Introduction

[The Japanese immigrant monk Hongshun (Kanho, n.d.]) said that some 500 li south of the Japanese capital stands the Peak of Gold. Upon its summit is the bodhisattva Vajra Zaō, foremost in miracles. Upon the mountain, there are pines and cypresses, renowned flowers and tender grasses. In several hundred temples, great and small, dwell those who practice the lofty Way. Women cannot climb it. Even today, men who want to climb it abstain from liquor and meat and sex for three months, and then all their wishes are fulfilled. It is said that this bodhisattva is a transformation-body of Maitreya, like Mañjuśrī at Mt. Wutai.

—Yichu (n.d.), in Shishi liutie (Six volumes for Buddhists)

A long day’s walk south of the village of Yoshinoyama in western Japan, Kinpusen, the Peak of Gold, rises up out of the northern reaches of the Ōmine Range (map 1). Even today, much of the Ōmine region is wilderness, home to boar, bear, monkey, deer, and countless smaller birds and beasts; however, it has also long been a haunt of humans and gods. In 2004, Kinpusen, alternatively known as Sanjōgatake, Ōminesan, and Mitake, was included in a newly designated UNESCO World Heritage Site. This book tells the story of how the mountain first rose to cultural prominence during the Heian period (794–1185).

Archaeological remains indicate that religious practice was under way at Kinpusen by the Nara period (710–84). According to narrative sources, during the early 800s holy men who combined Buddhist devotion with Daoist-style longevity practices and the worship of indigenous gods (kami) traversed the Ōmine Range, gaining special powers through ritual practice. During the 900s, Kinpusen gained fame as the

1. Shishi liutie (459). This text dates to the 950s.
Introduction

haunt of a fierce local deity named Zaō, the King of the Treasury, and by midcentury, male members of the high aristocracy had begun to make pilgrimages to the mountain. Accordingly, Kinpusen came to play an important role in the ritual and political life of the ruling elite.

The mountain’s fortunes shifted dramatically at the end of the eleventh century, however. Armed conflict between religious institutions was becoming increasingly common, and Kōfukuji, a powerful temple located in the Nara Basin, was working to bring temples and shrines across the province of Yamato under its sway. Being located at the far southern end of the province, Kinpusen became a prime target for these campaigns. In 1093, Kōfukuji forces marched on Kinpusen and defeated the mountain monks in a series of battles, disrupting established patronage patterns and bringing the mountain into closer contact with the religious establishment of Nara, the “southern capital” (nanto). In the ensuing hundred years, Kinpusen’s infrastructure developed significantly; meanwhile, proponents of mountain practice produced texts in which they sought to codify traditions, construct transmission lineages, and canonize itineraries through the Ōmine Range. In the wake of the Genpei War, which convulsed Japan between 1180 and 1185, well-known monks connected with the Nara revival, including Kōfukuji hierarchs, took an active interest in Kinpusen and the surrounding Ōmine region. Ascetically inflected mountain pilgrimage became a recognized mode of Buddhist practice around which sectarian identity gradually coalesced; in this respect, it bore a strong similarity to monastic discipline (ritsu), meditation (zen), and Pure Land devotion. Toward the end of the Kamakura period (1185–1333), a discrete religious movement known as Shugendō, “the Way of practice,” emerged from interchange between communities associated with powerful lowland temples and the Ōmine region.

