

religious, social and economic life as a whole with all the dynamics of community life in a village, recording also the differentiation of matters in the different parts of the village. It comes as no surprise that such differentiations touch upon basic concepts, for instance, when elements of a kinship (*dôzoku*) complex are intermingled with a complex of age classes and a complex of generation classes. We have to recall that in the vicissitudes of history older forms of social and religious life disintegrated and were re-assembled to new forms.

In an Appendix (p.142-178) the author lays before us description and content of documents on the cult organisation of the Uwase Shrine. These documents are in themselves a rich source of information on religious matters in the life of the villagers. They belong to a category of literature which is called *komonjo* (old documents) and became the subject of specialized studies. The Appendix is followed by a bibliography which is valuable to every student of Japanese folk life and lore.

Dr. Kreiner's monograph deserves our high esteem in several respects. Being both a trained cultural anthropologist and a linguistically well prepared Japanologist who is laboriously ploughing through a great amount of Japanese ethnological and folkloristic literature, he reveals the organic relationships that exist between village religion and society. Many things of course are hypothetical as long as not all parts of the very variegated country have been explored equally intensively, but of possible hypotheses the author built up good ones, for the time being perhaps the best ones. On the *miyaza* (shrine association) and other related topics the discussion is still going on, in it Dr. Kreiner's contribution cannot be ignored even by native scholars. We have here another case of pioneer work in Japanese ethnology done by a foreign researcher.

M. E.

Thomas Immoos: *The Birth of the Japanese Theater.*

In: *Monumenta Nipponica*, Studies in Japanese Culture,
Vol. XXIV, No. 4, Tokyo, 1969; pp.403-414.

Starting from the fact that all forms of theater, beginning from the very oldest, are still preserved in the Japanese theater, the author wants to "investigate what the living forms of theater can teach us about archetypal rites and performances" (p.404). Since the written texts are not very old he tries to establish the underlying ancient patterns through comparison with similar forms in other cultures. In this aim the paper resembles two articles published earlier and reviewed in this periodical³⁾.

Primitive man's understanding of the world surrounding him is not a philosophical one but a magical one. By actually re-presenting the expected effects in appropriate rites he thinks to force the powers active in this world to produce them. Survivals of such rites in a play may tell us something about

³⁾ Thomas Immoos: *Das Tanzritual der Yamabushi und ein Ritual der Wiedergeburt im Yamabushi-Kagura.* In: *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens*, Band L, Tokyo 1968; pp.1-25.

the original meaning of the play. As an illustration of this point the author mentions an ancient hunting dance surviving in a play he has seen in Yamano-kuchi, Miyazaki Prefecture. It is a *kyôgen*-type play without a fixed text, presented in autumn before the annual boar hunt. Tarô the fool and Yazô the bright boy set out together for the hunt. But on their arrival at the mountain a bamboo whistle announces the coming of the mountain god, a fearful dragon. The monster swallows Tarô, but Yazô eventually manages to shoot it and free Tarô. All this seems clearly meant as a means to previously overcome the lingering dangers of the starting hunt.

For the appearance of the god two kinds of masks are used in this play: the sound mask of the bamboo whistle and the animal mask of the dragon. In the *Yamabushi-kagura* the sound of the flute means the voice of the god. And also in the *Noh* the flute plays a very important role.

In some places such rites of sympathetic magic are still performed in the precincts of a Shintô shrine as *ta-asobi*, *dengaku*, etc. One year's work in the fields is represented in these rites to induce fertility. In a number of *Noh* plays of the *dengaku* tradition such rites can be traced and provide us with a key to the deeper meaning of such a *Noh* play. For example, in '*Ikkaku Sennin*' a hermit banishes the rain dragon. The king sends girls to feast him. He drinks the forbidden wine and loses his power. So the rain dragon reappears. An animal mask, may it be an actual head of the animal or just a stylized wooden mask, is often used for the appearance of a god. In any case it is not only a symbol but the real presence of the god, as in the lion mask, *gongen*, in the *Yamabushi* ritual. This is the meaning of the well known lion and deer dances and also of bird dances.

