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Shamanic Dance in Japan

The Choreography of Possession in Kagura Performance

Abstract:

This paper discusses the choreography of trance in Japanese kagura dances and the shamanic elements that have been preserved in them. Three case studies of kagura are examined: (1) Ōmoto Kagura, in which an authentic shamanic trance is still performed and which serves as a point of comparison; (2) Hana Matsuri, which has a kagura dance which is believed to indicate that the dance once included a possession-trance (*kamigakari*); (3) Hayachine Kagura which never included a possession-trance but still displays clear shamanic choreography in its dances. Using these case studies, the shamanic character of kagura is discussed, as well as why such shamanic choreography is preserved even where real trance does not exist. It is also shown how *kamigakari* is expressed in dance and how it functions in such performances.

Key words: folk dance—choreography—possession—trance—kagura—*kamigakari*

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RELIGION IN JAPAN is often characterized as shamanic in origin.[1] Indeed, both religious ritual and the performing arts in Japan are generally acknowledged as originating from shamanic possession-trance.[2] The ancient techniques involved in summoning the deities to possess their shamans included elements of the performing arts: dance, music, song, and drama. Japanese religious practice is thus rightfully described as "hierophany" or "a showing of the sacred" (ELLWOOD and PILGRIM 1985, 111). To this day, the great variety of the so-called *minzoku geinō* 民俗芸能 (folk performing arts) in Japan combine artistic and spiritual dimensions into functional ritual events.

This paper concentrates on kagura 神楽, the ancient Japanese ritual dance of shamanic origins. Kagura is a religious performance that often accompanies Shinto *matsuri* 祭 (rite or festival) and is considered its prototype.[3]

As is well known, however, actual shamanic possession-trance is now rare in Japan and can be observed in only a few places. The loss of shamanic energy is due not only to the advance of modernity, but also to the persecution toward the end of the 19th century of native practices deemed as "primitive" or "subversive" by the Meiji government (GRAPARD 1984; YAMAJI 1987, 214–215). Most kagura schools as well have lost their "authentic" shamanic energy. They no longer display "real" trances or conduct direct communication with the spirits. Nevertheless, many kagura schools preserve the memory of a lost tradition of possession, and incorporate a *choreography* or a *display* of trance of some kind. In this respect, they are a "showing of the sacred."

Of interest for us here is not only that these "displays" of trance, or the performances of the appearance of possession, are conducted in those performances where possession was once enacted, but also that possession is curiously choreographed in those kagura schools that had never performed it in the first place. This leads us to raise questions about "why" and "how." We will first ask why such a choreography is perpetuated in kagura schools even when the real shamanic energy is lost. Then we will explore how possession-trance is enacted or "shown" in kagura performances.

This paper is thus concerned with the ritual expressions of shamanic energy in Japan in the context of kagura dance, and examines the performance or the display of shamanic possession-trance where it is no longer actually conducted. This is significant for the understanding of religious expression, as an exploration of shamanic elements in kagura may further our understanding of the way a culture preserves its philosophy and worldview through ritual expressions.

A few introductory remarks about kagura as shamanic performance, and about kagura dance, will precede our main discussion of three case studies of kagura.

KAGURA AS SHAMANIC PERFORMANCE

The characters forming the word "kagura" can be translated as "entertainment for the kami" 神 (deities). All agree that "kagura" is probably a contracted form of *kami no kura* 神の倉 (seat of the kami) implying the presence of kami in the kagura performance, or performance itself as the dwelling of kami (ORIKUCHI 1975, 250; ISHIZUKA 1984, 272–73; NISHITSUNOI 1979, 99–102). Tradition crowns kagura as the heir of the prototypical ritual recorded in both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihongi:* the account of "Opening the Rock-Cave Door" (*Iwato biraki* 岩戸開き). This myth describes a shamanic rite in which the goddess Ame-no-uzume 天宇受賣 performs a frenzied dance of possession.[4] Shamanic elements from the myth were incorporated into later Shinto ritual and into kagura; for example, the *torimono* 採物 (hand-held props), which appear in this myth and in kagura, serve as "channeling devices" for the kami to descend upon and enter the body of the shaman. Dance itself served both to induce trance and as the contextual manifestation that the dancer was possessed by the kami.