In conceptualizing the roles that Kinpusen played in premodern religious culture, I draw loosely on Henri Lefebvre’s theoretical formulation of perceived, conceived, and lived space, which has been put to good use in other studies of sacred mountains in East Asia. Since the
1970s, geographers like David Harvey and Edward Soja have elaborated upon Lefebvre’s model; in this book, I refer primarily to the triad of real, imagined, and real-and-imagined space articulated by Soja. Real space (or as Soja often calls it, Firstspace) is what we see and touch: in the case of Kinpusen, this means the granitic outcroppings and ridges, beech and cryptomeria, and shrines and steles lining the paths. Knowledge privileging this physical, material mode of spatiality has traditionally been concerned with the “surface plottings” of classical cartography, although research on the social and historical production of material landscapes has been on the rise. Imagined space (or Secondspace) refers to the realm of representation: this is what and how we think of our world. At an extreme, imagined space may be “entirely ideational, made of projections into the empirical world from conceived or imagined geographies.” In Heian Japan, courtiers envisaged Kinpusen as a realm of immortals, where “meditation monks sip upon the mists” and where “morning clouds and evening rains are deep blue and boundless.” This kind of representation has no a priori relation to physical reality, yet it can exert profound influences on human perceptions of real space.

Despite their differences, the real and imagined dimensions of spatiality are interdependent, hence the third term, real-and-imagined space. As embodied creatures, we necessarily operate in real-and-imagined space at the same time that we live with it: our actions depend upon and shape our world. In turn, our world shapes our lives. For the purposes of this book, real-and-imagined space designates the ground for religious practice as well as its results. Pilgrims, for instance, climbed a very real Kinpusen; meanwhile, through financial endowments, they contributed to the growth and institutionalization of the mountain’s built environment. During their journey and after their return, they wrote and spoke about the mountain, thereby enhancing its

5. Soja, Thirdspace, 77, 79.
6. For meditation monks, see memorial quoted in Go-Nijō Moromichiki, Kanji 5.8.17 (2168). For clouds and rain, see Gōtotoku nagon ganmonshū 3.5 (426).
7. Lefebvre, Soja, and others maintain that the introduction of a third term opens up ontological and epistemological binaries, resulting in analyses that emphasize both/and openness, rather than either/or closure. On this point, compare Soja, Thirdspace, 139–44; and Bhabha, The Location of Culture, 53–56.
Introduction

reputation and disseminating a particular spatial imaginary. By burying sutra manuscripts upon the peak, they altered the physical landscape, while projecting themselves into an imagined future when, in a distant rebirth, they would return to the mountain in the presence of Maitreya, the future buddha, and their scriptures would rise up out of the earth. In practice, then, the real and imagined interfused. It is the historical, human reception and construction of Kinpusen as a real-and-imagined place that is the focus of this book.

It was through pilgrimage that Kinpusen developed into a culturally significant landscape. When courtiers began to make the journey in the mid-900s, pilgrimage itself was a new practice among laymen. With no inns, topographical maps, or ready supply of food en route, travel of any sort was difficult and, if one traveled in any comfort, expensive. Consequently, pilgrimage remained largely an elite endeavor or a specialized mode of ascesis for some centuries. As discussed in chapter 1, early evidence for lay pilgrimage to Kinpusen is fragmentary; nonetheless, it is clear that whereas other early pilgrimage sites, such as Ishiyamadera and Hasedera, were comparatively accessible, Kinpusen was the first destination requiring more than a week of travel to be frequented by nobles. It attracted a full range of male aristocrats, from comparatively low-ranking literati, to provincial governors, to senior aristocrats. Following upon Kinpusen's success, aristocrats began to travel to Mt. Kōya in the eleventh century and to the Kumano area, which is home to three shrines, Hongū, Shingū, and Nachi, in the twelfth. Like Kinpusen, both Mt. Kōya and Kumano are located on the Kii Peninsula (see map 1). These “three Ks,” often referred to by Heian writers as the “southern mountains” (nanzan), were the most important remote pilgrimage destinations for the male elite from the 900s into the Kamakura period. All three remain active centers today.

