

# Viewing the Hana Matsuri at Shimoawashiro, Aichi Prefecture

By

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The Hana matsuri 花祭 of Aichi Prefecture and surrounding areas is a three day festival of religious rites and *kagura* dancing which dates back to the Muromachi period (1392-1573). Originally performed after the harvest, it is now held during the New Year holidays when many of those who were born in the area are able to return home for the festival. Until recently the festival was conducted in a private home or *minka* 民家, but in some areas it is now held in the village hall. This article will describe the performance of one such Hana matsuri which was presented in the village of Shimoawashiro 下粟代 in northern Aichi Prefecture. A twenty-four hour *kagura*, or sacred dance, performance on January 2 and 3, 1982, was the central feature of this three day festival. This article will first describe the setting of the Shimoawashiro performance and then outline the major features of the dance there.

The Hana matsuri is divided into two traditions, the *furikusa* 振草 and the *ōnyu* 大入, which take their names from two rivers in the northern part of the prefecture. These two traditions are distinguished primarily by the shape of the stove used for boiling water in the center of the dance floor. Shimoawashiro belongs to the *furikusa* tradition, which uses a cone-shaped stove made of clay. The *ōnyu* style uses a three-legged metal cauldron. It is also said to be less ecstatic in its dances than the *furikusa* tradition. Both traditions have a similar plan for preparing the ritual area, but some of the dances are unique to each area. A description of the setting of the Shimoawashiro *kagura* is given below.

## SETTING OF THE HANA MATSURI

Outside the Shimoawashiro village hall and to its west a temporary

shrine or *Ujigami karimiya* 氏神假宮 was built for the local gods attending the kagura performance. It was made of wood and was about three meters tall. Its roof and walls were covered with cyprus boughs and its corner posts were decorated with branches cut from a *sakaki* 榊, the sacred tree used in Shinto ceremonies. White paper-cuttings or *gohei* 御幣 hung from the sakaki branches as well as from the sacred rope or *shimenawa* 注連繩 stretched across the front of the altar. A paper-cutting was hung in the center of the shimenawa and two red lanterns were hung on either side of the altar. Offerings of fish, vegetables, fruits, rice, salt and *sake* were arranged on the altar. This temporary shrine was the focus of the opening ceremony of the Hana matsuri, when early in the day the kami were carried in a *mikoshi* 神輿 from the local Shinto shrine. The kami resided in this temporary altar and later moved into the *kansa* 神座, or kami seat, near the dressing room for the dancers. On the following day after the public events there was a procession back to the shrine with the mikoshi.

A bamboo stick with colored gohei had been set at one end of the rice field next to the matsuri site. Its placement in the field and the food offerings on the ground next to it suggested the original connection of this festival to the success of the yearly harvest. Just outside the dance floor area was a small charcoal fire, around which spectators warmed themselves throughout the evening and into the early morning. This bonfire or *seishi* 庭燎 served to drive away any lingering, unwanted demons.

In Shimoawashiro the dances themselves were performed in a small newly-built village hall. Until 1980 the Hana matsuri was held at the home of one of the local residents, on a rotating basis, but due to the expense and extensive preparation needed, it is now held in the village hall. The dance area, known as the *maido* 舞庭, was a concrete floor approximately six by eight meters. In the center was a clay stove about one and a half meters tall, specially constructed for the occasion. This stove, known as the *kama* 釜, was shaped like a domed mountain with a flat top. Inside was a cauldron of boiling water with a wooden cover. The fire opening under the cauldron faced the area where the musicians sat and from where the performers first entered. This fire, called *saito* 柴燈, is intended to purify the Hana matsuri area and to drive away evil spirits.

Hanging from the ceiling directly above the kama was the *yubuta* 湯蓋, which functions as an arching canopy like the heavens (Fig. 1). It was an elaborate square decoration of individual colored paper cut in the same pattern as the sacred gohei. The five colors used in these paper-cuts were red, yellow, white, green and purple. The gohei

lining the outside of the yubuta were thinner than those on the inside. Large sheets of specially cut white paper covered the top of the yubuta and enclosed the *byakke* 白蓋, inside of which was a "Bee's nest" (*hachi no su* 蜂の巣) of small "treasures."<sup>1</sup>

The *byakke*, although not visible inside the yubuta, is significant as the vehicle for the kami in their movement into the ceremonial area. A *kami michi* 神道, or path of the gods, extends from the frame supporting the *byakke* to the pillars made of sakaki in the four corners of the dance floor. Made of cut paper, the *kami michi* is considered to be the means by which the gods enter the festival area. The *byakke* containing the "bee's nest" becomes a special focus at the end of the matsuri when it is ritually broken open by one of the masked demons. Its contents are distributed to the participants to bring them good fortune in the coming year. The "bee's nest" is made of white or colored paper in the shape of a rope bag and contains small coins, pieces of colored paper, rice cakes and dried persimmons. The yubuta, then, containing the *byakke* and inner "bee's nest," is a type of cosmic symbol. It functions as both a temporary dwelling for a multitude of kami which are invoked during the religious rites and is the locus of gifts distributed to the participants as a sign of future blessings. Moreover, the yubuta is linked to the sacred space of the maido by the *kami michi* and the sakaki pillars in the four directions.

