

## REVIEW OF REVIEWS

**Nippon minzokugaku** (Japanese Folklore Science), Vol. V, No. 1

**Honda Yasuji:** Ritual Mask Dances of a Mythological Animal called "Shishi".

A *shishi* dance (*shishi* usually translated as 'lion,' though the mask used is not necessarily that of a lion) can be performed by two persons, in which case it is said to be of continental origin; or by one person only, then considered to be of Japanese origin. When performed by two persons, one of them forms the forelegs of the animal, the other the hindlegs, both persons being covered with a cloth that makes up the body of the animal. However, under this cloth may be more than two persons, three or five, and sometimes even a greater number, in which case the lion is called *hyakusoku ishi* (i.e. 'lion with hundred legs'). When only one person enacts the lion-dance, he does it by donning the lion's head and by binding a drum over his stomach. There may be three, four, eight, or twelve, such dancers who jump, sing and beat the drum. Both in dances with one person under the cloth and with two, a *himorogi* (straw-rope which marks a place or a thing as sacred) is fastened on the back of the lion. Beside masks of a lion, also masks of a boar, a deer, and a dragon are frequently used. Lion-dances performed by two persons originate in continental forms of dancing (i.e. *gigaku*, *bugaku*, *sarugaku*). Lion-dances are performed at festivals by expert players of *dengaku* and *sarugaku* and by various other artists. The *sarugaku* is the prototype of farcical dances, called *kyôgen*.

Lion-dances with two persons can be classified as follows: 1) dances with a lion's mask called *bugaku* or *dengaku* and in *kagura*-plays (cultic dances with music). To this first group belong the *Gongen*-dance of Akita Prefecture; the dances at the *hana-matsuri* ("flower festival") of Mikawa; and the Izumo-type *kagura* of Sendai; 2) dances in which lions appear with a complex set of ceremonies and performances. These lions frequently ac-

company a procession with a portable shrine (*mikoshi*). There are also places where tiger-masks are used. The lion-masks are of the same type as those used for the *gigaku*. Gifu Prefecture has its Sukigawa-*shishi*, Tottori Prefecture its *Kirin-shishi*, Shimane Prefecture its *shishi* (lions) of Sone Town. 3) The third group is made up of lion-dances performed by mountain-ascetics (*yamabushi*). The lion in their dance is considered a manifestation or incarnation of a Bodhisattva and is worshipped. Groups of dancers with such lion-masks make their rounds through villages late in autumn, playing in front of each house, thus driving evil away and preventing fire. In the prefectures of Iwate and Aomori this type of dance is called *yamabushi-kagura* or *kongen-mai*, the first name meaning 'kagura (cultic dances with music) played by mountain-ascetics,' the latter 'dances of manifestations of Bodhisattvas.' Whereas in the prefectures of Akita and Yamagata they call it *bangaku-shishi-mai* ('game-music dance'). 4) A fourth type is called *daikagura*. Dancers from Ise, Goangawa, and from Shigeyoshi Village, Owari, set out across the country to perform their Ise purification dances, driving away evil spirits from stoves and exorcising the whole house. This exorcism is a substitute for a pilgrimage to the Great Ise Shrine, called therefore *daikagura*, meaning a 'substituting *kagura*.' The lion-mask is considered the seat of the god. The players are groups of young men. Lion-dances with one player only are known in great numbers from Kominato in Tsugaru (Aomori Prefecture) on to Chiisagata District in Shinshû and along the Pacific coast. They are of two types: 1) two male lion-masks and one to three female lion-masks are used. Lion-masks are not the only ones used. The mask can also be a boar, a deer or a dragon. In addition to the mask-players, there are musicians, Tengu (long-nosed goblins), *yamabushi* in great numbers. Lion-dances of this kind are popular from Shinshû, Iwaki to Tsugaru in Northern Honshû. 2) Only well developed antlers of a deer serve as "lion-masks." The dance is a deer-dance, danced by twelve dancers in changing formations, popular in Rikuchû and Rikuzen in Iwate Prefecture. The dancers carry a big drum fastened to their abdomen which they beat while dancing. Without a drum the same deer-dances are performed from Iwate Prefecture, Rikuchû, Shimohe District to the Kamihe District. The orchestra, accompanying the first deer-play consists of flutes and drums. Its rhythm is the same as that of *bugaku*, or in other words, a dance performed to the classical court music, derivating from the whole mainland of