Pilgrimage was certainly a devotional activity, but it was also saturated with political significance. The most eminent members of the
ruling elite traveled to Kinpusen. In this respect, two phases in Heian history are important for the purposes of this book: the Fujiwara regency and the insei, literally “rule by retired emperors.” In the second half of the ninth century, it became increasingly common for an emperor to reign with a regent, usually his maternal uncle or grandfather. In the ensuing decades, this custom was institutionalized and the office of regent was monopolized by one patriline within the Fujiwara family’s Northern House. Accordingly, the period from the mid-900s until the late eleventh century is known as the regency (sekkkan seiji, sekkan jidai). Although the regents were far from the sole players on the political scene, or even at court, their close ties to the emperor and the Council of State, together with their command of extensive landholdings and clientage networks, made them tremendously influential.10

Retired Emperor Shirakawa (1053–1129, r. 1072–86) is widely recognized as the primary architect of the insei (1086–1221), a political order in which retired emperors achieved political ascendancy. Although the regency and Fujiwara control of it endured as formal institutions for hundreds of years, their importance was relativized when Shirakawa, who had stepped down from the throne in favor of his son in 1086, began to assert control over matters of state. Despite the upheavals of the Genpei War, retired emperors continued to dominate the political scene up through the early Kamakura period. Their ascendancy came to a definitive end only with the Jōkyū Disturbance, when Retired Emperor Go-Toba (1180–1239, r. 1183–98) mounted a failed challenge to the military government in 1221. Changes in the power balance notwithstanding, a high level of continuity obtained between the regency and the insei: like the regents, the retired emperors’ influence was based on their clientage networks, landholdings, and relationship with reigning emperors.11

10. On the establishment of the regency, see Piggott and Yoshida, Teishinkōki; and essays by Morita Tei and Sasaki Muneo in Piggott, Capital and Countryside. The Japanese literature in this area is immense; helpful overviews include Ishigami and Katō, Sekkan seiji to ōchō bunka; and Hotate, Heian ōchō.

11. For the political history of the insei, see, for instance, Hurst, Insei; Adolphson, The Gates of Power; and Motoki, Inseiki seijishi no kenkyū. For the insei as an outgrowth of regency trends in shared rulership, see Ihara, Nihon chūsei no kokusei, esp. 191–232; and Uejima, Nihon chūsei shakai, esp. 147–227.
Both the regents and retired emperors headed vertically integrated conglomerates, which the influential historian Kuroda Toshio referred to as power blocs (kenmon). In Kuroda’s view, interdependent, and often fractious, rapprochements between blocs associated with the court, religious institutions, and warrior houses were the signal characteristic of medieval rule. Institutional historians have shown that power blocs took full form during the insei; consequently, even though Kuroda’s analysis has been critiqued, refined, and reinterpreted, it has led to a reconceptualization of the Middle Ages as beginning with the insei, rather than the Kamakura period. I follow this line of thought in this book: I frame Kinpusen’s integration into Kōfukuji’s power bloc during the late eleventh century as one instance of a much larger trend in the formation of a medieval religious landscape, that is, a landscape dominated by power blocs.

Together with the accrual of estates and the creation of administrative structures, ritual performance was central to the growth of a power bloc. In the following chapters, I maintain that Japan’s most powerful men and women built their lordship through flexible, ritual-cum-political systems; for analytical purposes, I refer to these as ritual regimes. Put briefly, I argue that ritual regimes were anchored in distinctive sets of sites, rites, and texts associated with specific patrons or lineage groups. From 969 to 1090, at precisely the time when the Fujiwara regents enjoyed political preeminence, they made Kinpusen into their signature pilgrimage destination: from generation to generation, members of their patriline climbed the Peak of Gold. By contrast, when retired emperors overshadowed the regents during the insei, they resorted to Kumano in a gesture of political and ritual change. Through spatial synecdoche, the regents mantled themselves with Kinpusen’s religious authority; the retired sovereigns, with Kumano’s. At the same time that ritual regimes provided a framework for spatio-religious symbolism, they also contributed to the articulation of clientage relationships within a power bloc. Membership in

12. For a classic exposition of the characteristics of a power bloc, see Kuroda, “Chūsei kokka to tennō,” in Kuroda Toshio chosakushū, 1:3–46. Kuroda’s analysis has been furthered and adapted by a range of scholars; the most important study in English is Adolphson’s The Gates of Power.