THE dance floor itself was marked off as a sacred space by a rice straw rope (*shimenawa*) attached to the sakaki trees in each corner. Hanging from the *shimenawa* were white gohei and paper-cuttings called *kiri-kazari* 切り飾り. These depicted six scenes and were hung on each side of the dance floor. The themes included a Shinto shrine; a *torii* 鳥居, or shrine entrance; a *negi* 禰宜, or male shrine attendant, and a *miko* 巫女, or female shrine attendant; the sun and moon, a horse; and five lower deities called *Godaison* 五大尊.

Directly in front of the musicians there were two *shimenawa* from which hung a double row of gohei and paper-cuttings. There was also a special sakaki tree between the musicians and the dancers. In the corner of the maido near the entrance to the dressing room there was hung a round object known as a *Bonten* 梵天. *Bonten* is the Indian creator god, Brahman, who was assimilated into Buddhism in its earliest stages. This ritual object is composed of three open fans placed in a circle with specially cut streamers of the five colored paper attached.

The musicians sat on a raised *tatami* platform with a sunken *hibachi* (charcoal fire) behind them. The accompaniment to the dances was a drum and flutes (Fig. 5), which were used to play a repetitive

melody that varied slightly to suit certain dances.

To the right of the musicians, in a southeasterly direction, was the dressing room, which contained the costumes, masks and ritual instruments. Known as the *kanbeya* 神部屋, this "room of the gods" is the principle focus of the matsuri preparations and traditionally was an area where women were not allowed. Around the edge of the room hung a shimenawa with gohei. Sakaki branches were placed near the ritual instruments to be offered in the dances. To the right of these instruments and near the entrance was a raised shelf known as a *kami dana* 神棚, a traditional household altar for the gods.

Just outside the dressing room was the *kanza* or seat of the gods. Located just to the left (east) of the entrance to the *kanbeya*, the *kanza* was an important ritual area which was the final resting place for the kami during the kagura. It was connected by a *kami michi* to the nearest sakaki tree of the maido to allow for the passage of the gods. Within the *kanza* there was a raised *kami dana* of about three meters in length which held various ritual offerings.

#### THE EVENTS OF THE MATSURI

The first day of the Hana matsuri a communal meal is held for the participants. After this there begins the preparation of ritual hangings for the maido and refurbishing of the *torimono* 取り物, or ritual instruments carried by the dancers. In the dressing room, the *Hana daiyu* 花太夫, or main ritual officiant, is occupied with *kirikusa* 切り草, or cutting of the *kirikazari* (paper-cuttings). Before preparing these various paper arts the Hana daiyu performs traditional hand gestures or mudras (*tein* 手印). These prayerful actions purify both the paper cutter and his materials. Meanwhile his assistants, known as *Myōdo* 宮人, prepare sword decorations, paint the axes to be carried by the oni and help organize the proper placement of ritual objects about the maido. The Shimoawashiro village hall is also purified before the kama is placed in the center of the maido. This preparation extends into the second day.

On the evening of the second day the waterfall ceremony (*Takibarai* 瀧祓) is performed. The Hana daiyu and the Myōdo climb into the hills outside Shimoawashiro to a designated waterfall, whose deity they greet with a *norito* 祝詞, or Shinto prayer. A shimenawa is tied across the waterfall and offerings are presented. Then the Hana matsuri officiants purify themselves before taking water from the waterfall and returning to the village hall where the festival will be held. Here the water is ritually placed in the cauldron within the kama in preparation for the later *Yudate* 湯立て rite. The Hana daiyu

and Myōdo then perform two purificatory ceremonies. The first, the *Takane matsuri* 高根祭, involves setting a gohei in a specially chosen, elevated place on the mountain side. Then the Hana daiyu greets and worships the various gods and spirits from the heavens and the mountains. The next ceremony, called the *Tsujigatame* 辻固め, is focused on the placement of gohei in the rice field (southeast) in the opposite direction of the mountain gohei (northwest). These ritual actions both invite the local gods and protect the village from evil spirits. The interaction of mountain and field kami, so prevalent throughout Japan, finds expression in this ceremonial invitation.<sup>2</sup>

The following day, marked by the beginning of the public dances, is also the time for the transfer of the *ujigami* or local shrine deity to the altar just outside the dancing area. The Myōdo lead the procession from the shrine to the accompaniment of a flute and drum. A participant, coming behind the mikoshi, carries the box containing the costumes, ritual instruments and masks for the festival.

Later, after returning to the hall where the festival is to be held, the Hana daiyu and Myōdo consecrate the gohei and matsuri instruments in a ceremony called *Kami iri* 神入, or "entrance of the gods." This concludes with a procession called *Kanza watari* 神座渡, in which the gohei and instruments are brought to the *kanza* in preparation for the matsuri rites and dances.

