

SHAMANISM IN JAPAN

By WILLIAM P. FAIRCHILD

INTRODUCTION

1. Purpose. This study is an effort to determine the basis for shamanism in Japan, and to present the concepts which crystalized various elements into shamanism. It also aims at determining the nature and forms of shamanism in Japan.

2. Western Scholars and Japanese Shamanism. M. Eliade's article "Recent Works on Shamanism"¹ deals mainly with M. Eder. Eliade, however, does not mention J. M. Martin, who tried to prove the existence of shamanism in old Shintoism, and tried to connect it with Asiatic continent shamanism.² C. Haguenauer did not write on shamanism, but he pointed out a number of facts which, according to him, show similarities with Altaic shamanism.³ There is little else written on Japanese shamanism by western scholars.

3. Terms and Concepts used in this Study. This paper follows the definitions and concepts as explained by Dom. Schröder.⁴

a. Shamanism is an institutionalized, fixed-ritual bound ecstatic contact with transcendental beings in order to perform a social function. It is not a religion, but is a religious phenomenon which fits in different religions.

b. The shaman is not a priest, but may perform priestly functions. There are shamans who are not priests, and priests do not need ecstasy, guardian spirits, etc. The shaman is not a prophet. A prophet may act in ecstasy, but need not. Neither is he bound to a fixed form, and his profession differs from that of a shaman. A shaman is not a magician. By his very nature

(1) Recent Works on Shamanism, Eliade, *History of Religions*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Summer 1961, U. of Chicago, pp. 152-186, esp. pp. 180-182.

(2) *Le Shintoisme*, Religion Nationale, II, *Le Shintoisme Ancien*, Hongkong, 1927, p. 254-281. Perhaps not mentioned by Eliade because of its early date.

(3) See Note 1.

(4) *Zur Struktur des Schamanismus*, Dom. Schröder, *Anthropos*, L, 1955.

a shaman is dependent on his guardian spirit, and so the basis of shamanism is a religious one, not a magic one. A shaman is not a mystic. A mystic has other goals. Ecstasy may be found with mystics, but it is not essential for mysticism, just as a fixed form, guardian spirit, etc., are not essential for mysticism.

c. Ecstasy is absolutely necessary for shamanism. It is a special kind of ecstasy—a transformation into another personality. By ecstasy the shaman contacts transcendental beings. This ecstasy may be migratory—contact outside of the body, or possessive—transcendental beings enter the body. This produces two basic types of shamans: migrating and possessed.

d. Guardian Spirit. The shaman is called by the guardian spirit either directly or indirectly, that is by spontaneous calling or by heredity. The shaman's personality, in ecstasy, depends on the guardian spirit.

e. Training. Training may be formal or informal, consisting of learning the art and techniques of the profession—ecstasy, prayers, rituals, hierarchy of gods, etc.

f. Graduation (Initiation). This is proof that the individual is proficient and is accepted by the community.

g. Fixed Form. The shaman is bound to a fixed form. This determines his costume, paraphernalia, rites, mode of performance, etc.

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CHAPTER ONE

SURVEY OF RESEARCH ON SHAMANISM IN JAPAN

1. Research Periods.

a. General. There were two approaches to the study of shamanism. One studied shamanism, itself, and concentrated on the phenomenon outside of Japan, especially in Siberia, Manchuria, Mongolia and Korea. The other studied the internal phenomenon of "mikoism."

Actually, ecstasy was so widespread and common in Japan, and so interwoven into religious and social activities, that it hardly seemed necessary to investigate the matter. When these practices of ecstasy began to be examined they were not associated with shamanism, because that term was still unknown. Later when the term shaman was introduced into Japan, it was associated with Siberian and northern primitive peoples. Consequently, the scholars talked about "miko" and "mikoism" in Japan and shaman and shamanism outside of Japan. As a result there were two independent research activities going on, with little attempt to inter-relate these two very similar phenomena.

b. Early Research (1886-1917). During this period there was no research on shamanism outside of Japan. Also, interest in the religious phenomenon of ecstasy dropped. There were several reasons for this. Ecstatic practices which had flourished both in organized Shintoism and in the folk religion prior to the Meiji Restoration in 1868, had been prohibited by the new government. Ecstatic practices had quickly disappeared from the shrines. Outside of the shrines the practices went underground. At the same time, western sciences, theories, methods, etc., began to be introduced into Japan. The scholars turned westward and tended to forget their internal problems. Also, because the individuals who practiced ecstasy had gone underground, it was very difficult to collect material. Finally, the individuals who practiced ecstasy had sunk to a low and degrading social position and were not considered worthy of study.¹

(1) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama Taro, P. 57ff.

However, in 1913 Yanagita Kunio, writing under the pen name of Kawamura, wrote a series of articles entitled "Miko Ko" which appeared in the *Kyodo Kenkyu*. This was the beginning of the collection of material on mikoism, and soon reports began to be made on groups of mikos operating in all parts of Japan. For the most part, these early reports were descriptive and very short. They did, however, contain information on the paraphernalia, invocations, prayers, spirits and deities worshiped, methods used to go into ecstasy, functions, etc. Since, however, shamanism was unknown, there could be no comparative studies of mikoism and shamanism. Mikoism and ecstasy remained an internal problem.

c. Introduction of the Study of Shamanism (1917-1930).

Mr. Iwai, one of the pioneers in the research of shamanism, sums up the situation during this period. He says that in 1917 there were no books available on the subject in the university library. What few reports he could find were written in Russian and were pure description and not analyses of the phenomenon. In 1924 the collection of material on shamanism began to accelerate and authors like Borgoras, Jochelson, Czaplicka, Shirokogoroff, Nioradze, etc., began to be known in Japan. From that time on Japanese scholars began to produce articles on shamanism, but they were few in number and scanty in content.²

During this period, while some scholars were concerned with shamanism outside of Japan, other scholars were working on mikoism within Japan. They continued to collect information and make reports on individual mikos and groups of mikos who had operated and were operating in Japan at that time. This was a period of collecting material, with little done in comparative studies of mikoism and shamanism, nor in the scientific analysis of the phenomenon of mikoism, itself.

d. Period of Comparative Studies (1930-1941). During this period the study of shamanism was accelerated because of the political situation. Korea, Manchuria and Mongolia began to be investigated, and while these studies were not aimed at the religious phenomena, political, economic and military reports began to contain descriptions of shaman activities. Gradually, field observers began to pay more attention to shamanism.

(2) *Waga Shamanizumu Kenkyu no Kaiko*, Iwai, *Minzokugaku Kenkyu*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1949.

These reports began to uncover the similarities between shamanism and mikoism. The period of comparative studies began. In the meantime, Mr. Nakayama Taro, saw the important role which mikoism had played in the history of Japan. In 1930 he published his comprehensive history of the Japanese mikos, *Nihon Miko Shi*. This work brought the question of shamanism in the Shinto religion into focus.

The comparative studies made in this period, however, were based on the false concept that shamanism is a religion of the primitive peoples of Siberia. Consequently, the studies concentrated on the comparison of the external form of shamanism and mikoism.

e. Post War Period. (1945-). After the interruption caused by World War II, the whole field of anthropology came to life with new vigor. Important discoveries of stone tools, dated by some as "Old Stone Age" were made, and the stone circles of Northern Japan were uncovered. Interest in the process of cultural change drew attention to the internal operations of Japanese culture. New religions were springing up in Japan, and with them came a wave of religious practices centered around ecstasy and other shamanistic elements. In 1949 the *Minzokugaku Kenkyu* published a special report on shamanism.³ The report contained the following articles:

- Shamanistic Tendencies in Japanese Village
 - Rites Harada, Toshiaki.
 - Fire and Shaman Akiba, Takashi.
- On the Clan Shamans of the
 - Heilar-Kahurs Omachi, Tokuzo.
- Religious Rites and Ceremonies of
 - Manchu Shamans Kobori, Iwao.
- On the Wolf Headed Deity of the Ancient
 - Turks Mori, Masao.
- Kagura in the North: Shamans of the Gilyak and
 - the Orocco in South Saghalien ... Yamato, Sukehiro.
- My Recollections of the Study of Shamanism
 - in Japan Iwai, Hirosato.

It is to be noted that only two of the above articles are concerned with shamanism within Japan. These two articles are of particular interest in regard to the history of research on

(3) *Minzokugaku Kenkyu*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1949.

shamanism because they point out certain concepts which were in vogue in 1949.

First of all, there still remains a rather clear cut division between the phenomenon of shamanism outside of Japan and mikoism within Japan. For instance, in "My Recollections of the Study of Shamanism in Japan," Mr. Iwai gives a bibliography of works on shamanism by Japanese scholars. However, he does not include the articles on mikoism, except for Yanagita Kunio's articles in 1913. Further, he does not include Nakayama's *Nihon Miko Shi* in the list of important works given in the body of the article. This is done in spite of the fact that the author admits that the Itako in Aomori Prefecture is an example of shamanism within Japan, and says that he considers Ame no Uzume (dancer who enticed the sun goddess out of the cave) and Himiko (woman ruler of a state in Japan) to have been shamans. It appears that Mr. Iwai was mainly interested in shamanism outside of Japan and in the theory of shamanism.⁴

Therefore the only articles of the seven which appeared in the Special Report on Shamanism which pertains to shamanism within Japan, is Mr. Harada's "Shamanistic Tendencies in Japanese Village Rites." In his article, Harada outlines a theory of the development of shamanism within Japan. Here is the first clear recognition that shamanism and mikoism are essentially the same. Ten years later, in 1959, he reiterates his theory with little change in the "Introduction" to the *Nihon Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8.⁵ His overall conclusion is that shamanism is stronger and more prevalent in cities and towns than in farm villages, and is stronger in fishing villages than in farm villages. The reason

(4) Works of Mr. Iwai. Buddhistic Elements in the World View of Shamanism, *Shiroi Tori Hakusei Kanreki Kinen Joyoshi Ronshu*, Nov. 1925; The Etymology of the Word "Shaman," *Minzoku*, Vol. 2, Nos. 1, 2 and 4, 1927; On the Genesis of Shamanism, *Minzoku*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1928; The Shaman's Costume and Paraphernalia, *Minzoku*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1929; On Shamanism, *Sekai Bunkashi Taikei*—"Cultural History of the World," Vol. 9, Sept. 1955; What is Shamanism? *Nihon Daigaku Tetsugaku Zasshi*, 1935; Recollections of My Studies on Shamanism, *Minzokugaku Kenkyu*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1949; Did History Originate from Miko? *Minzokugaku Kenkyu*, Vol. 21, No. 3, 1957; The Word "Pieh-Chi"—"Beki"—and Mongol Shamanism, *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko (The Oriental Library)*, No. 14, 1955.

(5) Sosetsu, Harada Toshiaki, *Nihon Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 7ff.

for this is that shamanistic tendencies appear only where strong individualism is manifested.⁶ However, in neither of his two articles does he make reference to any comprehensive work on shamanism within Japan. Mr. Harada's main contribution in relation to the history of the research of shamanism is his recognition of mikoism as shamanism.

During this post war period, as shamanism began to be better understood, and as more and more reports on mikoism appeared, the groundwork was laid for a comprehensive analysis of ecstatic practices in Japan and for the application of the criteria of shamanism to these practices.

2. Development of the Concepts of Shamanism.

a. General. Research of shamanism was hindered by lack of information on shamanism, itself. The research of western scholars flowed into Japan very slowly. Then too, important works on shamanism, such as those of Eliade,⁷ Schmidt,⁸ and Schröder⁹ appeared in recent years, and judging from the references contained in Japanese works on religion in general and shamanism in particular, it appears that these works are not known even today by many Japanese scholars. Under these conditions, it is not surprising if some of the concepts of Japanese scholars concerning shamanism are not clear.

Since this chapter is concerned with the development of the concepts of shamanism and their application to the phenomenon of ecstasy within Japan, the views of all Japanese scholars who wrote about shamanism cannot be presented. However, sufficient coverage will be made to show how the concepts changed through the years. Particular attention will be given to those authors who wrote about shamanism in Japan, mikoism in Japan, and ecstatic practices in Japanese religion.

b. Early Concepts.

(1) Yamaji, Aiyama. According to Nakayama, Mr. Yamaji was the first Japanese scholar to point out the relationship be-

(6) Ibid. Also, *Buraku Saishi ni Okeru Shamanizumu no Keiko*, *Minzokugaku Kenkyu*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1949, P. 7ff.

(7) *Schamanismus und Archaische Ekstasetechnik*, Eliade, Rascher Verlag, Zürich und Stuttgart, 1956.

(8) See Schmidt, P. W. in alphabetical index of authors.

(9) *Zur Struktur des Schamanismus (Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des Lamaistischen Grutum)*, *Anthropos* 50, 1955.

tween the Shinto religion and shamanism.¹⁰ His conclusions were as follows: In Manchuria, in the days of mother right society, the rulers were women and there was a "miko" religion. In the religious ceremonies the erection of the pillar was important and reflected their concept of the cosmos. Likewise, in Japan the ancient religion was a "miko" religion. Also, the use of the pillar of heaven can be seen in Japanese religious practices down through the ages. Like shamanism, Shintoism has the concept of the upper, middle and lower worlds, with Takamagahara being the upper region, Reed Land being Japan, and Yomi no Kuni being the underworld. Further, both Shintoism and shamanism have a trinity godhead, and both use bells in rituals. He concludes that it appears as though the Japanese, Korean and Manchurian religions all had the same origin.

(2) Nakayama, Taro. In 1930 Nakayama published his *Nihon Miko Shi*—History of the Japanese Mikos. These women were priests, sorcers, magicians, prophets, diviners, singers, dancers, prostitutes, etc. Since the great majority of these women practiced the art of ecstasy, his descriptions, explanations and facts concerning ecstasy, paraphernalia, rituals, guardian spirits, etc., contain the most important source of material in Japanese on shamanism in Japan.¹¹

While Nakayama also recognizes similarities between Shintoism and shamanism, he cannot agree with Yamaji as to the common origin of the two. His conclusions are that Japan is in the shaman geographical area; that there are many common elements in Siberian shamanism and Japanese mikoism, such as the world picture, ecstasy, etc.; and that there are similarities in the rites and rituals of shamanism and mikoism in Japan.

However, he says that there are also important differences in the two phenomena, for instance the basis of mikoism in Japan is ancestor worship, while shamanism is absolutely not ancestor worship.¹² Further, he argues, the gods and spirits which the Japanese mikos used to divine were family gods and spirits—first the *ujigami* or true ancestor blood related gods, and later the *ubusuna gami* or gods of people living within a given territory. On the other hand, the gods and spirits who possess the

(10) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama Taro, P. 98ff.

(11) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama Taro, Tokyo, 1930.

(12) *Ibid.* P. 102.

shamans are not ancestor gods, but are rather far removed and isolated gods and spirits. Also, in primitive Shintoism the mikos were worshipped as gods and the mikos believed themselves to be gods. While the shaman, no matter where found, is always a mediator between man and the gods and spirits, and are never worshipped as gods. As to the making of a shaman, he states that when the candidate was not a blood relative or a disciple, the candidate went into the mountains and obtained a mirror. However, in Japan, the individual became feverish and went into a state of possession by a god or spirit. Finally, he says that there were many differences in the form, rituals, succession, magic operations, sex life, etc. Because of these differences, he concludes that shamanism and mikoism are not identical.¹³

His arguments for this conclusion can, however, be for the most part discarded today. For instance, shamans in many parts of the world do use ancestor worship as a basis for shamanism and do use ancestor spirits as guardian spirits.¹⁴ It is also recognized today that the kind of spirit or deity used is not an essential criterion in determining whether shamanism exists or does not exist.¹⁵ Further, shamanism has a rich variety of forms, rituals, paraphernalia, and invocations and these external forms are not essential criteria of shamanism.¹⁶ As to spontaneous vocation, while some shamans may have gone to the woods to obtain mirrors, there is a great variety of ways in which shamans are called. In fact, the method Nakayama cites of Japanese mikos becoming feverish and going into a state of possession by gods or spirits is one of the typical ways for shamans to be called to their profession.¹⁷

In appraising the work of Nakayama, however, it must be remembered that he did his research on mikoism before shamanism was understood by both western and oriental scholars, and judgement should not be made because of his comparison of

(13) Ibid. P. 102ff.

(14) The Religion of the Ifugaos, Barton, R. F., American Anthropologist—New Series—Vol. 48, No. 4, Part 2, October 1946, P. 121. The Nature and Function of Priesthood, James, E. O., P. 17-20.

(15) Zur Struktur des Schamanismus, Dom. Schröder, Anthropos 50, 1955, P. 853.

(16) Ibid. P. 4.

(17) Ibid. P. 19. Also The Nature and Function of Priesthood, James, E. O., P. 29.

mikoism with shamanism and his erroneous conclusions. Nakayama must be judged in relation to the phenomenon of mikoism, itself. In this respect, he produced an outstanding work which makes possible a comparison of mikoism with shamanism today.

Sometimes it appears as though it is possible to substitute the word shaman for miko in his work, as for instance when he describes the origin of mikoism. He says that the first gods came down to earth along the axis or tree and possessed the bodies of human beings. This possession was of two types, one being attained by frantic dancing and stamping of the feet and going into a state of ecstasy, just as Ame no Uzume did to entice the sun goddess out of her cave. The other type was attained by a long ritual with *koto* playing just as the chief consort of the emperor did, with the individual entering a special room and becoming possessed and divining.¹⁸ He points out that Tama Yori Hime was a term used to designate women religious functionaries and means "Spirit possessed Princess."¹⁹ He also says that Himiko, the woman ruler of a part of Japan, was considered the daughter of God, and that she interpreted God's will and divined.²⁰

He then goes on to point out that the early mikos were in intimate relations with the gods and spirits and for this reason did not marry earth men,²¹ and that their principal function was to divine concerning weather, war, hunting, etc., and that to do their work they chanted prayers and went into ecstasy, or listened to the singing of others and became possessed.²²

When Nakayama reached the Edo period (1599-1867), the sources of material increased and he brings forth example after example of ecstasy, possession, miko training, initiation, function, etc., virtually proving that "mikoism is shamanism." His analysis of mikoism is quite like the modern concept of shamanism in many respects. For instance, his concept that ecstasy is essential for mikoism; that the ecstasy of the miko was caused by gods or spirits; that there were two kinds of vocations, hereditary and spontaneous; that initiation was a requirement to become a miko; that the mikos performed a social function; and that a fixed

(18) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 278.

(19) *Ibid.* P. 103.

(20) *Ibid.* P. 105.

(21) *Ibid.* P. 247.

(22) *Ibid.* P. 293.

ritual had to be followed, are all in accord with the concept of shamanism. However, he also includes magicians, prophets, diviners, singers, etc., within the concept of mikoism, and does not clearly differentiate religion and magic.

c. Recent Concepts.

(1) General. Although Nakayama wrote his history of Japanese Mikos in 1930, most Japanese scholars who wrote on Japanese religion did not take up the question of shamanism in official Shintoism or Japanese folk religion until very recently. There is no need here to list all the books written about religion in Japan which did not take up the question of shamanism. However, a few will be reviewed to show the general concepts of Japanese scholars on this question.

Mr. Matsuoka published a book in 1941 on the special characteristics of Japanese folk religion.²³ He leans very heavily on linguistics, and he cites many examples of ecstasy and possession. He says that "Takusen" is a kind of divination, and that it is a phenomenon in which spirits possess certain persons, borrow their mouths, and make known their wills. He adds that this type of possession was called "kami gakari" in old Japanese. He does not, however, bring up the question of shamanism.

Mr. Higo took up the question of the original religious beliefs of the Japanese people in his book in 1947.²⁴ Tsuda wrote a book on the Shinto religion in 1938,²⁵ and in 1951 he wrote a book on the fundamental thoughts of the Japanese people.²⁶ Kono made an investigation into the history of Shintoism in 1944.²⁷ In none of these books do the authors bring up the question of shamanism, although naturally, they talk about ecstasy, possession, and other shamanistic religious phenomena. With these authors as with most authors, the concept of shamanism had not yet been recognized.

(2) The Movement towards Recognition of Shamanism in Japan.

(a) Hori, Ichiro. Mr. Hori represents the trend in Japan in regard to the concept of shamanism. He is a prolific writer on religious matters, and his works clearly show the changing con-

(23) *Nihon Kokuyū Minzoku Shinko*, Matsuoka, P. 139.

(24) *Nihon ni Okeru Genshi Shinko no Kenkyū*, Higo, P. 251.

(25) *Nihon no Shinto*, Tsuda, P. 248-317.

(26) *Kokumin Shiso no Kenkyū*, Tsuda.

(27) *Shinto Shi no Kenkyū*, Kono, 1944.

cepts as more and more research is done. In 1951 Hori published the second volume of a work *Waga Kokuminkan Shinko Shi no Kenkyu* in which he treats the miko question,²⁸ and in which he brings for certain concepts of shamanism. Also in his book *Min-kan Shinko*²⁹ he has a few important words concerning shamanism in Japan.

In these works he recognizes that besides Shintoism and Buddhism, there is in Japan also the religious phenomenon of shamanism.³⁰ He expresses the opinion that shamanism was the pre-animism stage of religious development in Japan.³¹ However, at that time (1951) he did not consider the mikos as shamans. He says that although it is quite difficult to see the difference between some of the Korean and Ainu shamans and the Japanese mikos, there are fundamental differences. To be sure the Japanese mikos in the Akita district of Japan are possessed by the spirit of the fox and even use this spirit for various purposes. However, Japanese mikos do not have mental illness and are not pathological cases which is one of the special characteristics of shamans. Further, the mikos do not have definite spirits or gods who possess them, or if they do, they are not conscious of the fact.

Another fundamental difference between Korea and Ainu shamans and Japanese mikos is that shamans do not report the sayings of the dead nor talk after visiting the dead, and even though at times shamans do perform as mediums while curing sickness, these are exceptional cases.³²

He admits that Japanese mikos become possessed by spirits which is accompanied by convulsions of the limbs, lack of breathing, fainting, and physical collapse, but he contends that the Japanese mikos are of a different lineage, without definite spirits or gods who possess them.³³

In 1959, writing for the *American Anthropologist*,³⁴ he shows a decided change of view, so it seems. He points out that heaven-

(28) *Waga Kokuminkan Shinko Shi no Kenkyu*, Vol. 2, Hori, P. 660ff.

(29) *Min-kan Shinko*, Hori, Iwanami Shoten, 1951.

(30) *Ibid.* P. 93.

(31) *Ibid.* P. 267.

(32) *Waga Kokuminkan Shinko Shi no Kenkyu*, Vol. 2, Hori, P. 660ff.

(33) *Itako* are blind women in North East Japan who act as mediums. *Waga Kokuminkan Shinko Shi*, Vol. 2, Hori, P. 667.

(34) *Japanese Folk Beliefs*, *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 61, 1959, P. 417ff.

ly gods descended and culture heroes usually appeared in the oracles of shamans, and that great shamanistic families became the ruling classes. Likewise, Japanese mythology contains many stories in which marriage occurred between a powerful god and a great female shaman. The concept of *hito-gami* is deeply imbedded in ancient Japanese folk beliefs, and "man-god" groups formed separate religious and political states or classes in the isolated farming communities. There developed two concepts, one tending to strengthen the in-group feeling, the other tending to strengthen the belief in "man-god" and thereby producing a feeling of hospitality for invading foreign or roving priests and missionaries. This "man-god" concept with its resulting hospitality was extremely important for the development of the roving shaman.

Also in 1959, Hori expresses the viewpoint that among the mikos in the north east section of Japan there are individual guardian spirits and that there is a rich variety of them.³⁵

It is extremely difficult to appraise the works of Hori in regard to his concept of shamanism. It appears that he considers shamanism a phenomenon which can differ in essence in different parts of the world. There are, therefore, Siberian shamanism, Korean shamanism, Japanese shamanism, etc., and they differ in their essential elements.

Further, in his earlier works the influence of Ohlmarks theory of arctic hysteria and pathological illness among the shamans can be seen, a theory unacceptable today.

When writing in English, he constantly uses the word shaman, but when writing in Japanese, he distinguishes the mikos from shamans. The question arises whether he really means shaman when writing in English or whether he uses the term shaman because there is no suitable word in English for the term miko.

It is interesting to note that Hori considers the "man-god" concept extremely important for the development of the roving shaman and that these "man-god" groups formed religious and political states in the isolated and settled farming communities. This is just opposite to the views of Harada.

(b) Harada, Toshiaki. Although Mr. Harada has not pro-

(35) *Shokugyo no Kami*, Hori, *Nihon Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 97.

duced a detailed work on shamanism, he outlined a theory of the development of shamanism in Japan in two articles, one appearing in 1949³⁶ and the other in 1959.³⁷ He is one of the exceptions among Japanese authors on shamanism in Japan in as much as he defines the term shamanism. He says shamanism is a kind of religious phenomenon which has a priest who is known as a shaman as its nucleus. He states that a shaman goes into ecstasy by a definite procedure, and while in ecstasy divines, fortells, cures sickness, etc. He adds that the use of drums, bells, prayers, various rituals, special paraphernalia and costumes are special characteristics of shamanism.

He holds the view that fundamentally the shaman practices ancestor soul worship and worship of the souls of the dead; that most shamans are women; that while there are some men shamans, they often wear women's clothing when shamanizing; that women are more prone than men to go into ecstasy; and that the purest and highest developed form of shamanism is found north of Manchuria among the Tungus tribes. He says that the Tungus tribes have the three layer ideology with good spirits in the upper regions, evil spirits in the lower region, and man in the middle region. The upper world spirits are venerated and lower world spirits are feared, and because fear is the stronger emotion, the most important shaman rites are those to appease the evil spirits.³⁸

Harada's main interest is the discovery of the essential elements in society which cause shamanism to flourish. He concludes that shamanism flourishes where there is strong individualism, which is the same conclusion reached by Ruth Benedict.³⁹

In Japan, he states, the people lived in security over a long period and so developed a closely integrated village centered religion with long ancestor lines. Individualism became secondary to village-ism. In such a society "magic" does not flourish because the individuals do not work for selfish individual purposes. He admits, however, that shamanism did exist in Japan

(36) *Buraku Saishi ni Okeru Shamanizumu no Keiko*, Harada, *Minzokugaku Kenkyu*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1949, P. 7ff.

