Rise and Fall of the Administrative Temple of Ōta-no-Shō
in Bingo Province

—History, Priests and Cultural Properties of Ima-Kōyasan—

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In the 2nd year of Eiman (1166), Ōta-no-Shō in Bingo Province (present Hiroshima Prefecture) was donated to Ex-Emperor Goshirakawa-In by Taira-no-shigeihira, the son of Kiyomori. Later, in the 2nd year of Bunji (1186), the manor was donated by Goshirakawa-in to the Konpon-Daitōryō of Kōyasan, and remained a manor of Kōyasan until the Muromachi Period. The area of the manor’s rice fields, at the time it was donated to Kōyasan, was about 613 chōbu (= approx. 1,500 acres), and the manor produced more than 1,838 koku (1 koku = about 180 liters) of rice as land rent.

A large number of contemporary historical documents concerning Ōta-no-shō in Bingo Province have been handed down at the Kōyasan Temple in Kishū (present Wakayama Prefecture). Since the beginning of the 1900s, many theses have been published on the management of the manor and on its cultural properties. However, few studies, except a few on its cultural properties and precious natural monuments, have been made into the Ima-Kōyasan, which was in character the administrative temple of Ōta-no-shō. The author, in this paper, looks at the history of the rise and fall of the Ima-Kōyasan, which is designated as a place of historic interest by Hiroshima Prefecture, and gives a brief description of the priests who lived there, and of its cultural properties.

Local document of the Middle Ages relating to the Ima-Kōyasan were destroyed in successive disasters. This being the case, elucidation had to depend on only the Kōyasan documents, other documents handed down outside of the temple, a small number of carved inscriptions or records in Chinese ink on cultural properties, and Engi (history) of the temple written later on. This scarceness of materials made a thorough investigation difficult.

In this report, the author first retraced the history of the foundation, prosperity and decline of the Ima-Kōyasan, then discussed the priests living in the temple, and gave a brief description of its cultural properties. At the end of the paper are included as data a chronological table of the history of the Ima-Kōyasan, a list of successive chief priests, and other ancient records handed down at the Ima-Kōyasan.