Before the first public ceremony the Hana matsuri participants were served a meal in a tatami room south of the maido. Located beside the cooking area, this tatami space was curtained off as the public rites began. The participants ate heartily in preparation for the lengthy dances which they would be called upon to perform. When the meal was over around 6 p.m., the Hana daiyu came to the central kama to begin the religious rituals which preceded the dances.

The *Kami hiroi* 神ひろい rite was performed first as the Hana daiyu and the four Myōdo formed a half circle and chanted from the matsuri book to the rhythm of the drum. This ceremony invoked some two hundred twenty-five gods to be present during the matsuri. These included deities of heaven and earth, tutelary gods, deities of the five directions and gods from all the regions of Japan, including the local area. These invocations were repeated five times, once each during the *Kirime no Ōji* 切目の王子, *Sōkamimukae* 惣神迎え, and *Nakamōshi* 中申し ceremonies, and twice during the Yudate rite. The Hana daiyu and Myōdo are thought to alter their physical being during these ceremonies to receive the fullness of the invoked gods.<sup>3</sup>

Crossing then to the *kanza* the Hana daiyu and Myōdo performed the *Ama no matsuri* 天の祭, during which they placed offerings on the

raised *kami dana*, or god shelf. This shelf was decorated with the "Great gohei," gohei of five-colored paper, swords, ritual instruments and the five grains. The Hana daiyu then made offerings of *sake*, rice, *mochi* (pounded rice), miscanthus, chestnuts and *soba* (noodles). As the participants returned to the dance floor, one of the Myōdo threw *mochi* to the audience. Thus the physical presence of the invoked gods was extended to those present through the food offerings.

A SHORT ceremony followed which served to mark an activity which had taken place on the previous day, namely, the stretching of the shime-nawa around the maido. This ceremony, *Shimeoroshi*, and the following ritual, *Kama barai* 釜祓い, served to distinguish the sacred space of the maido and to purify the *kama*, or central clay stove. The former ceremony was a prayer in the four directions and it was a simple dance of body turns to the rhythm of flute and drum.

The *Kama barai* began when the Hana daiyu sat down on a straw mat spread in front of the kama's fire. He wore a tall black hat (*eboshi* 烏帽子) and a light green robe over blue trousers. At his waist he carried a short sword. He then placed a tray on his lap which had small ceramic dishes with salt, water and rice. First he prayed and successively sprinkled rice and water in the four directions and then tasted the salt remaining on his fingers (Fig. 2). He made several ritual hand gestures (*mudras*) during this rite. An assistant with a dark-blue robe took the tray and also threw rice in the four directions as the Hana daiyu chanted and prayed.

Later, after performing *mudras* with both hands, the Hana daiyu chanted, then took some of the burning twigs and put them into the cauldron of water. Next, holding the sword over the kama, he purified heaven and earth and the five directions. Finally, while performing *mudras*, he chanted the story of the origin of the matsuri instruments.

The most important ritual of Hana matsuri was performed next, namely, the *Yudate* 湯立て, or boiling water purification. The Hana daiyu was accompanied by an assistant carrying the ritual instruments (Fig. 3); traditionally this was the owner of the house in which the matsuri was performed. They stood at the kama facing south towards the curtained receiving area. The Hana daiyu, after doing *mudras* over the boiling water, took the bamboo-leaved *yutabusa* 湯たぶさ and placed it on top of the kama. Dipping the leaves into the cauldron he then purified the dance floor by stirring up the hot steam and sprinkling water in the four directions. Next he poured some of the sacred water over a ritual instrument (*yugosa* 湯ごさ) which the assistant was holding. While doing this he again invoked the kami to the ceremonial place.

He continued stirring, lifting steam and reciting the invocation list for nearly half an hour. His chanting and circular movements over the kama were mesmerizing in their repetitive rhythm. Yet, as with most of the Hana matsuri ceremonies, the conclusion was quite sudden and the transition to the next event was rather casual. Thus after this impressive series of purifications and invocation rites, the Hana daiyu moved over to the musician's area and relaxed until he settled before the drum in a serious and meditative manner.

The Myōdo now chanted along with the Hana daiyu, calling the invoked kami first to the outdoor temporary shrine, then inside to the yubuta over the kama, and finally to the kami seat in the corner near the dressing room. Then the special assistant or *negi* (the leading Myōdo) took the drumsticks which were solemnly handed him by the Hana daiyu and then held them across his chest as he turned towards the kama. All the subsequent dancers would hold their ritual offerings in a similar manner when entering or exiting the maido. At those times they also walked with exaggeratedly high steps as did the *negi*. Accompanied by the drum and flutes, the *negi* began a graceful dance on the straw mat facing the fire opening of the kama. This dance, known as *Bachi no mai* 撥の舞, or *Gaku no mai* 楽の舞, served to purify the drumsticks and through them the drum itself (Fig. 4).