Asia, from Korea to India. The dance of the second deer is performed to only one drum. A connection with shamanic dances cannot be ruled out. Dance and songs of both the first and the second deer-play have been given a conventionalized elegance.

Lion-dances are performed only from Shinshû on to the North, they are unknown in Fukui, Kyûshû and Okinawa. However, in these latter places substitutes of them exist, called "dances for welcoming gods" (*kami-mukae odori*), "big-drum dances" (*daiko odori*), etc. No lion-masks are used for them, but drums are carried and beaten by the dancers. As in lion-dances, sacred ropes and bundles of paper-stripes are fastened to the back of the dancers. Items which are known from Shintô cult. The dancers either have handkerchiefs tied around their heads or wear straw-hats decorated with artificial flowers. Both dances and songs show artistic refinement.

From Hiroshima Prefecture, Yamagata District to Shimane Prefecture, Ôtsu District, archaic lion-dances are performed at field planting ceremonies. The donning of boar and deer-masks has a cultic significance. The objects to be worshiped are the respective animals or their spirits. Dragon-masks are worn as magic means to obtain rain and at the same time to expel evil. The mask-dances were given this significance at the hands of professional prayer-sayers (*kitôsha*) and were assimilated with traditional trends of the people. The musical accompaniment and other additions stem from the *gigaku*, *bugaku* and *sarugaku*. All dances were imported from the continent. They were enjoyed first by the court and then by the lower strata as well. Among the latter the function of the lion-dances is primarily exorcism. They are, therefore, performed also when the palanquin (*mikoshi*) of the god is carried through the streets in solemn procession. The lion-mask is the incarnation of the god. It has the power to subdue fire, drive evil away and make a funeral safe and propitious.

When *daikagura* (substituting *kagura*) are performed, amulets for purification and exorcism are distributed to those who cannot attend. This gives them the benefits of actual attendance. Throughout the year the masks are stored away in a small shrine in a house. The choice is made on the basis of a rotating system. In the past, the masks had a definite abode, an old house or a Buddhist temple.

**Sasadani Ryôzô:** *Kuzugami* and *Fujigami* (Earth and Water

Deity).

*Kuzu* means arrow-root, *fujî*, wisteria, *kami*, god. *Kuzugami* means the earth-spirit or the water-god, who changes from a snake into a dragon, and which Buddhists combined with the Eight Dragon Kings. Using some imagination a dragon can be seen in the shape of the arrow-root. The word *kuzu* for the plant, when written with the respective characters, means 'nine heads.' That would mean that the water-god has nine heads; a coincidence in the sound produced the "arrow-root god." The belief in the snake-god must have been wide-spread as can be seen from many place-names with combinations of the word *kuzu*. In Yamato alone 50 places have been counted where the *kuzugami* is worshipped. It may be due to a phonetic corruption that the same god is also called *fujigami*, wisteria-god. Anyhow, we have in him an ancient Earth or Water-god.

**Mogami Takayoshi:** Annual Renewal of the Clothes Covering Sacred Objects.

Before a festival is to be held in a Shintô shrine or a Buddhist temple, the god to be worshipped is given new clothing in a special ceremony. At the Tsukuba Shrine in Kantô the clothing for the god is flax from the Spring Festival and after the Autumn Festival it is silk. The old clothing serves as amulet. In Minobusan the clothing of Nichiren, the founder of a Buddhist sect, is renewed twice a year. This is done on the first of the 6th month and on the first of the 10th month, each time accompanied by sutra chanting of high ranking priests. Here also the old clothes are prized as amulets. Kôyasan, the headquarters of the Shingon sect and Hasedera in Yamato are also known for cloth changing ceremonies, as are many other great Buddhist temples. On a village or a family level we know of a similar ceremony for the god Oshirasama, which is a clothed figurine in possession of the *itako*. These are mostly blind female shamans or necromants.

