, “‘Tsukiminedera konryū shugyō engi emaki’ to shugen no randosukēpu,” in Kawasaki, *Shugendō no Muromachi bunka*, 179–200. For Masamoto’s commissions of other *shugendō*-inflected works and the motivations behind them, see McCormick, *Tosa Mitsunobu and the Small Scroll*, 196–200.
- 38** Morley, *Transformation, Miracles, and Mischief*, 66.
- 39** Fabio Rambelli, “‘Dogmen,’ Craftspeople, or Living Buddhas? The Status of *Yamabushi* in Premodern Japanese Society,” in Faure et al., *Shugendō*, 123–37.
- 40** See, for example, Ushiyama Yoshiyuki: “‘Nyonin kinzei’ sairon,” *Sangaku Shugen* 17 (1996): 1–11; “Heian jidai no ‘nyonin kinzei monjo’ ni tsuite,” *Ueda Joshi Tanki Daigaku Kiyō* 25 (2001): 11–19; and, in English, “The Historical Development of the Exclusion of Women from Sacred Places (Nyonin Kinzei) in Japan,” *Acta Asiatica* 97 (2009): 39–55; see also Katsuura Noriko, “Women and Views of Pollution,” *Acta Asiatica* 97 (2009): 17–37.
- 41** Tales of Tōran are analyzed in D. Max Moerman, *Localizing Paradise: Kumano Pilgrimage and the Religious Landscape of Premodern Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, distributed by Harvard University Press, 2005), 203–7.
- 42** Susan Matisoff, “Barred from Paradise? Mount Kōya and the Karukaya Legend,” in *Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan*, ed. Barbara Ruch (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2002), 475. The Japanese text is in Yokoyama Shigeru, ed., *Sekkyō shōhon shū*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1968), 421.
- 43** Moerman, *Localizing Paradise*, 210.
- 44** Moerman, *Localizing Paradise*, 213.
- 45** Fumiko Miyazaki, “Female Pilgrims and Mt. Fuji: Changing Perspectives on the Exclusion of Women,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 60, no. 3 (2005): 346.
- 46** In the taxonomy of *tengu*, the nun goblin thus falls into the category of half-bird–half-human variety. The type of bird visually referenced in *tengu* imagery is commonly referred to as a kite, but it is more precisely a type of hawk called *nosuri*, or *chōgenbō* in Japanese, a medium sized bird of prey that feeds on rats and other small mammals; see Sugihara Takuya, *Tengu wa doko kara kitaka* (Tokyo: Taishūkan Shoten, 2007), 108–9.
- 47** More relevant here, given the nun’s sharp beak engineered for meat eating, might be her association with the mythical vagina dentata, an image of toothed female genitalia, said to be a manifestation of the fear of the castrating female; see Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1993), 157. The relationship between the *ama tengu* in this tale and the female mountain demon (*yamanba*) of Japanese folklore is also an important one that I hope to explore in a future study of these scrolls.
- 48** Interestingly the Edo-period illustrated book depicts the nun as a demure, attractive-looking nun with no monstrous attributes, aside from the flaming torch.
- 49** Hardacre, “The Cave and the Womb World,” 168.