Having received the newly purified drumsticks from the *negi* the Hana daiyu began to play the drum and sing *Tōgo bayashi* (Drum accompaniment) and then *Shiki bayashi* (Regular accompaniment). These are songs to purify the drum by means of the drumsticks, the purification going from the outer edge gradually toward the center. With the final song, *Sarugo bayashi* (Sarugaku accompaniment), the climax is reached.<sup>4</sup> When the drum echos through the mountain village the people hearing this feel they have been invited to the matsuri (Haga 1977: 53).

The blue-robed Myōdo then danced *Mikagura* 御神樂 carrying red-sun fans and *suzu* (round bells mounted on handles). The four officiants faced the kama with their fans open and began their graceful rotating dance. Although they began dancing at a moderate tempo, they soon increased the beat as they moved into the four directions. Returning to their original location the fan waving dancers now moved around the kama, occasionally dipping to the ground and turning in a half circle to move in the opposite direction. The Myōdo circled the kama again, then formed a line before the kama's fire opening. Here they concluded their dance, proceeding out of the maido with the high-stepping walk. This dance, the title of which is an explicit reference to "Court kagura," is the transitional dance from the ex-

pressly sacred ritual activities to the first of the villagers' dances. Its pattern of rotating movements in the four directions served as the essential structure of the later dances with specific variations.

WHILE the audience began to grow in size to about one hundred people, a single dancer came out of the dressing room to present the *Ichi no mai* 市の舞. He wore a white cloth wrapped about his head, and a black coat with a gourd *sake* container (*hyōtan* 瓢箪) pictured on its back. On his trousers there was a wisteria pattern and over his shoulders and around his waist he wore a red sash. Both the hakama (trousers) and haori (coat) were loose fitting and he gripped his sleeves with his fingers and waved his arms in a manner suggestive of bird's wings. This costume, with varied designs, was the basic pattern used in most of the unmasked dances. Few dancers, however, used their costumes as dramatically as the three dancers who separately presented the *Ichi no mai*.

The first dancer carried a red-sun fan with a sakaki sprig and bells. He entered the maido with high steps and before the fire-opening of the kama he stretched backwards, then repeated this movement to the four directions. After this act of offering he rotated his hand instruments in rapid circles before his chest. Gripping his sleeves while still holding his ritual instruments, he began a series of increasingly rapid whirls, dips to the ground and wild leaps. Three times he circled the kama dancing to heaven, earth and the four directions accompanied by a trilling flute and a pulsating drum. It is said that the *Ichi no mai* dancer performs with such vigor and intensity that he is believed to be possessed (Haga 1977: 56). When this dancer concluded he returned to the straw mat facing west and ritually stretched in the four directions, circled the kama and left the maido with high steps. The second *Ichi no mai* dancer carried sakaki and bells and the third dancer held bamboo brass and bells. It was the first of the villagers' dances and differed greatly from the priestly sobriety of the ceremonies performed by the Hana daiyu and Myōdo.

The tempo of the Hana matsuri kagura was now set. After the solemn invocations of the Hana daiyu, the graceful dances of the *negi* and Myōdo, and the rhythmic songs and ecstatic leaps of the *Ichi no mai*, the spectators were well into the spirit of the dancing festivities. For the next several hours there was a steady series of dance performers who maintained the ecstatic tempo well past midnight until the first masked dancers appeared around 4 a.m.

First there was the *Jigatame no mai* 地固めの舞, performed by two dancers with folded fans and bells. Dressed like the *Ichi no mai*



dancers, they performed a similar dance to the repetitive beats of the drum which varied with every third cadence from a three-beat to a four-beat tempo. The flute continued a simple note movement from a whole note in its lower register to a quarter note movement in the middle upper register. The length of the dances necessitated alteration in drum and flute players so that the basic rhythm flagged at times but resumed after a minute or two of practice. The first dancers of this series carried fans and bells, the second carried wooden swords and bells. The last group danced with metal swords and bells. Each dance lasted about thirty minutes; therefore the total dance was about one and one half hours.

It was during the first of the three *Jigatame no mai* dances that several spectators suddenly appeared in the maido. Their inebriated gusto heightened the ecstatic tempo of the dances although it did not totally disrupt the dancers' rhythm. Exuberant audience participation has traditionally been a significant aspect of the Hana matsuri and, until recently, it was restricted to men. These spectators who participate in the maido dances are called *seito*, and often come from the nearby villages, which also celebrate the Hana matsuri, though on different days.

Around 11 p.m. on the third day of the Hana matsuri there began the charming series of dances by young children called *Hana no mai* 花の舞. Three children were carried to the maido by older dancers. The children were aged from four to ten years and dressed in red haori and hakama with white headbands on their heads. They carried their headdress in their right hands and bells in their left hands. The children danced with a swaying motion, suddenly jumping to one side with vigor. Meanwhile, members of the *seito* surged around them, but the children were not jostled out of line as they danced their way around the kama. Several adults, including one of the *Myōdo*, helped the children if they faltered or broke their rhythm. During this period the seated audience in the tatami mat areas and those standing just outside the maido were served sake and a local stew. They were urged to join the *seito* who surrounded the principal dancers. When the three children dancing *Hana no mai* finished their first sequence of dances, their headdresses were fastened on their heads and they repeated their dance.