The word "kagura" is a relatively late appellation for the ancient imperial ritual of *chinkon* 鎮魂. *Chinkon* meant both "pacifying the spirit" *(tama shizume)* and "shaking the spirit" *(tama furi)* and was first performed by the Sarume 猿女 and the Asobibe 遊び部. The Sarume clan (Uzume's descendants) conducted rites of rejuvenation for the spirits of the emperors; these involved possession-trance (*kamigakari* 神憑り, usually of a female shaman or *miko* 巫女), and a resulting oracle (*takusen* 託宣) from the deities. The Asobibe were a guild that performed their *chinkon* to pacify the spirits of dead emperors (ŌBAYASHI 1984, 10–15).[5] Both spirit pacification and rejuvenation were achieved by means of songs and dances, and both became the functions and goals of later kagura (IWATA 1990, 32; HOFF 1978, 161–62; HONDA 1974a, 28).[6]

Most scholars see *kamigakari* or possession-trance as the core and essence of kagura. For, if kagura was originally *kami no kura,* referring to

both the place (the seat of the gods) and to the ritual action or event, then the most important elements in the ritual of kagura were the acts of summoning and welcoming the deities, worshipping them, and receiving their blessings and messages—in other words, to perform *kamigakari* and obtain a *takusen* (ISHIZUKA 1984, 273; IWATA 1990, 14).

The loss of authentic *kamigakari* has led to its imitation, and the process of "showing trance" has naturally led to the development of artistic performances.[7] Today "kagura" is a collective name for the most ancient genre of the folk performing arts. Folk kagura is generally divided into four major types: *miko* kagura 神子神楽, Ise kagura 伊勢神楽, Izumo kagura 出雲神楽 and *shishi* kagura 獅子神楽 (with its subgenre *yamabushi* kagura 山伏神楽). Except for *miko* kagura, they have all been strongly influenced by Shugendō 修験道.[8] As MIYAKE has shown, Shugendō itself is shamanic in nature, and its practitioners, the *yamabushi* 山伏 (those who lie in the mountains), practice an "aggressive" kind of shamanism, induced by the magic of ferocious ascetics (1984a 57–59; 1994, 76–77).[9]

With all its variety of genres and types, there are common shamanic elements in all folk kagura schools. For example, the construction of the sacred enclosure or locus of a kagura event displays the basic character of kagura as *kami no kura*. It defines kagura as ritual space, as well as ritual action. Also, in any kagura performance the costumes are part of what transforms the dancer into the representation or the manifestation of the kami. The aforementioned *torimono* have been central as *yorishiro* 依代 ("channeling devices" for kami) in all kagura performances, as they were in the dance of Ame-no-uzume. (NISHITSUNOI 1979, 98; TAKATORI 1969). Masks are significant as a sign of possession in kagura as imitation of trance when there is none.[10] Kagura music is universally composed of drum, flute, cymbals, and the singing of *kami uta* 神歌 (kami songs), each of which has the power to summon the deities. However, the most significant action associated with kagura as shamanic rite is the dance.

As our main interest in this paper lies with the choreography of possession in kagura, let us introduce the subject with a brief discussion of kagura dance.

KAGURA DANCE

The types of kagura dance are traditionally distinguished by two different terms: *mai* 舞 and *odori* 踊. Orikuchi established the formal definition of the two: *mai* is a dance in rotations and circular movements, characteristically slow and elegant; *odori* is a dance of leaping and jumping up and down, characteristically fast and energetic (ORIKUCHI 1975, 237–39; YAMAJI 1983, 105–106; 1987, 216–19). These are ideal types, however. As KIKKAWA rightfully

remarks, there is no pure *mai*-circling dance in Japan: what is called *mai* usually contains jumping, and *odori* often refers to quiet dances (1989, 166–80). Both styles of dance are thought to have originated in shamanic possession-trance.

Among the ancient techniques to induce *kamigakari* there was one that involved a "set" made up of a shamaness and priests: trance was induced into the *miko* by priests around her. As in the myth, the *miko* held *gohei* 御幣 (a wand of white-paper streamers) and various leafy branches (e.g., *sakaki* 榊 and *sasa* 笹 [bamboo grass]), as well as bells—all sound-producing instruments to summon the deities. The priests who performed purification held weapon-like *torimono*: spears, swords, bows and arrows (IWATA 1990, 47–50). (In other techniques, as in the [presumed] example set by Ame-no-uzume, the shaman enters into a state of possession through his or her own music and dance.)