13. See, for instance, Rekishigaku Kenkyūkai and Nihonshi Kenkyūkai, Chūsei no keisei.
the retinue of an eminent pilgrim, for instance, demonstrated social and political intimacy, whereas the provision of logistical and financial support expressed clientage. Externally, ritual regimes provided a platform for interaction with other power blocs. When Retired Emperor Shirakawa visited Kinpusen in 1092, for instance, he not only contested the regents’ symbolic claims to the mountain, but also made it clear that he sought to form his own constituency there. At the same time, by taking a hand in Kinpusen’s affairs, he positioned himself over and against the power-bloc temple Kōfukuji, which had already begun to make the claim that Kinpusen was properly one of its client institutions.

Given its immersion in political culture, Heian-period travel to Kinpusen and the Kii Peninsula fits with the observation of the anthropologists John Eade and Michael Sallnow that pilgrimage is often a matter of competition. Pilgrims to the southern mountains vied with each other in their gifts to the gods and expressions of piety. Together with the explicitly hierarchical organization of pilgrimage parties, this contravenes Victor Turner and Edith Turner’s classic theoretical model, according to which pilgrims experience *communitas*, a liminal state of “anti-structure” in which social boundaries dissolve, only to be reinstated upon the pilgrims’ eventual return home. Nonetheless, the Turners’ conceptualization of pilgrimage as a rite of passage resonates with the Heian situation, for spatial practices, which included talking and writing about place, as well as traversing and inhabiting it, were integral to the production and maintenance of social identities. Regents and retired emperors legitimated and majestified themselves through their journeys; as pilgrims, they were making themselves at the same time that they were making the mountain. The sociologist Ian Reader, who has written extensively about pilgrimage in Japan, has shown quite vividly that pilgrims, institutions, and stories are constantly making and remaking the real-and-imagined landscape. Without pilgrims, Kinpusen would not have looked the same, to either the physical or the mind’s eye.

In order to illuminate the relationship of pilgrimage to other modes of practice, especially political activity and manuscript production, in the following chapters I often employ the term “traces” (ato, or in compound, seki or jaku). Across a range of genres, Heian-period writers consistently designated physical entities that provided access to the past and the divine as traces; these could be manuscripts, footprints, gods, or even human remains. By appropriating the notion of traces as an interpretive lens, I mean to bring into focus a broader, integrative project in Heian discourse and religious practice. Persistent references to traces, I argue, indicate that the political and the religious, walking and writing, functioned as cognate domains. Traces played a central role in political culture, where precedent (rei, or sometimes ato) provided the reigning standard for law, governance, and etiquette. They also anchored theological imagination, which posited that kami are manifest traces (suijaku) of buddhas and bodhisattvas. Footprints were called “foot traces” (ashiato, sokuseki); manuscripts and calligraphy, “hand-traces” (shuseki). This terminological consistency was no coincidence. Whatever category traces belonged to, they tended to operate as what we might today call ostensive signs, which show what they represent because they are of a substance with it. Put differently, a trace was not so much a representation as a condensation or replication of the person or god who produced it. A manuscript, for instance, could operate as a physical, satisfying, and ritually potent instantiation of its scribe and/or author.

Broadly speaking, Heian-period men and women felt that traces were important because they localized and materialized what would otherwise be inaccessible temporally or geographically. In this respect, it is significant that Heian writers often paired the term “trace” with the verb “to seek out or inquire” (rei o tazunu). Because sacred sites

---

17. I borrow this usage from Fabio Rambelli, who has it by way of Umberto Eco. As Rambelli notes, icons and Buddhist relics have also long functioned as important types of ostensive signs (Rambelli, Buddhist Materiality, 79, 123–24; see also Sharf, “On the Allure of Buddhist Relics”).