FOLLOWING this, four men danced in haori which differed slightly from those of the *Ichi no mai*, although they also carried fans and bells. Theirs was an interlude dance performed as a dedication to the local fire department and called *Ichiriki hana no mai* 一力花の舞 (Fig. 6). Such dances dedicated to specific local organizations or persons or sponsors were now interspersed between the *Hana no mai* dances.

This extended the unmasked dances until well past midnight.

Two more groups of *Hana no mai* children, holding trays and bells, were carried to the dance floor. This was followed by two dedication dances. Then a third group of children carrying *sake* containers and bells danced. Finally, a series of four dedication dances was performed with the dancers carrying various ritual instruments as offerings.

By about 4:30 a.m. the audience had thinned to about two dozen people, some dancing, some watching and others sleeping. Suddenly from the dressing area came the first masked dancers, a group of long-nosed *oni* 鬼. These demons were dressed in red with a white skull cap under their masks. On their back were tangled skeins of red tubular cloth. The *oni* also carried axe-like halberds which they waved in a horizontal movement as they leapt about the *kama* to the rhythm of the drum and flutes now playing in a minor key. As the audience was aroused by this new dance there emerged from the dressing room another *oni* who was dressed all in green. The three long-nosed *oni* danced for an extended period before they were joined by their leader, the *Yamawari oni* 山割鬼 (Fig. 7).

The appearance of the *Yamawari oni* stirred the *seito* to begin a vigorous chant which translates roughly as, "Momotarō-san, Momotarō-san, give me your *kibi dango* (sweets) which you have on your hip." (Momotaro is the hero of a folk tale who journeys to overcome demons.) The *Yamawari* is the *oni* of the mountain who will "cut the mountain" of the *kama* with his assistants. This begins the release of purifying power in the *Yudate* that transforms the masked demons. Meanwhile the sheer presence of the 45 cm. *Yamawari* mask was a commanding sight. Because of the size of the mask the dancer, a *Myōdo* who inherited the role, focused on a candle held in front of him in order to maintain direction. He carried a black halberd-axe with a fan tucked at his waist and bells lodged in the red tubular roles of cloth on his back. The reddish-brown mask was slightly darker than his red costume. Moving solemnly, he positioned himself on the mat facing the *kama*'s fire opening. With the base of his halberd set by his feet and the axehead held to the side at arm's length, he swept his free arm in front, bringing it back slowly to his waist and then standing with his arms akimbo. In this stance the *Yamawari* held this gesture as if giving a *mie* 見得, or dramatic pose. The attendant *oni* imitated his movements and faced the same direction.

Four torchbearers then entered the *maido* and stationed themselves between the masked dancers. From the straw mat the *Yamawari oni* circled the *kama*, stopping at each of the three other sides to perform the same dramatic pose. Having returned to the straw mat area, the

Yamawari oni and his assistants began the "mountain cutting" dance (Fig. 8), in which they put their right foot on the kama and struck at the kama without actually hitting it. This was repeated in the four directions until the Yamawari returned to the straw mat where his black halberd was exchanged for a white one. The Yamawari oni then performed a short dance, after which he left the maido visibly exhausted. The long-nosed oni continued a gruelling dance in which they leapt and swung their halberds. Dancing by shifts they finally exited after a total dance time of well over an hour.

After a short pause three boys in typical black haori with chrysanthemum designs emerged from the preparation room to dance the *Mitsu mai* 三つ舞. In addition to bells, they carried wooden swords with gohei on their tips. This dance group executed elaborate sword movements following the instructions of the Hana daiyu, who played the drum. While they performed many of the same dance steps and movements as the former unmasked dancers, there were final sections of special sword manipulation to add to the dramatic effect. The *Mitsu mai* was performed by three different groups of boys and young men. The first group held wooden swords, the second group held metal swords and the third group held wooden swords again in addition to the everpresent bells.

In the early morning hours while it was still dark, the dance of the most respected and feared masked figure, the *Sakaki oni* 榊鬼, began (Fig. 9). This high point began exuberantly as an assistant oni, with a demon mask of about 30 cm., emerged with a wooden halberd and tubular cloth on his back. He performed the same leaping, swinging dance as the earlier assistant oni with the long-nose masks. A second oni appeared and was joined in his dance by a third red oni. In turns these three oni leapt with the vocal encouragement of the seito.<sup>5</sup>

With the arrival of the Sakaki oni a charged silence swept through the audience. The striking character of his large mask, 55 cm., was matched by his black halberd and scarlet costume with piles of tubular cloth wrapped about his body. The Sakaki oni was distinguished not only by his two-horned mask but also by the bright green sakaki branch tucked in his waist, which is said to represent the god of the mountain (Haga 1977: 67). He also had a fan beside the sakaki and bells pushed into the rolls on his back. It is also said that when the person who inherits this role completes the extensive ritual purifications and costume preparations the spirit of the oni wells up in his body (Haga 1977: 65).

