

## REVIEW OF REVIEWS

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**Ishizuka Takatoshi:** Local Variation of Folklore and Its Basis.

1) House-gods (*ie no kami*).—In Western Honshû (Chûgoku) the island Oki and the peninsular part of Yazuka District and in Nogi District are found, besides the shelves for the standard house-god (*kamidana*), shelves for *Ebisu* and *Daikoku* (Gods of Luck), for the Hearth-god and the Year-god (*toshitoko*, from *toshitoko* “man of the year”). The latter is worshipped not only at New Year, but throughout the year as the house-god. However, from the greater part of Southwest Izumo on over to Hôki, Mimasaka, Bitchû and Bizen, the year-god has no permanent shelf on which to be worshipped, whereas in Bingo, shelves for the regular house-god and for the hearth-god are found but none for *Ebisu* and *Daikoku*. In parts of Aki and Suwô there are many houses without shelves for the regular house-god and the hearth-god. Beginning from Oki Island over to the Eastern part of Shimane Peninsula of Izumo and in Tôhaku District of Hôki and Waki District of Bizen, the year-god (*toshitoko*) is worshipped in many houses on a rice-container that is kept in the sleeping room (*nando*). Women officiate at the worship of this god, which is considered as field-god, year-god or god of women. The god is connected with the belief in a grain-soul. Three names exist for him. From Sanin to Suwô and Eastern Nagato they call him *okamasama* (hearth-god); in Western Nagato, *Kôjinsama* (widely used in Japan for the hearth- or fire-god); and in Bitchû and Bingo, *Rokuusama* (meaning of the word not clear). The oldest of the three names is *okamasama*, the two others have been brought in by Buddhist lay preachers and ascetics (*gyôja*).

2) God of the farmhouse compound or mansion-god (*yashiki-gami*).—This god is worshipped in four different forms—as mansion-god for the whole kinship group, or only for the head-family from which new families have branched off, or for each individual family of the kinship group, or for a group of branch-families. The oldest form of worship is that by the whole clan, or at least by the head-family, found in Oki, Izumo, Hôki and Mimasaka. The worship by individual families or groups of families is found in Bitchû, Bizen, Bingo, Suwô and Nagato. In Western Honshû the mansion-god is widely called *Kojinsama*, besides *Jinushisama* (Lord of the Ground, ground

owner). In Western Honshû the mansion-god is said to be the soul of the ancestor of the kinship group or a family ancestor. As such he may be worshipped in places as one specific individual ancestor, elsewhere one with lost personality as guardian-god of the entire kinship group. The elapse of time after death required to become an ancestor-god differs in different places. It is 50 years in Bitchû, Kawagami District, Nariha; in Suwô, Saba District, Tokuji Town, Yuzuki 150 years. People then talk of *hotokeagari* or elevation to a *hotoke*, that is a soul enjoying Buddha-hood; or the soul is called *morisama*, guardian-god. The belief in the ancestor-god as mansion-god is certainly very old.

3) The god of the hamlet, (*burakugami*).—In Oki, Izumo, Bizen, Bitchû, and Bingo the god of the hamlet is the mansion-god worshipped by a group of families, their common guardian-god. Hamlets of village size have also a shrine (*jinja*) for their guardian-god. In many places *Kôjinsama* is worshipped as hamlet-god.

4) Buddhist sects.—In the religious traditions of Western Honshû Buddhist sects also played their role. In Aki and Western Bingo the Shin-Sect (full name *Jôdo-shinshû*, the True Pure Land Sect, propagated first by Shinran Shônin, 1174-1268); in Bingo and Izumo, the Zen-Sect; in Eastern Bitchû and on Oki Island, the Nichiren Sect. The Shin-Sect has the most followers. People who have left their native village community to settle down elsewhere have joined this sect.

#### **Tanaka Senichi:** *Obisha* (a festival in Chiba Prefecture).

In Chiba Prefecture, Sanbu District, Kujûkuri Town, a festival, called *obisha* or *obusha* is celebrated several times in a year at certain intervals which are determined at meetings either of men only or of women only or of both. Now it seems the banquets enjoyed at such meetings are the main concern, but formerly it was archery, as also the name *bisha* indicates, *o* is honorific.

#### **Takeoka Chieko:** On *Anbasama*, a Belief among Fishermen.

Traditions concerning *Anbasama* exist in seaside villages of Fukushima Prefecture, Iwagi District, and from Chiba Prefecture on northward up to seaside districts of Iwate Prefecture. *Anbasama* is basically a god to whom fishermen pray for a good catch, but gradually also other people started praying to him as god who protects against epidemics. In Katori District of Chiba Prefecture the named god is identical with Awa Ôsugi Daimyôjinsama and said to protect against smallpox. A mask of a *Tengu* (a goblin with a long nose) is borrowed from the shrine of *Ôsugisama* and carried away on his shoulders by a man who had once been village head. From each family a youth joins him, and together they dance through the village singing "Anba *yare*" (let's do *anba*!) and selling amulets to the onlookers. If in a family a child contracts smallpox, the shrine minister will say prayers. If the sick sees *Anbasama* in a dream, the disease will be light and *Anbasama* is

said to look like an old grandmother (*obâsan*). Also, this goddess is believed to be the same as *Ôsugi Daimyôjin*.

**Hirano Kaoru:** The Legend of Oto Tachibana Hime's Death by Drawing.

All over Chiba Prefecture legends connected with Yamato Takeru are found [Yamato Takeru is a half legendary, half historic figure, a hero who was essential in the pacification of the country and consolidation of the power of the Yamato clan who gave the nation its Imperial dynasty]. The calming down of the rough sea as soon as the maiden Oto Tachibana was in the water shows a relationship between the female sex and water. The legends have it that the girl was sacrificed to the dragon god in the water in her official capacity as an army attached sorceress or shaman who had to explore the will of the gods. When the girl went into the water various kinds of mats were spread out before her made of reedgrass, hides and silk, eight of each material, a solemn ceremony that points to the reception of a guest (in this case of the dragon god). The significance of these details in the legend is that a shamanness went to placate the sea-god. An old custom of fishermen is to keep hair of a woman enclosed in the little shrine of the guardian-goddess of the boat, the so-called *Funadama-sama* (Soul of the Boat), and, when in distress, to throw this hair into the sea. The visible representation (*shintai*) of the guardian-goddess may be hair of a woman or a human figure or die. The deity is said to be female and said to be identical with the ancestor-goddess which is worshipped by women. In Nagasaki Prefecture, Gotô Islands, a Dragon Palace Festival is celebrated in the 10th month. At it a mirror and other personal effects of women, such as combs and hairpins, are sunk into the sea. The belief described above has thus found its expression in annual rites of the community.

In Western Japan there exists the belief in *Sodemogigami*, that is, the God who tears off sleeves. He is a road or travel god who likes to pluck off a sleeve from the *kimono* of passers-by. If a traveler happens to fall down in front of the god, it means coming misfortune, to escape which the person has to cut off one sleeve and sacrifice it to the god. This belief is found in Kinki with Kyôto as its center and in Iki and Tosa.