In Aomori Prefecture, Nakatsugaru Distri, Nishimeya Village, and in the hamlet Sagose, they celebrate the Oshirasama Festival on the 16th day of the third or ninth month. Oshirasama is said to return from Heaven in the third or ninth month. On the 16th day of the third and ninth month, old women gather in a house and offer rice-wine and twelve rice-dumplings (*mochi*). At the same time they make a new coat for Oshirasama from white silk-cloth, 6 feet and 3 inches long. To this coat they attribute extraordinary power. In the Shônai district, on the

ninth day of the ninth month of the lunar calendar, people take Okonaisama (or Ogonehan), the same god as Oshirasama, down from the house-altar, place him in the alcove (*tokonoma*), and offer him new rice and worship him. On the second day of the 12th month, the house-wife wraps the god in a kerchief (*furoshiki*), and brings him to the priest in the Shintô shrine who gives him new clothing. Thereafter the god is taken home and placed again in the alcove, where he receives first the family's thanks for his protection against natural disasters, and secondly is asked for continued protection and blessing. Other people bring the god, instead of to a Shintô priest, to a female shaman (*itako* or *miko*) for the renewal of the coat. It is a general practice that food offerings are made to the god, which are later eaten by the family members. When a house, wherein a divine spirit has been worshipped, is rebuilt, the worship of the god in the new house begins by giving the god new clothing. Pieces of the old clothing people carry on their bodies as an efficient amulet.

**Sakaguchi Kazuo:** The *Yakami-shû*: a Specific Group of Female Participants in Folk-Shintoistic Ritual, Niijima, Izu Province.

In the main village of Niijima, there are three old families, called the "upper house", "the middle house" and the "lower house". In these three houses the office of religious ministers, called *hôri*, is hereditary. The female members of the three families are called *yakami*. The villagers are called *yakami-shû*, that is *yakami*-group. At the entrance of the house of a *hôri* stand two posts, called *oshimengui*, on them bamboo branches and strawropes (*shimenawa*) are hung, which mark the place as house of a god. Only the *hôri* and the female members (*yakami*) of the house are permitted to go beyond the sacred posts. Inside the house is a room which is called *o-yadaijin*, and into it only the *hôri* and the *yakami* are admitted. In this room the gods of the village are worshipped. A *hôri*, or a holder of the office of minister, takes a bath every morning and evening, a hot one in winter, a cold one in summer, then proceeds to the sacred room and worships the gods of one of the villages, which are assembled here. When one of the villages celebrates its community festival, the *hôri* keep themselves clean. They engage in neither field-work nor fishing. Their living is guaranteed by contributions of the villagers. They receive always the first fruits of the seasonal crops.

As *yakami* (housewife of a *hōri*), only a woman who is already beyond her menstruation age, can be chosen. As a rule, both the *hōri* and the *yakami* are past their fiftieth year of age. Daily religious duties are incumbent also on the *yakami*. Both the *hōri* and his *yakami* serve a term of five years. The *yakami* is usually a retired grandmother who still wants to be useful for the community. She must not call on her home when the house is in a state of impurity. Her home is taboo for her 20 days after a child-birth, 50 days after the death of one of the parents of the house, and 20 days after the death of an aunt. A lady who has finished her term as *yakami*, is called *mikoagari*. The old term *miko* shows that the woman must formerly have held the position of a female shaman, *agari* means 'termination'. The *yakami* is installed in her office as soon as she has learned the ritual songs. Every five years or so the retired *yakami* gather in the house with the sacred room and sing to drum beating religious songs, thus initiating the new *yakami*. The term *yakami* means literally 'house-mistress'.

