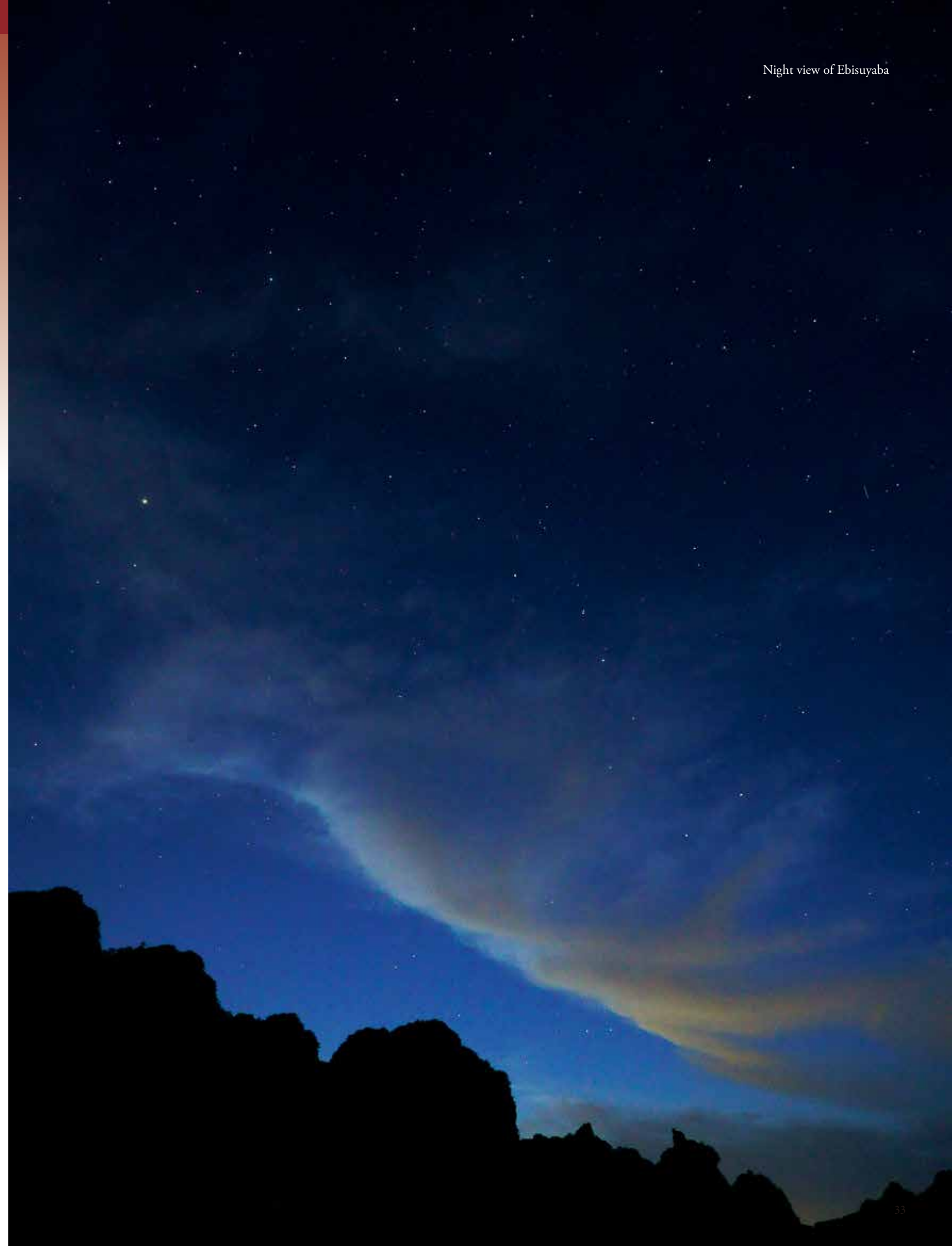
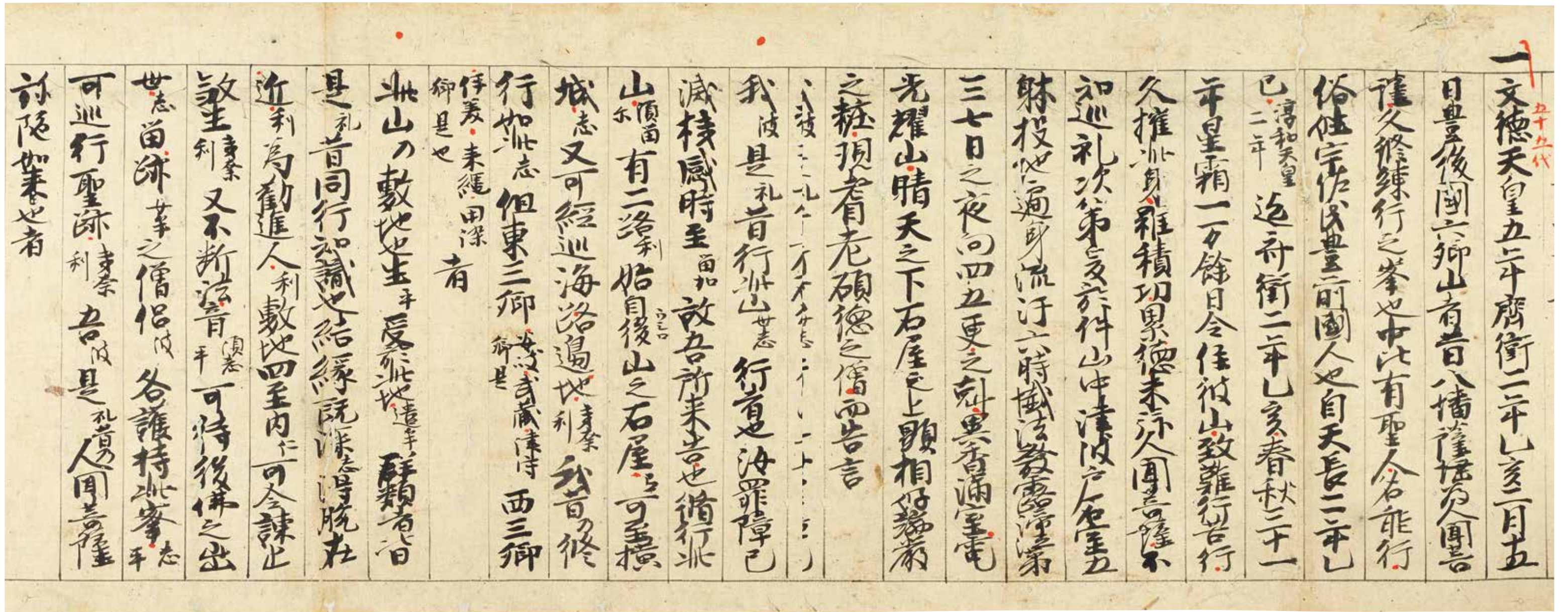


