In the early modern period, there were two major Shugendō branches: Honzanha and Tōzanha, respectively affiliated with Tendai and Shingon Buddhist monzeki temples, Shōgoin and Sanbōin. By order of the Tokugawa regime, in 1613 most regional Shugendō networks had to identify themselves with one of these (Miyake 2005, 69–70). Honzanha has received far greater attention than Tōzanha in the scholarship on Shugendō. In order to expand our knowledge on the latter, this essay focuses predominantly on Tōzanha. The institutional history of early-modern Tōzanha is distinctive; however, some of the greater characteristics also apply to Honzanha Shugendō.

In this period, shugenja settled in villages and were treated as peasant cultivators in official census documents until the late eighteenth century (Hardacre 2002, 44; Kiyohara 1932, 524). While Honzanha had seen much growth in the late medieval period into the mid-seventeenth century, the expansion of Tōzanha began only in the early part of the seventeenth century (Miyake 2005, 70), when Tōzanha won independence from Honzanha oversight. Tōzanha was able to grow in the Kantō region following a dispute that challenged Honzanha’s right to charge licensing fees for the performance of certain rituals (Sekiguchi 2000, 33–48; Sekiguchi 2008). Many local shugenja in the Kantō region probably chose to affiliate with Tōzanha to escape the fees and restrictions imposed by the Honzanha.

In the early seventeenth century, Tōzanha became affiliated with Sanbōin, a Shingon monzeki temple at Daigoji in Kyōto. From the late medieval period, before Sanbōin’s eventual connection with Tōzanha Shugendō, Daigoji was home to yamabushi who wore special robes emulating Fudō Myōō and who were considered low-ranking monastics providing guard functions for the temple. They were not regarded

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1 Haguro Shugendō remained independent.
as fully on par with other Buddhist clerics, but they were also unrelated to Tōzanha (Sekiguchi 2000, 35–37, 43).

During the late medieval period, twelve shōdaisendatsu 正大先達 temples in central western Japan controlled Tōzanha shugenja through lineage-based networks in each province. They had initially sought affiliation with Sanbōin to gain leverage in legal disputes with the Honzan branch and its monzeki leader, Shōgoin. Eventually, however, Sanbōin began competing with the shōdaisendatsu for authority. Ranks of regional shugenja were awarded annually at a gathering in Ōmine. Initially, the Shingon temple merely approved the rankings awarded by the shōdaisendatsu but eventually began to grant its own independent licenses to shugenja.

In 1700, Sanbōin merged the abbotship of a Shugendō temple in Edo with one at Yoshino that was the resting place of the purported sectarian founder Shōbō 聖宝. The resulting temple, Edo Hōkakuji ほっかくじ, served as an administrative representative (furegashira 触頭) and liaison with the bakufu in Edo and counterbalanced the power of the shōdaisendatsu temples (Miyake 2001, 31–32; Miyake 2005, 70–73). During the late seventeenth century, Sanbōin’s influence extended to doctrinal and practice-related matters. The Sanbōin monzeki Kōken 高賢 (1639–1707) is particularly noteworthy. Kōken participated in two nyūbu retreats on Ōmine and compiled a prayer manual of Tōzanha Shugendō, the Tōryū denju kirigamishū 当流伝授切紙集 (Nakada 2008, 31).

Once settled in villages, many shugenja served as priests at tutelary village shrines and officiated during cyclical village rituals to grant protection from agricultural pests and ensure adequate rainfall. They also conducted life-cycle rituals for children; provided cures for illnesses through spells, incantations, exorcisms, and divination; and performed various other rituals for this-worldly benefits. Furthermore, shugenja pursued their ascetic training not only in the Ōmine mountain range but also at regional sacred sites. They distributed talismans and items such as medicines and tea from regional shrines and temples with which they were affiliated, as well as from the Ōmine Mountains. They also acted as pilgrimage guides for villagers (Miyake 2005, 80–85).

According to the sectarian regulations from 1802, Tōzanha shugenja entered their religious careers as disciples before the age of twenty. They took the tonsure (tokudo 得度), shaved their heads, vowed to follow the five or ten Buddhist precepts, and adopted a religious name (bōgō 坊号) (Shoshū kaikyū, 2:441). Diligence in observing mountain