"*Mai*" is originally associated with the dance of a *miko* performed to the accompaniment of a chorus of priests; the *miko* circles and sways left and right until she falls into a trance. Once possessed, however, her dance becomes one of uncontrolled leaps and jumps, characterized as "*odori*." Thus *mai* is understood as the preparation of trance, beginning in conscious action, and *odori* is then understood as the trance behavior itself, originally unconscious (Gunji quoted in YAMAJI 1987, 217).

"*Odori*," however, is also associated with the priests' dance that precedes that of the *miko*, and that is intended as exorcism of evil spirits. This pacification is achieved through stamping and *henbai* 反閉 (magical steps), turning to the five directions, and manipulation of weapon *torimono*. In the context of folk kagura today, this "preparatory" ritual dance of exorcism is indeed dominant.[11]

Be that as it may, one can typologically distinguish between the two types of *kamigakari:* the spontaneous (*odori* type), and the caused or induced (the *miko-mai* turned *odori* type) *kamigakari*. Whenever an expression of *kamigakari* is intended, it is shown through the imitation of either or both of these types, which describe unconscious movements.

Thus, the choreography of possession is a choreography that shows an imitation of the process leading to loss of control, or of a state of loss of control itself (as "*mai*" or "*odori*"). That is to say, either through the "preparation" dance of the *miko*—circling, waving, and sounding the *torimono* in all directions—or through imitation of loss of control: most commonly, through high jumps and leaps, but also through trembling hands or body, falling, walking in zigzag steps, or staggering backwards. In any of these cases, the point at which the *kamigakari* dance begins is the dramatic moment of transformation when, as KIKKAWA puts it, "the dancer turns into a kami" (1989, 183–84).

Let me emphasize here again, that the choreography described above is the chosen choreography for a dance that strives to show (i.e., present) the *appearance* of trance. This choreography does not necessarily reflect real possession-trance conditions, as can be witnessed in various places around Japan. In many cases (e.g., as with the *itaḳo* of north Japan or the kagura *miḳo* of Iwate Prefecture; see below), the possession trance of shamans does not involve a loss of consciousness or a loss of control of one's movements. As we shall see below, even in genuine kagura *ḳamigaḳari* events, the conduct of the possessed is sometimes mild and still. However, whenever one tries to choreograph possession—to show *ḳamigaḳari* on stage—the chosen body language is always that of a violent trance, expressed through imitating loss of control. That choreography became the established dance code for expressing the state of *ḳamigaḳari* in kagura.

Today, as already mentioned, most kagura forms seem to have lost their original association with genuine shamanic possession. Kagura events are still performed as religious and efficacious rites, incorporating shamanic elements into their dances, if only in stylized forms of masking or of shamanic choreography (ISHIZUKA 1984, 273).

I will next examine why and in what way a shamanic choreography that depicts possession is still extant in the genre of kagura.

THREE CASE STUDIES OF KAGURA

To demonstrate the shamanic structure of the kagura and how possession-trance choreography is preserved in its various kagura genres, I chose to present here three different examples from three different areas in Japan: Ōmoto Kagura 大元神楽 in Shimane Prefecture in western Japan on the Sea of Japan coast; Hana Matsuri 花祭 in Aichi Prefecture in central Japan; and Hayachine Kagura 早池峰神楽 in Iwate Prefecture in northeastern Japan. Each of these kagura schools, according to Honda's classical division, represents a different genre of kagura: Ōmoto Kagura is classified in the Izumo kagura genre, Hana Matsuri as a Shimotsuki Kagura 霜月神楽 (kagura of the eleventh month) of the Ise kagura genre, and Hayachine Kagura as an example of the *shishi* kagura genre of northeastern Japan.[12]

All three kagura schools share in the basic structure of *matsuri:* summoning down the gods to a sacred enclosure; dancing for them, asking for their protection, worshipping them, and revitalizing them in the dance; and in sending them back with honor. All three schools are deeply influenced by the Shugendō tradition, and they also represent three different possibilities or styles for the display of shamanic trance.

Ōmoto Kagura of Shimane Prefecture is a school of kagura that still retains the tradition of real trance during performance. Ōmoto Kagura is

here taken as the first example, to serve as a reference point for the role the shamanic possession (*kamigakari*) and oracle (*takusen*) play in the context of kagura.