18. For correlations between scripture and the bodies of its copyists and authors, see Eubanks, Miracles of Book and Body, as well as chapter 5 of this book.

19. This position stands in decided contrast to the Derridean conceptualization of “the trace” (la trace) as a mark of unbridgeable absence that “properly has no site” (Derrida, Margins of Philosophy, 24). In the Heian period, traces were represented as persisting in, springing from, and actually making place.
were often framed in terms of traces left by founder-figures, pilgrimages can fruitfully be construed as inquiries into traces. In her analysis of the European Santiago de Compostela pilgrimage, the cultural anthropologist Nancy Frey has commented that through their journeys pilgrims engage in dialogue with the past. \(^{20}\) The same was eminently true of pilgrims in Heian Japan.

The fact that traces offered access to the past and the divine helped to mediate formal and categorical differences among traces. In the ensuing chapters, I argue that in the Kinpusen cult and in Heian religious culture more generally, texts, rituals, and places became mutually constitutive. For instance, when the regents and retired emperors went to Kinpusen, they copied Buddhist sutras and buried them upon the summit. Purposely leaving traces on the page and in the earth, these men were simultaneously making text and marking place. This book, then, is a history of religious practice in a particular place, but it is also a history of practices of place-making. \(^{21}\)

To write the history of Kinpusen as a real-and-imagined place during the Heian period, I have worked almost exclusively with Heian-period sources. This might seem unexceptional, and indeed unexceptionable, but in fact it departs from dominant trends in the Japanese- and English-language literature. To date, Japanese research has favored structural analyses, while English-language research has focused primarily on contemporary practices, with some attention to medieval developments. \(^{22}\) In this respect, it is telling that of the seven hundred

---

20. Frey, *Pilgrim Stories*, 17–46, 221–22. The pilgrim’s dialogical, interpretive project is thus similar to the historian’s as discussed by LaCapra in “Rethinking Intellectual History.”

21. The term “practice” is commonly used in Buddhist studies to refer to devotional and meditative activities. Without excluding this usage from my discussion, I intend the word more in the sense developed by Pierre Bourdieu (for instance, in *Outline of a Theory of Practice*) and applied by Sherry Ortner and others (see, for instance, Ortner, *High Religion*). Practice, then, may be understood as activity limited and made possible by the social structures within which it occurs and characterized by inequalities of power and authority. I have borrowed the phrase “place-making” from Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*.

22. Miyake Hitoshi’s Japanese-language research has been particularly influential. See, for example, his *Ōmine shugendō no kenkyū; The Mandala of the Mountain*; and *Shugendō: Essays*. In English, see, for example, Swanson, “Shugendō and the Yoshino-Kumano Pilgrimage.” For the Middle Ages, see Royall Tyler, “Kōfukuji and the Mountains.”
pages of Shudō Yoshiki’s authoritative institutional history of the temple Kinpusenji and its eponymous mountain, fewer than sixty are explicitly devoted to the years prior to 1185. There is certainly more to be said. Furthermore, researchers have consistently based their representations of Kinpusen’s early history on sources produced at a time when Shugendō was coalescing as a discrete religious movement. In this historiographical mode, early and mid-Heian practices appear as proto-Shugendō. By viewing Kinpusen and the ritual and textual activities focused on it as part of the broader religious and political culture, however, we gain a richer, more nuanced understanding of Japanese religious history. It also begins to appear that Shugendō emerged from rupture, not continuity. In fact, toward the end of this book, I argue that the emergence of Shugendō groups was predicated upon Kinpusen and Kumano’s loss of institutional independence and that Shugendō organizations themselves became a source of division and disruption.

