

Worshipping at the Summit

Goraigo* and *Goraiko

***Goraigo*: The Appearance of Amida Buddha**

When conditions are right, a climber looking across the summit of Mt. Fuji with the sunrise at their back will see a gigantic human-shaped apparition in the mists beyond, glowing with a rainbow-colored aura. This is a Brocken specter, a magnified shadow of the observer named after a German peak where it frequently occurs. Fuji-ko pilgrims called it *goraigo*: the appearance of Amida Buddha.

In most other contexts, the term *goraigo* implied Amida's arrival to take faithful believers to the Pure Land after their death. On Mt. Fuji, the meaning was subtly different. The peak of the mountain was considered another world, the domain of the sacred where visitors were spiritually reborn. To see Amida's shimmering form in the mists was an exceptionally moving and auspicious confirmation of that experience.

***Goraiko*: The Coming of the Light**

Brocken specters still appear on Mt. Fuji under the right conditions, but any visitor lucky enough to see one is likely to interpret it as a purely natural phenomenon. Today's climbers are generally more interested in experiencing *goraiko*, the "coming of the light" as the sun rises in the east. Like Diamond Fuji, the view of Mt. Fuji when the sun is sinking or rising exactly behind its peak, the popularity of *goraiko* shows that the sheer cosmic scale of the iconic mountain retains its fascination for modern visitors.