Of the ritual songs (*kami no mi-uta*), one type is called *okagura* and consists of songs, music and dances. The songs are sung to the beating of drums. Another type of ritual songs is called *kami-isame*, 'exhortation of the god'. As to the annual obligations of the *yakami*, at New Year she has to perform the *sho-kami-isame*, which is 'exhortation of all gods'. By 'all gods' are meant the guardian-god of the village, other gods worshipped in the village, and the field-god. In springtime a pilgrimage has to be made to the gods, and again on the fifth day of the fifth month. The 13th day of the sixth month is the beach-festival, on the 7th day of the 7th month the water-god is worshipped, and on the 20th day of the tenth month the fishermen's god Ebisu. The first day of the 12th month is a day of thanksgiving to all gods.

**Inoguchi Shoji:** Various Aspects of Ritual Abstentions in Sanin Area.

Before they celebrate a festival, all villagers have to practice ritual abstention. In Tottori Prefecture, Ketaka District, Hamamura Town, there is a Himeji Shrine. In the 11th month of the lunar calendar, from the first day of the ox (*ushi*, ox, a zodiacal sign of the calendar) throughout the following seven days abstention has to be practiced, because on the eighth day the festival of the monkey (*saru*, another calendar sign) is celebrated. It is believed that on the ox-day at the ox-hour (two o'clock in

the morning), the god retires to take his rest of which he is badly in need. In popular belief the clan-god (*ujigami*) goes to Izumo to make rice-wine there, receiving help from nobody. Upon his return he must take a rest. While he sleeps the villagers must not do rough work and carry on no money transactions. Even cooking and bathing have to be postponed. The monkey festival is held on the 28th day of the first month. Before this day the shrine minister must prepare his foot over a special fire for two nights and three days. He must also sleep in the shrine hall, eat only ritually pure food and wear a mask of the god. All young men in the village wear new clothes and lion-masks and take part in a procession. Then follows the rite of arrow shooting, in which the shrine minister, still wearing his mask, shoots twelve arrows at a target. His hits and misses are counted and are said to predict good or bad harvest. The twelve shoots represent the twelve months of the year.

In Tottori Prefecture, Ketaka District, Aoya Town, Narutaki Hamlet, the villagers celebrate at their shrine a Silence-Festival (*buin-matsuri*). They observe similar abstentions previously described. In Hyôgo Prefecture, Mitaka District, Mitaka Town, Ojiro Village, Shinya Hamlet, the community worships the Atsuta Shrine as their guardian-god. Twice a year, on the fifth of the first month and on the tenth of the 11th month, a master of ceremonies or rather a temporary minister is chosen. His family must then observe abstinence (*monoimi*) during his term of office. He has to keep his body clean and must cut down on his social life. During the New Year's month and the 11th month he must avoid dirty work. Men whose wives are with child or have recently given birth to one, are not eligible for the office.

In Tottori Prefecture, Hino District, Iwami Village, at the Ôishi Shrine, they hold annually five festivals. At each festival, groups of eight families designate a man as their delegate. Under the supervision of their delegates all villagers observe abstinence. The delegates are chosen from old families. While in office they must not take impure persons into their house and funeral rites cannot be performed therein. From the day before the Great Festival in the ninth month and proceeding days the abstinence is intensified. Menstruating women and those with a baby must enter neither the house of a delegate nor a house of a member of his clan (*uji*). The night before the festival sacrificial rice-wine is served in the house of the chief delegate to the other delegates and their assistants. On the festival day itself the

delegates for the coming year hoist a flag over the shrine and offer rice-wine. Rice and rice-cakes are offered. The next day, persons prevented from entering the house of a delegate on account of their impurity beg to offer rice-wine on their behalf so that they can enter the house.