The present project is also distinguished by its focus on the activities of laypeople. In the field of religious studies, most research on premodern Japan has concentrated on monks and, to a much lesser extent, nuns. In addition, researchers have preferred to examine the doctrinal—and less often, the ritual—practices of specific schools, for instance the Buddhist Tendai or Shintō Watarai school. These endeavors are important and worthwhile, but the fact remains that discussions of the activities of the laity, the vast demographic majority in any period of history, have been far fewer. In this book, I take up the

24. The most important later texts to be taken as reflections of Heian circumstances are the *Kinpusen sōsōki* and *Kinpusen zakki*, both of which date to circa 1300. A third key source is the *Kumano gongen kongō Zaō hōden zōkō nikki*. Although often cited as a reliable report, this last text has been shown to be as much a work of fiction as a record of facts (see Kawasaki, “Kumano gongen kongō Zaō hōden zōkō nikki to iu gisho”). For examples of the uses to which these sources have been put in the secondary literature, see Royall Tyler, “Kōfukuji and the Mountains,” 177–79; and Miyake Hitoshi, Ōmine shugendō no kenkyū, 275–77.
25. On Tendai, see, for instance, Groner’s studies, *Saichō* and *Ryōgen*; as well as Stone, *Original Enlightenment*. On the eponymous school, see Teeuwen, *Watarai Shintō*.
26. For the Heian period, Ruppert, *Jewel in the Ashes*; and Moerman, *Localizing Paradise* are notable for analyses of both lay and clerical religiosity. See also Ambros, “Liminal Journeys” for laywomen’s pilgrimages, and Yiengpruksawan, *Hiraizumi*, *
practices of elite laymen, not because their activities are inherently more interesting or important than commoners', but because they are particularly well documented.

In addition to its political significance, several other aspects of lay religiosity bear emphasis. Perhaps most strikingly, laypeople did participate in doctrinal innovation. Clear evidence of this is to be found in honji suijaku discourse, which identified buddhas and bodhisattvas with kami and which was central to Kinpusen's local theology. Most of the extant early examples of honji suijaku interpretation came from the hands of male literati, not monks. Laypeople were also major players in the realm of ritual innovation, a point exemplified by sutra burial. This practice emerged around the year 1000 and became central to lay pilgrimage to Kinpusen. Furthermore, laypeople exercised their ritual agency consciously, even conscientiously. This is particularly visible in the form and function of the practices that I analyze as ritual regimes, which show how successful the nonmonastic elite could be in shaping religious activities to suit their own ends.

Among the many laymen who were active at Kinpusen, three play starring roles in this book: Fujiwara no Michinaga (966–1027), Fujiwara no Moromichi (1062–99), and Retired Emperor Shirakawa. (It should be noted that Michinaga and Shirakawa later took the tonsure; at the time of their Kinpusen pilgrimages, however, they were still laymen.) The reasons for choosing these men as dramatis personae are threefold. First, each represents a specific phase in the history of politics and pilgrimage. Second, each made at least one journey to Kinpusen. And third, the historical and archaeological record for these three pilgrims is comparatively rich, in contrast to scant documentation for others.

Even today, Michinaga is famous as the regent extraordinaire: he represents the high tide of the Fujiwara regency, and it was he who cemented his family's connection to Kinpusen, as well as its participation in pilgrimage more broadly. Michinaga made one successful trip to

“The Eyes of Michinaga,” and “The Phoenix Hall at Uji” for temple-building projects pursued by members of the Fujiwara family. Relevant discussions also occur in essays by William McCullough, Helen Craig McCullough, Stanley Weinstein, and Allan Grapard in Shively and McCullough, Heian Japan.
Kinpusen in 1007 and planned two others, which he was forced to cancel, in 998 and 1011. Moromichi, Michinaga’s great-grandson, was well regarded in his own day, but in historical perspective, he played the role of the twilight regent. Moromichi assiduously maintained his family’s traditions, including pilgrimage to Kinpusen, visiting the mountain in 1088 and 1090. With Moromichi’s untimely death in 1099 at age thirty-seven, followed by the death of his father two years later, the regents’ position eroded significantly. Into the gap stepped Retired Emperor Shirakawa, who exerted influence first as the father and then the grandfather of two successive reigning emperors. During the decade following Moromichi’s death, Shirakawa declined to make Moromichi’s heir, Tadazane (1078–1162), regent, creating the first formal gap in the regency in a century. Having traveled to Kinpusen in 1092, where he emulated and competed with the regents, Shirakawa began to make repeated pilgrimages to Kumano during the second decade of the twelfth century, when his political ascendancy was assured. In this way, Shirakawa eclipsed Kinpusen, making Kumano a signature site for himself and his descendants.27