## Chapter 2

# Prayer at the Rokugo-manzan Temples

The prayers of Rokugo-manzan began at the base of sheer, rocky mountains. Seeking a venue for their ascetic training, the priests of ancient Usa moved ever further into the steep mountains and deep valleys of the Kunisaki Peninsula. Refined temple buildings such as the Odo (main hall), Fukiji Temple, a National Treasure, and the Buddhist statues housed there offer a glimpse into their prayerful devotion. In the late Heian Period (11th-12th century), when the power of the laws and truths of Buddha declined and led to a time of turmoil, Rokugo-manzan flourished. Sutra mounds were constructed throughout the Kunisaki Peninsula, a sacred place where the laws and truths of Buddha were safeguarded, to transmit those to future generations.





Tangible cultural property designated by Oita Pref.  
**Collection of the Oracles of Hachiman Usagu Shrine, Vol. 11**  
 Muromachi Period  
 14th–15th c.  
 Ink on paper  
 H: 28.7; W: 771.8  
 Hachiman Nadagu Shrine, Kitsuki City

This collection of documents depicting the history and lore of Usa Jingu Shrine was compiled by Jin-un, the shrine's priest, over his 23 years starting in 1290. The originals no longer exist, but all 16 volumes remain in their entirety in these copies from Hachiman Nadagu Shrine, which date back to the Muromachi Period.

Volumes 3 through 12 chronologically record divine revelations from the deity Hachiman. Of these, Volume 11 depicts the

origins of the sacred mountain training. In 855, a monk named Nogyo from Mirokuji Temple received the Rokugo-manzan pilgrimage route from the Ninmon Bosatsu in a cavern in Mt. Tsuwado (in modern-day Kitsuki City). This was an edition from the late Kamakura Period, and while it should be treated as lore, it suggests that the monks of Mirokuji Temple were instrumental in establishing Rokugo-manzan as a sacred place.