Hana Matsuri is an example of a kagura tradition that had lost its *kamigakari* as recently as the Meiji period (1868–1912). Living memory still refers to particular dances as "*kamigakari* dances," and this shows in their choreography, as described below. This genre of kagura displays especially strong *yamabushi* colors. The various esoteric ritual sessions of Hana Matsuri at times produce such power and energy that they cause an "out of context" or "spontaneous" trance (though it never occurs during the dances).

Hayachine Kagura is a stage performance of ritual dance. Like Ōmoto Kagura, it is a professional-looking theater dance performance, related in its repertoire to ancient Nō. However, unlike Ōmoto, it has no tradition of trance: no historical mention of a *miko*, and no remnant or oral tradition of *kamigakari* during performance. Moreover, Hayachine Kagura is carefully constructed as an organized stage performance, with no room for loss of consciousness. It is by nature an itinerant kagura that had to be road-efficient and rely on its own powers to survive. Nevertheless, in spite of this lack of *kamigakari* tradition, there is a particular choreography in several of the dances (described below) that undeniably suggests *kamigakari* behavior. This makes Hayachine Kagura our most intriguing case.

Why and How?

Why perform a shamanic trance when there is none originally? Since kagura performance functions as a Shinto *matsuri,* one would expect that it would just follow the typical Shinto ritual structure: address the kami; honor and petition them; present offerings of food, sake, music and dance; and then send them back. If the shamanic energy is lost to such an extent that some kagura schools had never actually performed it, why is it important to preserve the appearance of trance or possession in the choreography of their dances? Is it not enough that the ritual is conducted as an offering for the kami, as indeed it claims to be? Are the kami not satisfied with just being summoned and worshiped? Why pretend—why "fake"—a shamanic trance?

These questions are especially pertinent for understanding the Hayachine Kagura performance, which is a ritual performance that functions not just as any *matsuri,* but has the active power of magical protection, exorcism, healing, and inducing fertility. Why is it not "satisfied" with its elaborate magical choreography? One possible answer is that the presence of the kami, in its original form, could only be seen in shamanic possession-trance. Kagura is the "seat of the kami," but the kami is not really present

without a shamanic possession. Since kagura is a "showing of the sacred," of the real divine presence, it requires more than a simple *matsuri,* or even a powerful magical ritual. Kagura must display the authentic presence of the kami, even in stylized form. Thus, efforts are made to maintain the kagura's original power by preserving the energy of possession as proof of the kami presence. If it were not for this display of immediate divine presence, one would be unable to distinguish between kagura and other Shinto rites. Therefore, even though authentic trance no longer exists and much of the shamanic energy is lost, the attempt is still made to preserve the raison d'être of kagura through the expression of trance.

How is this shamanic energy displayed in different kagura? This question of "how" pertains to the obvious features of possession-trance, and even more so to its culturally defined code of symbolic movements, which accords with its particular philosophy or worldview. We will thus see how tradition preserves the appearance of possession on stage. We will also investigate what is expected in the show of trance: is it a mere display of the presence of the deity, or is there an additional message? To answer our second question, we will next present the three kagura schools and the shamanic elements seen in the various facets of their performance: their stage structure, costumes, *torimono*, masks, music, and, most importantly, their dances and their expressions of *kamigakari* that display shamanic energy.

Ōmoto Kagura: "The Real Thing"

Background

The Ōmoto Kagura school is found in the area of Iwami 石見 near the Sea of Japan in Ōchi-gun 邑智郡, Shimane Prefecture (formerly Chūgoku 中国). It is generally classified as belonging to the genre of Izumo kagura (Ushio 1985; Ōchi-gun Hozonkai 1982). A strong and independent system of professional Shinto priests was organized in the area of Iwami (Ishizuka 1984, 275), and it is because of this local organization that the tradition and practice of *kamigakari* continued in this area even beyond the Meiji government prohibition.[13]

Ōmoto is the name given to the *uji-gami* 氏神 (the ancestral deity), or the collective spirit of the ancestral deity of the area, who has been invited to dwell in a carefully prepared, long, straw snake (*tsuna hebi* 綱蛇). It is the representative of the deity Ōmoto which means "Great Origin." The straw snake is 13.65m. (7.5 *hiro* 尋) long, and a red-cloth tongue hangs out of its mouth. This straw snake is worshiped coiled around a sacred tree, with an altar and *gohei* in front of it. On the day of its great *matsuri,* once every seven (or thirteen) years, it is taken down from its tree, coiled up and carried in a dignified procession through the village to the appointed shrine, where a

night-long kagura is to take place before it. During this night-long kagura, Ōmoto-sama is expected to possess one of the villagers and give his oracular message (*takusen*). This *takusen*, achieved via genuine *kamigakari,* is the most important part, the very core of this kagura.