(37) *Sosetsu*, Harada, *Nihon Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 7ff.

(38) *Ibid.* P. 7f.

(39) *Patterns of Culture*, Benedict, Mentor Books, N.Y., 1946, P. 72ff.

and that the term "miko" included shamans.⁴⁰

These first shamans were family shamans and even when they became professional, they still worked for the public. Modern shamans, however, are professionals and specialists who work for individuals and even try to convert them. Modern shamans in Japan have an individual character, and the tendency towards shamanism in Japan today, especially in the farm villages, is a rather recent development based on new ideas of freedom and individualism.

Harada contends that the original Japanese wet rice culture put the men firmly in control of the village administration, and as long as they retained this control, the priests remained male. Women were subordinated, often being excluded from religious life. However, sacerdotal tasks which were originally in the hands of the *toban* or elders, gradually became more and more professionalized as the village administration became more complex. The more religious life became detached from social life, the greater became the tendency for women to play important roles in religion. This is when shamanistic cults and ceremonies became prevalent.⁴¹

It must be noted that Harada does not clearly differentiate shaman from priest, and correlates shamanism with magic when he says "in such a society magic does not flourish." As for his statements that shamans are mostly women; that shamanism is a cult of worship of the souls of the dead and is based on fear of evil spirits and rituals for their appeasement; and that the original wet rice culture put the male in a dominant position, even excluding women from religious functions; do not appear to be based on the latest studies of shamanism in general, nor on Japanese history. And as was already pointed out, Mr. Hori says that great shamanistic families existed in the farming areas.

(c) *Nihon Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959. This is a 425 page volume on Japanese folk religion. It contains chapters on classification of souls and spirits, functions of souls and spirits, family gods and village gods, man-god relations, occupation gods, nature gods, religious festivals, possession, influence of Buddhism, Chinese influence, Shugendo religion, Christianity, and modern

(40) Shamanistic Tendencies in Japanese Village Rites, Harada, *Minzokugaku Kenkyu*, Vol. 14, P. 7ff.

(41) *Ibid.* See English Summary P. 84.

religions in Japan. In this volume, shamanism is dispensed with in six and a half pages in the introduction, which is written by Mr. Harada and whose theory and concepts were presented above.

Sprinkled here and there throughout the volume, there are a few references to shamanism and shamanistic survivals. Mikoism is treated in a little more detail than shamanism, but little is said about the concept of mikoism. The volume is, however, an important reference book and contains bibliographies of the most important works on mikoism.

3. Summary. The study of shamanism was slow getting started in Japan, and is still lagging behind the research of the west. Many concepts of the 1930's and 40's which were based on inadequate material are still in vogue among Japanese scholars, such as "arctic hysteria," "shamans are pathological cases," "most shamans are women," "shamanism is magic," "shamanism is a cult of the souls of the dead," etc.

Mikoism, which is centered around ecstasy, was studied but it was denied that mikoism is shamanism. These early conclusions were based on external characteristics, and on the false concept that shamanism was a religion of Siberia.

After World War II it began to be admitted that Japanese mikos were, in many cases, shamans. Hori Ichiro went so far as to say that shamanism was the pre-animism stage of religious development in Japan. Today, shamanism is in vogue among writers on religious subjects, with a tendency to label every individual who goes into ecstasy a shaman.

In 1958, Eder applied the criteria of shamanism to ecstatic practices in Japan and proved the existence of shamanism in modern Japan.⁴² It is the outstanding article on Japanese shamanism in a western language.

(42) Schamanismus in Japan, M. Eder, *Paideuma* (Mitteilungen zur Kulturkunde), Band VI, May 1958, Heft 7.

CHAPTER TWO
THE BASIS FOR SHAMANISM IN THE RELIGIOUS
ENVIRONMENT

1. General.

In this chapter the most important concepts which make up the religious complex within which Japanese shamanism operated and still operates today will be discussed.

2. Cosmological Concepts.

a. Separation of Heaven and Earth. In the beginning there was chaos. Out of this chaos heaven and earth sprung up. However, there was no violent explosion. It was a long slow process, with the heavens and the earth gradually separating.¹ It is known that this separation was slow and gradual because there was once a man who always walked in a bent over position. He came to a village in the east and the people asked him why he walked in such a manner. He answered that the place from which he has come had a sky so low that he could never straighten up, and so his body became fixed in that position.²

b. Mythological Intercourse with the Transcendental World.

(1) Floating Bridge of Heaven. When Izanagi-Izanami, the parents of Japan, formed the island of "Onogoro", they stood on the floating bridge of heaven—"Amano Ukihashi." This bridge is spoken of as a real bridge and one that could be used for traveling back and forth between heaven and earth.³

(2) Spears and Arrows. When Izanagi-Izanami stood on the "floating bridge of heaven," and pushed a spear down into the waters they formed the island of "Onogoro."⁴ It was not necessary that this spear be tremendously long because at that time the heavens and earth were still close together. In fact, in those days spears and arrows could be thrown back and forth between earth and heaven quite easily, and could be used to

(1) *Kojiki*, P. 43.

(2) *Fudoki*, P. 333.

(3) *Die Weltanfänge in der Japanischen Mythologie*, Franz Kiichi Numazawa, P. 151ff.

(4) *Kojiki*, P. 53.

carry messages. One god was killed by one of these arrows which had been shot to heaven and shot back to earth. His wife and children's wailing voices were heard in heaven and a god descended and took the corpse back to heaven.⁵

(3) Pillars of Heaven. The first act of the parents of Japan, after forming the island of "Onogoro" was the setting up of the "pillars of heaven"—"Ame no Mihashira." These pillars served various purposes, such as the wedding place of Izanagi-Izanami, and as the first shrine, "Yahirodono." However, a very important function of the pillars was their use as a stairway to heaven.⁶

Izanagi-Izanami's Marriage and Trip to Heaven. After arriving on the island of Onogoro, Izanagi and Izanami desired to have children. They performed a marriage ceremony, walking around the pillar of heaven in opposite directions and meeting on the opposite side. After the marriage a child was born, but it was a sort of water leech. They put it in a reed boat and set it adrift. The second child was also not a true child. Then they ascended to heaven to get the advice of the gods of heaven. They were told that the marriage ceremony had been improperly performed because Izanami, the goddess, had spoken first when they had met on the opposite side of the pillar. They returned to Onogoro, performed the marriage ceremony again, and then gave birth to many children, such as the islands of Japan, the deities of wind, fire, mountains, etc.⁷

(5) Izanagi's Trip to Yomi no Kuni. At the birth of the god of fire, Izanami was burned and died. Izanagi buried his wife. Then he made a trip to the underworld to bring her back to earth. Izanami told her husband that she could not return to earth because she had performed the "Yomotsu Hegui" or purification rite.⁸

(6) Umi Sachi Biko and Yama Sachi Biko. In this story the underworld region is under the sea. The inhabitants are not demons or devils, but are good and benevolent spirits and gods. The transcendental beings treat the visitor from earth in grand style, and the chief of the region gives his beautiful daughter to the visitor as his wife. After a number of years, when the visitor

(5) Ibid. P. 115f.

(6) Die Weltanfänge in der Japanischen Mythologie, Numazawa, P. 32.

(7) *Kojiki*, P. 53ff.

(8) Ibid. P. 63ff.

returns to earth, he is presented with gems which have great power.⁹

c. The Tree of Life. The cosmic tree of life or god tree—"Kami no Ki"—has played an important role in Japanese religious concepts. Mr. Kawamura sums it up by saying that it is clearly evident that the tree was thought of as a god or spirit and was a source of life. Priests, mikos, and other functionaries held the branch when performing, and this practice spread all over Japan, from the far north to the Ryukyu Islands, and remains a common practice in shrines and outside of shrines today. The earliest concept behind this practice is the "Sei Ki"—the living tree or tree of life.¹⁰

3. Concepts of Transcendental Beings.

a. Gods and Spirits.

(1) General. From the earliest times there was a concept of a transcendental world inhabited by transcendental beings. The kinds of gods and spirits which are believed in are extremely important because it is from these beings that the shaman obtains a guardian spirit or guardian spirits. The shapes of these beings, the hierarchy, powers, authority, limitations, etc., form the shaman and give him his power.

(2) The Seven Generations of Gods (Kojiki Version). When the heavens and the earth first opened up, a god came into existence. His name was Ame no Mi Naka Nushi no Kami, which means the ruler of the heavens. Next appeared Taka Mi Su Hi no Kami whose name literally means "High Honorable Reproducing Birdnest Sun God." The third god was Kami Mu Su Hi no Kami, meaning "God Birth Birdnest Sun God." These three gods make up the first generation. They did not, however, produce other gods.

In the second generation two gods came into existence. One was named Umashi Kabi Hi Ko Ji no Kami, meaning "Splendid Man Reed God." The other was Ame no Toko Tachi no Kami, meaning "Unchangeable God of Heaven." These gods were also non-productive gods.

Next followed five generations of pairs of gods and goddesses, who were deifications of swamps, sand, cut trees, poles, buildings,

(9) Ibid. P. 137ff.

(10) Oshira Kami, Kawamura Koki, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 1, No. 5, P. 257f.

crops, etc. The last of these five pairs of deities were Izanagi-Izanami, translated "Mutually Inviting Gods." These two gave birth to the Islands of Japan, the natural phenomena deities, etc., including the fire god who caused Izanami's death. In the Kojiki version, they did not give birth to the sun and the moon or the destructive wind god. These came into existence when Izanagi was purifying himself in the river after his trip to the underworld to fetch back his dead wife to earth. The Sun Goddess, Amaterasu O Mikami, came from his left eye. The Moon Deity, "Tsukuyomi," came from his right eye. The Wind God, Susano-o came from his nose. That marked the end of the seven generations of gods.^{11 12}

(3) Man-God Beings. In addition to the gods and goddesses of the seven generations, who were distant gods, a whole host of gods and goddesses came into existence. These were more human like, half god-half man. This is the period of rich mythology and the activities of the eighty thousand or eight hundred thousand gods and goddesses.

The gods and goddesses of this period were thought of as living in a world which was a reflection of the human world. The whole transcendental world and its inhabitants were in a social organization which had economic and political systems just as the real world. Since localization was one of the actual conditions in the real world, it is not surprising to find that the gods and goddesses were localized but not specialized. These gods and goddesses had their spheres of influence, but on the whole, their functions were not definite. There was no highly organized hierarchy.¹²

The general term used to designate these beings was "kami." It was applied to almost any phenomenon which could not be explained by natural means, or to any object or phenomenon which was thought to have extra human power. Thus there existed gods and goddesses of all sorts, among which mountain gods, rock gods and family ancestor gods were very important, even displacing the Sun Goddess in importance in many, if not most cases.

(11) Kojiki, P. 51ff. Studies in Shinto and Shrines, Ponsonby-Fane, P. 2.

(12) *Rei to Kami no Shurui, Ikegami, Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 18.

In addition to nature gods and family gods, there were village gods, tribal gods, etc. Among all of these gods, however, the family gods were the first and most important.¹³

(4) Family Gods and Local Gods.

(a) *Ujigami*. These were not merely family gods, but were ancestor gods, and those who worshipped them were blood related to the gods. These gods could be local gods, and most probably were in the beginning. This is true because the gods usually descended on the tops of mountains, founded shrines, and the ancestors of these gods became the heads of the shrines. If these families became extended families living in the immediate area, then the gods were both family gods and local gods. If, however, the families became clans and practiced exogamy and spread over wide areas, then they might become only family gods. Also the original family god could become lost and new family gods created.

(b) *Yashiki Ujigami*. These were gods of the individual houses and were worshipped within the homes in private. They were the individual family gods and could be of various kinds. Thus it was possible and most likely the case that the individuals in the family had at least two gods, one the blood related family god, and the other the house god.

(c) *Mura Ujigami*. These were local gods or village gods, and were worshipped by all the people living within a given area. These gods protected all the people in the area, and all the people took part in the religious festivals in their honor. Village or local gods were called by different names in different parts of the country, but the following three terms became widespread throughout Japan; *Ubusuna Kami*—Birth place god; *Chinju Kami*—Protector; and *Inari Kami*—God of the Harvest who is also the fox deity.

(5) The Lesser Gods. There were also a host of occupation gods, gods of various crops, fields, plants, roads, oceans, cities, hearth fire, etc.

(6) Large Shrine Gods. As the shrines became larger and famous, they took on a new meaning. Originally the people who worshipped at a particular shrine may have been blood related to the original ancestor of the shrine god, but when the shrine became famous, people from different families and different clans,

(13) Ibid. P. 18ff.

as well as people from many different areas began to worship at them. Just when the shrines became separated from the function of serving families is unknown, but the separation existed at least from the beginning of the Heian period (800 AD - 1185), at which time not only the gods became separated from the function of serving the family only, but performers of ceremonies in the shrines began to come from outside of the family.¹⁴

(7) Foreign Gods. To this list must be added the Buddhist gods and spirits, the spirits of Taoism, and other imported religions. Of these foreign gods, the Buddhist deities played the most important role. Buddhist gods and goddesses were placed parallel with family gods, village gods and other native gods. The Emperors, who were supposedly divine and direct descendants of the ancestor goddess, nevertheless practiced Buddhism. They constructed Buddhist temples, built statues of Buddhas, and even became reincarnated Buddhas.

In the homes of the masses, very often there were, and still are today, two altars, one for the Shinto gods and the other for the Buddhist gods.¹⁵

b. Summary. There were a host of gods and goddesses venerated in Japan and their functions overlapped in many cases. Gods of all sorts were venerated by the individuals, but family gods were intimate gods and played the most important role in the lives of the masses. These family gods also played an important role in the functioning of the guardian spirit among the shamans.¹⁶

4. Concept of the Soul.

a. Immortality. The Japanese people had a belief in the indestructibility of the soul and believed that after death the soul continued to live the same kind of life as people on earth. At death the soul was separated from the body, and once the purification ritual was performed in the other world, the soul

(14) *Ujigami, Nihon Shakai Minzoku Jiten*, Vol. 1, 1952, P. 67f. *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 123. *Rei to Kami no Shurui, Ikegami, Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 20.

(15) *Studies in Shinto and Shrines*, Ponsonby-Fane, P. 47ff. *Ie no Kami to Mura no Kami*, Hirayama, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, *Matsuri no Soshiki to Shisaisha*, Harada, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 251f.

(16) *Ibid.* *Ujigami, Nihon Shakai Minzoku Jiten*, Vol. 1, 1952, P. 67f. *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 123.

could not return to earth again as a person.¹⁷ This is the rite Izanami performed and so could not return with her husband.

b. Classification of Souls. Classification is difficult, but as Ikegami points out there were personal souls, free souls, and power souls. Personal souls can be subclassified as souls of the living and souls of the dead. There was essentially no difference between the souls of men, animals, or plants. The substance to which these souls gave life was different, but the souls were the same. The word "tama" was used to designate both souls of the living and the dead.

(1) *Tama*. There were various kinds of *tama*. *Aramitama* were souls of the living and *nigimitama* were souls of the dead. *Kushimitama*—mysterious or marvelous souls and *sashimitama*—happiness or good fortune souls, were considered as operations performed by souls of the living. However, the exact nature of those operations is unknown.¹⁸

(2) Power Souls. These were like *mana*. They could and did possess and give power to rocks, trees, water, etc., and to anything that moved. This power was also called *chi*, *hi*, *bi*, *itsu*, etc.¹⁹ The power given to objects by these souls could be transferred to other objects and to human beings. Thus, there was a belief that his power possessed foods and man could then obtain this power by eating them.

(3) Souls of the Living. These were also called "*Tamashii*," "*Ikimitama*," "*Ikiryō*," etc. They could leave the body. Temporary or partial separation meant sickness. Permanent separation meant death. There was also a belief that there was a time after birth when children did not have souls, and in various parts of central Japan, the visit to the shrine by the parents with the child, was the time the soul entered the body.

(4) Souls of the Dead. These had a period of purification, 33, 49 or 50 years after which they became spirits or gods, and were honored as ancestor spirits. They became family gods and mountain gods, and every spring came down from the mountains to the villages and fields. They returned to the mountains in the fall.

Souls of the dead, who had no surviving relatives to honor

(17) *Kojiki*, P. 65.

(18) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 214.

(19) *Rei to Kami no Shurui, Ikegami, Nihon Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 23.

them, hovered about and frightened living people. Souls of persons who had misfortune before they died or who had died in anger were especially feared because they became evil spirits after death. They brought misfortunes to living people. There were ceremonies and rites throughout the year to pacify them.²⁰

5. Animal Spirits.²¹

a. General. Since in the Japanese concept of the soul there was no difference between souls of human beings and animals, these souls also continued to live after separation from the body. Animal souls also became spirits and had the power to bring fortune or misfortune to man. These animal spirits could possess human beings, and since these spirits could move about and transform themselves, animal spirits became associated with mountain gods, harvest gods, etc. After 33, 49, or 50 years they became spirits or gods.

b. Distribution of Animal Spirits. The fox is the most widely distributed animal spirit, followed by the dog and the snake. The distribution of animal spirits is shown on Chart #1.

c. Animal Spirit Families.

(1) General. There were families who were especially related to the animal spirits. These families were known as *Kitsune Suji*—Fox Lineage—, *Kitsune Mochi*—Having Foxes—, *Inu Kami Suji*—Dog Spirit Lineage—, *Tobyō Mochi*—Having Snakes—, *Kudaya*—*Ya* meaning house and *Kuda* being a kind of fox, *Osaki Suji*—Osaki Lineage (*Osaki* being a kind of fox). These terms were applied to families which for generation after generation raised animal spirits.

(2) Distribution of Animal Spirit Families. Chart #2 shows the distribution of animal spirit families in Japan. It is to be noted that the number of animal spirit families is much less in the remote areas of Japan. Because of this Ishizuka believes that originally such families did not exist in Japan, but developed later.

(3) Fear of Animal Spirit Families. These families were feared and there was little intercourse between these families

(20) Ibid. P. 24.

(21) *Tsukimono*, Ishizuka, *Nihon Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 28ff. *Ise Jingu no Kora*, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 1, No. 3, P. 150. Japanese Folk Beliefs, Hori, *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 61, 1959, P. 421f.

and ordinary families. To protect themselves against being possessed by the spirits raised and controlled by these families, certain countermeasures were taken. In Kochi Prefecture, when passing a house which possessed the spirits of the dogs, it was the custom to pin a needle on the clothing over the breast to prevent possession. In Tokushima, if a person was possessed by an animal spirit, he spread faeces around the home of the animal spirit family.

It was considered very dangerous not to satisfy the animal spirit families. It was also believed that if a person bought land on which one of these families had lived, the buyer would become an animal spirit family.

(4) Marriage. Social isolation and fear of these families effected marriage. It was believed that if anyone married into these families, the new family became an animal spirit family. Before marriage this question was always thoroughly examined. As a result, the percentage of marriages between animal spirit families and non-animal spirit families was very low, and is low even today. See Chart #3 for statistics.

In relation to shamanism, the important point is that these animal spirit families intermarried, and it was these families which practiced ecstasy and belonged to shamanistic groups.

(5) Origin of Animal Spirits and Animal Spirit Families. Little is known about the origin. There is a legend in Awa no Kuni on the Island of Shikoku which says that an animal flew over Chukoku and Shikoku. A warrior shot it with an arrow and it was cut into three pieces. The head fell on Awa no Kuni. It was like a dog's head. The people buried the head and it became the dog spirit. The body fell in Sanuki and became the monkey spirit. The tail became the snake spirit. These spirits could possess people, cause sickness and death and other evils. However, there were people of the dog spirit lineage who had the power to cause these spirits to possess other people. Ordinary people had a horror of these families and detained from marrying them, or of having any intercourse with them.²²

The legends of origin are slightly different in other places, but they are generally the same story, but the parts of the body become different spirits.²³

(22) *Awa no Inugami no Hanashi*, Nagao, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 4, No. 11, P. 671.

(23) *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 2, No. 5, P. 308.

d. The Dog Spirit. The dog was particularly favored on the island of Shikoku, but was important in other parts of Japan, and all the way down to Okinawa. The dog spirit families had a permanent bond with the dog spirit. The permanency of this bond is shown by a case in which the family head of a dog spirit family was put to death after an official investigation into the family's activities. However, the man's son reappeared as a dog spirit family head. This family venerated the dog spirit and during ecstatic performances venerated the dog's head.

It was said that if a daughter was married, seventy five spirits went with the bride to her new home. The family she entered became a *Gedokami Mochi*—having a spirit outside of the Shinto and Buddhist hierarchies. Although the family might command the spirit to possess an individual, these spirits also possessed many people without the command of the family. The dog spirit played a dual role, family god and guardian spirit of the individuals in the family. In some places the spirits were said to have been restricted to the females.²⁴

Another report says that there were as many dog spirits as there were members in the family. If the family increased, the dog spirits increased. Also when a daughter married, a dog spirit was sent with her to the new family, and the new family became a dog spirit family. These spirits could bite persons who were not members of the spirit family and cause sickness and death. They were not, however, entirely slaves, and sometimes they bit their own family members.²⁵

Another report says that the dog spirit was called *Inugami*—"Dog God"—and the family was called *Inugami Mochi*—"Having Dog Gods." Generally there were not marriages between these spirit families and non-spirit families. If there was a marriage, the dog spirit followed the bride to the bridegroom's house, and seventy five dog spirits were born. New dog families came into existence if a person bought old furniture like shelves or chests of drawers from a dog spirit family. The dog spirit keeper could send the dog to bite those against whom he had a grudge. If the keeper wanted to know the thoughts of others, he tapped on the bottom of a rice boiler with a dipper, assembled his dog

(24) *Hebi Kami—Inu Gami*, Kawamura, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 1, No. 7, P. 400.

(25) *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 1, No. 2, P. 112.

spirits, and from them learned the thoughts of the other person. The relationship between the dog spirit and the family members was intimate and secret. If a child was born, a dog spirit was born. The spirit grew up with the child and died when the child died. If the child was resented by another child, the dog spirit possessed the other child.

The keepers fed the spirits and it is reported that an old lady in one of these families put the spirits in a rice mortar and fed them. Someone accidentally saw the dog spirits in the mortar, and the dog spirits and the old woman died.²⁶ A dog spirit family could be started by placing a dog in the ground, with just its head unburied, and starving it to death. Not to abuse the dog, beans were planted and when the plant grew rocks were placed near the plant as an altar.²⁷

Burying dogs in the ground and starving them to death was also practiced for other purposes. A miko did this and then cut off the heads and boiled the worms from the skulls and sold them as amulets to guard wealth and money.²⁸

e. The Fox Spirit. The fox was and is more popular than the dog spirit both in farm areas and in cities because the fox spirit is the deity of the harvest and the god of wealth. The fox spirit family members did not marry non-fox spirit families, and the majority of these families practiced ecstasy. The families cultivated intimate relations with the fox and fed them *Azuki Meshi*—"Red Beans and Rice"—and *Aburage*—"Fried bean curd"—during the mountain festivals. Here can be seen the relationship between the mountain god, the harvest god and the fox deity. The harvest god returned to the mountains in autumn and came down from the mountains in spring. The fox was a carrier of the deity and finally became the deity of both mountain and harvest.

There was a master servant relationship between the family members and the fox spirits. The family members could cause the fox spirit to possess others when payment for services was considered insufficient, when the family member was envious, etc. This was especially true of the mikos. The mikos used the fox spirit not only as slave spirits, however, but also used them

(26) Ibid. P. 266ff.

(27) *Higo no Inugami, Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 2, No. 6, P. 380.

(28) *Tsukimono*, Ishizuka, *Nihon Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 289.

as guardian spirits for *kuchiyose*. This was known as *Kitsune no Kuchiyose*—Fox Mediumism. Mikos also performed *Inari Oroshi Kuchiyose*—God of Harvest Mediumism—, and *Ebisu Oroshi Kuchiyose*—God of Wealth Mediumism.²⁹

Another report³⁰ says that the fox spirit families were not Eta families (Eta is a class, the members of which were meat eaters, cattle slaughterers, leather and straw industry workers, etc., who were socially ostracised), but like the Eta were avoided even though they were often rich and prosperous. Fox spirit families did not marry members of regular families, but if such a marriage took place, 75 fox spirits accompanied the bride to her new home and a fox family was created.

When the fox spirit possessed persons without being ordered to do so by a member of the fox spirit family, exorcism was performed by Shugendo priests, priests of the Ontake sect, and mikos, the majority of whom were animal spirit family members. In Nagasaki Prefecture, the exorcisers were called *Yake Tsukai*—“Field Fox Users” and *Inari Tsukai*—“Harvest Deity User.”

Individuals practiced various forms of magic or religious rituals to prevent possession. A needle was put into dolls both to prevent possession and to drive out spirits which had possessed individuals.³¹ This custom is still practiced today.

Although there are various names in different parts of Japan for the fox spirit, the term *Kuda Kitsune* is quite common. Yanagita Kunio connects this term to the descent of the mountain god. The theory is based on the fact that *kuda* means to descend. Therefore the term means “descending fox” or “carrier of the mountain god.”³²

Kuda also means pipe or tube and mikos often used a tube or cylinder as a place to capture or banish fox spirits. *Kuda Kitsune* may, therefore, mean “Pipe or Tube Fox.” The pipe could also have been the path or conduit which conducted the mountain deity from the mountain to the rice field, assuring everyone that the spirit would not be sidetracked.

(29) *Ebisu Oroshi—Inari Oroshi*, Kawamura, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 1, No. 4, P. 212ff. *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 2, No. 7, P. 422f. *Tsukimono*, Ishizuka, *Nihon Minzokugaku*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 289f.

(30) *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 2, No. 3, P. 172f.

(31) *Tsukimono*, Ishizuka, *Nihon Minzokugaku Taikai*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 289f.

(32) *Ibid.* P. 292.

f. The Snake Spirit. The snake spirit was called *Hebi*, *Tobyō*, *Tonbe*, etc. These spirit families collected small snakes. They could cause the spirits to possess and bring harm to others. The families, however, could cause possession for good purposes. On the small island of Tobyō Shima there was a snake shrine.

The snake families inhabited the coastal regions more than the inland regions, in opposition to the dog spirit families who lived in mountainous or farm regions. These snake spirits were the secret spirits of men shaman.