Because of the size of the mask he was unable to see clearly for himself and therefore was led by a lighted candle. He first went to

the kanza, where he greeted the kami, then to the straw mat before the kama. Here the Sakaki oni dramatically posed just as the Yamawari oni had done earlier. With his assistants imitating his moves the Sakaki oni postured in the four directions and performed the "cutting the mountain" rite, again symbolically releasing the purifying steam within the kama-mountain. Torchbearers also entered between the masked demons as they danced about the kama.

When the Sakaki oni returned to the straw mat the negi approached him with a sakaki branch and struck him on the shoulder. Thus began the *mondō* 問答, or dialogue, during which the negi and the Sakaki oni tugged on a sakaki branch held between them. After striking the oni's shoulder the negi questioned him about his personal history. Then the negi threw the sakaki branch towards the kanza and the Sakaki oni stomped twice in unison with the beats of the drum. This stomping symbolized driving out the malign forces in the earth which might threaten the local crops (Haga 1977: 68). Having exchanged his black axe-halberd for a white one, the Sakaki oni concluded with a short dance. His assistants exited after another series of exhausting circuits of the kama.

Almost immediately, as the first signs of dawn appeared, a group of twisted face masked dancers moved into the maido. With no organization to their movement, these *Otsurihiyara* shuffled about and wandered slowly out of the entrance of the maido. There were two male masked dancers called *Hyottoko*, wearing black haori and carrying clubs with *miso* smeared on them. Two female masked dancers called *Okame* completed these sacred clowns or *dōkeshā* 道化者. They wore ragged dresses and carried rice paddles with sticky rice on them (Fig. 10). Once outside they began to chase anyone they chose, usually smearing the face of their victims, thereby blessing them with abundant food for the upcoming year.

Before the clowns returned to the maido the *Miko* 巫女 masked dancer appeared in the dance area, led by a candle and carrying a fan and bells (Fig. 11). Dressed in a black shawl and red dress, her dance and gestures were tranquil in contrast to the raucous behavior of the clowns. The negi then engaged the Miko in a dialogue (*mondō*), during which she explained her history. Just before the clowns returned, the Miko exited into the dressing room.

The clowns then began a whirling dance with fans and bells called *Iwato no mai* 岩戸の舞.<sup>6</sup> As the seito progressively joined the masked dancers, these *dōkeshā*-clowns began to tease them with their smeared clubs and paddles. Gradually they left the maido, leaving as many "blessed" faces as they could.

Without a break the *Hino negi* masked dancer emerged from the dressing room, carrying bells in his right hand and the five colored gohei in his left (Fig. 12). Appearing as a middle-aged man in full robes, the Hino negi moved vigorously about the drum side of the maido, dancing in the five directions. The leading member of the Myōdo, the negi, also participated in a dialogue with the Hino negi.

Following these masked dances there was a series of unmasked dances called the *Yotsu mai* 四つ舞. These lengthy dances were performed by a group of four men who carried, in succession, fans, wooden swords, metal swords and finally wooden swords again. The three distinctive features of the *Yotsu mai* are the square dance formations and the manner of manipulating their swords over the kama and over their heads. In Shimoawashiro and other furikusa locations, the *Yotsu mai* dancers also take off their jackets and wave them with sweeping graceful gestures toward the ceiling. These dances continued for two hours into the late morning.

Near noontime the celebrated *Okina* 翁 masked dancer appeared. This black mask with white eyebrows had an engaging smile and its many wrinkles indicated its venerable age. The *Okina* carried bells in his right hand and the special five colored gohei (*hitokatabei* 人形幣) cut in the shape of a human in his left hand.<sup>7</sup> The *Okina* first entered into a *mondō* with the negi. In this exchange the character of the *Okina* is depicted as one who has journeyed from a distant place and has finally found his way (Haga 1977: 75). This dialogue dwelt on the time and place of the *Okina*'s birth and his later personal history. The audience reacted very favorably to this auspicious mask, which is said to present a prayerful figure who brings good fortune to the community (Inoura 1981: 76). After the *mondō*, the *Okina* danced around the kama with flute and drum accompaniment. Both during the *Okina*'s performance and after his exit the audience began to swell in preparation for the purification rite.

THE *Yubayashi* 湯ばやし dance, which culminates in the hot water purification, began as four young dancers emerged from the dressing room into the crowded maido. Dressed in the typical attire, these young dancers carried rice straw bundles (*yutabusa* 湯たぶさ) in both hands and were barefoot. They performed an energetic dance waving their *yutabusa* bundles over their heads as they circled the maido. In addition, as the dancers shook and chanted, so also the seito mimicked the dancers. For an hour, then, this dance continued at a gradually increasing tempo. Suddenly, without indication, the lead performer thrust his bundle into the cauldron within the kama and scattered hot

water without regard to where it fell. Then the other dancers also dipped their *yutabusa* bundles and threw hot water randomly. The spectators fled the flying drops of water but only after insuring that they had been sprinkled, for the waters of the *Yudate* rite are considered to be purifying and to ensure good health. The scene of the drenched maido after the *Yubayashi* was in striking contrast to its crisp appearance at the opening of the matsuri. But more activities intended to extend the purification and prosperity that this festival might bring to its participants then followed.