The arc of Kinpusen’s rise and fall as an elite pilgrimage destination thus illustrates the more general move from the ancient regime and its statutory codes (ritsuryō), which persisted into the early Heian period, through the royal court state (ōchō kokka) over which the regents presided, and into the increasing factionalization of the insei. During Kinpusen’s close association with the Fujiwara regents, its institutions functioned on a more-or-less independent basis. By contrast, in the early insei period, Kōfukuji forcibly integrated Kinpusen into its growing domain, thereby ushering the mountain into the Middle Ages, by which I mean an institutional and political order dominated by power blocs.

It is possible to analyze these developments in detail because royals, aristocrats, and officials customarily keep daily records (nikki) of their activities. Happily, both Michinaga and Moromichi’s journals, including their accounts of their Kinpusen pilgrimages, have been largely preserved. In addition, materials from their sutra burials happen to

27. For Kumano during the insei, see Moerman, Localizing Paradise, esp. 139–80.
have been excavated from the mountain. These include votive texts, as well as fragments of sutras that the regents copied out in golden ink on indigo-dyed paper. In Moromichi’s case, we have most of a prayer that he wrote out on plain paper to bury with his sutras, whereas in Michinaga’s, we have a votive inscription from the gilt bronze tube in which he buried his scriptures. We have no text written by Retired Emperor Shirakawa about Kinpusen, but during research at the Historiographical Institute at the University of Tokyo in 2005–7, I found manuscript copies of a fragment of a journal written during the 1092 pilgrimage by one of Shirakawa’s retainers, most likely Ōe no Masafusa (1041–1111). In addition, the same journey is briefly described in the unofficial annal Fusō ryakki (Brief history of the East); a prayer written by Masafusa on Shirakawa’s behalf also survives. These sources are central to the following discussion. In telling us how individual elite pilgrims represented their own actions, these texts make it possible to develop a tightly focused history of religious practice at one particular site.

This book falls into three parts. The three chapters of part 1 focus on Heian-period representations and cultural memory of Kinpusen, that is, the mountain imagined. In chapter 1, I chart out the mountain’s spatial imaginary, which was rooted in a conceptual duality through which ritsuryō ideology defined the capital over and against the mountains. With the emergence of lay pilgrimage in the tenth century, members of the elite began to subvert this divide, appropriating the mountain’s wild, otherworldly charisma and expanding the domain of the civilized center. In the second chapter, I introduce Kinpusen’s pantheon, focusing on its king, Zaō. Resolutely local, Zaō and the other mountain gods embodied the combinatory quality of the entire mountain cult: they mixed the attributes of buddhas and kami, while simultaneously exemplifying ideals associated with Daoism. In this respect, Kinpusen stands as a vivid example of the twin processes of indigenization and Buddhicization that have marked the spread of Buddhism throughout Asia and around the world. Chapter 3 centers on the concept of ritual regimes as a theoretical model of the religious practices of Heian elites. In ritual regimes, the most eminent nobles and royals used integrated sets of sites, rites, and texts to strengthen their rule and display their righteousess. Ritual regimes were shaped by the
twin dynamics of emulation and competition. Thus, when Kinpusen became the signature pilgrimage site for the Fujiwara regents during the eleventh century, the mountain took on great political significance. Conversely, this meant that it was bound to become a victim of political change during the *insei*, as the retired emperors sought to establish distinctive ritual regimes of their own.