Kojin, the deity of the hearth, was often in the form of a snake and women mikos used them when divining, just as they used other animal spirits. The close connection between the snake spirit and the hearth deity is perhaps a hint of the origin of the transfer from ancestor and family gods to animal spirits, and from ancestor spirit possession to animal spirit possession. This could happen when the snake, which was first used as a symbol of the family deity took on the actual power of the deity.³³

g. Insect and Bug Spirits. Insects and bugs of various kinds were kept in the houses and venerated, ate the same kind of food as the family, drank rice wine, etc. New insect families were generated by marriage with non-spirit families. The body of a person possessed by an insect spirit began to ache. One method to drive out the spirit was exorcism by mikos who were called *Ogamushi*. Perhaps this word means "Bug worship" from the word *Ogamu*—worship—and the word *mushi*—bug. Another method was to strew the area around the person with filth and thus drive away the spirit. This method was also used to prevent possession.

Bug and insect spirits were not easy to control. If they were driven out by a person, they might return and harm the family from which they came. Because of the danger of these spirits, families might want to get rid of the spirits, but this was virtually impossible because of the permanent bond with the spirits. Yet there were exceptions. Once a person visited a bug spirit family and while the family was gone he opened a jar which contained the spirits. They escaped and the family was very happy to be rid of the spirits.³⁴

(33) *Hebi Kami—Inugami no Rui*, Kawamura, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 1, No. 7 P. 395ff. *Tsukimono*, Ishizuka, *Nihon Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 291f.

(34) *Hebi Kami—Inugami no Rui*, Kawamura, *Kyodo Kenkyu*,

h. Summary.

(1) Animal spirit worship and possession by such animal spirits was practiced throughout Japan.

(2) Certain families had a particular relationship with certain animal spirits, venerated, cultivated intimate relations with them, raised them and controlled them.

(3) These families increased by marriage of girls from animal spirit families with non animal spirit family members.

(4) Animal spirits were in many cases harmful to persons not members of animal spirit families.

(5) The families who raised animal spirits were mainly miko and Shugendo priest families.

(6) Marriages between animal spirit family members and non-animal spirit family members were rare. At the same time mikos and Shugendo priests who were very often members of animal spirit families intermarried.

(7) Animal spirits possessed members of the animal spirit families, acted as guardian spirits and slave spirits, and enabled the possessed person to perform *kuchiyose*.

(8) The bond between the animal spirits and the family members was permanent.

(9) Elements of totemism are present, such as: permanent and intimate relationship between the family members and the spirits; assistance given to the family members; parallelism; and rules and regulations governing veneration of the spirits.

(10) Animal spirit worship and animal spirit possession played an important role in shaping the structure of shamanism.³⁵

6. Descent of the Gods.

a. Development of the Matsuri. In Japan the gods descended on villages, tops of mountains, in forests, etc. The gods established shrines and became the ancestors of certain families who then had the authority and responsibility to continue the work of the gods on earth. These families claimed to be in contact with their ancestor gods. The gods however, were not content to remain in heaven or on the tops of trees and mountains and silently allow man to rule the world. They periodically visited the shrines, villages and family descendants and made

Vol. 1, P. 397ff.

(35) Ibid. P. 404. *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 532. *Tsukimono*, Ishizuka, *Nihon Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 286.

known their wills. These visitations were the times of the festivals. The fundamental meaning of *matsuri* was the welcoming of the descending gods or the inviting down of the gods.³⁶

b. Ecstasy—The Heart of the Matsuri. Everyone knew the gods descended and knew the time and place of the descent so that *matsuris* were held at specific times and at specific locations. However, the exact minute of the descent was more complicated. It was not sufficient for the head of some family who was a descendant of the god to merely announce that the god had arrived. Some proof was necessary.

Since the gods evidently did not desire to reveal themselves directly, they revealed themselves indirectly by possession of natural and man made objects, animals, plants and human beings. The most perfect proof was possession of human beings, however, because they could speak and announce the will of the gods directly to the people. The possession had to result in ecstasy. This showed that the individuals were not making false claims of possession. Since every village, every shrine, and many individual families had *matsuris*, ecstasy came to be a national religious practice.³⁷

This same concept was applied to a vast variety of occupation gods, gods of natural phenomena, animal deities, and later Buddhist deities, so that the practice of ecstasy penetrated into all stratas of society.

7. Concept of Possession.

a. Classification. Possession by gods, spirits, souls and other transcendental beings was not restricted to the *matsuris*. Almost anything could be possessed at any time. From the viewpoint of the object possessed, it can be said that five types existed: (1) Possession of natural phenomena and natural objects, (2) Plant life, (3) Man made objects, (4) Animal life, (5) Human beings.

b. Possession of Natural Phenomena and Natural Objects.

(1) General. Almost all natural phenomena and natural objects were possessed and became power laden on occasions. However, rocks were the most important in the everyday religious practices of the people.

(36) *Waga Kokuminkan Shinko Shi no Kenkyu*, Hori, Vol. 1, P. 349, 374ff.

(37) *Kami no Hyosho to Saijo*, Takeda, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 157.

(2) Rocks. Rocks were favorite abodes of the gods. The rocks were of various sizes and shapes, and the deities who possessed them were many and varied, such as the god of child birth, children's protective deities, fire gods, etc. During festivals small rocks were possessed and suddenly became very heavy. Mikos used to sit near sacred rocks when performing their rites and ceremonies. These rocks were called *Tora ga Ishi*—Tiger Stone—, *Uba Ishi*—Old Lady Stone, *Bikuni Ishi*—Nun or Priestess Stone.³⁸

Today, stones are used to testify that prayers are heard. The person stands in front of the rock, prays and asks that the stone be made either very heavy or very light as a sign that the prayer will be answered. Then the stone is lifted to check the result. Whether or not the individuals believe that a spirit possesses the rock is difficult to say, but it appears to be a survival of such a belief.

c. Possession of Plant Life. Although a great variety of plants were possessed, the tree is by far the most important. Not only individual trees, but whole forest were possessed, just as were various bushes, grasses, bamboo, etc. The tree was and is still set up in almost all religious festivals in Japan. The tree also influenced the paraphernalia used in many religious ceremonies, and such items as the *shimenawa*, as well as the *gohei* were derived from the possessed tree—the tree as the seat of the divinity—or the tree of life.

d. Possession of Man Made Objects.

(1) General. The list of these objects is almost endless. However, some objects were more important than others and had a wider distribution, such as the *Gohei*, *Kezuri Kake*—shavings and cuttings hung on trees, staffs, etc.—, flags, center or main poles of buildings (especially shrines and homes), straw brushes and brooms, palanquin, festival carts, grave head stones, dolls, masks, shelves used as altars in homes, mirrors, swords, shields, beads, gems, scarecrows, mortars and pounders, winnowers, straw bags, straw sandals, measuring devices, dippers, sickles, plows, hoes, fish hooks, chopsticks, dice, money, chests, the metal around the fireplaces, pot hangers, statues, pictures, etc.³⁹

(38) Ibid. P. 161. *Shizen to Kami*, Ikegami, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 155. *Kami no Hyosho to Saijo*, Takeda, same volume, P. 162.

(39) *Kami no Hyosho to Saijo*, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959,

Among these objects, pillars and posts, *gohei*, *shimenawa* and the palanquin appear to have played the most important role in religious concepts, ceremonies and rites.

(2) Pillars and Posts. The Japanese word for pillar is *hashira*. This term was used at one time to designate shrines. The first act of Izanagi-Izanami when they descended to earth, was the setting up of the pillars of heaven—"Ame no Mihashira." *Hashira* is also used as a numerator of the gods in the old literature. Shrines were also called *mori*—forest—, showing the close connection between live trees, cut trees and shrines.

These *hashira* were the dwelling places of the gods. They were made from various kinds of trees, but the pine, cedar, cypress and willow trees were commonly used. These trees were called "Kanjo no Ki"—trees of the Shinto and Buddhist gods—and it was under these trees that the festivals were held.⁴⁰

(3) *Gohei*. These staffs with paper and cloth cuttings attached to them were used in festivals and were placed around sacred places, such as shrines, stages, altars, etc. The chief performers used poles or sticks to which paper cuttings were attached. One term for such items was *mitogura* which means the place for the descent of the gods in old Japanese. Originally, it seems, the *gohei* was made with tree bark attachments, suggesting a connection with the tree of life. Today when a *gohei* is stood up or planted during a festival, it is a survival of the former planting or standing up of a live tree. It is even possible that flags, spears, etc., are of the *gohei* origin, which means the tree of life origin.⁴¹

(4) *Shimenawa*. These sacred ropes are hung in shrines, in houses, on gates, etc. They are used in ceremonies related to the honoring of the family, house, and village gods. They are hung in public bath houses, sumo wrestling arenas, etc. They represent the connection with the tree of life. The rope was also used to prevent the sun goddess reentering the cave of heaven.

(5) *Mikoshi*—Palanquin. The palanquin, which term is here used to include *midashi* or mountain cart, is the temporary abode of the gods. The palanquin has been used in religious

P. 163f.

(40) Ibid. P. 158f.

(41) Ibid.

festivals since at least the Nara period. (710-784). It was the place to receive the gods.

Before the palanquin was used, horses were sometimes used to receive and transport the god. At times poles were used to receive the gods. It is to be noted that while the Chinese characters in the term *midashi* simply mean "mountain cart," the term *Dashi* at one time meant the decorations at the top of a shaft or pole, and it was at that exact spot that the gods descended. Evidently when the pole was placed on top of the mountain cart, the same term was applied to wagon. The operation of the gods descent into the object was called *Goshinsa* and *Goshintai*—"God's form," "God," "Object of Worship."⁴²

e. Possession of Animal Life. Various animals were possessed by gods and spirits. Horses were used to transport the gods and at such times the horses became possessed. In the same manner certain animals were associated with certain deities and were considered to be the favorites of those deities. The fox was the carrier of the mountain god; birds—carriers of the Kumano deity; the monkey—carrier of the deity of Hiyoshi; the deer—carrier of the deity of Kasuga; the centipede—carrier of the deity Kidan; and the wolf—carrier of the deity of Sanpo.

It appears that originally these animals were not deities but developed from carriers of deities to actual deities.⁴³

f. Possession of Human Beings.

(1) General. The possession of human beings to be discussed here is a planned possession, in which the deities and spirits are called down into the body of an individual either by invocations of the individual himself for others. The "Descent of the Gods" was a central concept which gave rise to the matsuri with possession of various objects, animals, and humans.⁴⁴ The perfect form of possession was that of human beings, causing them to go into ecstasy. The descent of the gods' concept was applied to family gods, clan gods, village gods, individual house gods, occupation gods, etc., so that the matsuri penetrated all stratas of society. It is possible to classify these matsuris as official and unofficial. Each of these may then be subclassified as public and private.

(42) Ibid. P. 165.

(43) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 533.

(44) *Kami no Hyosho to Saijo*, Takeda, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 165ff.

(2) Public Official Matsuri. These were celebrated at certain times during the year, such as New Year, planting time, harvest time, etc. People from various occupations and social positions took part in these matsuris, but they were official state, city or village festivals, under the control of the heads of shrines and the members of the families who were descendants of the gods. The purpose of these matsuris was to learn the will of the gods and bring the human will, and the social and political activities into harmony with the divine will. Certain individuals were selected to be the instruments of the gods. This was known as *toya*. The selected individuals went into ecstasy and divined during the matsuri. He or she then became the head of the shrine for a fixed period, often one year, and was called *kannushi*. The *kannushi*'s responsibility was to become possessed and divine on various occasions throughout the year.⁴⁵

(3) Public Non-Official Matsuri. These were conducted in almost the same manner as the public official matsuris, except that they were not official shrine festivals. The main function was to invite down the gods and bring about possession of some individual, who then divined.⁴⁶ This was known as *yorimashi*. *Yorimashi*, often but not always, was centered around the possession of a child, boy or girl, about the age 7 or 8.⁴⁷

(4) Private Official Matsuri. These were held in various shrines, but at the highest level the performers were members of the Saigu. The performers were mikos, the chief of whom was the Imperial daughter. Among another duties, these mikos performed and divined at the coronation of each new Emperor.⁴⁸

(5) Private Non Official Matsuri. These were held in the homes of villagers and farmers. They took place at various times throughout the year, but the New Year matsuri was celebrated throughout the country. This was the time for sweeping out the house, and getting rid of evil spirits. Mikos were invited into the homes. They performed certain rituals, but the climax of the event was the ecstasy and divining, plus talking with the souls

(45) *Takusen to Matsuri*, Kawamura, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 1, No. 3, P. 132ff. *Hito to Kami*, Ikegami, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 84.

(46) *Kami no Hyosho to Saijo*, Takeda, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 157, P. 170.

(47) *Hito to Kami*, Ikegami, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 75.

(48) *Studies in Shinto and Shrines*, Ponsonby-Fane, P. 28ff.

of the dead while in ecstasy.⁴⁹

8. Summary.

From the earliest times there was a concept of intercourse with the transcendental beings by means of the floating bridge of heaven, the pillars of heaven, spears, arrows, etc. There were high gods and myriads of intermediate and lesser gods, but family gods and local gods held first place in the daily life of the people. The immortality of the soul was believed in, plus the transformation of souls into ancestor gods.

Animal spirits were important. Certain families controlled these animal spirits and had intimate relations with them. These families were feared, resulting in marriage taboos. Inter-marriage took place between members of animal spirit families, and the animal spirit families were members of ecstasy practicing groups, mainly miko and Shugendo priest.

Possession was a highly developed concept, with possession of human beings the most perfect form. Possession of human beings was related to the concept of the descent of the gods and the need to learn the will of the gods. The matsuri, with possession of human beings, became the nucleus of organized and folk religions.

Japanese religion contained to a very strong degree the necessary elements to permit the development of shamanism on a national basis because ecstasy was practiced at all levels of society and ecstasy is the core of shamanism.

(49) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 154f. *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 5, No. 1, P. 6.

CHAPTER THREE
THE ECSTASY COMPLEX IN JAPAN

1. Japanese Mythology and Ecstasy.

a. Ame no Uzume. When Amaterasu O Mi Kami, the sun goddess, hid in the *ame no iwato*—cave of heaven, the myriads of gods held the first matsuri to entice her back out. Ame no Uzume danced and it was a vivid shamanistic performance. Long singing birds, precious stones, and metals were collected. Blacksmiths and metal forgers assembled and made a large mirror. Then a long string of jewels was made. The shoulder bone of a male deer and a red cherry tree, material for divining, was obtained, and a tree with many branches was pulled out of the ground, roots and all, from the mountain of the gods, "Ame no Kagu Yama." The precious jewels were hung on the upper branches, the big mirror on the middle branches, and white and blue pieces of cloth made from the bark of trees on the lower branches.

Then the matsuri began. Futodama no Mikoto made various offerings to the gods. Ame no Koyane no Mikoto chanted powerful prayers, and Ame no Uzume performed a dance. She covered her head with vines, held a heavenly vine in her hand and tied bamboo leaves to it. She prostrated herself at the door of the cave in a hazy, buoyant condition, and then began to dance violently, stamping her feet and roaring. She became possessed by a god or spirit, unbared her breasts and lifted her vagina covering, while the myriads of gods shouted with laughter.

The sun goddess peeped out and was dumbfounded when she saw her image in the mirror. She thought another goddess had taken her place. She stepped out of the cave and Ame no Tajikara seized her and pulled her away from the entrance of the cave. Then he tied a rope across the entrance so that the sun goddess could not return into the cave. Then the world became bright again.¹

As Ponsonby-Fane says, this scene portrays the inauguration

(1) *Kojiki*, P. 81ff.

of the most important Shinto rites.² The birds, which presumably perched on gates facing the cavern, explains the *torii* or archways of the Shinto shrines which are literally bird rests. The blue and white cuttings (*ao nikite* and *shira nikite*) hung on the tree were the fore-runners of the *gohei*. The use of the *sakaki*—god tree—explain why this tree is now regarded as sacred. The rope at the entrance of the cave is the *shimenawa*. The dance of Ame no Uzume was the first *kagura*. The divine liturgy used was the first *norito*, and the use of the mirror and the jewels explains the importance of these items in the Shinto religion.

But the myth portrays more than that. It established the system of *matsuris* with possession as the central theme. It established certain procedures and paraphernalia as important in the art of ecstasy. It started a long history of ecstatic practices which has continued down to the present day.

Following the account of the ecstatic dance of Ame no Uzume, Japanese mythology contains many stories of great families which were formed by marriages of men to famous and great women who practiced ecstasy and who became possessed by spirits.³ However, not all of the women who practiced ecstasy were great and famous, as for instance Ohotataneko.

b. Ohotataneko. During the reign of Sujin (97-30 B.C.), there was an epidemic and many people were dying. The Emperor entered the *kamu doko*—God Room—and during the night had a dream in which he learned the name of a woman who could stop the epidemic. Her name was Ohotataneko. The Emperor sent runners out to find the girl. They found her in a village called Kafuchi no Minono. They asked her who she was, and she said that she was the daughter of the gods. The girl was taken to the Emperor and was made the *kannushi*—head of the shrine. After various rites were performed the pestilence ended. This girl's mother was Ikutamayori Bime which means a living person possessed by the gods, and had a virgin birth, being made pregnant by the gods.⁴

This story does not specifically state that the girl, Ohotataneko, practiced ecstasy, but as a "Kannushi" her responsibility

(2) Studies in Shinto and Shrines, Ponsonby-Fane, P. 5.

(3) Japanese Folk Beliefs, Hori, American Anthropologist, Vol. 61, 1959, P. 418ff.

(4) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 103. Kojiki, P. 179f.

would no doubt included *takusen* which was divination while in ecstasy.⁵

This story points to succession from mother to daughter of certain powers obtained through ecstasy; that ecstatic practices were not restricted to shrines nor to families which controlled shrines; that the Emperor, a descendant of Amaterasu O Mi Kami, had limitations to his power and capability to obtain divine knowledge; that the practice of appointing a "kannushi"—head of the shrine—is a very old religious practice; and that not all individuals appointed *kannushi* were members of families which controlled shrines. Finally, it shows that ecstasy was practiced in the folk religion of the people from a very early date.

2. Ecstasy in Early History.

a. Himiko. The Wei-shi which was written in Chinese in about the middle of the third century A.D., contains the story of Himiko, a woman ruler. She ruled a mother right society and administered the state through her brother. She acted as a mediator with the gods and spirits. Since Emperors existed, as reported in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*, at the same time as Himiko, it would appear that the Wei-shi reported conditions at one location in Japan while the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* reported events in another location.⁶ This, however, only shows more vividly that ecstasy was practiced in early historical times in different regions of Japan, that is by Himiko in one area and Emperors' wives and daughters in another.

b. Emperors' Wives and Daughters. The records are filled with accounts of wives and chief consorts of the Emperors who practiced ecstasy. The ecstatic practices of the chief consort of the Emperor before the Korean campaign is so well known that it need hardly be mentioned. In addition the shrine records contain many examples.⁷ And the *saigu* was an elaborate organization with ecstasy as one of its main purposes. (See *saigu*, P. 50)

c. Mikos. The mikos were women religious functionaries who served in the shrines and who served the common people outside of the shrines. They practiced ecstasy down through the centuries. (See *Miko*).

3. Organized Shinto Religion and Ecstasy.

(5) *Ibid.* P. 181.

(6) *Nihon no Rekishi*, Vol. 1, *Nihon no Hajimari*, P. 139ff.

(7) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 103f.

a. General. Shamanism and highly organized religions are generally in opposition to each other. Shamanism seems to flourish among people whose religion is not highly developed and organized, and whose social structure is also simple and loosely knit. A form of shamanism often exists in other cultures and cults, but when it does, it is apt to be subservient to some higher political or religious authority. In his essence, a shaman is a lone wolf, following his own, or rather, the dictates of his guardian spirit. A well developed cult with important gods in it, and a well organized priesthood, cannot tolerate any such freebooting approach to the supernatural, and is bound to restrict this kind of activity, and to deprecate the importance of shamans, mediums, and the like.⁸ This is not, however, entirely true for Japan.

Shintoism, in its essence, is not only not opposed to ecstasy, but actually is based on it, used it, developed it, and built up a whole religious complex around the idea of possession by gods and spirits. This was possible because Shintoism was based on the concept of family gods, clan gods, and family succession. Individuals who practiced ecstasy and divined were for the most part family members, heads of shrines, their wives and their daughters. When individuals were brought into the shrines from outside of the family, they worked within the framework of the family. There was really no conflict between priests and shamans nor between state and religion, since the whole complex was built on the family.⁹

These family organizations practiced ecstasy at all levels from the Imperial household down to the smallest shrines. At the highest level ecstatic practices were performed within the framework of the *Saigu*.

b. *Saigu—Itsuki no Miya*. These two terms have the same meaning and use the same Chinese characters. *Saigu* is the Chinese pronunciation, *Itsuki no Miya* the Japanese. The term means the arranger of the affairs of the gods in the shrines. In the beginning the term was applied to the shrine of Amaterasu O Mi Kami, later to the residence of the princess in Ise, and finally to the princess, herself. Originally the *Saigu* were for the most part Emperors' daughters, although when no daughter was

(8) The Heathen: Primitive Man and His Religion, Howells, P. 142.

(9) *Ie no Kami to Mura no Kami*, Hirayama, *Minzokugaku Taikēi*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 53ff.

available, some princess was chosen. Originally, it seems, the Saigu was appointed for life or according to the pleasure of the Emperor. Later a custom started of appointing a new *Saigu* at the beginning of each reign.

At the time of the coronation of the new Emperor, the Imperial daughters were assembled and after divination the location of the *shosai*—first purification shrine—was decided. The princess went there and again after divination, a *Saisho*—purification residence—was erected. The princess lived there, abstaining from all forms of pollution. In the ninth month of the third year of her assumption of duties, the princess went to Ise. She retired at the death or abdication of the Emperor, but also at times she retired because of deep mourning or misadventure. There was no fixed rule, however, and some resigned for other reasons.¹⁰

Later the *saigu* became an elaborate institution, the Saigu Bureau. It had inner buildings, which were the quarters of the princess and various attendants, both male and female; middle buildings which were the headquarters and which contained the official residence of the gods; and outer buildings which were 12 departments of the bureau.¹¹

With such an elaborate organization, the diviners were just a section. The diviners, under the Princess, were selected from various parts of Japan, five from Izu, five from Iki, and ten from Tsushima.¹² The diviners used various divining methods, but divination using ecstasy was the basic method.

c. *Toya—Kannushi*. Individuals were selected to be the heads of shrines for fixed periods, very often one year. The operation was called *toya* and the individual was called *kannushi* or *toban*. The Kannushi's responsibility was to go into ecstasy and divine.

The candidate for this duty was selected from among the *ujiko* or family members with blood relationship to the ancestor god, although there were exceptions to this. The selection was decided by a dream caused by the gods (recall Ohotataneko), and after the selection the individual fasted and abstained, purifying himself or herself for the welcoming of the gods. During the

(10) Studies in Shinto and Shrines, Ponsonby-Fane, P. 28-31.

(11) Ibid. P. 33f.

(12) Ibid. P. 59.

welcoming of the gods—*matsuri*—the *kannushi* lost his senses, went into ecstasy, sometimes became unconscious and while in ecstasy divined concerning the crops, weather, etc.

There were more than one *kannushi* to each shrine. There were classes of *Kannushis*, such as *negi*—in charge of ritual, *hafuri*—in charge of prayers and invocations, and *miko*—ritual performers. However, the basic method of divining was ecstasy, and they acted as the mediums between the people and the gods, and made judgements concerning the will of the gods.¹³

d. *Takusen*. This was divining carried out during the *matsuris* by the *Saigu* and *Kannushi*. During the *matsuris*, the shrine attached *mikos* were the chief performers, going into ecstasy and divining. They also talked with the souls of the dead and the souls of the living. They also divined before battles, during battles, before hunting and fishing expeditions, before planting and harvesting crops, etc.¹⁴

e. *Yutate*. This is the elaborate ceremony of the blessing of the water and the driving out of evil spirits from the water. The rite was performed in all shrines in all parts of Japan. The rite did not require ecstasy, but it was not uncommon, even down to the period just prior to the Meiji restoration (1868) for the *mikos* to go into ecstasy and divine during the performance or after the performance.¹⁵

f. *Kagura*. These were the sacred dances of the gods. The dance did not require ecstasy, but *mikos* often did go into ecstasy while performing them. As Hori Ichiro says, the tree branches, *gohei*, staffs, bamboo grasses, bows, swords, spears, etc., which were held by the performers during the *kagura*, were symbols of possession by the gods and spirits.¹⁶

g. Attempts to Control the Practice of Ecstasy.

(1) General. While it is possible that Shintoism would have developed internal opposition to the practice of ecstasy, Buddhism gave it a spur in that direction. As long as Shintoism remained a family organization, there was no need to oppose ecstasy.

(13) *Nihon Shakai Minzoku Jiten*, Vol. 1, 1952, P. 231.

(14) *Takusen to Matsuri*, Kawamura, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 1, No. 3, P. 129, 131. *Matsuri Kata*, Ogiwara, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 157, 209. *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 154, 290.

(15) *Matsuri Kata*, Ogiwara, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 157.

(16) *Waga Kokuminkan Shinko Shi no Kenkyu*, Hori, P. 389.

However, the importation of Buddhism in the year 551 A.D., started a battle between the two religions for control of the religious and political spheres.¹⁷

Among other differences, the Buddhist religion was not one of family succession. Organizationally, Buddhism was opposed to Shintoism. While not entirely due to Buddhism, Shintoism was gradually infiltrated by priests and officials who were not members of the families which controlled the shrines.

But more important, the battle with Buddhism called for action to strengthen Shintoism. Control of the practices of ecstasy was part of the campaign. Edicts were published prohibiting ecstasy outside of the jurisdiction of shrine authority, and a campaign began to lower the prestige of those who practiced ecstasy outside of shrine authority.

(2) Official Decrees. In 780 A.D. and in 807 A.D. official bulls against the practice of ecstasy outside of the authority of the shrines were published. These bulls were not only aimed at ecstasy, but were aimed at magicians, priests, sorcerers, etc. It was an attempt to gain complete control, while at the same time it aimed at eradicating abuses which were occurring. In regard to ecstasy two points are important: (a) The claim was made that true ecstasy was practiced within the shrines, fake ecstasy outside of the shrines. (2) The bulls show that the masses of people in both high and low social stratas were expending an extremely large amount of money for these services.

