



Age of Eruptions

— Origins of Fujisan worship —

In ancient times, villages and ceremonial sites were created among the foothills in places providing the best views of Fujisan. During the 8th and 9th centuries, people believed that the repeated eruptions represented the anger of the god of fire, Asama no Okami. To placate this god, the custom of "Yohai" (worship from afar) was created, with people looking up at and worshipping Fujisan from the foothills, and many places of worship were built

1-6 Kitaguchi Hongu Fuji Sengen-jinja Shrine, 7 Yamamiya Sengen-jinja Shrine. Repeated large-scale eruptions of Fujisan occurred beginning from the year 800. It is believed that shrines worshipping Asama no Okami such as 2 Fujisan Hongu Sengen Taisha Shrine, 7 Kawaguchi Asama-jinja Shrine, and 8 Fuji Omuro Sengen-jinja Shrine were constructed in the foothills to pacify the mountain.



Man'yōshū

This is the oldest existing collection of poems in Japan. In it, the poet Yamabe no Akahito describes the beauty of Fujisan: "When from Tago shore / We rowed far out and turned to look / Pure white it was, / The towering cone of Fuji / Gleaming under fallen snow." (Tago: a coastal area near Yu-Kanbara in Shimizu District, Shizuoka Prefecture)

Taketori Monogatari (The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter)

This is the oldest example of narrative literature in Japan. In it, the Japanese emperor takes the elixir of immortality which he received from Princess Kaguya and burns it on the highest mountain in Japan, inadvertently making the mountain immortal (Fujisan in Japanese, later becoming Fuji).

Shotoku Taishi Eden (1069)

This series of hanging scrolls depicts the life of Prince Shotoku, who ruled Japan around the 6th century. One scene shows the prince riding his beloved steed on the slopes of Fujisan.

Inspired by the artist's idea, the artist Shōkoku Taishi Eden, 1069. Collection of the Tokyo National Museum



Shugen-do priests and the Fujisan ascent

— Popularization of Fujisan worship —

Volcanic activity on Fujisan subsided in the 12th century. Fujisan became a place for mountain worship, and practitioners of the Shugen-do Buddhist faith began climbing to the peak to gain spiritual power from the gods of the mountain. 1-1 Mountaintop worship sites) One among them was the ascetic Buddhist priest Matsudai, who is said to have climbed Fujisan numerous times as part of his spiritual practices. It is said that Matsudai constructed Danichi Temple at the peak and Fujisan Kobo Temple (now 3 Murayama Sengen-jinja Shrine) at Murayama in the southern foothills, both of which became centers for the religious training of many priests. Beginning from the 14th century, ordinary believers called "Doja" came to make worship ascents of the mountain, guided by the Shugen-do priests. A number of ascending routes starting from the Sengen-jinja shrines

3 Suyama Sengen-jinja Shrine, 4 Fuji Sengen-jinja Shrine, and others) were constructed. 1-2 Omiya-Murayama Ascending Route, 1-3 Suyama Ascending Route, 1-4 Subashiri Ascending Route, 1-5 Yoshida Ascending Route), and villages were built to accommodate the Doja at each of the route starting points.



Fujisan and Miho Seikenji Temple

This ink painting portrays Fujisan, 25 Mihonomatsubara pine tree grove, and Seikenji Temple (located in Shimizu District, Shizuoka Prefecture).

Collection of Seikenji Temple

1-6



Kitaguchi Hongu Fuji Sengen-jinja Shrine

This shrine originated as a place to worship Asama no Okami from afar. With the expansion of the Fuji-ko faith, it subsequently grew as the starting point for the Yoshida Ascending Route.



Kawaguchi Asama-jinja Shrine

This Sengen-jinja shrine is said to have been built following an eruption in the late 8th century. The region of Kawaguchi prospered as a post station on the Misaka Road, a route built by the government to connect the capital and the Kofu Basin.

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Mountaintop worship sites

When the worship ascents of the Shugen-do adherents to the sites of worship were constructed along the rim of the crater at the mountain's peak. Worshippers also performed the "Oshi" ritual walk to the eight ridges around the crater, thought to represent the eight petals of the lotus flower that symbolizes Buddhist paradise.



Murayama Sengen-jinja Shrine

This shrine was the starting point of the Shugen-do faith that originated with the Buddhist priest Matsudai. This ascending route that started from Kitaguchi Hongu Sengen Taisha Shrine and passed through Murayama Sengen-jinja Shrine on the way to the peak was used by large numbers of Shugen-do adherents.



Suyama Sengen-jinja Shrine

This shrine was the starting point for the Suyama Area Mt. Fuji Route, which suffered major damage during the Hoei Eruption (1707).



Fuji Sengen-jinja Shrine

This shrine is said to have been built in 807 following the Enryaku Eruption. The Subashiri Ascending Route was used for pilgrimages by Fuji-ko adherents.

2



Fujisan Hongu Sengen Taisha Shrine

This shrine is the headquarters for the Sengen-jinja shrines in all parts of Japan. Initially built to worship Asama no Okami and pacify the erupting volcano, it was moved to its current location in the year 805.



Fuji Omuro Sengen-jinja Shrine

This is thought to be the earliest Sengen-jinja shrine built on Fujisan. It consisted of a main shrine that was a center for Shugen-do and Fuji-ko worshippers, located at the 2nd station on the Yoshida Ascending Route, and an auxiliary shrine on the shores of Lake Kawaguchiko.