National Treasure

## Odo (Main Hall) of Fukiji Temple

Fukiji Temple is a typical example of an old temple in the Rokugo-manzan culture of the Kunisaki Peninsula. The Odo (main hall), centered around a *garan*, or monastic training center, was built in the 12th century, making it the oldest wooden building in Kyushu. The government has designated it as a National Treasure. Together with the Phoenix Hall at Byodoin Temple in Uji, Kyoto Prefecture and the Konjikido Golden Hall at Chusonji Temple in

Hiraizumi, Iwate Prefecture, the main hall of Fukiji Temple is a prototypical example of a Heian Period Amida-do Hall. The combination of the gently curved roof with the straight lines of the pillars and wall panels evokes a simple yet well-balanced elegance. Inside of the main hall, a seated statue of Amitabha is enshrined on the *shumidan* altar as the principal image, and the walls throughout the hall feature bright murals emanating from behind the altar.

Visitors can view the inside of the hall, and a scale model of the main hall depicting what it looked like when it was first built is on display at the Oita Prefectural Museum of History. The now-faded murals have been faithfully reproduced, allowing visitors to experience what the people of the time thought heaven (known as the "Pure Land" of Amitabha) looked like.



Tangible cultural property designated by Oita Pref.

### Seated Amitabha with Standing Avalokiteshvara and Mahasthamaprapta

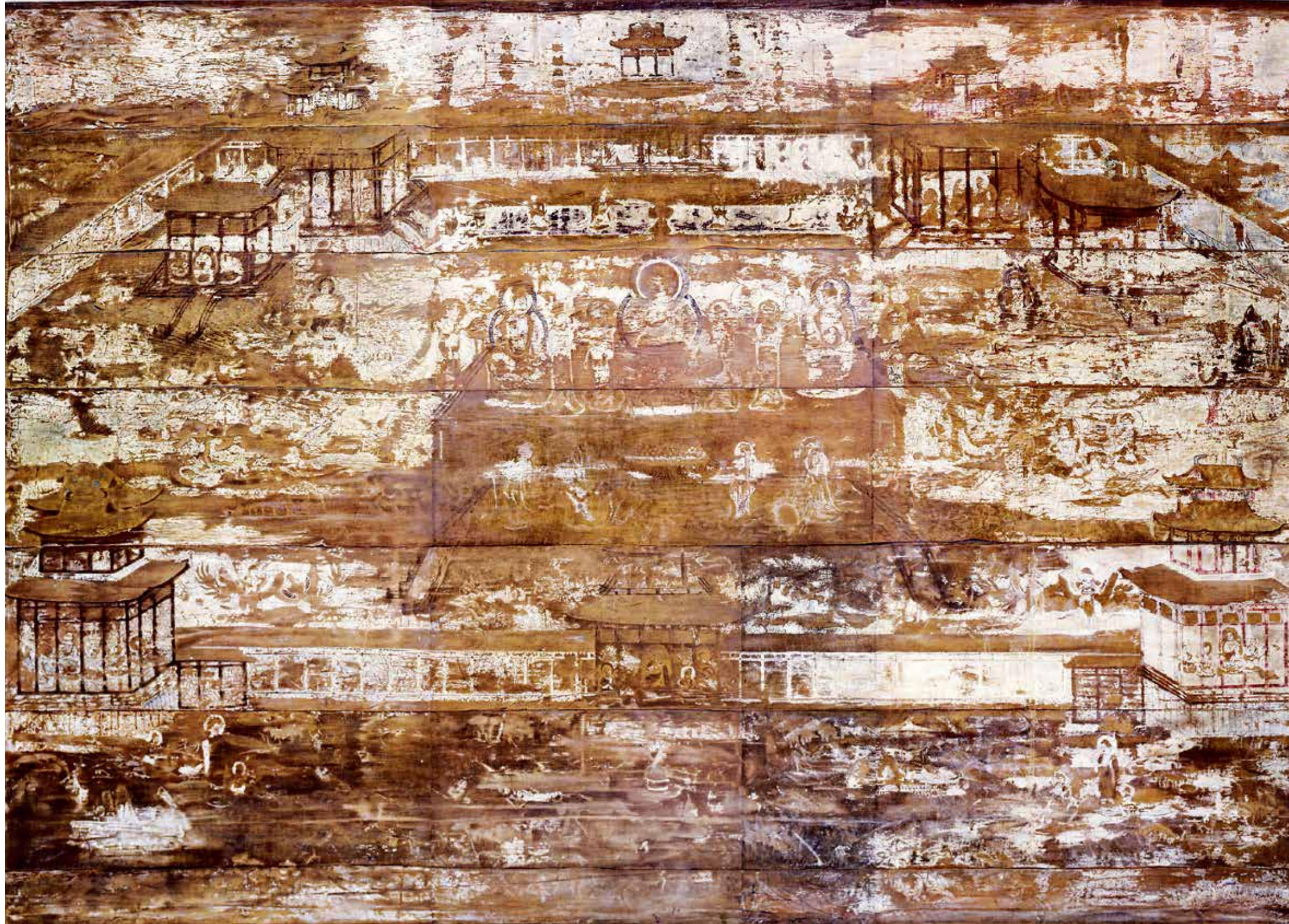
Heian Period  
12th c.