**Noda Saburô:** The *Oto* Ritual, with an Emphasis on Special Performances by Girls.

In Wakayama Prefecture, Hidaka District, Gobô City, Shioya Town, the Susa Shrine of the hamlet Morioka is said to have been built to ask the god Susanoo to subdue a big snake which made work in the fields and forest impossible. Every year on the ninth day of the New Year, and then in the sixth, ninth and tenth month, girls from seven nearby villages put on ceremonial robes and headgear. They make seven kinds of offerings with rice-wine and wave big wreaths of white paper as they are used by Shintô priests in purification rites. For a whole year the seven girls have to practice abstinence by eating food from pots and pans of their own. After one year, on the 7th day of the third month, their fathers carry them to the shrine where they learn how to handle the wreaths of white paper. The week before the festival they must not touch the ground with their feet and have to live inside the house on the wooden floor. They also get their hairdress changed. On the festival day itself they don a crown, put on ceremonial dress and apply plenty of white powder to their faces. In the middle of their foreheads a dot of red ink is painted, to both of their cheeks rouge is applied. A banquet for the next of kin follows, then the girls are carried to the shrine in a sedan-chair. As no sedan-chairs are available nowadays, the girls ride to the shrine on their fathers' backs or on bicycles. At the shrine the Shintô minister starts the ceremonies by reciting a ritual prayer (*norito*). After the ceremonies the rice offered before the god is taken down, then the girls swing their wreaths before the god, and when rice has been scattered around, the ceremonies are over.

The big rice-cake that has been offered before the god at New Year is given to the children which have been chosen as shrine girls (*otome*) and to their parents. After receiving this present the girls have to start their life of abstinence. They take the cake home and bury it in the ground. From this day on throughout the year the girls get their food prepared separately on another kettle. Should misery befall them, they must give up



their religious position and are given into the custody of another family.

**Ogoshi Katsuaki:** Cult-groups (*miyaza*) and Agrarian Rites in Izumi Province.

1) The cult-group assembly and the stick of the Oxen-king (*gyû-ô-jô*) in Izumi.—The members of a cult-group or *miyaza* gather on the New Year at the Buddhist temple. Because customs described here originated at the time of assimilation between Shintô and Buddhism, we find Buddhist elements mixed into the worship of native gods. Even the official separation of the two religions, rigorously carried out early in the Meiji era, could not eliminate such elements from the shrine worship.

In Kaizuka City exist the following *miyaza*: a *hataza* (field-group), an upper group (*kamiza*), a main group (*honza*, the latter being also the lower group (*shimoza*)). The three groups act jointly in important matters. The Buddhist rites of *okonai* (performance, ceremony) were held by the field-group on the 7th day after New Year, and on the eighth day by the main and the upper group. Only after the three shrines have been combined into one, do all three groups hold their rites jointly on the eighth day. They hang paper amulets on two wax-trees and two oak trees. They then bring the trees to the goddess Kannon at the temple Kôonji. From the goddess they receive good lucky rice-cakes which they take home and offer on the house-altar as a prayer to the gods in thanksgiving for the latter's blessing of the crops.

In Kaizuka City, at the Mizuma Temple exist cult-groups of a special type. There is an upper group, a middle group, and a lower group. Usually a village community has two to four cult-groups (*miyaza*). The basis for their separate formation is common territory, blood relationship, common affiliation with a Buddhist sect, and increase of the number of households. If in a family of the upper group no male child is born, that family loses its membership in the upper group and has to be content with being a member of the middle group. If the temple affiliation of a family of the middle group has slackened, the status of the family is lowered. Thus the middle group and the lower group are cult-groups only in name. The upper group is ruled by twelve old men, the *jû-ni-nin-shû*. Each of them has been initiated to this body by ordination to the Buddhist priesthood and by attendance of a series of lectures given by an older priest. In the evening of the 7th day after the New Year the villagers

gather for a ceremony which is called *okonai*. For this ceremony all the men bring a wooden stick, from a wax-tree, which is called stick of the oxen-king (*nyû-ô-jô*). After having received paper amulets from the Mizuma Temple which they fasten on their sticks, they go home and have a dinner of *zôni*, a New Year's dish consisting of rice-cakes boiled with vegetables. They plant the oxen-king-sticks in the rice-nursery where they supposedly keep noxious insects away. The paper-amulets are hung on the house-door to protect the family from robbery. The performances on the eighth day of the New Year are collectively called *shô-gatsu okonai*, or New Year's rites.