The decrees failed and the battle continued down until 1873 when the last bulls of prohibition of ecstasy were proclaimed. However, the last decree not only prohibited ecstasy outside of the shrines, but also within the shrines. Ecstasy promptly disappeared from official Shintoism. Outside of the shrines it went underground.¹⁸

(3) Family Control of Ecstasy Practicing Groups. Official bulls could not eradicate ecstasy outside of the shrines. However, great families which controlled large territories began to control the ecstasy practicing groups. This produced groups which were better organized. In 1596 a woman named Chiyoda was issued a license giving her control of all the mikos in the provinces of Shin-Kai. Later the Tamura family was given control of the

(17) *Studies in Shinto and Shrines*, Ponsonby-Fane, P. 47ff.

(18) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 598-692, P. 739.

mikos activities outside of the shrines for the eight provinces of the country of Kanto, the two provinces of Shin-Kai, and part of the province of Oshu.¹⁹ However, at no time were all the ecstasy practicing groups and individuals under the control of such families. Neither was the separation of shrine attached and non-shrine attached groups decisive. This is shown by the law suit which the Yoshida family brought against the wives of itinerant priests, claiming that they were performing functions legally restricted to shrine attached mikos. It seems that what started out as official action against those who practiced ecstasy outside of the shrines, turned into a battle between large and powerful families.²⁰

(4) Buddhism and Ecstasy. The hospitality of the Japanese people allowed them to accept the Buddhist hierarchy of gods and spirits along side the Shinto hierarchy. Buddhism, on the other hand, joined in the religious rites of Shintoism. In 1155 A.D., for instance, the Emperor, Toriwa, visited Kumuna. The Emperor summoned a number of mikos and more than eighty five *Yamabushi*—Buddhist itinerant priest. The Buddhist priests chanted, prayed and made vows while the mikos threw themselves on the ground, screaming and undergoing excruciating mental experiences.

When a person died mikos were called in to get information about the dead. An altar was erected, hot water containers were decorated with paper, figures of birds were cut out of paper, and the water purification rites were performed. The mikos became possessed by the souls of the dead and divined, crying in barking voices.

This same type of rite of calling back spirits of the dead was performed after Buddhist funeral services in Rikuchu Kuni, the Ryukyu Islands, Ugo Kuni, and at Akita during the spring equinox festival, as well as in the Buddhist temples in Iwao Kuni.²¹

Also, the Shugendo religion rites which employed ecstasy were held in Buddhist temples.

(5) Shugendo Religion and Ecstasy. This religion was a mixture of folk beliefs in mountain gods, Indian Buddhistic

(19) Ibid. P. 614-614.

(20) Ibid. P. 633.

(21) Japanese Folk Beliefs, Hori, American Anthropologist, Vol. 61, 1959, P. 423. *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 415ff.

asceticism, Chinese mythology, and certain practices of the Tendai and Shingon Buddhist sects, and Shintoism. Shugendo priests often married mikos who practiced ecstasy, but they themselves also practiced ecstasy. Both of these groups were very often animal spirit family members and often intermarried. When the Shugendo priests practiced ecstasy they worked with assistants, either in mass participation or combined form. (See Shugendo P. 86)

6. Ecstasy Outside of Organized Religion.

a. *Yorimashi*. This was possession of an individual to learn the will of the gods. The people selected an individual, often a child of either sex, about 7 or 8 years old, to be the voice of the gods. The following are examples of *yorimashi*.

A boy was selected and dressed for the occasion. His face was powdered white and a symbol was painted on his forehead. The boy went into ecstasy. He was put on a horse and taken to the festival area. After the festival the symbol was removed from the boy's face and he became normal again.²²

In Tosa, in the country of Takaoka, on the Island of Shikoku, a boy's face was powdered white and a star was painted on his face. He went into ecstasy and after the festival when the powder and symbol were removed, he returned to normal.²³

In the year 1133 a child was dressed with wild bird feathers and decorated with *gohei*. The child mounted a horse and became possessed by some spirit.²⁴

b. *Kuchiyose*. At New Year's and at other times during the year, the people invited mikos into their homes to divine, talk to dead ancestors, obtain information about persons who were lost or far away, etc. There were three kinds of *kuchiyose*, (1) *kami kuchi*—possession by gods or spirits in order to divine, heal the sick, etc., (2) *shi kuchi*—possession by the souls of the dead to report conditions, desires, etc., of the dead, (3) *iki kuchi*—possession by the souls of the living to obtain information concerning the activities, locations, thoughts, etc., of people who were at a distance.

(7) Summary. The practice of ecstasy began in the earliest days when Ame no Uzume performed her shamanistic dance in

(22) *Hito to Kami*, Ikegami, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 75.

(23) *Matsuri Kata*, Ogiwara, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 225.

(24) *Ibid.*

front of the cave of heaven and has continued down to modern times. The practice of ecstasy was not a matter of a few individuals in scattered regions of Japan, but was a highly organized practice within the Shinto religion and other organized religions. Outside of the organized religions, it was widespread and continued down to the present days in spite of official decrees of prohibition. The question remains, "Which of the groups which practiced ecstasy and are practicing it today are shaman groups?"

CHAPTER FOUR

MIKOISM

1. The Term Mikoism. Women played an important role in a region stretching from Manchuria, China, Korea and Japan to the Ryukyu Islands. In Japan these women were priests, soothsayers, magicians, prophets and shamans in the folk religion, and they were the chief performers in organized Shintoism. These women were called Miko, and the author calls the complex "mikoism" for lack of a suitable English word.

2. The Term Miko. The derivation of the term is unknown. After the introduction of Chinese characters various symbols were used to represent *miko* and these give some clue as to the original meaning.

a. Himiko. The first written reports concerning the Japanese were made in Chinese. The term "Himiko" was used to designate the woman ruler of a mother-right state. She interpreted the will of the gods and knew the art of dealing with the spirits. She divined and used ecstasy.¹

b. *Miko* 神子. These Chinese characters mean "God" and "Child." Nakayama says that originally the term meant "God" and not "Child of God," and that "Child of God" was a later development. Finally it came to mean "one possessed by gods" and "medium between man and God."² Harada also says that the term means "one possessed by the gods."³

c. *Miko* 巫. This term is used much later than 神子. The character is evidently a symbol of heaven and earth with a connecting link between them. Between the heavens and the earth there are two persons. Originally this character was a picture of heaven and earth with two hands and two dancing figures. The symbol evidently meant that the dancing persons were offering sacrifices to the gods as mediators between man and the gods.⁴

(1) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 104f.

(2) *Ibid.* P. 25, 245.

(3) *Sosetsu*, Harada, *Minzokugaku Taikēi*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 10.

(4) *Kaiji Kanwa Jiten*, *Nihon Kyoiku Shinbun Sha*, Tokyo, 1948, P. 192.

d. Other Terms for Mikos. There were many terms used to designate mikos. A list of terms is given in Appendix # 1.

3. Classification of Mikos.

a. General. The mikos performed so many diverse functions that classification is difficult. Nakayama says that much of the origin of government, economics, literature, stage, etc., is from the mikos.⁵ However, he makes a basic distinction between shrine attached and non-shrine attached. This is a starting point for the study of the mikos.

b. Shrine Attached and Non-Shrine Attached Mikos. Miko who operated in the shrines, Nakayama called *Kanagi Kei no Miko* while those outside of the shrines he called *Kuchiyose Kei no miko*. For shrine attached mikos he used the character 神子 meaning "Child of God." For those not attached to shrine he used 巫 meaning "medium," indicating that he considered the origin of the two types basically different or that he considered their fundamental operations different.

Nakayama admits that this classification is not entirely satisfactory because there was actually no such strict division.

Next Nakayama subclassified these two groups by the terms used to designate the mikos in the various shrines and sections of Japan. This aids in showing the extent of the distribution of mikos in Japan. (See Chart # 4.)

c. Other Classifications. Mikos have been classified as "Long and Short Bow;" those who used dolls and those who did not; those who used traveling boxes and those who did not; those who lived in cities and those who lived in small villages; those who had permanent bases of operations and those who roamed about the country; and those who were blind and those who were not blind.⁶

Non-shrine attached mikos have been classified by schools, such as Kishu Kumano Kei, Kaka Shiroyama, Inari Sage, Hanjo Tsukai, and Ebisu Ko Oroshi.⁷ Nakayama classifies the mikos who were operating outside of the shrines just prior to the Meiji period (1868) as (1) *Tamura Kei*—Tamura Family Controlled, (2) *Tosan Shugen no Tsuma no Miko*—wives of *Tosan Shugendo* priests, (3) *Shinshu Nezu Mura Kei no Miko*—Of the Shinshu

(5) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 35.

(6) *Ibid.* P. 640ff.

(7) *Ibid.* P. 608.

Nezu Village Lineage, (4) *Oshu no Itako no Miko*—Mikos of the province of Oshu known as Itako, (5) Other groups who were independent and whose control is unknown.⁸

d. Summary. While there were many groups of mikos operating and they were able to be classified into various groups Nakayama says that he cannot distinguish one group from the other in actual operation. He says that all these groups were the same, in that they all used ecstasy and possession by spirits, and performed the same type of functions.⁹

4. Functions.

a. Mikos performed functions in almost every sphere of activity, and these functions cannot all be explored here. The following survey of miko functions only treats those which are related to the question of religion and ecstasy.

(1) *Takusen*. Divining by using the method of ecstasy.¹⁰

(2) *Uranai*. This was also divining, but did not imply ecstasy. They divined by shooting arrows, burning bones of deer and the shells of turtles, etc. They divined before all important events. There were special gods of divining called *bokusen*. Uraniwa no Kami, also known as Futonorito no Mikoto, was the special god of *futomani*—divining by burning deer bones. *Futomani* was performed before the cave in which the sun goddess had hidden, and before which Ame no Uzume became possessed. It is to be noted that the divining and possession dance were performed by different individuals, showing that the possession was not directly related to the divining. Further, *futomani* was a religious act and was not magic since the diviner depended on the gods.¹¹

(3) *Yutate*. This was the purification of water—a blessing and driving out of evil spirits. It did not require ecstasy but often the mikos went into ecstasy while performing the rite or after performing it.¹²

(4) *Kagura*. These were the sacred dances of the gods.

(8) Ibid. P. 633.

(9) Ibid. P. 640.

(10) Ibid. P. 154, 290. *Takusen to Matsuri*, Kawamura, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 1, No. 3, P. 129. *Matsuri Kata*, Ogiwara, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, P. 209.

(11) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 143.

(12) *Matsuri Kata*, Ogiwara, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, P. 209.

(see *Kagura* P. 52.)

(5) *Toya*. This was the selection of the *kannushi* or guardian of the shrine. It was accompanied by ecstasy. (See *Toya* P. 51)

(6) *Yorimashi*. This was possession of individuals at festivals. (See *Yorimashi* P. 55)

(7) *Kuchiyose*. (See *Kuchiyose* P. 55)

(8) Additional Functions. The mikos also held funeral services,¹³ exorcised spirits from individuals, homes etc., and acted as one night wives. This last function may have been the origin of the mikos' close connection with prostitution and brothel operation.¹⁴

b. Summary. The religious functions performed by the mikos were social and altruistic in nature, serving the purpose of preserving life and bringing happiness to the members of society.¹⁵ Ecstasy was the basic method. One group of functions, such as *takusen*, *yutate*, *toya*, and *kagura* was more related to public and official festivals. The other group, *kuchiyose*, was related more to individuals and families, although there was overlapping of the two groups.

5. Exclusion of Shrine Attached Miko from this Report. It is possible that shamanism existed in the shrines. However the shaman elements have to be extracted from a mass of priestly functions, ceremonies, and official pageantry. The whole structure of the *saigu* would have to be analyzed in detail. This report cannot examine the matter in sufficient detail. It requires a special investigation. Therefore the shrine attached mikos' activities are excluded from the rest of this report. Their activities will only be treated if they overlap with the activities of the mikos outside of the shrines.

6. The Term Miko Versus the Term Shaman. The question arises as to whether the term "miko" should be used interchangeably with the term shaman as many Japanese scholars do.¹⁶

(13) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 259ff.

(14) *Ibid.* P. 34, 366ff, 358, 465ff. *Miko Ko*, Kawamura, Vol. 1, No. 1, P. 15.

(15) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 640.

(16) *Miko to Hi—Chosen Shamanizumu ni Okeru Seihi no Gyoji—* Fire and Shaman on the back cover of *Minzokugaku Kenkyu*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1949. *Hairaru-Dauruzoku no Shizoku Miko—* On the Clan Shamans of the Hailar Dahurs on the back cover of the above periodical. *Miko*

Based on the facts that mikoism has never been analyzed with the purpose of establishing the essential elements of the phenomenon; that many groups of religious functionaries called *miko* did not practice ecstasy; that today there are women functionaries called miko who do not practice ecstasy, this report does not employ the two terms interchangeably. The term *miko* in this report means "Women religious functionaries." The term shaman is used for individuals and groups which meet the basic criteriae of shamanism, namely: practice ecstasy, depend on a guardian spirit, are bound by a fixed ritual, operate within the framework of a social institution, and perform social functions.

7. Summary. Mikos performed in Japan throughout history. The term *miko* means possession by gods and spirits, and while originally perhaps all mikos employed ecstasy, the term gradually came to include many groups which did not use ecstasy. Mikos performed both within the shrines and outside of the shrines, divining, driving out evil spirits, performing sacred dances, etc., the purpose of which was to serve mankind by preserving life and bringing happiness to man.

Shrine attached miko activities were excluded from this report. The rest of the report will investigate ecstasy practicing groups outside of the shrines and apply the criteriae of shamanism to them.

Keisho no Shuzokuka—Succession in Shamanism on back cover of *Shakai Jinruigaku Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1959, although there is nothing to indicate that the miko described is a shaman.

CHAPTER FIVE

MIKO GROUPS

1. Itako.

a. Location. The Itakos are blind women, actively performing today. The group is concentrated in the north east section of Japan in Aomori, Iwate and Miyagi Prefectures. They perform various functions but are best known for their *shi kuchi* performances at Osore Yama.

b. Annual Performances at Osore Yama. Osore Yama—fearful Mountain is on the extreme north eastern tip of the main island of Honshu. This mountain has been considered the abode of the dead for many years. Legend says that a temple was built there about 1,500 years ago. Every year, between the twentieth and twenty fifth of July, thousands of people go to the mountain to visit, console and communicate with the souls of the dead. Thirty or so Itako go to the mountain and perform *shikuchi*. They spread mats on the ground close to the temple, sit on the mats and act as mediums between the living and the dead.

The Itako asks the patron several questions, such as the date of the death, the sex of the deceased, age at time of death, and the circumstances of the death. Then she mumbles and chants special litanies and prayers to call up the soul of the deceased. When the soul arrives, the prayers turn into the words of the soul. The Itako relates the conditions of the soul in the other world and makes certain requests of the living, such as to make a stone memorial, otherwise the evil spirits will cause trouble for the soul of the deceased. Most of the advice seems to be aimed at soothing the living. What is important is that the Itako speaks in strange voices, becomes excited and slightly crazed, and goes into ecstasy, her body quivering and shaking.

c. Oda Asa. Oda Asa is one of the some 136 Itako in Aomori Prefecture. (1961). She lives at the foot of Osore Yama in Mutsu City, a village with four Itakos. She is 68 years old (1956) and appears no different from the other villagers. Her home is the same as those of the other villagers, except that there is a small *shimenawa* hanging at the entrance.

Oda Asa was born in 1891 in Aomori Prefecture and was blind from birth. The village of her birth, Hirosaki, had an office of the Shugendo Bozo—a headquarters for priests of the Shugendo sect. There was also a Tendai shrine in the village which was the central office for Itakos, and so the number of Itakos in this village was high compared to most villages.

There was a school for Itako in the area and Oda Asa entered it and became a *Mame Itako*—"Young Bean Itako"—at the age of 17. She graduated after two years of study. She married a blind man when she was 21, (usually Itako do not marry, but if they do, they usually marry blind men) and continued to practice her profession.

Her functions are not restricted to *shi kuchi* at Osore Yama. She also performs in her home and in the homes of others. In addition to *shi kuchi*, she divines concerning the crops, weather, etc. She cures sickness, exorcises evil spirits from possessing people. This protection against possession by evil spirits is one of her most important functions.

She has a good reputation for curing mental sickness and people have confidence in her ability in these types of cases. In purely physical illness, broken bones, ruptures, etc., she gives advice concerning which doctor to go to, which medicines to use, etc.

When performing in a home, she uses two dolls called "Oshira Sama" or "Oshira Kami." While holding the dolls, she chants prayers, makes invocations, and dances, moving the dolls about. Then she goes into ecstasy and performs *kami kuchi*, *shi kuchi* or *iki kuchi*.

Most of the Itako are old women and before long there should be no Itakos unless some new source of candidates is found. However, most of the young people in the area do not believe in the powers of the Itakos, nor in this kind of religious phenomenon.¹

d. The Term *Itako*. The origin of the term is unknown, but Akiba points out that there is a possible connection with northern languages.² For instance terms for shaman are:

(1) *Hito to Kami*, Ikegami, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 85. *Shukan Yomiuri*, July 30, 1961, Hideo, P. 72ff. CBC Television, Nagoya, Japan, August 31, 1961, "Ono no Chizu."

(2) *Hito to Kami*, Ikegami, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 85.

utiugun is the Kidan language, *udayan* in the Yakut, *utyan* and *odeyon* in the Tungus. These resemble *itako* and *ichiko* in Japan, *itaku* in Ainu, and *yuta* in the Ryukyu Islands. However, historical connections have not been proven in the cases of *itako*, *yuta* and *itaku* by comparative studies.

e. Origin of the Itako. The origin is unknown. The group was flourishing before the Meiji restoration in 1868, and at that time they were not restricted to the north east corner of Japan, but also operated in the Kanto area.³

A legend explains why they are blind women. Because of the extreme cold weather in the north east part of Japan and lack of proper diet, there were more than a normal number of blind people. The blind were gathered together every five to ten years and executed because they consumed food but contributed nothing to society. An official who thought blind people could be useful, summoned a blind woman who had been trained as an Itako and took her into the garden. Then he asked her about her surroundings. She said that there was a pine tree and under the pine tree there was a stone lantern. Her answer was correct and society began to use the skill of the blind.⁴

This story tells us that the blind were considered to have some extra human power, especially those trained as Itakos. The official tested this power and was satisfied and gave official sanction to the practices of the Itako.

f. Training. Oda Asa attended a formal school and graduated with formal recognition of her ability to perform as an Itako. Nakayama reports that the Itakos had disciples and taught them the arts of *kuchiyose*, and that it required three to five years of training before graduation. The graduation was official recognition by the Itako institution and the new Itako was authorized to perform independently. The training was severe and for 30 days prior to the graduation, the candidates abstained from eating raw fish.

g. Graduation. This ceremony was called *kami tsuku*—attaching a spirit. The ceremony was extremely important because the spirit which possessed the Itako became her guardian spirit for life and was the source of her power. At the ceremony, the Itako mounted a bag of rice as though mounting a horse.

(3) *Oshira Kami no Kosatsu*, Tamura, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 5, No. 1, P. 6f.

(4) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 673.

Trays were set in front of the candidate. On the trays were various food offerings for the spirits. The candidate put her feet on these trays. A large number of Itako surrounded her and chanted *nan kami go tsuita*,—which spirit has attached? The answer was usually that one of the 13 Buddhas had attached himself to the candidate. This Buddha became the guardian spirit of the candidate. Then a marriage ceremony was performed, uniting the spirit and Itako. In many places this ceremony has degenerated and now consists of only blackening the teeth.

In spite of the long training period, severe preparations, and the fervent praying of the senior Itakos, it was very difficult for candidates to go into ecstasy. However, Nakayama says that he knew one Itako who could go into ecstasy without difficulty. She went through the initiation when she was 16, and instead of requiring the usual 6 or 7 days of prayers to call down the spirit, she became possessed after only one day and night. Her guardian spirit was a Bosatsu (Bodhi-sattva), a Buddhist saint.

h. Guardian Spirits. Just what guardian spirits the Itakos had prior to the introduction of Buddhism is not known, but after Buddhism, the guardian spirit became one of thirteen Buddhas in many cases. These thirteen Buddhas were venerated and invoked by the Itako, but the guardian spirit was in no way restricted to just thirteen Buddhas. Any Buddha could become a guardian spirit.⁵

i. Functions of the Itakos. They performed *kami kuchi*, *shi kuchi*, and *iki kuchi*. The performances were essentially the same before the Meiji restoration as they are today. Tamura says that during the New Year holiday period, the Itako were invited into the homes. They made invocations, performed certain rites, became possessed and acted as mediums. They also exorcised evil spirits from the homes and divined for the coming year. During the divining they held the "Oshira Kami" dolls.⁶

j. Paraphernalia.

(1) General. The Itakos used, and use today, candles, salt, rice cakes, black stole, rosary, dolls, etc. However, three items require special explanation, the *irataka* rosary, the cylinder, and the Oshira Kami dolls.

(2) Irataka Rosary. In addition to the Itakos, the Zatokakas

(5) Ibid.

(6) *Oshira Kami no Kosatsu*, Tamura, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 5, No. 1, P. 6.

in Akita Prefecture also used this rosary. At the same time, not all Itakos used it. It was mainly used by the Itakos in Miyagi and Iwate Prefectures. The Shugendo priests used the same type of rosary but called it *irataka nenju*.

Irataka is considered by some to be the sanskrit word for rosary, *arataka*. However, Yanagita Kunio says that *ira* meant thorn. This explains the claws of animals, etc., which are attached to the rosary and is not of Buddhistic origin.⁷

The rosary is about eight feet long and has some three hundred soapberry wooden beads on it. Various figures made of the jaw bones of mountain deer and foxes, horns of deer, teeth of the bear, claws of the eagle, shells, etc., are attached to it. These rosaries were treated with great reverence and were passed down from teacher to disciple when the teacher died.⁸

The meaning and function of the teeth, claws, horns, etc., are not known, but it is to be noted that in the past horns of animals were used for divination by mikos as were bones of birds. There is even a bird called *shitoto* which means "miko bird." It is also to be recalled that mikos and Shugendo priests were members of animal spirit families.

(3) Cylinder. Some Itakos used a cylinder hung over their shoulders. Such cylinders were also used by other mikos.⁹ Traveling mikos carried a bamboo tube with a metal cap, and in the tube there was a paper with the names of the Shinto and Buddhist gods written in the shape of a wheel. Such tubes were also used by mikos to capture animal spirits which had possessed people.¹⁰ All the functions of this cylinder are not known because its operation was a closely guarded secret. It is to be recalled that Yanagita Kunio connects the term *kuda* of the *kuda kitsune*—fox spirit—with the term *kuda* meaning down. As such these cylinders may have been the carriers of the fox spirit when it descended from the mountains.

(4) Oshira Kami Dolls.

(7) *Hito to Kami*, Ikegami, *Nihon Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 85.

(8) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 419ff. *Akita no Ichiko*, Katori, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 4, P. 228.

(9) *Haka Ishi to Oibaka no Tsuka*, Kawamura, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 1, No. 8, P. 450.

(10) *Shinshu Suwako Han no Kitsune*, Ariga Kyoichi, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 7, No. 2, P. 117f.

(a) Physical Characteristics. The dolls are about eight inches tall and are made of mulberry tree wood. They often wear dresses, but the dresses are just strips of cloth with holes cut in the center for the head. The female doll, at one time, had four bells attached to it, while the male doll had three bells attached to it.

(b) Oshira Kami Ritual. In 1929 Yanagita Kunio invited an Itako to his home to perform the Oshira Kami ritual. The Itako was blind. Her clothing was normal except that she wore a black surplus. She had a rosary hanging around her neck and a tube hanging over her right shoulder. She knelt before a small table on which there were two dolls, a female one on the right and a male on the left. There were a rice bowl of water, candles, some cakes, salt and rice on the table. The Itako sprinkled some salt, chanted a confession of sins, and then chanted the "Hannya Sutra"—The Buddhist Prajna-paramita—wisdom personified. Next she rubbed the rosary between her hands, read some more prayers, clapped her hands and began the Oshira Kami invocations and prayers—a long account of the lineage of the gods. While she chanted, she held the female doll in her right hand and the male doll in her left hand. At the end of the invocation, she bent her head down and touched the dolls with her head and whispered something. Then she bent the two dolls forward as though they were falling. That ended the dance ritual.

The Itako rested and then performed the *Ebisu Mai*—God of Wealth Dance. Then she performed the search through hell, which is the humming of a sutra, during which time the Itako fingers the rosary beads and becomes engrossed in the beings of the other world. The last act was to send the spirits back. This ritual consisted of singing in Shinto style the song of sending the spirits back to the mountains and forests. After the long ordeal the Itako was exhausted, but later she divined for several persons.

It is to be noted that there is no ecstasy in relation to the Oshira Kami ritual as performed by this Itako. However, the ritual is usually performed in connection with the performance of *kuchiyose*, at which time the Itako goes into ecstasy by possession and shamanizes.

Nakayama is of the opinion that there is a kind of possession during the dance. However, instead of the Itako becoming possessed, the dolls become possessed. He says that holding the male doll in the left hand and female doll in the right hand, which is reverse from the usual custom, probably indicates that

the Itako intends to retain her own identity while the dolls become possessed.¹¹

k. Ritual. The ritual of the Itako was generally as follows. They wore black stoles called *kesa*, hung black rosaries on themselves, scattered salt, rubbed a rosary, chanted invocations, performed the "Oshira Kami" dance, and performed *kuchiyose*.¹²

l. Oshira Kami.

(1) Legend of Origin. A legend says that once there was a farmer who had a daughter and a horse. The daughter loved the horse and used to sleep with it in the shed. Eventually she married the horse. When her father learned of this he was angry. He tied the horse to a mulberry tree and cut off its head. The daughter, in grief, mounted the head and ascended to heaven. The horse and the girl became gods and came back to earth as silk worms and lived in the mulberry tree. From that time on there have been Oshira Kami and their images are made of the wood of the mulberry tree.¹³

(2) Theory of Siberian Origin. This theory is based on the report that among Siberian Mongol people there is a spirit called "Morini Horobo," *morini* meaning horse and *horobo* meaning stick. These people represent the spirit by a figure of a horse's head at the top of a stick about two feet long. The bottom of the stick is hoof shaped. Five pieces of cloth of different colors and little bells are attached to the stick.