Wood with lacquer, gold leaf  
Amitabha statue - H: 87.6  
Avalokiteshvara statue - H: 103.0  
Mahasthamaprapta statue - H: 102.5  
Fukiji Temple, Bungotakada City

This statue depicts a seated Amitabha deep in meditation. On the left and right stand Avalokiteshvara and Mahasthamaprapta, respectively, and each is holding a lotus. All three statues have gentle, round faces, with long, narrow eyes that are slightly downcast. The detailing is intricate, as seen in the sloping shoulders, the body composed of gentle curves and bulges, the delicate texture of the clothing, and the shallowly carved fine wrinkles, and it is impossible to find any imperfections. These statues are

thought to have been created by a highly skilled sculptor of Buddhist images who incorporated the traditional Kyoto style around the mid-12th century, about the same time that the main hall of Fukiji Temple, now a National Treasure, was erected. These three statues were the principal image of the main hall of Fukiji Temple until 1918. They have been enshrined in the grand hall since being relocated there in 1949.





**Present-state Copy, Painting on the Wall of  
the Pure Land of Amitabha behind  
the Principal Image of Odo, Fukiji Temple**

Showa Period  
1981  
Color on paper  
H: 174.5; W: 247.5  
Oita Prefectural Museum of History, Usa City

Kyushu's oldest wooden structure, the Odo (main hall) at Fukiji Temple, is thought to have been built during the Heian Period (12th century). Its interior walls and columns depict numerous Buddhas and the worlds in which they lived, and this replica reproduces some of those. The mural illustrates the Pure Land of Amitabha, which was considered to be located in the west, and was executed on a board wall behind the principal image (Amida Triad). Despite damage during the more than 800 years that have passed since its creation, bodhisattvas can be seen surrounding the main image in the middle of a space surrounded by multi-story buildings. It is thought to have been painted by a painter from Kyoto, and the round, gentle countenance of the Buddha communicates the refined grace of the Heian Period. The Odo depicts the Pure Land to which nobles of the era aspired, making it a rare relic that expresses the intimate relationship between this area and Kyoto.



Reproduction copy



Important cultural property  
**Standing Acalanatha**  
Heian Period  
11th c.  
Wood with polychromy  
Statue-H:252.7  
Makiodo Temple, Bungotakada City





Originally enshrined at a temple built in connection with the development of the Usa Hachimangu *shoen* manors, these statues represent children following Acalanatha (a large standing statue, see the image in pp.40-41), who is dispersing earthly desires with an angry expression. The principal portion of each statue was carved from a single cypress tree, while the arms and legs were made separately and subsequently attached. The clothing, which consists of detailed, belt-like cloths on the upper body and wrap-around skirts, is simple but incorporates pleats with a three-dimensional appearance. The two statues exhibit different character: Whereas the standing Kimkara has its hands joined in prayer with a tranquil expression, the standing Cetaka wears an expression that suggests it is enduring something unpleasant while biting its lower lip and wrapping its left hand around its body. It is believed that both pieces, along with the statue of Acalanatha, were made during the late Heian Period by the atelier of Jocho, a leader of Buddhist sculptors in Kyoto of the time.