Omiya-Murayama Ascending Route

This route was the starting point of the Shugen-do faith that originated with the Buddhist priest Matsudai. This ascending route that started from Kitaguchi Hongu Sengen Taisha Shrine and passed through Murayama Sengen-jinja Shrine on the way to the peak was used by large numbers of Shugen-do adherents.



Suyama Ascending Route

This route was the starting point for the Suyama Area Mt. Fuji Route, which suffered major damage during the Hoei Eruption (1707).



Subashiri Ascending Route

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3



Yamamiya Sengen-jinja Shrine

This shrine is the predecessor of the Kitaguchi Hongu Sengen Taisha Shrine. In place of the usual main shrine building, a facility for worshipping Fujisan from afar was built, and was used for prayers to ward off the fires of Fujisan.



Kofu Station

This station is the starting point of the Shugen-do faith that originated with the Buddhist priest Matsudai. This ascending route that started from Kitaguchi Hongu Sengen Taisha Shrine and passed through Murayama Sengen-jinja Shrine on the way to the peak was used by large numbers of Shugen-do adherents.



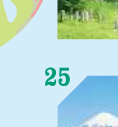
Yoshida Ascending Route

Beginning from Kitaguchi Hongu Fuji Sengen-jinja Shrine, this remains the only ascending route that allows climbers to walk all the way from the foothills to the peak.



Mihonomatsubara pine tree grove

The beautiful view of Fujisan from this place has been an influence on many artists. It appears in numerous collections of Japanese poems beginning with the Manyōshū, and is also the scene of the Noh play "Hagoromo" (feather robe) and the subject of many Ukiyo-e prints.



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5,10



"Oshi" Lodging Houses

These facilities provided meals and accommodation to Doja and Fuji-ko adherents when they made worship ascents. The house of the Oe family (10) is closed to the public.



Oshino Hakai springs

These eight springs are fed by the spring water of Fujisan. Worshipped by people since ancient times, these eight springs together were honored with the title "the eight lakes at the base of Fujisan". They consist of Wakuike Pond, Nagonike Pond, Kagamike Pond, Choehike Pond, Shobuke Pond, Sokoroshike Pond, Okamake Pond, and Deguchike Pond.



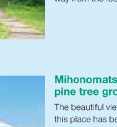
Lake Saiko

This lake is one of the five lakes at the base of Fujisan, which include the Fuji Five Lakes.



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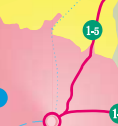
Hitoana Fuji-ko Iseki

The lava tunnel is said to be where the gods of Fujisan resided. It was used as a holy site to the Fuji-ko faith as an important place in the religious training of Hasegawa Kakugyo.



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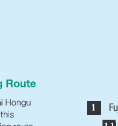
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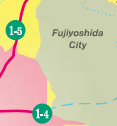
Funatsu lava tree molds

Among the lava tree molds formed when flowing lava engulfed a tree, the ones which resemble a human form are called "Onians". One religious practice of the Fuji-ko adherents was the "Churanaguri" pilgrimages to these sites. The inside of the main cave of Yoshida lava tree molds (22) is not open to the public.



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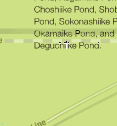
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Mihonomatsubara pine tree grove

The beautiful view of Fujisan from this place has been an influence on many artists. It appears in numerous collections of Japanese poems beginning with the Manyōshū, and is also the scene of the Noh play "Hagoromo" (feather robe) and the subject of many Ukiyo-e prints.



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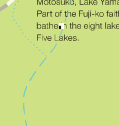
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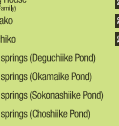
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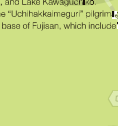
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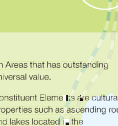
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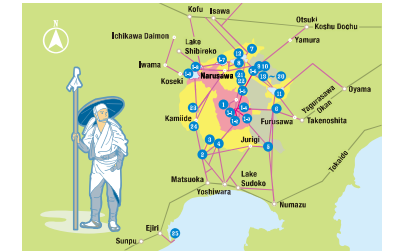


Fuji-ko and holy site pilgrimages

— Flourishing of Fujisan worship —

The "Fuji-ko" faith of Fujisan worship originated in the 17th century with Hasegawa Kakugyo, a priest who trained at Fujisan. A new religious practice emerged, with Fuji-ko adherents worshipping Fujisan as they made pilgrimages to the places where Kakugyo had trained, including 12 Hitoana Fuji-ko Iseki, 25 Shiraito no Taki waterfalls, 27 Lake Saiko, 28 Lake Shojiko, 29 Lake Motosuko, 31 Lake Yamanakako, 32 Lake Kawaguchiko, 33-35 Oshino Hakai springs, 36 Funatsu lava tree molds, and 37 Yoshida lava tree molds.

In the 18th century, the Fuji-ko faith spread explosively among the general population. The pilgrimage routes to the various spiritual sites became roads that connected the Sengen-jinja shrines in the foothills and other famous sites and historical ruins which became Component Parts of the Fujisan World Heritage, and these roads were traveled by large numbers of Doja. 9-10 "Oshi" Lodging Houses were built at the starting points of the worship ascents to house the "Oshi" who guided and took care of the Doja.



Map of pilgrimage routes to Fujisan in the mid 19th century

The Fujisan pilgrimage routes were not a series of single paths, but rather a number of different routes created according to the purpose of travel. This map shows the many mid-19th century pilgrimage routes that were constructed as the Fuji-ko faith flourished.



This series of Ukiyo-e prints shows the 53 post towns along the Tokaido Route, and depicts the beauty of Fujisan as seen from different places in Japan.