Mikos in Japan were called *Mori* and the dolls formerly used by the Itakos were often in the shape of horses' heads and had cloth and bells attached to them. This is said not be accidental and must be explained either by migration of peoples or by borrowing.¹⁴

(3) Local Interpretation of Origin. The word *mori* in Japanese means forest. There is a mountain in Yamagata Prefecture called "Mori" and every year people make offerings called "mori offerings" to their dead ancestors on this mountain. *Mori* is, thus, a term indicating some relationship with the souls. Further the trees and forests were considered the abodes of the

(11) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 649ff., P. 659.

(12) *Buraku Saishi ni Okeru Shamanizumu no Keiko*, Harada, *Minzokugaku Kenkyu*, Vol. 14, No. 1, P. 12.

(13) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 553.

(14) *Aboriginals of Siberia*, Czaplicka, from *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 693.

gods and spirits.¹⁵ Also, while it is true that mikos did use figures of horses' heads at the top of sticks, they also used figures of other animals' heads, and in some cases used the figures of human skulls.¹⁶ As to the cloth and bells, it must be remembered that the mikos' dolls were formerly sticks and look more like *gohei* than dolls. Such sticks and staffs with strips of colored cloth and bells are found in many places and are not restricted to Siberian peoples. Naturally a resemblance between Japanese stick dolls and Siberian stick dolls is found. As Obayashi points out the origin of the Ainu *inau* or cult stick was probably in central Asia. Whether such sticks came in to Japan from Siberia or from China by way of Korea is still in doubt.¹⁷

At any rate, it seems unnecessary to go to Siberia to interpret the connection of *mori* with gods, spirits, woods, trees, sticks, dolls, and mikos.

(4) The Term Oshira Kami. There are various theories as to the origin of the term "Oshira Kami."

(a) The word originally meant *hina* which merely means doll.

(b) It comes from "Shiroi Yama"—white mountain—where mikos used dolls. The tradition was passed to the Itako with a change from "Shiroi" to "Shira" and by replacing "Yama" by "Kami."

(c) It came from the Ainu term "Shira Tsuki Kamui"—a guardian spirit. The spirit was introduced into the northern Itako group with a change to "Oshira Kami."

(d) It came from *Kaiko no Shira*—silk worm which was venerated as a relic of Buddha.

(e) It comes from the term *Oshirase Kami*.

(5) Summary. Both the origins of the term and the dolls themselves are unknown. However, the dolls and the spirits they represented were not peculiar to the Itakos. Neither were they, nor are they today, restricted to the northeast section of Japan. They appear in many parts of Japan.

In some places the figures have become Buddhist figures and

(15) *Shizen to Kami*, Ikegami, *Nihon Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 147. *Kami no Hyosho to Saijo*, Takeda, Same Volume, P. 159.

(16) *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 1, No. 5, P. 259.

(17) Concerning the Origin of the *Inau*, Obayashi, *Minzokugaku Kenkyu*, Vol. 24, No. 4, P. 1-30.

are known as "Oshira Ko." In other places there are festivals in honor of the silk worm god who is called "Shiro Kami." There is a festival in honor of the silkworm mountain god in Ueno Kuni, called *Oshira Machi*. It appears that at one time the name "Shira Kami" was spread from one end of Japan to the other and existed from very early times. Some scholars believe that these gods were family gods and as such existed in early times.¹⁸ and were called upon to help cultivate the fields.¹⁹ At any rate, they were not peculiar to the Itakos. The Itakos merely adopted the gods venerated in the society in which they were performing.

m. Summary of the Itako. The Itakos practiced ecstasy, depended on a guardian spirit, had a training period and graduation, were recognized by society, and performed a social function. These are basic criteriae of shamanism. Vocation or calling can be explained as "social hereditary." The blind had been selected at one time by the gods to carry out this function. Since not every blind woman became a shaman, those who did had to have certain predispositions for the profession. Living in a society in which the blind normally became shamans, the blind were socially and psychologically tuned for a calling.

2. *Okamin*. This term may have meant "Okami"—God—, "Okamisan"—wife or mistress.²⁰ The Okamins were blind women and they performed *kuchiyose*. They performed 17 days after the death of a person, during the fall and spring equinox festivals, and on other occasions as requested. They also performed *hi imi*—fortelling days which bring calamities, disasters, bad luck, incurable sickness, etc. The villagers believed the Okamins and adults did not go out to work and children did not go to school on these days.

Okamins entered training when very young and received 7 years of instruction, during which time they had to pay their teachers' board and lodging. Training ended with a formal graduation called *Kami Tsuku*—attaching the spirit—the same as with the Itakos. At the graduation a *shimenawa* was stretched above a platform. The candidate sat in the middle of the platform, blindfolded, surrounded by her relatives. Mikos gathered around the platform and chanted invocations. The candidate was

(18) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakakayama, P. 556ff.

(19) *Oshira Sama to Okunai Sama, Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 3, No. 1, P. 53.

(20) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 17.

asked, "What spirit has attached itself?" The candidate answered either "Hachiman Sama"—God of War—or "Aito Sama"—God of Happiness. Then there was a celebration and feast. However, sometimes the spirit did not attach itself to the candidate. This happened if any impure person entered the hall.²¹

3. *Waka*. These were also blind women. The term may come from *Waka no Miya*—young prince—or from *Waka Miko*—Young Miko.²² The *Wakas* were found throughout Rikuzen Kuni. They are active today. Harada says that in Fukushima Prefecture the *Wakas* are invited into homes and the people listen to their *kuchiyose*. The *Wakas* place branches of the willow tree in a stone mortar and hold green bamboo branches with paper cuttings attached to them. They tap a bow string with a mosquito net bar saying, *Haya modore—modore*. Then they invoke the gods of all parts of Japan and call out the names of the dead. Their bodies tremble. They become possessed and divine.

The *Wakas* are put under the care of a teacher when they are young, and study for five to six years. Every morning they perform the Buddhist water purification rite. They fast and abstain, practice ascetism, and upon finishing training they receive an income which more or less compensates for the long hard training. Most of them marry and support their husbands. The people have confidence in the *Wakas'* power.²³

Nakayama says the *Wakas* used two methods of *kuchiyose*. "*Meigenshiki Butsuza*—calling down Buddhist deities," and "*kami oroshi shiki kamiza*—calling down Shinto deities." In calling down Buddhist deities, the *Wakas* used a green bamboo bow with a flax string. The bow string was tapped with a bamboo stick about 16 inches long. They invoked the gods and went into ecstasy. The spirits first possessed the bow string and gradually moved to the *Wakas'* bodies. In calling down the Shinto deities, the *Wakas* used a rosary called *kirijuzu*—cut rosary—, or the *oroshi kami shiki juzu*—rosary for calling down deities.

Before the *Wakas* were authorized to perform they had to have licenses, formal written documents, stating on them the

(21) *Rikuchu Tozan Chiho no Miko, Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 3, No. 4, P. 244f.

(22) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 16.

(23) *Buraku Saishi ni Okeru Shamanizumu no Keiko*, Harada, *Min-zokugaku Kenkyu*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1949, PP. 11, 12.

rituals and rites they were competent to perform.²⁴

The *kirijuzu* rosary was also used by mikos in the Kanto district and other areas of Japan. It had rather flat beads, sixty in number, with sun and moon god designs on them, as well as two large crystals. *Kirijuzu* was an ordinary rosary which had been cut apart so that additional items could be strung on it.²⁵

4. *Moriko*. This term may mean protector.²⁶ Also, *mori* means forest. Then there is the theory of Siberian origin, *mori* meaning horse.

An Hitachi Kuni, Tsuchi Ura region report says that these mikos were mostly blind women. When people were sick they invited the Morikos into their homes. The room was darkened and candles lighted. The Morikos used the bow and called upon the eight hundred myriads of Shinto gods to assemble. The Morikos' bodies became Hotokes or other Buddhist spirits, and they declared themselves to be various ancestor gods or various recently deceased persons. The Morikos often severely chastised the living members of the family, but then quickly mitigated them. The Morikos told the past and the future, told the sick which curses had descended on them, which gods to reverence and honor, which medicines to use, in which directions to go to find doctors, etc. They acted as the Buddhas who had possessed them, giving various other reports and advice.²⁷

In the whole area of Kanto-Oou there were many traveling mikos called *Moriko*. In Hitachi City they were called *Kami Moriko*—Spirit Moriko. From other areas came traveling mikos called *Myogi Moriko*—strange doctrine—exquisite practices. They used Gehobakos and performed *kuchiyose*, using the rice bowl, water and leaves.²⁸

In Shinshu Kuni blind but mostly young women performed the purification and sweeping out of evil spirits from the hearth. These mikos were called *mori*. They carried bells and other implements in scarves. They were invited into the homes to

(24) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 675ff.

(25) *Ibid.* P. 419.

(26) *Ibid.* P. 18.

(27) *Ibid.* P. 664.

(28) *Miko no Otto, Shugen no Tsuma*, Kawamura, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 1, No. 10, P. 580f.

perform the purification rites and *kuchiyose*.²⁹

5. *Nono*. In Shinshu Kuni mikos were also called *nono*. They operated both within the shrines and outside of the shrines, and in "Miko Villages." All of them practiced *kuchiyose*. Those attached to shrines performed the *kagura* and were called *suzu furu nono*—bell shaking *Nono*.

In Kawanaka Shima and vicinity *nonosan* performed the purification of the hearth rites. Many of them came from Matsu-moto, but others came from places unknown. These mikos carried their implements in scarves. They shook bells, chanted invocations, and spoke with the voices of spirits. They also danced, shaking bells with their right hands and holding something wrapped in cloth in their left hands. They raised their hands high over their heads, stopped ringing the bells and said, "I am a guardian spirit of one generation." Then they performed *kuchiyose*.³⁰

6. *Zatokata*. These mikos performed in the Akita area and in some parts of northeast Japan. *Zato* was formerly a term for priest. *Kata* was a term for wife. Since these mikos were formerly wives of priests, the term is a natural one.³¹

The *Zatokata* performed after funerals, communicating with the souls of the dead. They used a rice bowl filled with water and a dead leaf. They stirred the water, chanted invocations, fingered a rosary, went into ecstasy and performed *kuchiyose*.³²

Another account says that the *zatokata* were blind women and generally their husbands were farmers. They performed after funerals and called back the souls of the dead. This was called *kura oroshi*. They also used the bowl of water and dead leaf, plus a rosary called *mokorenji*—magnolia tree.

If a child was born and was sick, it was placed under the protection of a *Zatokaka*. A rosary bead from the miko's rosary was attached to the child's clothing and became the protector of the child. For this reason the number of beads on the original rosary cannot be determined.³³

The *mokurenji* rosary was made from the wood of the

(29) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 665.

(30) *Ibid.* P. 664ff.

(31) *Ibid.* P. 15.

(32) *Akita no Ichiko*, Katori Hidemasa, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 4, No. 4.

(33) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 660.

magnolia tree. The wood or the rosaries had to be imported because the magnolia tree does not grow in that area. They were expensive and precious and were handed down from teacher to disciple when the teacher died. It had between 250 to 300 beads, and had teeth, tusks, etc., attached to it. When a bead was attached to a child's clothing, the child became the foster child of the miko.³⁴

7. Tamura Family Group.

a. General. In 1759 the functions of the shrine attached and non-shrine attached mikos were more specifically defined. Those attached to shrines were permitted to use official names of states, provinces, etc., as group designators. Those outside of shrines were restricted to using terms like "Asahi" and "Kasuga" which were not official titles. Shrine attached mikos were permitted to wear superbly ornamented and exquisite gowns. Those outside of shrines were restricted to wearing white gowns with the crane and tortoise designs on them. Shrine attached mikos were authorized to perform *yutate*. Non-shrine attached mikos were prohibited from performing this rite. However, this law was not effective and the mikos' functions continued to overlap considerably.

Finally the Tamura family head was appointed the head of all non-shrine attached mikos operating in Kanto, Koshin and part of Oshu. Tamura organized the mikos and this organization continued to exist down to the Meiji restoration in 1868.

The power of the Tamura family started in 1590 when he received a land grant for his military services. In 1600 he received special military honors and more land grants. The family continued to serve in the military generation after generation. The exact date when the Tamura family became the head of miko activities is unknown, but it was as early as 1715.

b. Organization. The wife of the family head was, for generation after generation, a miko who practiced ecstasy. This family controlled the mikos' activities, supervised their training, established the curriculum, inspected training, issued licenses to the mikos, and supervised the practices after graduation.

c. Tamura Method. The basic method was (1) recitation of prayers and invocations, (2) a fixed ritual, (3) going into ecstasy,

(34) *Akita no Ichiko*, Katori Hidemasa, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 4, No. 4.

(4) performing *kuchiyose*, (5) recovery. The miko first recited invocations, among which there were thirty six key ones. The *miko* recited one verse when a patron entered the room, another when the patron was making the request, and a third when the patron sat down. Then she raked sedge leaves across the bow string, chanted invocations, went into ecstasy and performed.

d. Rituals. Definite and precise procedures were required when chanting invocations, praying, worshipping the gods, calling down the Buddhas, calling up the souls of the dead and the living, curing illness, divining, etc. Each operation had its own special invocations and prayers.³⁵

e. Training. Candidates entered training between the ages of 7 and 15. They were sent to various Shinto shrines and became candidates for *Kagura Miko*. After graduation they became *Hachijo Mai Komori no Kagura Miko*. About 20 girls were assigned to a teacher and were housed by the supervisor of the local district. They learned the *kagura* and *kuchiyose*, *Kyu Ki*, or "Nine powers?" *Tama Uranai*—Bead divining, *Roku Sho Roku Cho*—special invocations, *Misaki Agu*—Devotions concerning the souls of the dead, *Happo Seki*—Knowledge of the directions, *Kami Uranai*—Deity divining, etc. Altogether there were twenty six special arts to be learned.

The last of the Tamura family mikos said that she visited various shrines and temples and received training in the above mentioned operations and in the art of going into ecstasy. She said that it was not easy to go into ecstasy, but that with special training it could be learned quickly. She said that the candidates and the gods became intimate, forming a relationship like that between mother and child or husband and wife, so that day and night there was a feeling of possession by the gods and spirits.

She said that originally the mikos did not marry but this tended to masculinize them. She also said that her father told her that during the Tokugawa era (prior to 1868), control of the mikos had kept him very busy inspecting training programs, giving and supervising examinations and issuing licenses.

f. Graduation. Details of the graduation ceremony are not known but it was formal and written diplomas were given to successful candidates.

(35) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 614-628.

g. Functions. The functions of the mikos were the performance of all the operations learned in training. These included *kagura*, *kuchiyose*, *tama uranai*, *kami uranai*, *kyu ki*, etc. The *kyu ki* operations were secret and were important, having connection with the cosmological concepts of the group. The *kyu ki* were (1) The highest heaven—water, (2) Empty space—fire, (3) Furnishings—wood, (4) Sword—metal, (5) Lust and passion—earth, (6) Inlets and rivers—water, (7) The country land—fire, (8) Woods and forests—fire, (9) Mountains—metal.

h. Paraphernalia. The Tamura group used candles, altars, rice, and other paraphernalia, but its special items were the Azusa Bow and the *gehobako*.

(1) Azusa Bow. The bow was made of various kinds of wood, such as male and female bamboo, mulberry, nandin, etc. The string was made of the hair of a woman and flax twisted together. It was said that this tradition started with Jingu Kogo, the Emperor's consort. When she divined at the start of the campaign to Korea she had no bow at hand, so she made a bow out of a branch of a tree and used her own hair to make the string.

It is strange, however, as Nakayama says, that there would have been no bow at hand if the divining took place in camp prior to a military campaign. However, the tradition of making the bow string out of hair was not peculiar to the Tamura group. Kyushu mikos made the string in the same manner, and bows were considered the seats of spirits by various miko groups.

(2) *Gehobako*. The Tamura group used a traveling box called *gehobako*. Such boxes were not restricted to the Tamura group, but because this group was so large and extended over such a wide territory, it is discussed here.

(a) Construction. The box used by the Tamura group was .995 Ft. high and .795 Ft. in length and width. The outside of the box was lacquered black and the inside was lacquered red.

(b) Terms for the Box. *Gehobako* consists of three Chinese characters which mean "an outside of natural law box," and so has the meaning "box with strange power."

Other terms for the box are *Tembakuja*—Heaven White Shrine, *Sanbaku*—Mountain White, *Tenbaku*—Heaven Box, *Nobaku*—Field White. Because the Chinese character for white, pronounced *shiroi* or *shira*, is used in three of these terms, Nakayama believes there may be a connection between these boxes and the Oshira Kami dolls. Since the dolls were carried in the

boxes, the boxes may mean "Oshira Kami boxes."³⁶ In addition the term *Tembakuja*—Heaven White Shrine, indicates that the box was not just a container used to carry paraphernalia but was an abode of the gods and spirits.

(c) Contents of the Box. This was a closely guarded secret. However, the last of the Tamura family mikos said that rosaries and sacred books were kept in the boxes. She also said that she had heard that other groups kept dolls, dogs' skulls, etc., in the boxes, but that the Tamura group did not do so.³⁷

The Gehobakos of the Shimano village group, however, contained straw dolls, regular Japanese style dolls, scare crow dolls (representing Kuenbiko Kami), figures representing Kangi Ten—Buddhist God of Happiness, cat and dog skulls, and human skulls. Human skulls, however, were an exception and were only carried by special women.

It appears, however, that at one time skulls played a greater role in mikoism than in recent times and may have been carried in the Gehobakos of most mikos. It seems that at one time the heads of enemies were cut off just before they died. These heads were buried and after 12 months they were taken out of the ground, cleaned and used by mikos. The skulls were supposed to have the power of the dead persons' souls. This procedure was only used with the heads of persons who had promised their heads to the mikos.

In addition animal spirit families were started by burying dogs in the ground and starving them to death and using the skulls. Also at one time, Oshira Kami dolls were topped by figures of animals' heads. Further, there is evidence of a cult of skulls back in the stone age in Japan, since skulls with holes drilled in them have been found in burial mounds.

(d) Functions of the Box. The box served as a container for various items used by the mikos, but it was also used even when the mikos were not traveling. The box was actually the abode of the spirits. That they were considered the abodes of the spirits is not strange. The idea that boxes were the abodes of spirits was a widespread belief. Sometimes the gods or spirits entered the bamboo boxes carried on the backs of travelers causing them to become so heavy that they could not be carried.

(36) Ibid. P. 515f.

(37) Ibid. P. 625.

It was necessary for the traveler to perform some rite or build an altar before the spirit would leave the box.³⁸

i. Social Status of Tamura Family. The family received compensation for its inspections, supervision of training and graduations, issuance of licences, etc. The income allowed the family to enjoy a relatively high standard of living. The head of the family in the eleventh generation was able to support concubines. The position was an official one and included supervision of *kagura*. The family was in a higher social position than the individual mikos spread around the country.

j. Social Status of Individual Mikos. These were, for the most part average citizens, such as the wives of farmers and fishermen. Others were in a lower social status and were regarded as prostitutes.

k. Reduction of the Authority of the Tamura Family. After the Meiji restoration (1868), the Tamura family organization was disbanded. In 1869, Tamura Hachi Tayu was ordered to use the title *Bu Fu To* instead of *Shinji Bu Tayu To*. This was in effect a reduction of his authority to the Tokyo area. His authority in relation to shrines was restricted to the Kagura. He was prohibited from distributing the statues of Okuni Nushi no Mikoto, from holding the *gohei* and performing the blessing of the hearth, from performing the moon rising ceremony, from using the title Azusa Miko (being permitted to use the title Azusa Me—Asuza Woman), from performing *tama uranai*, from placing the *ao fusama*—amulet hung near the hearth—in the home, from blessing the home, and from distributing the votive picture of the horse.

The last Tamura tried to start a new church called the *Shinto Azusa Me Kyo* which was to have mikos as the nucleus, but the death blow came in 1873 when ecstatic practices were prohibited.³⁹

1. Summary. The Tamura group was large and well organized. The group received training, depended on guardian spirits, employed ecstasy, performed a social function, and was tied to a fixed ritual. The material on vocation is scanty because

(38) Ibid. P. 127, 301, 354. *Hako Ishi to Oibako no Tsuka*, Kawamura, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 1, No. 8, P. 450.

(39) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 632. Shamanistic Tendencies in Japanese Village Rites, Harada, *Minzokugaku Kenkyu*, Vol. 14, No. 1, P. 7ff.

the normal calling was by heredity. Here was a large shaman group.

Such a highly organized shaman group in a high culture may be unique in the world, just as the issuance of licenses to practice shamanism may be. It shows that shamanism can exist on a wide scale in high cultures, and in politically and economically unified as well as in loosely knit societies. It indicates that the search for the force which integrates various elements into shamanism must be pursued in spiritual or mental causes rather than in the material culture.

8. Yazu Miko Village.

a. General. There were many miko villages in Japan. This is in line with the social development of the nation. Since early times the society of Japan was stratified and divided in accordance with occupations. Doll makers, metal forgers, geta makers, etc., occupied sections of villages and cities. Mikos were no exception.

b. The Founder. In 1569 Chiyoda Nyubo was appointed head of all miko activities in the two provinces of Ko-Shin. This woman was a descendant of a famous family and the appointment was made for services rendered to the state by the family. Her family also had connections with the Shigeda family which had good standing with the Shugendo religious leaders.⁴⁰ The Mikos whom Chiyoda controlled were called *nono* some of whose activities have already been discussed. (P. 73)

c. The Term *Nono*. This term is evidently borrowed from the word *nono* from *no no miya*—the house in which the *saigu* lived at Ise.⁴¹

d. Organization. The mikos were organized into groups, each group lodging in one house. Each house had a supervisor known as *kakae nushi*. The sizes of the groups varied from 3 to about 30. On the average about 300 girls were living in the village at all times. Each house was part of a larger group consisting of about 10 houses, but there was no rigid organization and each house operated more or less independently of the others. In colloquial language the village was called *Nono Koji*—*Nono Alley* and *Furu Mi Tachi*—*Old Honorable Mansion*."

e. Candidates. Most of the candidates were obtained while

(40) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 610-612.

(41) *Studies in Shinto and Shrines*, Ponsonby-Fane, P. 31-34.

the groups were on their annual trips around the area. For the most part the girls were very pretty and were selected when they were between 8 and 15 years old. There is here a hint of buying and selling girls, and it seems that beautiful girls were selected because of the opportunity this gave the group to earn money by side jobs.

f. Training. The training period was from 3 to 5 years. Training was given individually and orally. After the water purification and other rites, the candidate sat opposite the senior miko and learned *kuchiyose*,—*iki kuchi*, *shi kuchi* and *kami* or *Kojin kuchi*. The candidates learned various rituals, invocations and the art of ecstasy. They were also required to fast and abstain.

One of the last of these mikos said that there were expert and poor mikos, depending on the individual's mental abilities and personality. She also said that when she began training, the discipline had been much severer than in recent times. Dropping out of candidates and other factors caused the lightening of discipline, until at last only abstinence from meat and the performance of the cold water purification rites were required.

g. Functions. The main function of the *nono* was *kuchiyose*. When performing *shi kuchi* the *nono* sat down in front of a small table on which there was a tray containing a rice bowl filled with water. The patron came forward, put a dead tree leaf in the water, stirred the water three times and gave the date of the death of the individual. The *nono* tapped her *gehobako* which was covered with a black cloth, and then rested her left arm from the elbow to the hand across the box. She closed her eyes for a few minutes and then began to speak.

For *iki kuchi*, the procedure was the same except that the water was stirred three times with twisted paper after it had been breathed on 3 times.

For *Kojin* or *kami kuchi*, the water was stirred with a green leaf.⁴²

h. Annual Trip. The mikos performed in the houses in Miko village, but their most important function was serving the farmers and villagers in the surrounding area. Every year they made a tour. The trip was started after the Old New Year and lasted about 6 months. The married Nonos were accompanied by

(42) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 681-692, P. 706-714.

their husbands who carried the baggage. They were called *Ni Mochi*—porters. The old men and the young men of the Nonos' families stayed at home to take care of the farms and houses. The mikos did not travel in mass. Each house had its own itinerary. Thus the 300 mikos dispersed in small groups in all directions.

The Nonos performed everyday in some village and then moved on to the next village. They are reported to have earned side money by performing various services for men, and some people called the group "traveling brothels." This may or may not have been true, but within Miko Village they lived strict, unmarried lives. From the support given to the Nonos on these trips it appears that most people had confidence in their *kuchiyose* performances.

i. Paraphernalia. The rice bowl of water, dead leaves, green leaves and twisted paper were used in the *kuchiyose* performance. The *gehobako* was also used and in them were two dolls, skulls of animals, and in exceptional cases, skulls of human beings.

j. Social Position. The Nono were in a better financial position than the other inhabitants of the area. Their annual income enabled them to live comfortably. They had nice clothes and lived in rather high style. They were accepted by the farmers and villagers as true religious performers, and while some may have considered them prostitutes, the fact that they performed *kuchiyose* everyday while on their annual trip, shows that they were accepted by society.

9. Ten O Ji Miko Village. This village, like the rest of the miko villages, quickly disappeared after the prohibition of ecstasy. In 1871 there were only three black, wooden latticed houses in this miko village which had formerly been a miko village. The mikos who lived there were called "Azusa Miko." the Tamura Family designation.

At the entrances of the houses were three pieces of cloth with the names of the mikos who lived there written on them. Above the entrances were *Shimenawa*. Because the houses were dark inside and had black lattices, the mikos were called *kuroi koshi*—black lattice.

The method used by the Azusa Mikos in the Osaka Area is known by a report written in 1706. It says that the miko folded her hands and closed her eyes. She used a rosary and a bow, made invocations to call down the spirits, venerated the gods,

and performed *kuchiyose*.

The hierarchy and kind of spirits used by these mikos is seen in the invocation which calls upon the "pure heaven"—"pure earth"—"inner and outer purity"—"pure six roots of perception" (Buddhist—eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and thought)—"God of heaven outside of earth"—"God of the well in the home"—"God of the garden"—"God of the hearth fire"—"Past Buddhas"—"Future Buddhas"—and "Shinto eight hundred myriads of gods."⁴³

10. Shinshu Kuni Mikos. There were mikos who used the Azusa bow but who were simply called *kuchiyose*. They carried a box which was supposed to contain one or two dolls. They reclined on the boxes when acting as mediums. They called up the Gracious Deities of Ise and other local gods. They performed *Shi Kuchi*, reporting the conditions of the dead, and told what should be done to help the souls of the dead.