Next there appeared the *Asa oni* 朝鬼, preceded by his assistants. The costume and dance steps of this oni were similar to that of the earlier masked demons. The *Asa oni* was distinguished from the earlier oni by his mask and the longhandled mallet which he carried. This demon danced about the maido, placed his foot on the kama, and, after shaking his mallet in the middle of the *yubuta* canopy, struck down the inner byakke. This paper-cut basket contained symbols of the prosperity sought for the whole village. Participants rushed to pick up what they could while the *Asa oni* and his assistants finished their dance and exited.

The final dance in the maido area was the *Shishi* 獅子, or lion's dance, which is traditionally associated with purification (Kobayashi 1981: 8). First a young person wearing a clown *Okame* mask and holding sakaki in his left hand came to the maido where he greeted the *Shishi*. The *Shishi* was played by two people, one person manipulating the mask and the other filling out the cloth body. The *Shishi* held a rice straw bundle (*yutabusa*) in its mouth, and, after circulating around the kama, it placed this in the remaining waters of the cauldron. Then the *Shishi* performed a dance of purification by shaking the wet straw bundle about the maido. This alternately humorous and serious masked figure ended the public dances. But various religious rituals concluded the Hana matsuri.

The religious ritual of *Hina oroshi* entailed two simultaneous activities which marked the end of the public events and the continuing efforts of the officiants to ensure good fortune for the celebrating community. First, in the maido area the canopy of streamers (*yubuta*) was lowered and the inner *hina gohei* ひな御幣, which are specially prepared paper-cuts of human figures, were distributed to the audience. Meanwhile in the kanza area the Hana daiyu and the Myōdo gathered to chant a refrain as the audience departed.

Following this the Hana daiyu purified a great sword in the dressing room and prepared to drive away any lingering spirits to the edge of the village. This ritual cleansing, called *Gedōbarai* げどう祓, was con-

tinued by the Myōdo along with the Hana daiyu in other areas of the village.

When these officiants reassembled they gathered the ritual instruments from the dressing room and went around the maido area to the *Ujigami karimiya* shrine outside. The portable altar (*mikoshi*) was then returned to the local Shinto shrine in a ritual known as *Miya watari* 宮渡り. This signalled to the villagers, some of whom lined the roadway carrying gohei, that the Hana matsuri was publically ended.

Returning to the matsuri hall, the Hana daiyu and Myōdo began the *Go koku matsuri* 五穀祭 or Five grain offerings. In the kanza area a plank was placed across the upright drum on top of which were papers with small amounts of wheat, rice, beans, millet and barley. The Hana daiyu and Myōdo began to throw the five grains by turning the papers upside down. Then they performed *Dai shōgun kaeri asobi* 大將軍返り遊び by taking the papers and, after gracefully waving them, let them fly. The offering of grain and paper was a ritual farewell to the kami. This rite concluded as the Hana daiyu and Myōdo moved to the *kami dana* of the dressing room, where they chanted *Kōjin yasume* 荒神やすめ in order to quiet the deity of the kama.

The final ceremony of Hana matsuri at Shimoawashiro was called *Shizume no mai* 鎮めの舞 or the Pacification Dance. The Hana daiyu, the Myōdo and other participants gathered in the dressing room, purified a great sword and prayed to the matsuri masks. Wearing swords, they stamped their feet in the pattern of nine esoteric characters. Next they did five types of mudras and incantations in the five directions. This ritual concluded out-of-doors with a purification for the departing kami. This final purification is similar to one performed for the departing ancestors during the late summer festival of Obon (Kita Shitara Hana-matsuri Hozonkai 1981: 33).

The preceding description has been an effort to give a general presentation of the sequence of events involved in one particular Hana matsuri. It should be noted that alterations in the sequence are not only possible but usual for *furikusa* matsuri. The complexity of this festival is also a significant indication of the need for further investigations before any extensive interpretation can be attempted.

#### FINAL REMARKS

Although some observers have clearly separated the religious rituals from the so-called secular dances, it would appear that such a rigid distinction is difficult to maintain in light of the constant overlap of both reverent and raucous behavior. What appears to emerge as an underlying impulse of the Hana matsuri can be seen in concerns which

are at once both "religious" and "secular." The Hana matsuri brings together both this-worldly and other-worldly concerns in a ritual designed to insure the perpetuation of the life of the ancestors while also insuring the richness of crops and maintenance of health. Thus the matsuri is punctuated by rituals of purification and of petition illustrating this combination of other-worldly and this-worldly interests.

As for purification, on the one hand there is a desire to purify the oni (considered by some interpreters to be the ancestors), while at the same time there is also a desire for the purification of the village and the participants. Similarly with regard to petition, invoking the gods is a major religious ritual and at the same time there is a constant stream of petitions for harvest, health and happiness. The Hana matsuri is, then, a ritual that seems to reflect a fundamental impulse of the human spirit to insure its own continuation beyond death and to nurture present life.