2) The Myôjin Association for praying for a good crop.— [Under Myôjin come locally important gods so that the term applies to a number of gods. The local inhabitants know which god is their Myôjin]. One person of each family is a member of the Myôjin Association. They have a ceremony on New Year's Day with prayers for a good harvest. The first day of the ninth month is the day for admitting new members into the association. At 10 o'clock in the morning the old members gather in the shrine office. They bring two logs of cryptomeria, each about 24 feet long. The association members take their seats on both sides of the logs and first a plate of pickled radish is passed around. Then follows the dinner. When all are seated for it, they take a foot long stick of oak or cherry into their hands and worship the god in the alcove (*tokonoma*), while the door is closed and the room is completely dark. Next taper is lighted, a big drum is beaten, and a flute is played. With music the god is called down. Rice-wine is offered to him and a Shintô prayer (*norito*) is recited. While they beat the matted floor (*tatami*) with their sticks, they move around in the room on their knees wresting the sticks from others. The ensuing tumult ends when the Shintô minister beats a gong. The assembly is then disbanded. The rite aims at producing a good crop of the early rice (*wase*). For producing a good crop of the middle and the late rice, the rite is repeated twice. If in the brawl with the sticks none of the participants has suffered bodily harm, good crops can be expected. The triple performance is repeated on the first day of the ninth month and on New Year's Day. On these days members do not touch dirty work.

3) Sesam with which prayers are said for abundant rain.—In the three villages of Kitade, Umase and Tadaoka, belonging to Tadaoka Town in Senhoku District, Wakayama Prefecture,

people go to the Matsuo Shrine, beat sesam there as a means to obtain abundant rain. Rain prayers are not usually said at Buddhist temples

4) The seedling festival.—In mountain villages near Kishiwada City, on the eve of the rice planting day, people bring three bundles of seedlings. Each person plants one stalk of pampass-grass (*Miscanthus sinensis*) in the ground, offer soaked rice and rice-wine. Some families even offer ceramic ware, and worship the rice-seedlings in the yard in front of the house. The pampass-grass has symbolic meaning. This means that the rice may grow as abundantly as pampass-grass. The three bundles of seedlings are then planted at the irrigation mouth of the best rice-field. With the soaked rice and the rice-wine a dinner for the day is prepared. Because the seedlings are the object of worship, the rite is called the seedling festival.

5) Rice planting on a field owned by the Shrine Association and called shrine-field.—On the shrine-field of the Sugawara Shrine in Kishiwada City, Yoshii Town, rice planting is done three days before the summer solstice. On this day the villagers must by all means abstain from rice planting in their private fields. Such work would be thought to profanate the sacred rite of rice planting on the shrine-field.

**Iwamura Mitsuo:** On Marriage Customs in a Village in Ishikawa Prefecture.

The village in which the marriage customs are described here is Oshino Village in Ishikawa District, Ishikawa Prefecture. The marriage of a young man into the family of his bride is called *uchiage*, a word which probably means 'starting a household'. The writer first investigated the etymology of this term by comparing it with parallels and similarities from all over the country. He then elaborated on regional differences of the wedding rites.

**Hoshino Shunei:** A Study on Jizô (Ksitigarbha) in Games of Children.

Jizô in Japan is a patron-god of children. From many places children's games are known in which the role of Jizô is played by one of the participants. It is of special interest that a child is possessed by Jizô and in this condition utters oracles. Behind these games of children stands the belief that Jizô saves criminals from their punishment in Hell.