Originally the god descended upon a tree. There he was worshipped with rites. But from the tree he could be transferred to a sacred *sakaki* (*Eurya ochracea*) twig or a pole or the bells of the *kagura*. He can descend also on the dancer and take possession of his body. This theophany in the human actor shows especially the roots of the Japanese theater as lying "in the ecstatic techniques of shamanism" (p.410). Therefore, the dancers have to observe a number of tabus before performing "*Okina*", the most ancient *Noh* play. The accompanying music (flute and drum), many implements of the stage together with the very much underlined role of the main actor show the connection with the rites of the god-possessed shaman. In more than half of all *Noh* plays an actor is possessed by a god (*shinnô*) or a demon (*mugen*), for example, *Dôjôji*, where the disguised demon finally shows his real form as the snake demon. Especially important not only for the Shintô ritual but also for the development of the Japanese theater is the *kagura*. The word can also be translated as *kamikura* 'god seat'. These dances "are prayers acted out in movement" (p. 412). Sympathetic magic connected with the needs of an agricultural society is still present.

In a later interpretation the gods appear to be more anthropomorphic, they talk to man and he can talk about them. Tales explain events as the deeds of a god. The secure the regularity of his life cycle he celebrates seasonal festivals. Dances and plays representing the old tales are thought to assist the gods in their "struggle between death and rebirth" (p.413). They teach the history, the world views and the beliefs of the people.

Uzume's dance, the *iwato-biraki*, is the prototype of all mythical dances. Her dance brought the sun back to set the life cycle into motion anew. The *kagura* is aimed "to bring this happy event to pass again" (p. 413). And also

here, all the circumstances of Uzume's dance are clearly shamanistic.

Beyond doubt the author is presenting many insights in the meaning of old theatrical forms in Japan and their possible connection with the phenomenons of a similar type in other areas. But it seems to the reviewer that in this lays the weak point of the present paper. It would be impossible to examine within its limited space every single aspect, but there are many things taken for granted. The very key expression 'Shamanism' has so many facets that to my mind it should not be treated in such a diffuse and general manner, the same could be said about the concepts of 'mana', 'totem' and the so-called 'participation mystique'.

Peter Knecht

Hartmund O. Rotermund: Die *Yamabushi*. Aspekte ihres Glaubens, Lebens und ihrer sozialen Funktion im japanischen Mittelalter. Monographien zur Völkerkunde. Herausgegeben vom Hamburgischen Museum für Völkerkunde, Band V.

Hamburg, Kommissionsverlag Cram, de Gruyter & Co., 1968. 258 Seiten, 13 Tafeln.

A profound study of the popular response to the Buddhist doctrines and systems which were introduced and further developed in Japan is welcome indeed. We learn from it about the religious life of the Japanese people at large. That the Japanese were never entirely converted to Buddhism and that Buddhism was only an addition to their native religion becomes evident once more by the monograph under review. In the Middle Ages the phenomenon of mountain ascetism (*shûgendô*) occupied an important place in the general picture of Japanese religiosity and has not yet disappeared even in our own time. The practitioners of it, called *yamabushi* ('those who sleep on mountains'), are known to everybody.

Dr. Rotermund first outlines the history of the research work on the *yamabushi* done so far. These were already well known to the first Christian missionaries who worked in the country during the second half of the sixteenth century. Throughout his book the author shows a respectable familiarity with relevant Japanese documentary sources on the *yamabushi* and all those religious situations and movements in the context of which mountain ascetism has to be seen. *Shûgendô* was made an organized institution in the thirteenth century, its roots however lie deep back in the past. They are mountain worship, the belief in the magic power which life in the solitude of mountain pics bestows, shamanism and religious practices in the service of tribal communities. In the seventh and eighth century many professional magicians, healers and shamanistic diviners were already active, among them was En no Gyôja whom the *shûgendô* adherents claim as their founder and patriarch. At his time however ascetism in the mountains existed only as eremitism on an individual basis, wandering from one mountain to the other as a means of accumulating merits and magic power began late in Heian time. The movement was given a new impetus by the two esoteric Buddhist sects of Tendai and Shingon. By the end of the Heian era (920) the *yamabushi* had their status well established within popular