#### NOTES

1. The *byakke* is known in some locations as a "canopy of flags" or *bantengai* 幡天蓋. It is directly related to the decorations used by the *Yamabushi* 山伏 in their initiation ceremony of *Shōkanjō* (cf. Haga 1977: 21 and Kita Shitara Hanamatsuri Hozonkai 1981: 9). Yamabushi or "mountain ascetics" transmitted the Shugendō 修驗道 tradition whose syncretistic practices and doctrines were a significant influence on the formation of the Hana matsuri. For a description of a *Shōkanjō* ceremony and ritual decorations see Earhart 1970: 139-43; and regarding the syncretic nature of Shugendō see Matsunaga 1969: 258.

2. On the interaction of mountain deities (*yama no kami*) and field deities (*ta no kami*) see Toshihiro Hirayama, "Seasonal Rituals Connected with Rice Culture," in Dorson 1963: 57-75.

3. For the physical and spiritual alteration of the Hana daiyu and Myōdo see Haga 1977: 39-41. It should also be noted that the ceremony *Kami hiroi* is also called *Kirime no Oji*, which is the name of one of the 99 "stopping places" on the Shugendō pilgrimage route from Kyoto to Mt. Yoshino.

4. These song titles and their significance were pointed out to us by Kobayashi Kazushige, who referred us to Gorai Shigeru 1981.

5. One of the dance movements that these oni perform involves swinging their axe-head down near the floor as they dance. This movement stirs the *saito* fire of the kama. See Kobayashi 1981: 7, and Hayakawa Kōtarō 1971: 222. During the performance at Shimoawashiro, on two occasions the dancers were corrected by members of the Myōdo regarding the correct performance of this movement. This gives some idea of the effort made to maintain the traditional patterns.

6. The *Kojiki* myth of Amaterasu's seclusion in the cave also describes the comic nature of Ame no Uzume's lewd dance which caused the assembled kami to laugh. See Philippi 1969: 84-85. The *Iwato no mai* dance along with other elements of Hana matsuri such as the "boiling water" purification (*yudate*) and *Mikagura* dance suggest that the development of other forms of kagura dancing may provide a significant



interpretive context for Hana matsuri.

7. The *hitokatabei* is another ritual item directly related to the Yamabushi ceremony of Shōkanjō. See Kita Shitara Hanamatsuri Hozonkai 1981: 9 and Haga 1977: 81.



Fig. 1. *Yubuta*, the canopy above the *kama* (stove).



Fig. 2. *Hana daiyu* sprinkling salt in the four directions during the rite of *Kama barai*.



Fig. 3. *Yudate* rite performed by the Hana daiyu while his assistant holds other ritual instruments.

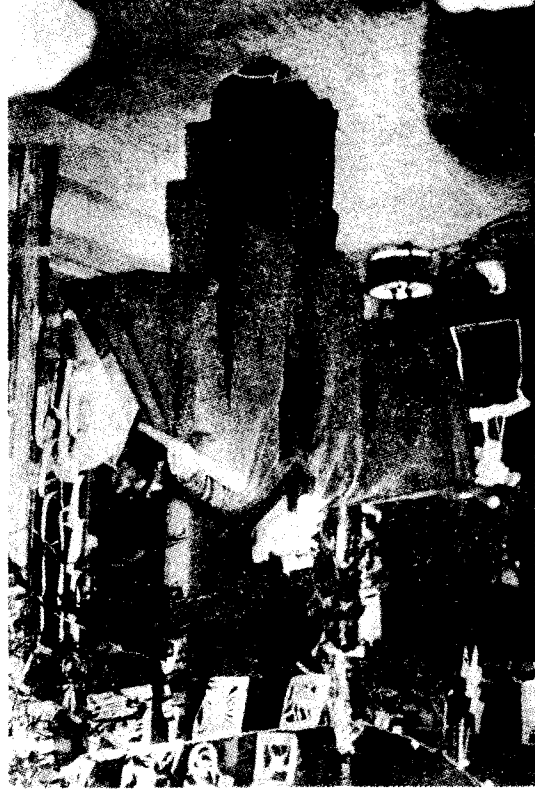


Fig. 4. *Bachi no mai*, during which rite the leading member of the Myōdo, also called *negi*, performs the dance which purifies the drumsticks.



Fig. 6. An *Ichibiki hana no mai* team performing a dedication dance.



Fig. 5. Drum and flute players. Note also the straw mat beside the drum which is placed near the *kama* for the significant dances.



Fig. 7. The *Yamawari oni* and two of his assistants around the *kama* with the torch-bearer among the assistants.



Fig. 8. *Yamawari oni* and his assistants performing the 'cutting of the mountain' rite.



Fig. 9. The *Sakaki oni* postures near the kama.



Fig. 10. The *Okame* and a *Hyottoko* clown with a member of the audience.



Fig. 12. The *Hino neqi* with a five-colored gohei.



Fig. 11. The *Miko* silently dances near the kama.

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