Important cultural property  
**Standing Cetaka**  
Heian Period  
11th c.  
Wood with polychromy  
Statue - H: 129.5  
Makiodo Temple, Bungotakada City



Important cultural property  
**Standing Kimkara**  
Heian Period  
11th c.  
Wood with polychromy  
Statue - H: 125.8  
Makiodo Temple, Bungotakada City



This building, the former main hall of Makiodo Temple, originally housed nine Buddhist statues.

Tangible cultural property designated by Oita Pref.

### Standing Amitabha

Heian Period  
10th–11th c.  
Wood with polychromy  
Statue - H: 156.5  
Rurikoji Temple, Kunisaki City

This is one of the oldest wooden statues of the Kunisaki Peninsula. Nearly the entire statue was carved from a single block of Japanese nutmeg, and the inside of the statue was not hollowed out at all. The head is small and the waist is high, so proportionally, the part from the chest to the abdomen is thicker. The overlapping Y-shaped folds on the front of the statue emphasize the volume of the abdomen and the thighs. A visual effect evoked from the alternating wide and tapering folds is also evident from the left arm to the abdomen.

The upper eyelids hang low over the eyes, and the eyes, nose, and mouth are all centrally positioned, evoking a dignified facial expression. The head features relatively large spiral-shaped curls of hair, and the bulge at the top of the head, which is typical of Buddha is gentle. Wooden statues with these kinds of features are prevalent on the eastern side of the Kunisaki Peninsula.



Tangible cultural property designated by Oita Pref.

### Seated Bhaisajyaguru

Heian Period  
12th c.  
Plain wood (currently)  
Statue - H: 96.1  
Iwatoji Temple, Kunisaki City

This statue of Bhaisajyaguru is holding its right hand with the palm out, a gesture meaning “fear not,” while the left hand, which rests on its knee, is holding a medicine jar. This statue is considerably

weathered, having enshrined in a cavern for many years, but this only heightens its appeal. The large spiral-shaped curls of hair, which bulges upward, is shallowly carved. The eyelids hang low over the long, narrow eyes, and the edges of the mouth are closed tightly, evoking a dignified facial expression. The folds of the robe are shallow, which is typical of the style of the 12th century. The well-balanced statue was carved to fit well within a triangular frame.

Iwatoji Temple is home to many cultural properties, including the stone stupas (important cultural property) built in 1283 and the stone guardian kings created in 1478. Furthermore, it is home to the Shujo-onie ritual, an important intangible folk cultural property, which is held every other year on the seventh day of the Lunar New Year.





Tangible cultural property designated by Oita Pref.  
**Votive Plaque of Cintamanicakra**  
 Kamakura Period  
 13th c.  
 Gilt bronze  
 Dia.: 29.0  
 Jinguji Temple, Kunisaki City

Hanging round plaque, or *kakebotoke*, are a uniquely Japanese type of artwork that was hung on a pillar or wall and worshipped. The form developed based on influences such as esoteric Buddhist icons during a time in which a variety of ancient indigenous faiths and Buddhism were coming together, and by the late Heian Period large numbers were being produced and

dedicated throughout Japan. Although Kyushu is considered to have had fewer *kakebotoke* than other areas of the country, it is known that an especially large number of the pieces had been passed down at Jinguji Temple partway up Mt. Otake in Kunisaki City in the Rokugo-manzan region, including not only this piece, but also one featuring the Thousand Armed

Avalokiteshvara and writing in ink dating to 1292. These *kakebotoke* were originally enshrined at Takenogongensha Shrine at the peak of Mt. Otake, and the series of pieces of which they are a part has important implications for our understanding of the syncretism of the Shinto and Buddhist faiths at the time.

1st plate



Front



Back

36th plate



Front



Back

Important cultural property  
**Bronze Plates Engraved with the Lotus Sutra**

by Kino Shigenaga  
 Heian Period  
 1141  
 Bronze  
 H: 21.3; W: 17.9  
 H: 22.0; W: 17.9  
 Choanji Temple, Bungotakada City

The act of copying the Lotus Sutra and other Buddhist scriptures and burying them in the ground as a way to transmit them to later generations was practiced widely as a religious activity in the late Heian Period, when the Buddhist faith flourished. In some cases, verses from such scriptures were engraved on materials that were more robust than paper. Examples include talc sutras, which were made by engraving verses on a soft mineral known as talc that had been carved into the form of a tablet; pebble sutras, which were made

by writing verses in ink with a brush on pebbles (rocks from riverbeds); tile sutras, which were made by engraving verses on clay tiles; and bronze plate sutras, which were made by engraving verses on cast bronze plates. The last is extremely rare, and three examples from Kyushu are the best known (from Rokugo-manzan, Mt. Hiko, and Mt. Kubote). These bronze plates with engraved Lotus Sutra were excavated from the mountain behind Choanji Temple, one of the leading Tendai temples in the Rokugo-manzan region.