Although no one was supposed to see the insides of the boxes, there is a story of one man doing so. A miko stopped at a house for the night. The miko left the house and one man opened the box and saw the dolls. They were clay dolls and were kissing each other, their bodies entwined about each other. When the miko returned she knew someone had opened the box. She was upset and said that a sacrilege had been committed. She leaned on the box and asked the dolls who had opened it. Then she reprimanded the people in the house severely. This story is not too reliable, but it does show the ideas of the people about the mikos' dolls.⁴⁴

11. Akita Area Mikos. In addition to the *itako*, *zatokaka* and others, there were also blind mikos who used the Azusa bow. They performed mainly at rice planting time. They performed the usual three types of *kuchiyose*. Their operation was essentially the same as the Itako group.

Other mikos in the Akita area used an eight feet long bow which was laquered black. It could be folded and carried about. The string was made of flax. They tapped the string with a stick about a foot and a half long, chanting *kami yose*—spirit possession—invocations. They also drew lots—*Mikuji*.⁴⁵

Other mikos in this area used small bows about two feet

(43) Ibid. P. 666-668.

(44) Ibid. P. 665f.

(45) Ibid. P. 586, 647.

long which were made of green bamboo. They stretched the bow string and recited invocations to call down the spirits and then went into a hypnotized state.⁴⁶

Another report says that a miko used both Shinto and Buddhist spirits. She had two altars in her house. It was her practice not to become possessed by both Shinto and Buddhist spirits on the same day.⁴⁷

12. Chikuzen Kuni Mikos. There is a report of an old woman who used candles and incense and invoked the 13 Buddhas and the gods of fire, wisdom, wealth, children's deity, pregnancy deity, etc., in her *kuchiyose* performances. She rubbed her hands and shook like a person possessed by the fox, after which she yawned and began to speak with the mouths of the dead.⁴⁸

13. *Sasa Hataki* Group. These mikos had long pieces of bamboo grass—*sasa*. They touched this bamboo to their faces or tapped it lightly on their foreheads. They wore red gowns. First they put a bowl of water on the table, picked up the long pieces of bamboo, touched their faces with them and said something. Then they became possessed and their bodies shook and trembled. They spent as long as forty minutes making invocations to Shinto and Buddhist deities before they became possessed.⁴⁹

14. Summary of Non-Shrine Attached Miko Groups.

a. *Ichiko*. Although there were many groups of mikos performing and they had particular names for the groups, *ichiko* was a term used in almost all parts of Japan to designate mikos who used ecstasy as their basic method.

There are various opinions as to the derivation of this term, such as "City Child"—*ichi* meaning city and *ko* meaning child; a change from *itsukiko*—the title of mikos in the shrines; a change from *ichijama*—a term used in the Ryukyu Islands for those who performed rites in connection with souls of the dead; a borrowing from the Korean term *kami ichi ko*; and a borrowing from the Mongolian and Siberian languages.⁵⁰

(46) Ibid. P. 648.

(47) Ibid. P. 699.

(48) Ibid. P. 700f.

(49) Ibid. P. 675.

(50) Ibid. P. 14. *Hito to Kami*, Ikegami, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 86.

At any rate, the use of the term indicates that the mass of people recognized the essential sameness of the groups.

b. Most Common Elements.

(1) Vocation. Hereditary call was the rule, although there were some who entered the profession from outside of the families of mikos. There is little evidence on vocation, but it was animal spirit families who were frequently mikos and here the call is by heredity. The Tamura family is another example and there is no reason not to believe the families he controlled did not pass on the call by heredity. The blind mikos received their calls by social heredity.

While the call among the Nonos in Miko Village appears to have been a degenerated form, with recruitment of girls while on their annual trips, there is no evidence as to which families the girls came from, as for instance animal spirit families or families in which the mothers were mikos.

(2) Training. Training lasted from 2 to 7 years. It was an oral tradition, with instruction given by the tutor method. The candidates had to master the techniques of ecstasy and the art of *kuchiyose*, as well as scores of invocations, rituals and ceremonies.

(3) Graduation. There were formal graduations at which time candidates became possessed by their guardian spirits. Very often a marriage ceremony took place between the miko and the guardian spirit. In many cases written documents were issued to the candidates. The initiation meant a binding, perpetual relationship with the guardian spirit.

(4) Guardian Spirits. The guardian spirits were many and varied, but the concept of 13 Buddhas, one of whom became the guardian spirit was widespread. However, the guardian spirit was not restricted to one of the 13 Buddhas. The guardian spirits came from the Shinto and Buddhist hierarchies, various animal spirits, family gods, etc. The mikos relied on guardian spirits for their ecstasy.

(5) Functions. Mikos performed functions in relation to the cosmos—being the dispensers of the powers of the tree of life; functions in relation to transcendental beings, such as venerating the deities; and functions in relation to society, such as the three forms of *kuchiyose*. They divined, healed the sick, contacted the dead, etc. Their social functions were altruistic.

(6) Paraphernalia. The rice bowl of water, tree leaves, *gehobako*, bows, dolls, and rosary were used by many groups.

The one item which could hardly be dispensed with was the tree of life or derivatives of the tree. These took the form of leaves, bamboo, grass, *shimenawa*, bows, sticks, etc.

The *gehobako* or spirit box was common among traveling mikos and the cylinder was common with those mikos connected with the fox. The *gehobako*, *irataka* and *mokurenji* rosaries, and the cylinder suggest a strong connection with animal worship or totemism. The dolls also point to animal spirits when we consider the oldest type. The paraphernalia were greatly influenced by Buddhism, but the Shinto religion paraphernalia were also well represented.

(7) Ritual. All groups were rigidly tied to a fixed form. Even when *kuchiyose* was performed time after time on the same day, each performance required exactly the same procedure. Nothing could be changed and nothing could be left out.

(8) Method. The method was monotonously the same in all groups: preparation of the performance area, chanting of invocations, ecstasy, performance, and recovery.

(9) Social Position. On the whole the mikos outside of the shrines came from the average citizen class. A few lived in relative comfort, and a few were in the low stratum. Some were considered prostitutes, and prior to the Meiji restoration many were prostitutes. However, the mikos were believed in and accepted by society for without this acceptance, mikoism could not have flourished on such a grand scale, not in just isolated pockets, but throughout the islands of Japan.

CHAPTER SIX

SHUGENDO RELIGION GROUP

1. General. The Shugendo religion was a mountain and hill worshipping religion. It had no fixed disciples, no fixed dogmas, no temples of its own, etc. It was a parasitic religion, borrowing wholesale from Shintoism, Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Mikoism, etc. Prior to the Meiji restoration, it had about 170,000 pillars of faith who were like squad leaders. This indicates that the actual number of followers must have been very large.

The dynamic growth of the Shugendo religion was due to several factors. It appealed to the mass of people because it was based on the belief in mountain gods and the concept that mountains were the abodes of souls, both very old beliefs in the Japanese religion. It used pilgrimages to mountain tops as one of its main religious services, which fitted in with the customs of the people. It appealed to the rugged individuals in society who were leaders of military units because of its severe discipline. Warriors, explorers, and adventurers were drawn to it because of its emphasis on outdoor life, mountain climbing and rugged way of life. Also, Shugendo priests were *hito-gami*—man gods—for whom the Japanese villagers had a strong feeling of hospitality.¹

2. Shugendo Priests.

a. Training. Though the Shugendo priests were itinerant priests, not anyone could become a priest by merely obtaining the hiking equipment, garb, and other religious paraphernalia. There was a severe training program which included fasting and abstaining from food and water, going without sleep for long periods of time, living in solitude, burning the flesh, cutting away the flesh from the bones, walking on fire, etc. This training not only served a religious purpose, but prepared the candidates for the life of a pioneer. It produced, not only religious but also military and political leaders. These priests were not afraid of

(1) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 426. *Buraku Saishi ni Okeru Shamanizumu no Keiko*, Harada, *Minzokugaku Kenkyu*, Vol. 14, No. 1, 1949, P. 13. *Japanese Folk Beliefs*, Hori, *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 61, 1959, P. 423.

danger, and were men whom the masses both admired and feared. The candidates also learned the art of going into ecstasy, and because their method was so much like that of the women mikos, they were called *kannagi* or *otoko kannagi*—men mikos. The term *kannagi* was used interchangeably with *shugenja*—Mountain Ascetic—, indicating that ecstasy was commonly practiced by them.²

b. Functions.

1) Prior to Birth. The Shugendo priests were called *ho-in*. This term was used to designate Buddhist priests who exorcised spirits and who practiced ascetism. The *ho-in* had power over the villagers, not only during life, but even before birth and after death. When women were pregnant, they went to the *ho-in* to learn the month of birth, in which direction to go to find a midwife, etc. During pregnancy, the women visited the *ho-in* to obtain protection for themselves and the unborn child through the rite of *roku san yoke*—amulet protection. This protection was necessary because a demon called “Kokusan Sama” could possess the head, breast, or lap, and if it did then exorcism was required.

(2) During Childhood. After birth the child was taken to the *ho-in* to be made *toriko*—foster child of the *ho-in*. This rite established a relationship between the child and a particular Buddha, such as Dainichi Nyorai (Mahavairocanastathagata), Kanzeon Bosatsu (Goddess of Mercy), and Fudo Myo (Acala).

As the child grew it took rice and cakes to the *ho-in*, his spiritual father. As the child continued to grow, the *ho-in*'s advice was sought during the “Sun Rising Festival,” “Moon Rising Festival,” “Blue Warrior Festival,” etc.

(3) Adulthood. When the child became an adult, the *ho-in*'s advice was sought when the young man was seeking employment, when about to be engaged or married, before taking hot spring cures, before receiving medical treatment, when trying to find lost articles, etc.

(4) After Death. When the person died and the funeral services were over, the *ho-in* was in charge of the rituals and prayers during the removal of the old fire from the home and its replacement by new fire.³

(2) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 426-433.

(3) *Shugendo to Minzoku*, Togawa, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 343ff.

(5) *Yorikito*—Ecstatic Prayer. This was a rite which employed ecstasy. The main purpose was divination.

3. *Yorikito*.

a. Procedure. *Yorikito* was a formal ceremony, usually performed in Buddhist temples. After the physical arrangement of the stage, a person was selected to be the instrument of the spirits. Many priests and priestesses, mikos, various assistants, and Shugendo followers assembled. They chanted prayers and invocations, and the selected individual went into ecstasy. While in ecstasy, the possessed individual divined concerning good and evil fortune, and declared the will of the gods to the audience. The operation was called *yorimashi* which is the same term used for possession of individuals in the unofficial public *matsuris*.

b. The Performers. There was a chief performer whose duties included overseeing the physical arrangement of the stage, leading the priests and mikos in prayers and invocations, and questioning the possessed individual. The assistants chanted the invocations to induce the spirits to possess the individual, and some had the responsibility to subdue the possessed person if he became violent.

The individual who became possessed was called:

Gohei Mochi—One who holds the *gohei*.

Yori Ura—Child of the ancestors or Venerator of Ancestors.

Nori Ura—Mounted Child or Child Possessed.

Nakaza—Medium in the center seat.

Itsumono—The unified one or Identical one.

Gohodane—Protector of Truth—Real Protector.

Gohotsuke—Attached Protector or Attached to the Protector.

Goinbo—Protector who depends on something.

Go O—King Protector.

Konendo—Old Year Youth (Literal Translation of Chinese Characters.)

c. Examples of *Yorikito*.

(1) Iwama Yama Honzan Ji. This is a Tendai temple. *Yorikito* rites were held there every year. The individual selected to become possessed was called *gehodane*, and was usually a light headed individual. This person went through a period of abstinence and performed certain rites. Then a great number of people chanted and the *gehodane* became possessed.

In a specific case reported, the possessed individual became like a maniac, jumping and running around like a wild beast, roaring loudly. The possessed man displayed amazing strength

and threw an impure person several tens of steps through the air. He lifted extremely large and heavy water containers and drank tremendous amounts of water. Upon regaining consciousness, he remembered nothing of these feats.⁴

(2) Kyoto Tendai Temple. At this temple the rite was called *goho tsuke*—guardian who is attached. This rite was in honor of the snake spirit who was supposedly the guardian spirit of the individual who became possessed. At 8 o'clock in the evening all the lights were extinguished. The person who was to become possessed went through a ceremony which was a symbol of human sacrifice. The priests and monks surrounded the victim in the dark and chanted the "Darani" (Buddhist Dahrani incantation) in loud voices. Then the victim went into a state of death for an hour or two. This was a sign that the victim was acceptable to the gods.

Next the victim was placed on a plank and carried out of the temple to the temple grounds, and splashed with great quantities of water to purify his body. When the victim recovered consciousness he performed the *Ge Ho* ritual naked. The *go ho tsuke* ceremony included going into ecstasy and diving for the coming year.⁵

(3) Ryozanji. The *Yorikito* ritual was generally the same as at Iwama Yama Honzan Ji, except that the possessed person was called *Go O*—Protector King. The priests chanted and the individual became possessed and ran around the temple trying to catch impure persons. He also divined.

d. Origin of *Yorikito*. *Yorikito* was not a Shugendo invention. It was a form of the "Concept of the Descent of the Gods." But not even the specific form was original with the Shugendo religion. The same form was used by the Shinto religion in the *takumai* and by the villagers in folk religious practices.

(1) *Takumai*—Divination Dance. This was a yearly divining. The medium was called *saniwa* or *taku tayu*—divining chief. This individual was a direct descendant of the gods, and the assistants were of the same lineage.

A dance platform was erected and a large *shimenawa* with the end of the rope forming a dragon's head was made. The *shimenawa* was stretched between two poles in front of the

(4) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 427.

(5) *Ibid.* P. 428f.

performance area. The diviner sat on the stage, while a large number of priests held on the *shimenawa* and others held *gohei*. Then the priests began to chant invocations.

After some time the diviner's complexion changed and he screamed out, saying such things as an unbeliever was in the shrine, that some evil or impurity was in the village, that certain disasters were going to occur, etc. Then the principal priests asked the diviner questions and listened to his answers. The diviner sometimes unsheathed his sword and ran about wildly, making tremendous leaps over the dance platform. Sometimes the diviner injured people in the audience. When necessary, the assistants would take hold of the diviner and hold him down, bringing about his recovery.⁶

(2) Folk Religious Practices. During the annual cleaning out and purification of the homes, a *shimenawa* was stretched outside and two large *gohei* were planted. The villagers gathered and built a bon fire. They chanted invocations to Buddhas as well as to the gods of the five principal crops. Suddenly one or two or more individuals would become possessed and seizing *gohei* they would begin to jump around wildly. They entered the fire, running through it, and at times sitting down in it, without getting burned. These celebrations were held every night between the fifteenth and twenty seventh of September.⁷

e. Searching out the Impure. During *yorikito*, the possessed person often searched for impure people. That such searching was expected at such ceremonies and was known by the mass of people is shown by the legend of the blood lake. The legend says that a warrior, an unbeliever, ate fish and went to a *yorikito* rite. The possessed Go O immediately knew that an impure person was in the hall and began to chase him. The warrior climbed a pine tree and the Go O climbed the tree after him. The warrior drew his sword and killed the Go O. Then the warrior went to a lake and washed the blood from his sword. As soon as the sword touched the water, the water congealed. From that time on, whenever it rains the lake turned blood red.⁸

f. The *Yorikito* Ecstasy.

(6) Ibid. P. 430. *Matsuri Kata*, Ogiwara, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 210.

(7) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 429.

(8) Ibid. P. 428.

(1) Type of Ecstasy. The *yorikito* differs from the mikos' ecstasy. Here the ecstasy is active. In addition, the *yorikito* ecstasy required teamwork. Likewise, the ecstasy practiced by the Shugendo priests was different from that found in the folk religion practices, when individuals became hysterical or became spontaneously possessed. The *yorikito* was no such random possession. The individual possessed was carefully selected, went through purification rites, and acted as a member of a trained team. In addition, the possessed person relied on a guardian spirit and went into ecstasy in order to divine.

Nakayama says that the Shugendo priests usurped the method of the mikos and substituted men for women, but changed little else except the use of a medium between the spirits and the subject to be possessed.⁹

(2) Guardian Spirit Role. It was seen that the snake spirit was considered to be the guardian spirit of the *Go Ho* who was possessed at the Kyoto Tendai Temple.¹⁰ The rite also included the chanting of invocations to call down the spirits, and both Shinto deities and Buddhist deities were used.¹⁰ Also, mountain gods played an important role as guardian spirits, as did the fire god and animal spirits.

4. Shugendo Miko Teams. Many factors contributed to the formation of Shugendo Priest—Miko teams. Both the Shugendo priests and the mikos practiced ecstasy; traveled about the country performing religious functions; and were animal spirit families. Marriages between animal spirit families and non-animal spirit families were rare. The result was the marriage of Shugendo priests to mikos and the formation of teams which traveled about the country servicing the farmers, mountaineers, and fishermen.¹¹

The relationship between the Shugendo priests, mikos, and shrine activities was quite complicated. Very often Shugendo priests became guardians of the shrines, and in some cases they became the permanent heads of shrines. In the shrines there were full fledged mikos as well as young girls who performed

(9) Ibid. P. 432.

(10) *Goho Doji*, Yanagita Kunio, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 2, No. 11, P. 641ff.

(11) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 440. *Ebisu Oroshi*, *Inari Oroshi*, Kawamura, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 1, No. 4, P. 210. *Tsukimono*, Ishizuka, *Nihon Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 288.

kagura dances, divined, etc. Sometimes Shugendo priests married shrine attached mikos and remained the permanent heads of the shrines. At other times they married mikos and left the shrines with their wives. Sometimes they left the shrines while their wives remained attached to the shrines.¹² It is not surprising then that the Yoshida family lost its lawsuit against the wives of these itinerant priests, whom they claimed were infringing on the rights of shrine attached mikos.

5. Paraphernalia. The Shugendo priests emphasized warrior type equipment. This was in line with the idea that they were warriors against evil. They also used the *oibako*—a traveling basket. It was bamboo and they considered them to be the abode of the spirits. The purpose of the basket was essentially the same as the mikos *gehobako*.¹³

6. Summary. Considering the *yorikito* rite, it seems possible to conclude that many Shugendo priests were shamans. Sometimes the possessed individual was not a Shugendo priest, but since the possessed individual was a trained person, the most likely person to be selected was either a fellow priest or a trained follower.

In the matter of vocation, the animal spirit family system must be considered. If there was a Shugendo priest who was not from an animal spirit family and he married a miko from such a family, then the new family became an animal spirit family. The husband, in this case, had no choice in the matter. He now had a guardian spirit and vocation, whether he wanted them or not.

Also the Shugendo priest underwent severe training and upon completion of the training was authorized to perform the Shugendo priest's functions, which included going into ecstasy.

In the performance of ecstasy, there was a fixed ritual, and the purpose of the ecstasy was divination, a social and altruistic purpose.

In the *yorikito* rite, Shugendo priests sometimes performed both as the chief functionaries and as the mediums. In rites performed with their wives, the mikos were the mediums and went into ecstasy while their husbands performed the chanting

(12) *Ise Jingu no Kora*, Ishi Maki, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 1, No. 3, P. 150ff.

(13) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 439.

of invocations and questioning of the mediums. Thus while the evidence may not permit labeling all Shugendo priests shamans, certainly many were shamans.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ONTAKE KO

1. General. The *Ontake Ko* group worshipped mountain gods and attached itself to the Shinto religion. It performed various functions and employed ecstasy as its basic method. Like the Shugendo priest, the *Ontake Ko* were men.

2. The Term *Ontake Ko*. The term means "Honorable Mountain Pilgrim (pious) Association. However, the group was also called *Hotaka Ko* meaning "Honorable Warrior Pilgrim (pious) Association.

3. The Performers. The *Ontake Ko* work in teams of two. The teams are called *Oza*—main seat, while the members are called *Zenza*—front seat, and *Chuza* or *Nakaza* meaning middle seat.

4. The Performance. When these teams go into action, the middle seat sits on the ground and in many cases is blindfolded. The front seat sits on the ground in front of and facing the middle seat. The patrons sit or kneel behind the front seat. The front seat chants and prays invocations and the middle seat goes into ecstasy, which is usually light and passive. While in ecstasy the middle seat relates the words of the gods, cures the sick, etc.

5. The Candidates. They undergo a severe training which includes learning various invocations, rituals, etc., with special emphasis on the development of intimate relations with the gods and spirits.¹

6. Guardian Spirits. The spirits which possessed the *Ontake Ko* in former times, were said to be spirits of stars, metal, and hearth, plus various water spirits. Usually it was not just one spirit but various spirits which descended. When possessed, the middle seat announced that he was the spirit of Mikasa Mountain or *Aragamisama*—a fierce and destructive spirit. In addition, the *Ontake Ko* had fox spirits both as guardian and slave spirits. The principal deities of the *Ontake Ko* were Shinto gods, but they chanted Buddhist sutras and prayers.²

(1) *Hito to Kami*, Ikegami, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 86. *Matsuri Kata*, Ogiwara, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 210.

(2) *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 2, No. 1, P. 46f.

7. Functions. Because the *Ontake Ko* group performs today and because its functions appear to have changed a little, it is advisable to treat the functions as present day and past functions.

a. Present Day Functions. According to written literature, the *Ontake Ko* group has lost much of the power it once had, and is now just a small group performing health cure rites and divination.³ However, based on observations in the City of Nagoya, the group is operating quite extensively. The performers still operate in teams of two, but today women as well as men belong to the group. They exist in fairly sizable numbers and perform the three types of *kuchiyose*. They are organized and have a headquarters. They hold regular meetings in private homes and at their headquarters. More details cannot be given because of the necessity for prolonged field work.

b. Past Functions—Prior to 1868.

(1) *Oza wo Tateru*. This means establishing the honorable seat. It was performed in each house in the village. During this rite, the *Ontake* cured the sick, foretold disasters and good fortune, and divined in various matters. The power of the *Ontake* was called *kami oroshi*—descent of the gods. In the area around Matsumoto City, also called *Inu Kai Yama*—mountains where dogs are raised—the *Ontake Ko* were very active. This suggests a possible connection with the dog spirit.

(2) *O Hi Machi*—Waiting for the Sun. At this festival the *O hi machi no oza*—medium who welcomes the sun—prayed and divined, driving away harm. When the spirits descended into the body of the medium, he announced that he was the *Mikasa Yama To Ri Ten*—Mikasa Yama Deity—, or *Aragamisama*—destructive spirit. However, the milder spirits usually possessed the man. While in ecstasy, the middle seat gave information concerning the names of sicknesses from which patrons were suffering, and gave the causes for them. He also advised how to avoid illness and how to cure it. He told the patrons which rituals to use, and kinds of commercial medicines, herbs, roots and barks to use. Surprisingly, he wrote the names of the medicines, although under normal conditions, he could not write.

(3) Exorcism.

(a) General. The *Ontake* not only became possessed by fox spirits, but was able to control them as well, and could

(3) *Hito to Kami*, Ikegami, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 86.

exorcise them. During the exorcism rite, the middle seat ate prodigiously of the favorite foods of the fox, soy bean paste and fried bean curd. The Ontake went into ecstasy, making tremendous leaps over 5 to 8 feet high bushes. Upon recovery he was surprised to learn of his actions. At any rate, the fox spirit left the possessed person.⁴

(b) Example of Exorcism. This case is not unique. It is presented only to show the exorcism rite. A man took a bath and after the bath fell to the floor. His eyes became like an insane person's, and his body got very hot. He received medical treatment but grew worse by the day. Then he began to ask for bread and ordered the people to bring whatever food he asked for. It was concluded, therefore, that he was possessed by the *kuda kitsune*—Tube (?) Fox.

An Ontake was called in to perform the exorcism. A certain woman offered to act as the middle seat. The Ontake chanted invocations and worshipped earnestly. Suddenly the woman became possessed by the fox spirit. She stooped over, crouching like a fox, and yelped like a fox, shouting, "Are you calling me? You call well." She said that she had no intention of causing such a serious illness, etc. Then she asked for food and began to eat it. While she was eating, the Ontake took a *gohei* and began to conjole the spirit to enter into a small bomboo tube (*kuda*) about two inches in diameter. He prayed and coaxed and finally the spirit entered the tube. The Ontake quickly corked the tube, and ordered that it be taken about 5 or 6 hundred yards north of the house and buried.

As soon as the fox spirit was captured, the possessed man awoke. His fever dropped and he became well. However, the exorcist said that some highly reliable person should spend 3 days and 2 nights in prayer to insure full recovery. Then he departed saying that he was very busy taking care of other sick people.⁵

8. Showmanship and Trickery. The *Ontake Ko* group mixed certain forms of trickery with their performances. Sometimes they produced needed medicines in remote places, late at night, when they could not be otherwise procured. The Ontake claimed

(4) *Inu Kai Yama no Kami Oroshi, Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 2, No. 1, P. 85. *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 2, No. 1, P. 46f.

(5) *Shinshu Suwako Han no Kitsune*, Ariga Kyoichi, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 7, No. 2, P. 117f.

that he obtained these medicines from the spirits. They also produced strange and difficult to obtain items, such as rhinoceros horns and fairly large objects. After using them, the *Ontake* threw them behind the sliding doors of the room. The items disappeared and could not be found the next day.

9. Summary. The *Ontake Ko* group practiced ecstasy, depended on guardian spirits, underwent training, followed a fixed ritual, were recognized as true religious performers and performed a social function.

The ecstasy was sometimes active and sometimes passive. The active ecstasy appears mostly in cases of exorcism, while the passive appears in *kuchiyose*. The ecstasy required a team of two, the *zenza* chanting the invocations and the *chuza* going into ecstasy.

Ikegami suggests that the difference between the *Ontake Ko* and the *Itako*, is that the *Ontake Ko* group used gods or spirits to cause ecstasy, while the *Itakos* used the souls of the dead.⁶ The *Itakos* however also used guardian spirits when divining.