Based on close readings of eleventh-century pilgrims’ journals and votive texts, part 2 focuses on pilgrims’ engagement with the real mountain and their contributions to Kinpusen as a real-and-imagined place. To date, very little information on what Heian-period pilgrims actually did has been available to Western-language readers; here, I reconstruct the protocol of the journey to Kinpusen, including the process of sutra burial. Chapter 4 maps out the ritualized itinerary followed by the regents Fujiwara no Michinaga and Moromichi. Chapter 5 takes up the segmented, complementary rites that they conducted at the summit. Whereas pilgrims undertook sutra burials to advance personal religious agendas, they paired these observances with conventional dedications of huge corpora of scriptures, which operated as rites of state protection.

In chapter 6, I tell the story of Retired Emperor Shirakawa’s 1092 journey to Kinpusen, which paradoxically contributed to both Kinpusen’s institutional growth and destabilization. On the one hand, Shirakawa laid the groundwork for direct patronage by building, staffing, and endowing a cloister in the Yoshinoyama area, which, unlike the summit of Kinpusen, was habitable year-round. On the other, his resolute promotion of mountain monks and his involvement in Kinpusen’s administration provoked Kōfukuji’s partisans, who were convinced that by rights it was they who ought to control Kinpusen’s affairs. This chapter is based on the above-mentioned journal fragment, which provides the most detailed extant record of ritual protocols at the peak. Analysis of this source illuminates the details of the pilgrimage process as well as the complex friction between Shirakawa, Kōfukuji, and Kinpusen.

Part 3 examines the religious culture of Kinpusen in the wake of the eleventh-century boom in elite pilgrimage. Chapter 7 chronicles the wars of 1093–94, which resulted in Kinpusen’s defeat and subsequent integration into Kōfukuji’s power bloc. This conflict profoundly
affected the mountain’s religious culture. Although Kinpusen monks violently resisted Kōfukuji’s suzerainty until 1145, during the second half of the twelfth century the two institutions entered a phase of comparative amity, with a sizeable portion of Kinpusen’s community adopting Kōfukuji’s interests as their own. Around the same time, however, proponents of mountain practice also sought to resist assimilation through textual strategies. These are taken up in chapter 8, which analyzes texts produced during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries about Kinpusen and the broader Ōmine region. Known as *engi*, these materials combine origin narratives with litanies of deities and sites. They construct lineages, codify rituals, and define territory. Importantly, although *engi* about Ōmine testify to a concerted effort by partisans of the southern mountains to assert their own, distinctive religious identity in reaction to their newly subordinate institutional status, the texts themselves were clearly disseminated through networks dominated by power-bloc institutions. This juxtaposition points to the hybrid, multivocal quality of *engi* and their representations of the Ōmine region.

In the epilogue, I conclude that the ruptures of the twelfth century, followed by integration into the sphere of the post-Genpei Nara revival, created the matrix from which Shugendō groups emerged in the late Kamakura period. Most twentieth-century research on Shugendō was conducted in the field of folklore studies, wherein the existence of religious practitioners known as “those who lie down in the mountains” (*yamabushi*) has been loosely equated with the existence of Shugendō. Although literary and historical sources do show that *yamabushi* were common figures on the Heian-period religious scene, these men were not organized into discrete groups with their own hierarchies, doctrines, and sectarian consciousness. As historical research during the past two decades has shown, discourse in which Shugendō figured as an independent “Way” (*dō, michi*) came into use around the year 1300. Thus, although it is possible to trace out connections between Shugendō and Heian-period pilgrimage to Kinpusen, it is important to recognize that the two phenomena belong to two, very different historical contexts.

Before turning to the ways in which Heian-period men and women imagined Kinpusen, it is worth noting that their practices and mine are
in some ways parallel. The four processes of walking, writing, reading, and remembering are at the core of this book. For Heian pilgrims, these came together in the deposit and discovery of traces. They have also been fundamental to the research and writing for this book, which is, after all, a trace that I have left, with both my writing hands and my walking feet.