Important cultural property  
**Side Plates of Bronze Case**  
 by Kino Shigenaga  
 Heian Period  
 1141  
 Cast bronze  
 H: 21.3; W: 18.8  
 H: 21.3; W: 11.7  
 Choanji Temple, Bungotakada City

Choanji Temple is one of the leading Tendai temples in the Rokugo-manzan region. These plates were kept by the temple along with the Bronze plates engraved with Lotus Sutra (see the image in p.47). Originally they were part of a case in which those plates were stored, but today only the side plates survive.

Kyoto, in equal proportions. The name of the artist, Kino Shigenaga, also appears in documents recording the creation of a pair of bronze plate sutras, one dating from 1141 that was excavated at Mt. Kubote and another dating from 1145 that was excavated at Mt. Hiko, suggesting that this piece was associated with the fabrication and dedication of a series of bronze plate sutras at these three mountains. In addition to their status as a Tendai Buddhist icon that typifies Kyushu during the Heian Period, the plates comprise an extremely important artifact that highlights the strong links between Rokugo-manzan and Usa.

The plates bear several images of distinctive Tendai Buddhism. Engraved inscriptions accompanying those images make it clear that the piece was associated with Iwashimizu Hachimangu Shrine in Kyoto and that the bronze from which the plates were cast was sourced from Kyushu and

Arya-Avalokitesvara



Sahasrabhuja



Ekadasamukha

Cundi



Hayagriva



Cintamanicakra

### Sutra Containers

Heian Period  
 12th c.; from the sutra mound in Tokoji Temple  
 Bronze; ceramic  
 Container No. 4 - H: 20.8  
 Container No. 9 - H: 37.2  
 Container picked up on ground No. 1 - H: 25.6  
 Container picked up on ground No. 2 - H: 27.5  
 Kitsuki City Board of Education

It was believed that after the death of the Buddha, the laws and truths of Buddha would be lost, and an era of turmoil would ensue, so in the middle of the Heian Period, many sutra mounds—that is, sites where sutras were buried underground to preserve the laws and truths of Buddha into posterity—were built. The Kunisaki Peninsula is known as one of the areas of Japan with a large number of sutra mounds. The sutras were stored in Sutra containers, or

*kyozutsu*. These containers were made of either bronze or ceramic, and they come in many shapes and sizes. The ceramic containers include those made specifically for housing sutras as well as repurposed jars. The repurposed jars were sealed by placing a bronze mirror over the opening.

Tokoji Temple is home to sutra mounds that house many sutra containers, and a rare example of a site where sutra con-

tainers were excavated from beneath the ground. Tokoji Temple, one of the temples of Rokugo-manzan, had a massive garan, or monastic training center, but it was burned down in the Sengoku Period. Today, only the rebuilt main hall remains. Very few records about Tokoji Temple remain, so the artifacts unearthed from the sutra mounds of Tokoji Temple are an invaluable resource for understanding the temple's history.



Sutra container picked up on ground No.1



Sutra container picked up on ground No.2



Lid of sutra container No.4 (Bronze mirror)



Lid of sutra container No.9 (Bronze mirror)



Sutra container No.4



Sutra container No.9



Important cultural landscape

## Rural Landscape of Tashibunoshō Osaki

Tashibunoshō manor was one of the 18 private manors (Hommishō Juhakkashō), a patron of Usa Jingu Shrine. The manor was governed by the Tashibu family, whose members served as Shinto priests at the shrine, and the deity Hachiman continues

to be enshrined there to this day.

A curvilinear country landscape on gently sloping land could be said to embody the true spirit of Japan, a legacy that has been passed down unbroken from ancient

times. The Buddhist culture that typified the Rokugo-manzan region, as seen at Fukiji Temple, the Makidō Temple, and the Kumano Magaibutsu Stone Buddhas, flourished in this scenic mountain landscape.