Finally, the use of the tube to capture the fox spirit is evident in the case of the *Ontake Ko*, and there is no reason not to believe that the tube performed the same function among the *miko* groups.

(6) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 673.

CHAPTER EIGHT
SUMMARY

1. General. The Descent of the Gods expressed itself in the institution of the *matsuri*. The main purpose of the *matsuri* was to learn the will of gods. Possession of a human being was the form under which the gods could reveal their wills directly to the people in spoken language. Possession became a national religious practice at all levels of society and in official as well as in the folk religion. The largest ecstasy practicing group was the *Miko*. Mikos performed both within the shrines and outside of the shrines. Shrine attached mikos were part of an elaborate organization. Those outside of the shrines had more freedom of action.

Outside of the shrines there were three large groups practicing ecstasy, "Mikos"—"Shugendo Priests"—"Ontake Ko." Some of the groups and individuals practiced pure shamanism, while some practiced a degenerated form.

2. Vocation. Hereditary, spontaneous and social hereditary calls took place. Hereditary call was the most important, although there were some cases of spontaneous calls by possession.¹

Succession of mikos was through the female line, and this is a principle of Japanese mikoism.² Shrine heads, main figures in festivals, etc., all based their rights to these positions on heredity.³ In almost all the large shrines the miko family members performed the religious functions, and only later were they replaced by functionaries who were not of the family lineage.⁴ Even today shrine attached mikos, although they do not perform ecstasy, receive their positions through family succession. However, not every case of shaman was one of heredity.⁵

(1) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 102.

(2) *Ibid.* P. 107.

(3) *Ie no Kami to Mura no Kami*, Hirayama, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 3, 1959, P. 60.

(4) *Miko no Otto—Shugendo no Tsuma*, Kawamura, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 1, No. 10, P. 578ff.

(5) *Buraku Saishi ni Okeru Shamanizumu no Keiko*, Harada, *Minzokugaku Kenkyu*, Vol. 14, No. 1, P. 10, 11.

Families such as the Tamura, who controlled miko activities had mother and daughter shamans. Shugendo priests and mikos belonged, in many cases, to animal spirit families. They inter-married and daughters and sons received calls by heredity.

Social heredity was seen among the blind shamans. The blind were accepted by society as persons selected to perform *kuchiyose*. The blind were socially and psychologically tuned for a shaman call.

3. Guardian Spirits. Family gods, nature gods, animal spirits, Buddhist and Shinto gods, etc., were guardian spirits. There is sufficient evidence to conclude that the shamans had particular guardian spirits. Originally the shamans did not marry earth men because they married their guardian spirits. When they began to marry earth men, the first night of the marriage was the spirit's right night.⁶ The initiation ceremony often included a marriage ceremony, uniting the shaman and the guardian spirit. The training programs emphasized the development of intimate relations with the spirits, like a husband-wife, or mother-child relationship. Such a relationship is difficult without a particular spirit. Hori Ichiro says that the mikos had in almost every case individual guardian spirits, and in most cases the spirits were different for individual mikos.⁷

With this evidence, it is difficult to see how Ikegami concludes that the mikos who operated in shrines were possessed by gods, while those outside of shrines were possessed by souls of the dead or the living, and that only the latter type exists today in Japan.⁸ Itakos, and others do become possessed by souls. However, they perform other functions, such as divining, healing the sick, etc., at which times they are possessed by guardian spirits. Evidently the power to call up souls does not exist within these shamans, themselves, but is obtained from the guardian spirit.

Finally, the guardian spirits of Japanese shamans were overwhelmingly good spirits. White shamanism was the rule in Japan.

4. Slave and Assistant Spirits. These were mostly animal spirits. Animal spirits were sometimes guardian spirits, but their greatest role was that of slaves and assistant spirits. The relation-

(6) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 106, 413.

(7) *Shokugyo no Kami*, Hori, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 97.

(8) *Hito to Kami*, Ikegami, *Minzokugaku Taikei*, Vol. 8, 1959, P. 85.

ship between the shaman and the guardian spirit was quite different from that between the shaman and the animal spirits. In one case there was a marriage and the relationship was based on dependency, love, veneration, etc. In the other case, there is almost a master-slave relationship. At times it appears as though there were a struggle going on to see who should be the master.

Naturally, the shaman fostered good relations with the animal spirits, feeding, providing homes for them, etc. However, the shaman was able to capture, banish, order them about, exorcise them, and even create and destroy them. The animal spirits were not, however, entirely slaves. Sometimes they assisted the shamans of their own free will, and sometimes they even revolted.

5. Hierarchies of Deities. There were sufficient deities to construct many different hierarchies. One such construction is seen by an invocation used by shamans. Above is the heavenly kingdom with four heaven rulers. Below is the ruler of the underworld. There are rulers of the five roads, a heaven god, an earth god, a god of the home, a well god and a hearth god. In the country of Ise there are the sun goddess, Amaterasu O Mi Kami, with forty spirits in the main shrine and eighty lesser spirits outside of the main shrine. There are spirits of the rain, wind, etc. In the country of Omi spirit shrines include Sakamoto San no Daigongen, Ibuki shrine, Taga Myojin, Chikubujima Benzaiten, Chikuma Myojin, Tamura, the spirits of the sixty or more Shogon administered shrines, Izumo shrine spirit, and altogether the number equals 98,007 Shinto spirits and 13,004 Buddhist spirits. But among all of these, Azusa spirit is personally asked to teach the shaman all things.⁹

6. Training. There were two types of training, formal and informal. Informal training was given by the mother to the daughter or by a full fledged shaman to a candidate. Formal training was given in schools and included standard curriculum, examinations, inspections, and formal graduations. The well organized schools appeared rather recently. Originally, in most cases, the mother was most likely the teacher because of the system of family succession.¹⁰

(9) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 646.

(10) *Miko no Otto—Shugendo no Tsuma*, Kawamura, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 1, No. 10, P. 580.

Formal and informal training were given orally, using the tutor system. The training lasted between 2 to 8 years. The training consisted of memorizing, word for word and in exact order, many invocations; learning divining and curing methods; perfecting rituals and sacrifices; cultivating intimate relations with the guardian spirit; and learning the art of ecstasy.

Written licences were issued to qualified shamans, which is impossible among illiterate peoples, and may be the only example of its kind on record, at least on such a large scale.

7. Graduation. In many cases there were formal graduations. The candidate became possessed, and after recovery there was often a marriage between the new shaman and the guardian spirit. In Japan, the candidate did not generally have to prove that the ecstasy was a true ecstasy. The institution was the bond. Society accepted the shaman because it recognized the authority of the family or other institution which controlled the training and activities of the shamans.

8. Ecstasy.

a. Possession Type. There is almost no evidence of migratory possession. Whether the shaman migrated to the other world after possession is another question. The searching for impure persons by Shugendo priests, the brandishing of swords, etc., may indicate that the possessed individuals were making trips to the transcendental world and were battling demons. However, there is no direct evidence of flight of the soul—pure migratory ecstasy. The concept of the descent of the gods and the *matsuri* forced the possession type ecstasy into the important position.

b. Active and Passive Forms of Ecstasy. The active form was seen chiefly in the Shugendo Yorikito and in the Ontake exorcism rites. Usually, however, the ecstasies were mild. Only in a minority of cases did the shamans become extremely active and only in a few cases did they appear as dead.

c. Extra Human Power. All the shamans performed mental activities which, if true, would have to be labeled extra human. Physical extra-human power was seen during the *yorikito* ceremony and *takumai* when the individuals made tremendous leaps, lifted extremely heavy objects, drank prodigious amounts of water, etc. It was also seen in cases of possession by the fox during exorcism rites. The Ontake group, who reportedly could not write when not in ecstasy, used to write the names of medicines when in ecstasy. They also produced medicines and

other items when such items could not be otherwise procured.

A famous shaman used to go into ecstasy everyday and while in ecstasy draw pictures. Although she was a farmer's daughter and had received no special training in art, her pictures are intricate and abstract in nature, portraying concepts of the universe, the gods, etc.¹¹

9. The Shaman Method. If the common points are abstracted out of the variety of invocations, paraphernalia, etc., it is recognized that the basic method of the shamans was the same.¹² It consisted of the preparation, invocations, ecstasy, *kuchiyose*, and recovery. Many shamans included a "sending back of the spirits," but this was not a necessity.

10. Invocations. These were indispensable and were made to Shinto, Buddhist, and other spirits. They often appear meaningless in places, contradictory in other places, and are often composed in poor literary style. Interpretation of the invocations is difficult. They were not written, but were passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. Meaning of words became lost or hazy, and in addition the shamans used special language to hide the meaning of the invocations. And of course, the invocations were family and shaman group secrets.¹³

Transcribing the spoken invocations into suitable written language is difficult because a great variety of meaning can be given to almost any group of spoken words by using various combinations of Chinese characters.

11. Fixed Ritual. Rich rituals and very simple rituals were used, but in all cases the ritual was necessary to go into ecstasy. Although shamans might perform all day, the exact ritual had to be performed each time the shaman went into ecstasy.¹⁴ Nothing could be out of order. If the words of the invocations got out of order, the spirits or souls would not appear.¹⁴

12. Paraphernalia. The Japanese shamans used a rich variety of implements, utensils, uniforms, etc. The most important and widespread were the tree or parts of the tree, *gohei*, staffs

(11) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 231ff.

(12) *Miko no Otto—Shugendo no Tsuma*, Kawamura, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 1, No. 10, P. 580. *Ebisu oroshi—Inari oroshi*, Kawamura, *Kyodo Kenkyu*, Vol. 1, No. 4, P. 211.

(13) *Nihon Miko Shi*, Nakayama, P. 645ff.

(14) *Ibid.* P. 111, 641, 644

and sticks, *shimenawa*, bow, rosary, dolls, swords, *gehobako*, and cylinder. The *gehobako* played a role paralleling the Siberian shaman's drum, being the source of power of the shaman, the abode of the spirits, and the place to banish or capture spirits. The cylinder was closely connected with the fox spirit and with the descent of the mountain gods to the fields each spring. It was also used to capture fox spirits during exorcism rites.

13. Functions of the Shamans. The functions of Japanese shamans can be classified under the one term *kuchiyose*. This includes *kami kuchi—iki kuchi—shi kuchi*. There was fundamentally no difference between the shaman performances within the shrines and those outside of the shrines, although the term *kuchiyose* is usually restricted to performances outside of the shrines.

The functions were altruistic. There was little use of shaman power to bring harm, although there are some cases of this mis-use of power, especially in the case of animal spirit possession. However, these cases are mostly based on rumor, and are not well substantiated by facts. On the other hand, the shamans exorcised spirits from those who became possessed.

14. Social Position. Shamans connected with shrines came from families of higher social standing than those who performed outside of the shrines. The heads of shrines were often women who were shamans, and in the Heian period officials welcomed rich shamans as second wives.¹⁵

There was a continual effort by officials to lower the prestige of non-shrine attached shamans. These shamans were generally poor and came from the farms, fishing villages, and working classes in the cities. Families like Tamura and Chiyoda were in a higher social position than the mikos they controlled, and they had connections with miko activities both in the shrines and outside of the shrines. Shugendō priests were in a strong position and the people both feared and admired them.

Women shamans were associated with prostitution from the earliest days. Brothels developed around the shrines, and many of the inhabitants of the brothels were shamans. Shamans who left the shrines to become independent helped to swell the number of inhabitants of the brothels.¹⁶

(15) Ibid. P. 594.

(16) Ibid. P. 473, 475, 482.

However, prostitution was not always a mark of low social status. Many gay quarter girls were honored and made the central figures in festivals. This appears to be a degeneration of the original idea of "one night wife" which was a religious rite, giving man an opportunity to contact the gods by sexual intercourse with shamans.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSIONS

1. Shamanism existed in Japan in the past on a national scale and exists today both in rural areas and in cities.

2. In its external form, Japanese shamanism showed influences from the north, for example the term *Itako*, use of dolls and types of dolls, etc.; influence from China and Korea, as seen in the use of many terms, deities, paraphernalia, etc. However Japanese *Ontake Ko* operation is remarkably like the Ifugaos teams in the Philippines, except that the Ifugaos teams are women.¹ The system of selection of shrine heads after possession whose duties it was to perform dances, become possessed and divine is similar to the operation among the Ga in West Africa.² The *Saigu* closely resembles the system found among the chiefs in Tikopia.³

3. Japanese shamanism was not a religion. The shamans used the deities of various religions, as well as the paraphernalia, invocations, etc. It had no fixed dogmas, priesthood, deities, or sacraments of its own.

4. Japanese shamans were not magicians. They depended on spirits for their power.

5. Descent of the Gods was the nucleus of Japanese shamanism and the *matsuri* was the outward form of this concept.

6. Possession type ecstasy was the rule. Migratory type ecstasy was undeveloped.

7. Active and passive forms of ecstasy were experienced, but the passive form is representative of the majority of cases.

8. Individual, combined and mass participation shamanism were practiced.

9. Hereditary calling was a principle of Japanese shamanism, although there were cases of spontaneous callings.

10. Social hereditary vocation operated in the case of the blind shamans.

(1) The Religion of the Ifugaos, Barton, American Anthropologist—New Series—Vol. 48, No. 4, Part 2, Oct. 1946, P. 167f.

(2) The Heathen: Primitive Man and His Religion, Howells, P. 143.

(3) Religion among the Primitives, Goode, P. 72.

11. The training was from 2 to 8 years. It was either formal or informal, using the tutor system. All instructions were given orally.

12. There were highly organized shaman schools with formal graduations and written licences.

13. The institution was the bond between the shamans and society. There was no need to prove that the ecstasy was real by extra human feats.

14. The ritual was rigidly fixed.

15. The method was preparation of stage, invocations, ecstasy, performance and recovery.

16. The social functions were altruistic.

17. Guardian spirits included family gods, Buddhist and Shinto gods and animal spirits. Animal spirits were also slave and assistant spirits.

18. Good spirits were the rule.

19. Japanese shamans were not as a rule pathological cases.

20. Women shamans outnumbered men shamans.

21. Shamanism and shamanistic religions are growing in Japan at the present time.

22. Further research on shamanism is required, especially on the question of: How was migratory ecstasy lost or why was it undeveloped when there are many similarities with Siberian shamanism in Japanese shamanism?

List of Japanese Terms with Chinese Characters

Aburage	Azusa Yumi
油揚げ	梓弓
Aitosama	Bikuni Ishi
愛宕様	比丘尼石
Ama no Ukihashi	Bosatsu
天の浮橋	菩薩
Amaterasu O Mi Kami	Bufuto
天照大神	舞夫頭
Ame no Iwato	Chikuzen Kuni
天の石屋戸	筑前国
Ame no Kagu Yama	Chinju Kami
天の香山	鎮守神
Ame no Koyane	Chugoku
天の児屋	中国
Ame no Mihashira	Chugoku
天の御柱	中座
Ame no Mi Naka Nushi no Kami	Dainichi Nyorai
天之御中主神	大日如来
Ame no Tajikara-O no Kami	Darani
天手力男神	陀羅尼
Ame no Toko Tachi no Kami	Dashi
天之常立神	山車
Ame no Uzume	Ebisu
天宇愛売	夷
Ao Fusama	Ebisu Ko Oroshi
	夷子おろし
Ao Nikite	Ebisu Mae
青丹寸手	夷舞
Aragami Sama	Ebisu Oroshi Kuchiyose
荒神様	夷下し口寄
Aramitama	Eta
荒魂	穢多
Asahi	Fudoki
朝日	風土記
Awa no Kuni	Fudo Myo O
阿波国	不動明王
Azuki Meshi	Furu Mi Tachi
小豆飯	古御館
Azusa Me	Futodama no Mikoto
梓女	布刀玉命
Azusa Miko	Futomani
梓巫女	太卜

Futo Norito no Mikoto	Hitachi Kuni Tsuchi Ura Chiho
布刀詔戸命	常陸国土浦地方
Gedokami Mochi	Hito Gami
外道神持	人神
Gehobako	Hiyoshi
外法箱	日吉
Gishi	Ho In
魏志	法印
Gohei	Hotaka Ko
御幣	武尊講
Gohei Mochi	Hotoke
御幣持	仏
Gohodane	Ichiko
護法実	市子
Gohotsuke	Iki Kuchi
護法付	生口
Goinbo	Iku Tama Yori Bime (Hime)
護因坊	活玉依毘売
Go O	Inari Kami
護王	稻荷神
Goshintai	Inari Oroshi Kuchiyose
御神体	稻荷下し口寄
Hachi Tayu	Inari Sage
八大夫	稻荷下げ
Hachi Jo Mae Komori no Kagura	Inari Tsukai
Miko	稻荷使ひ
八丁舞籠の神楽巫子	Inu Gami (Kami)
Hachiman Sama	犬神
八幡様	Inu Gami Mochi
Hafuri	犬神持
祝	Inu Kai Yama
Hanjo Tsukai	犬飼山
飯繩遣ひ	Irataka Nenju
Hannya	いらたか念珠
般若	Ise Myojin
Happo Seki	伊勢明神
八方賣	Ishi Koridome no Mikoto
Hashira	伊斯許理度売命
柱	Itsukiko
Hebi	齋子
蛇	Itsuki no Miya
Hi Imi	齋宮
日忌	Iwama Yama Honzan Ji
Himiko	岩間山本山寺
卑弥呼	Iwao Kuni
Hina	岩代国
雛	

Iyo	Kamu Doko
伊予	神牀
Izanagi no Mikoto	Kamunagi
伊邪那岐命	巫
Izanami no Mikoto	Kanagi Kei no Miko
伊邪那美命	神和系の神子
Jingi Kan	Kanjo no Ki
神祇官	勧請木
Jingu Kogo	Kangi Ten
神功皇后	歓喜天
Kawachi no Minono no Mura	Kannagi
河内之美努村	覓
Kagura	Kannushi
神楽	神主
Kagura Miko	Kanzeon Bosatsu
神楽神子	観世音菩薩
Kaiko no Shira	Kasuga
蚕のしら	春日
Kakae Nushi	Kawa Naka Shima
抱主	川中島
Kaka Shiro Yama	Kesa
加賀白山	袈裟
Kami	Kezuri Kakari
神	削掛
Kami gakari	Kidan
神憑り	貴船
Kami Kuchi	Kiri Juzu
神口	切り珠数
Kami Moriko	Kishu Kumano Kei no Miko
神もりこ	紀州熊野系の巫子
Kami Mu Su Hi no Kami	Kitsune
神産巢日神	狐
Kami no Ki	Kitsune Mochi
神の木	狐持
Kami no Ko	Kitsune no Kuchiyose
神の子	狐の口寄
Kami Oroshi	Kitsune Suji
神降し	狐筋
Kami Oroshi Shiki—Kamiza	Kojiki
神降し式神座	中事記
Kami Tsuku	Kojin Kuchi
神附	荒神口
Kami Uranai	Konendo
神占	古年童
Kami Yose	Konjin
神寄	金神

Ko-Shin	Misaki Agu
甲信	神差婦上
Kuchiyose	Mokurenji Juzu
口寄	木蓮寺珠数
Kuchiyose Kei no Miko	Mori
口寄系の巫女	森
Kuda	Mura Kami
クダ一管	村神
Kuda Kitsune	Mura Ujigami
クダ狐	村氏神
Kudaya	Myogi Moriko
クダ屋	妙義もりこ
Kuen Biko Kami	Nakaza
久延毘古神	仲座
Kumano	Nan Kami ga Tsuita
熊野	何神が附いた
Kura Oroshi	Negi
座下し	禰宜
Kuroi Koshi	Nigimitama
黒い格子	和魂
Kushimitama	Nihon Sho Ki
奇魂	日本書記
Kyu Ki	Ni Mochi
九気	荷持
Mame Itako	Nobaku
豆いたこ	野白
Matsuri	Nono Koji
祭り	ノノ小路
Meigen Shiki Butsuza	Nono Miya
鳴弦式一仏座	野々宮
Midashi	Norito
御山車	祝詞
Mikasa	Ochobo Inari
御笠	お千代保稲荷
Mikasa Yama To Riten	O Hi Machi
御笠山刀利天	御日待
Miko	Ohotataneko
神子	意富多多泥古
Miko Ko	Oibako
巫女考	笈
Miko Kyo	Okami
神子教	お神一お上一狼
Mikoshi	O Kuni Nushi no Mikoto
御輿	大国主命
Mikuji	Omoikane no Kami
御籤	思金神

Onogoro	Sasa
淤能碁呂	笹
Ontake Ko	Sasa Hataki
御嶽講—御岳講	笹掃
Oou	Sei Ki
奥羽	生樹
Oroshi Kami Shiki Juzu	Shikuchi
降神式珠数	死口
Osaki Suji	Shime Nawa
オサキ筋	注連
O Shira Kami	Shingon
オシラ神	真言
O Shira Ko	Shinji Butayu To
オシラ講	神事舞太夫頭
Oshu no Itako no Miko	Shinshu Kuni
奥州のイタコの巫女	信州国
Otoko Kannagi	Shinshu Nezu Mura no Kei no
親	Miko
Oza	信州瀬津村系の巫女
大座	Shinto
Oza wo Tateru	神道
御座を立てる	Shinto Azusa Me Kyo
Rikuchu Kuni	神道梓女教
陸中国	Shira Nikite
Rikuzen Kuni	白丹寸手
陸前国	Shiroi Yama
Roku San Yoke	白山
六三よけ	Shiro Kami
Roku Sho—Roku Cho	四郎神
六首—六張	Shitoto
Ryozan Ji	巫鳥
両山寺	Shosai In
Sachi Mi Tama	初齋院
幸魂	Shugendo
Saigu	修驗道
齋宮	Shugendo Bozo
Saisho	修驗道坊主
齋所	Shugendo Kyo
Sakaki	修驗道教
榊	Shugenja
San Baku	修驗者
山白	Susano-O no Mikoto
Saniwa	須佐之男命
審神	Suzu Furu Nono
Sanpo	鈴振ノノ
三峯	Taka Mi Mu Su Hi no Kami
	高御産巢日神

Taka Magahara	Uba Ishi
高天原	姥石
Takumai	Ubusuna Gami
託舞	産土神
Takusen	Ugo Kuni
託宣	羽後国
Taku Tayu	Ujigami
託大夫	氏神
Tama	Ujiko
魂	氏子
Tamanoya no Mikoto	Hikoji no Kami Umashi Ashikabi
玉祖命	宇摩志阿斯訶備比古遲神
Tamashii	Umisachi Biko
魂	海幸彦
Tama Uranai	Uranai
玉占	卜占
Tama Yori Hime	Uraniwa no Kami
玉依媛—魂憑姫	占庭の神
Tamura	Waka Miko
田村	若巫女
Tamura Kei no Miko	Waka no Miya
田村系の巫女	若の宮
Tembakuji	Yako Tsukai
天白寺	野狼使い
Tenbako	Yamabushi
天箱	山伏
Tendai	Yamasachi Biko
天台	山幸彦
Ten Oji	Yashiki Ujigami
天王寺	屋敷氏神
Toban	Yashiro Dono (Yahiro Dono)
当番	八尋殿
Tobyō Mochi	Yazu Miko Mura
トウビョウ持	瀬津の女村
Tobyō Shima	Yomi no Kuni
トウビョウ島	塩泉国
Tora ga Ishi	Yomotsu Hegui
虎ガ石	塩泉戸喫
Torii	Yori Kito
鳥居	憑祈禱
Tosan Shugen no Tsuma no Miko	Yorimashi
当山修験の妻の巫女	尸童—憑座
Toya	Yori Ura
頭家—当屋—当家	尸童
Tsuku Yomi	Yutate
月読	湯立
	Zenza
	前座

Note: Terms used in the text which either have no Chinese Characters or which employed phonetics in the Japanese texts referred to have not been included on this list.

CHART #1.

NAMES OF ANIMAL SPIRITS
AND
THEIR DISTRIBUTION

From: "Tsuki Mono"

By

T. Ishizuka. *Minzokugaku Taikai*,
Vol. 8, 1959, P. 293.

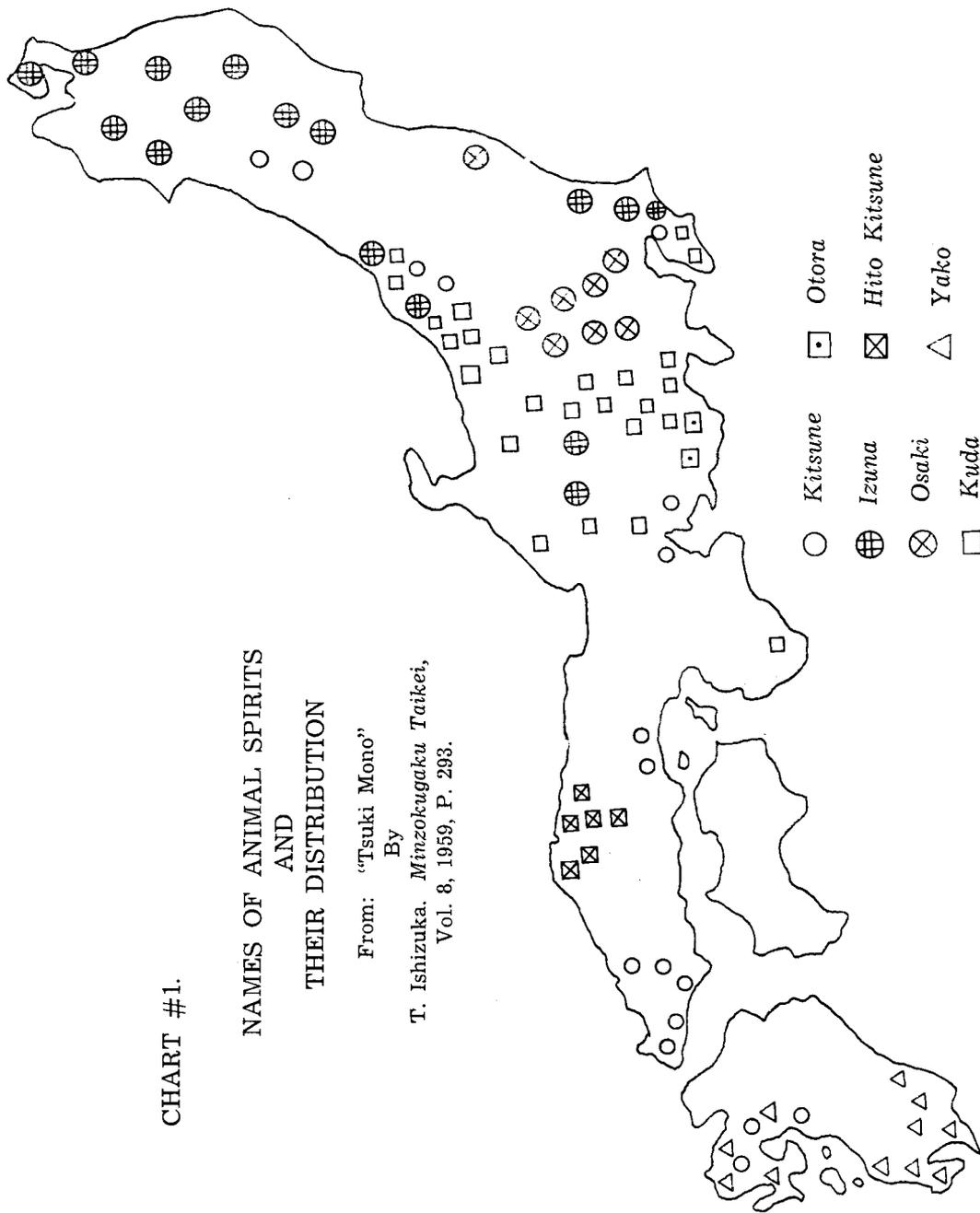


CHART #1A.

NAMES OF ANIMAL SPIRITS
AND
THEIR DISTRIBUTION

From: "Tsuki Mono"
By

T. Ishizuka. *Minzokugaku Taikei*,
Vol. 8, 1959, P. 293.

WILLIAM P. FAIRCHILD

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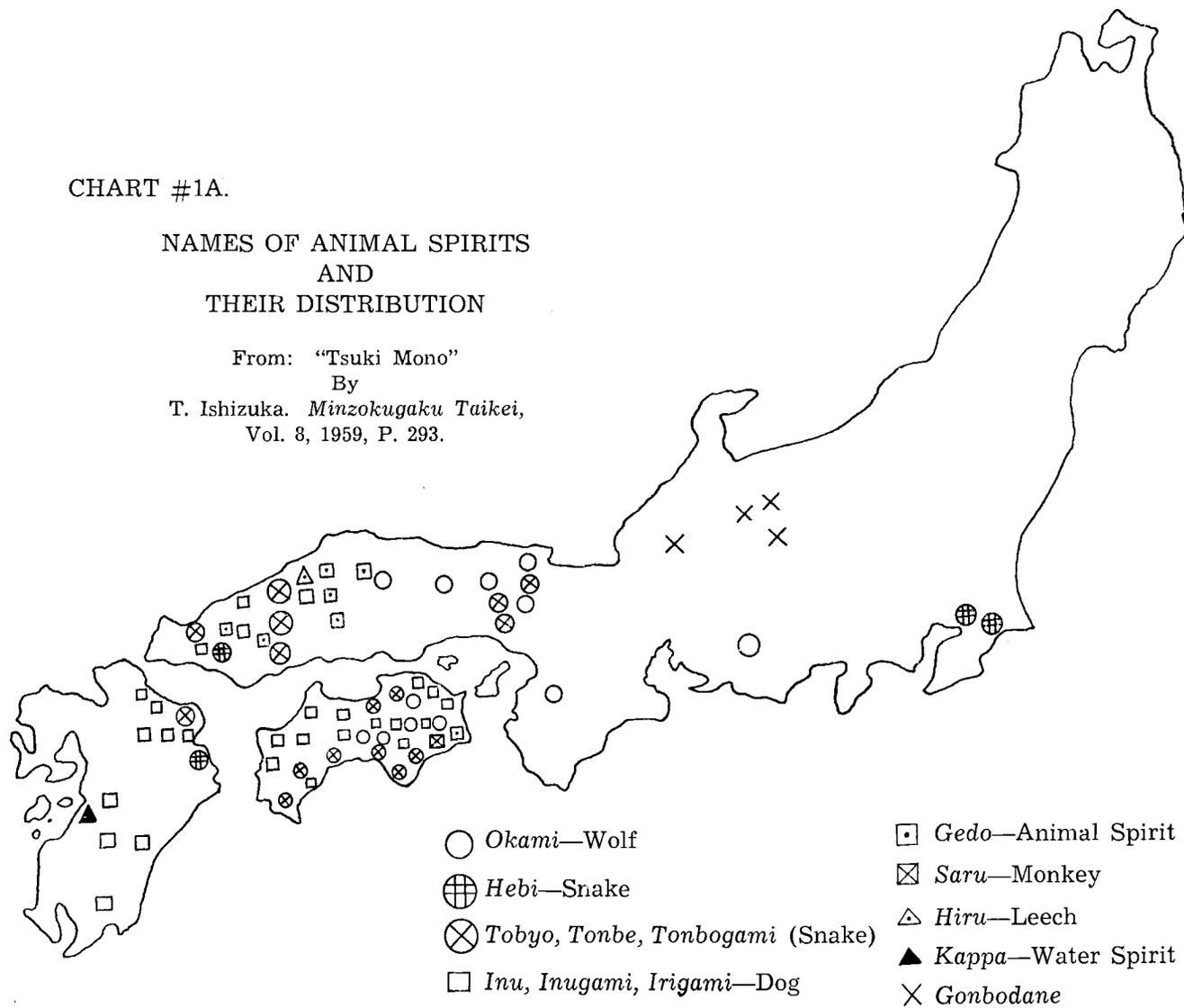


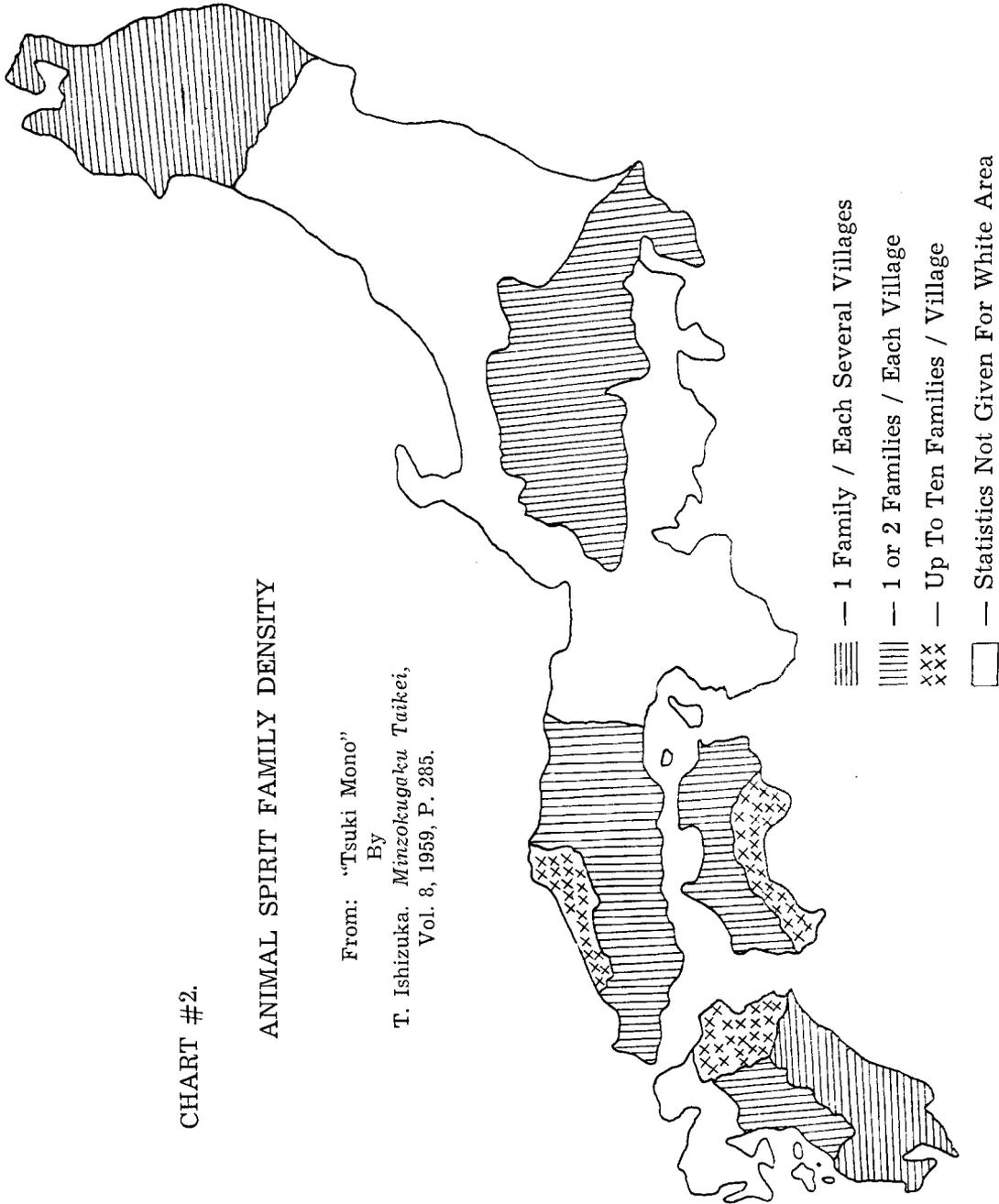
CHART #2.

ANIMAL SPIRIT FAMILY DENSITY

From: "Tsuki Mono"

By

T. Ishizuka. *Minzokugaku Taikei*,
Vol. 8, 1959, P. 285.



- ▬ — 1 Family / Each Several Villages
- ▮ — 1 or 2 Families / Each Village
- xxx — Up To Ten Families / Village
- — Statistics Not Given For White Area

CHART #3.

ANIMAL SPIRIT FAMILY MARRIAGE STATISTICS

LOCATION	OITA KEN VILLAGE "Y"	KOCHI KEN VILLAGE "T"	SHIMANE KEN VILLAGE "A"	SHIMANE KEN VILLAGE "K"	SHIMANE KEN VILLAGE "O"
% OF ANIMAL SPIRIT FAMILIES	42.7	16.9	13.2	56.7	39.4
W+W	46	175	190	86	49
B+B	29	20	8	15	26
TOTAL : W+W B+B PERCENTAGE	75 (95)	195 (97)	198 (98)	101 (94)	75 (93)
W+B INTERMARRIAGE	4 (5)	7 (3)	5 (2)	7 (6)	6 (7)
YEARS OF RECORD INVESTIGATION	JAN. 1953 TO JUNE 1955	1945 TO 1954	1948 TO 1952	1943 TO 1952	1933 TO 1952

W=Animal Spirit Families.

B=Non Animal Spirit Families.

From: "Tsuki Mono"

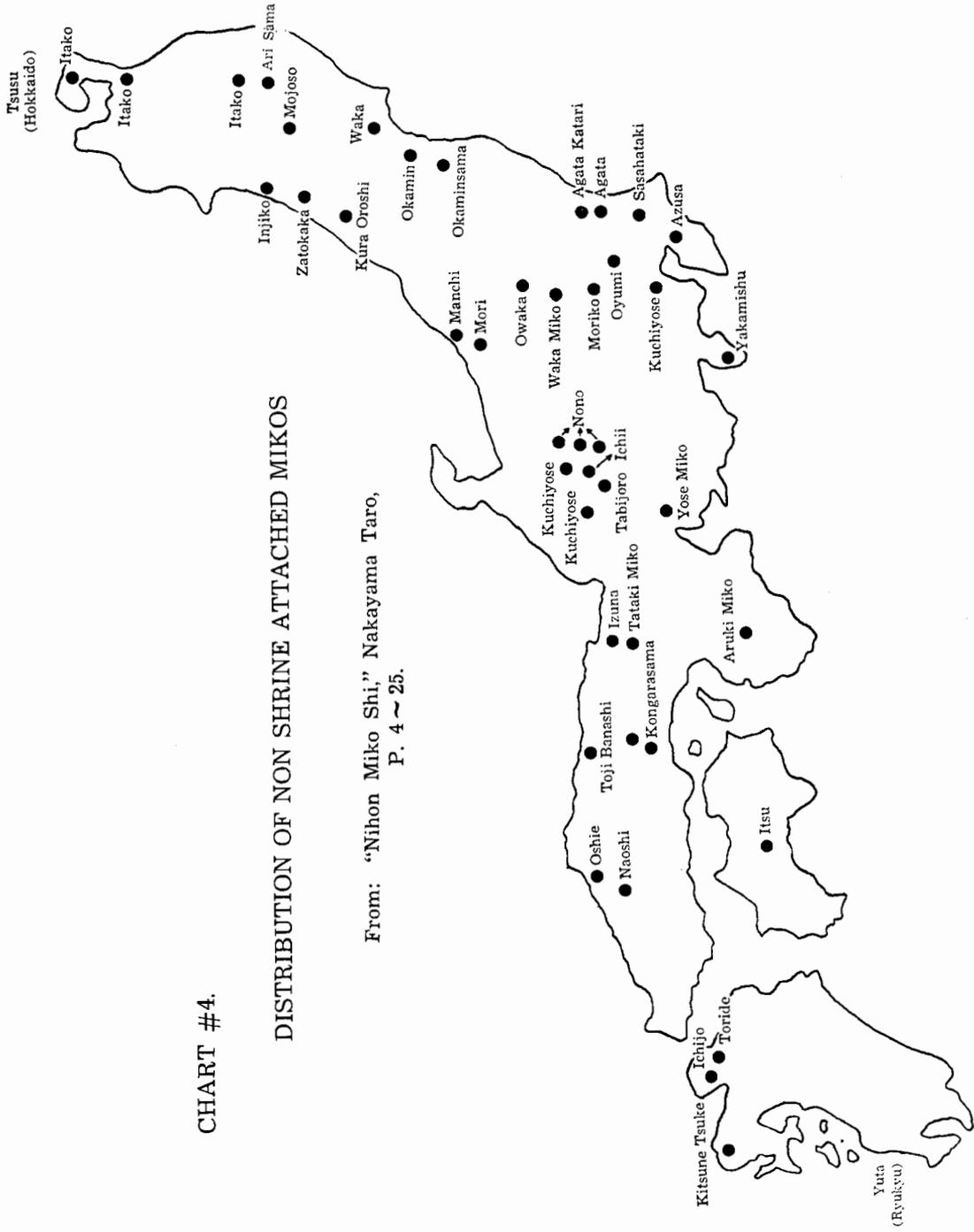
By

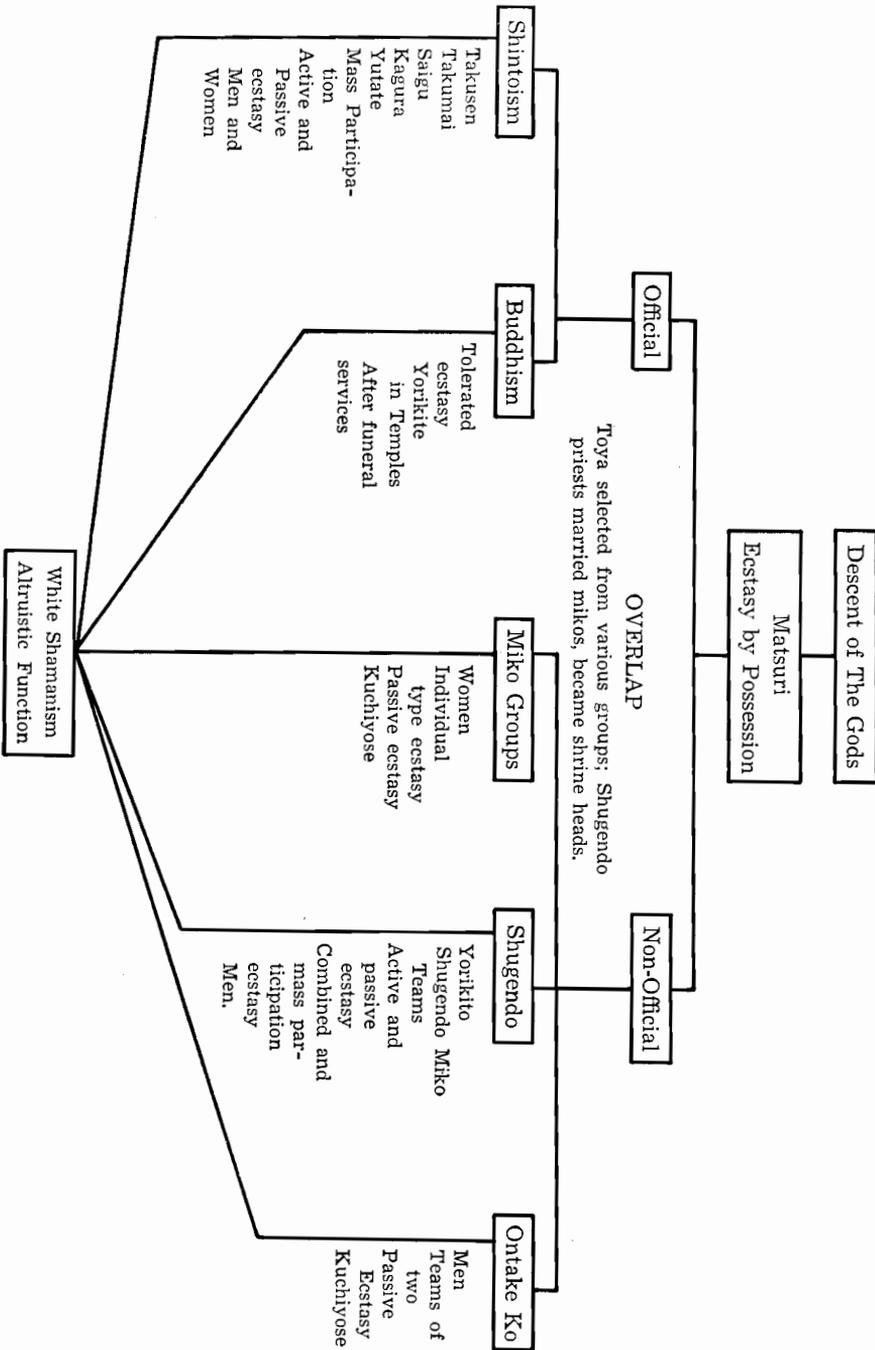
T. Ishizuka. *Minzokugaku Taikei*,
Vol. 8, 1959, P. 287.

CHART #4.

DISTRIBUTION OF NON SHRINE ATTACHED MIKOS

From: "Nihon Miko Shi," Nakayama Taro,
P. 4 ~ 25.





APPENDIX #1.

I. SHRINE ATTACHED MIKO

"From Nakayama Taro's *Nihon Miko Shi*, P. 4-25."

- Aneko* 姉子 Since this is a family member term meaning "elder sister," it may indicate a family miko before the advent of the professional type miko.
- Aretomo* 阿礼乎止壳 Name used at Kamo Shrine. The meaning is not clear, but perhaps it is connected with fertility rites since *Are* also means "Birth-Life."— 産生 —
- Hijikanagi* 肘巫 "Elbow Miko"—Perhaps an assistant, or one who is at the side of another miko.
- Itsukiko* 齋子 Term used at Matsuo Shrine.
- Itsuki no Miya* 齋宮 The residence of the princess at Ise Shrine, the office of the Saigu, and the princess, herself.
- Kannagi* 巫一覡 Men who performed "Miko" rites.
- Katakannagi* 片巫 Meaning unclear, but from *Kata* meaning side, it is thought that this also means assistant miko.
- Kami Itsuki* 神齋 Term used at Kasuga and Ohara Shrines.
- Kine* キネ Meaning unknown, but may be connected with the tree, "木" being pronounced *ki*. This term is sometimes written with Chinese characters, 幾禰 .
- Koso* 古曾 Appears to be a term for an experienced or old miko.
- Miko* 神子 General term. It may mean "God Child"—"Child of God"—"Medium between God and man."
- Mikamuko* 御巫 Appears to be merely another name for *miko*, but applied to mikos in special performances.
- Miyanome* 宮能売 Title used for mikos at Miwa Shrine.
- Mono Imi* 物忌 Title used at Kajima Shrine. The term was related to divination by use of turtle shells, and was also used to indicate different ceremonies and rites, 13 in number.
- Naishi* 内侍 Used as title at Itsukushima Shrine. Means maid of honor.
- Oichi* 大市 Title used at Suwa Shrine.
- Omikamuko* 大御巫 Appears to be merely another name for *miko*, but applied to mikos in special performances.
- Onnabetto* 女别当 Used at Haguro Shrine.
- Onoko Kannagi* 巫一覡 Men who performed miko rites.
- Osame* 〃 Term used at Katori Shrine.
- Osome* オソメ No Chinese characters for this term. The term was used at Kibitsu Shrine.
- Sai In* 齋院 An organization like the *Itsuki no Miya* or *Saigu*, but at Kamo Shrine.
- Sono Ichi* 忽ノ市 Term used at Atsuta Shrine. One of the various ranks of mikos.
- Tama Yori Hime* 王依媛 The Chinese characters 魂憑媛, also pronounced

Tama Yori Hime, expresses the most probable meaning, namely "One possessed by spirits."

Waka 若 Term used at Shiogama Shrine. *Waka* means young.

Yutate Miko 温立巫女 General term used in the shrines for those who performed the water purification rites.

II. NON SHRINE ATTACHED MIKO

Arisama no Kannagi Found in section of north east Japan.

They were mostly men.

Agata 県 Found in north east Japan, but south of Sendai. The word *agata* was used in reference to the capital, but was used in the country to mean miko.

Agatakatari 県語リ Found in the same general areas as the *Agata*. *Katari* nearly means to relate or speak.

Aruki Miko 歩き巫女 Roving shamans. Found in the Yamato Nara area.

Azusa Miko 梓巫女 Indicates the use of the bow—"Azusa Bow"—when performing.

Ichidono 殿 Derivation of term unknown. Probably connected with the sacred dances, the *kagura*.

Ichii No specific Chinese characters used in the term. Found in the vicinity of Matsumoto City.

Ichijo No Chinese characters used in term. Found on the Island of Kyushu. Appears to be a change from *Ichiko* or the Ryukyu Island *Ichijama*.

Ichiko 市子 General term used throughout Japan.

Injiko No specific Chinese characters. Found in north west Japan. Appears to be a dialect change from the term *Ichiko*.

Itako No Chinese characters. Blind women shaman found in the north eastern part of Japan.

Itsu 佯 Meaning is not clear. *Itsu* was used in various places to designate men mikos. *Itsu* also means power, spirit, etc.

Iizuna 飯網 The name of a kind of fox. Shamans were possessed by the fox spirit and performed *kuchiyose*. *Iizuna* now has the meaning of sorcery.

Kitsune Tsuki 狼憑 Means "fox possession." Found on the Island of Kyushu.

Kongarasama Chinese characters not used for this term. It appears that like a bug called "*mizusumashi*" the mikos roved about from house to house—"guru guru." Found mainly in south west Japan.

Kuchiyose 口寄せ This term was used throughout Japan to signify the operation of possession by spirits or souls. It was also used to designate mikos.

Kuchiyose Miko 口寄せ巫女 Same as above.

Kura Oroshi 座下し This term indicates the function of calling back the souls of the dead as well as the shaman who performed. Found in north west Japan.

Manchi No Chinese characters. Origin of the term is unknown. Found

- on the west coast in the area opposite Sadoshima.
- Mojose* 盲女僧 Blind shaman attached to the Tendai religion. Found in north east Japan but not as far north as the Itako.
- Mori* No Chinese characters. Nakayama suggests the meaning "protector." *Mori*, however, also means "forest." First shrines were also called *mori*. Found on the west coast in the area opposite Sadoshima.
- Moriko* No Chinese characters. Same meanings as above. Found in the area north east of Tokyo.
- Naoshi* No Chinese characters. Meaning not known. Found in the Chugoku district of Japan.
- Nono—Nono San.* No Chinese characters. Found in central Japan. Perhaps a direct borrowing from *No No Miya*, the house in which the crown princess lived at Ise.
- Okamin* No Chinese characters. Meaning unknown. Found in north east Japan. Mostly blind women.
- Okaminsama* Same as *Okamin*.
- Oroshi Miko* 降し巫女 General term. It indicates the descending of spirits or souls. Not restricted in area.
- Oshie* No Chinese characters. Found in Chugoku district.
- Owaka* No Chinese characters. Same as *Waka* but with honorific. Found in north central Japan.
- Oyumi* 大弓 Denotes the big bow which the shaman strummed or raked with bamboo, leaves, etc.
- Sasa Hataki* 笹掃き This denotes the method of tapping the face with bamboo grass as part of the ritual of going into ecstasy. Found north east of the Tokyo area.
- Shiroyumoji* 白温文字 Roving shamans who showed their white underwear as they walked. The general term for such underwear was then applied to the mikos.
- Tataki Miko* 叩き巫女 Name comes from tapping the bow string as part of the ritual to bring about ecstasy. Found in central Japan.
- Tojibanashi* 刀自話 Means "old woman who talks." Found in south west Japan.
- Tabijoro* 旅女郎 Signifies traveling singers, dancers, and prostitutes. Indicates the degeneration of the miko. The term was used in the vicinity of Nagano.
- Toride* No Chinese characters. Meaning unknown. Found in northern Kyushu.
- Tsusu* No Chinese characters. An Ainu shaman.
- Waka* No Chinese characters. Blind shamans found in the northeastern part of Japan. Same as *Owaka*.
- Waka Miko* Same as above.
- Yakamishu* No Chinese characters. Meaning unknown. Found on Izu peninsula.
- Yose Miko* 寄せ巫女 *Yose* has the same meaning as in *kuchiyose*. They were found in central Japan.
- Yuta* No Chinese characters. Ryukyu Island shamans.
- Zatokaka* 座頭嬬 Blind woman shamans found in north west Japan. In

addition, various other terms were used to designate mikos, such as *Sato Miko*—里巫女—and *Mura Miko*—村巫女—both meaning village miko. Miko were also often called after the family name, place of origin, etc.

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As can be seen from footnote 4 on page 1, I used Schröder's study on shamanism, because, even though Eliade has produced the outstanding work on Shamanism which has been revised, improved and enlarged in the English version ("Tollinger Series", New York, 1962), Schröder gives a concise and critical survey on the essential elements of shamanism and related concepts, and is in general agreement with Eliade.