The kagura dancers are all male and so are the mediums. In the late middle ages the *kamigakari* was conducted by a *miko*, a female shamaness who became possessed through a trance induced by a *yamabushi*, often her husband. However, with the changes of time, men took over the role of the *miko* (ISHIZUKA 1984, 282–85). In Iwami, *kamigakari* was once the function of special families, but since Meiji it has been open to all local men who wish to volunteer. Three candidates are chosen each time to undergo a week-long purification before the *matsuri* so they may act as "oracle masters" (*taku dayū* 託太夫). The kagura dances themselves passed into the hands of the villagers even before Meiji, and the local priests (*shinshoku* 神職) are now responsible only for the ceremonial parts (*shinji* 神事) of the kagura (YAMAJI 1990, 214–16; USHIO 1985, 52–73).

The Structure of the Stage

The dance stage of Ōmoto Kagura is the main hall of a shrine, in front of an altar of steps covered with white cloth, on which the straw snake god is enshrined during the first part of the evening. The eastern and western poles at the corners of the stage are focal points for the ceremony. To each pole is tied a bag of rice into which numerous little *gohei* are inserted. From the beams of the four sides of the ceiling there hang elaborate paper cuttings, signifying the four seasons and corresponding to the four directions and the four colors: green (spring), red (summer), purple (winter), and white (autumn). Thus a sacred enclosure is defined. At the performance I witnessed in the village of Ota in November 1996, there was a curtain on one side and musicians on another, leaving two sides open for the audience.

Tengai (canopy 天蓋)

The shamanic meaning of the stage is especially embedded in the impressive 3.64 square meter *tengai* that is hung over the enclosure. *Tengai* means "cloud" or "heaven's canopy." It is a makeshift ceiling from which hang numerous paper cuttings in five colors: green, red, purple, white, and yellow. Among them are hung special rectangular-box-shaped paper hangings, called *byakke* or *byakkai* 白蓋, in all five colors.[14] These *byakke,* nine in all (eight smaller rectangular ones in green, red, purple, and white, and a bigger, yellowish hexagonal one in the center), are tied with ropes and can be manipulated and made to "dance" or "jump" up, down, and around. The *byakke* play a central role in the kagura: at one point during the night these

paper "boxes," with ropes held by three priests, are made to jump and prance around in such a way that their tails and fringes fly about. The dancing *tengai* is the major shamanic trait of the stage, for it is the place onto which the kami descend and in which they dwell. When it is shaken and activated, the kami can pass through it and possess those below it. Dancing underneath the *tengai* used to be one of the traditional methods used to achieve *kamigakari,* probably the original one; and as mentioned below, it still seems to be working today.

The dances

After the ceremonies of bringing Ōmoto-sama to the kagura hall are completed and the kami is properly enshrined, kagura dances are performed. From this point until the next morning, a mixed program of kagura dances and ceremonies follow one upon another in succession.

There is a strict division in Ōmoto Kagura between, on the one hand, the "ceremonial dances" conducted by the priests in all-white silk garments, during which *kamigakari* is attempted, and the kagura dances performed by the villagers, on the other. And, as in the genre of Izumo kagura, there are also two kinds of kagura dances: the *torimono-mai* 採物舞 and the Kagura-nō 神楽能. The *torimono-mai* are danced without masks and in relatively plain costumes. These are the magical dances of Shugendō and Onmyōdō 陰陽道 (yin-yang school) heritage meant for purification. They are swift in tempo and conducted facing the five directions, with swords and other weapons of exorcism.

The Kagura-nō dances display the spectacular character of Ōmoto Kagura. These are dramatic masked dances in full costume that tell stories from the myths and epics. Among the stories are famous ones such as the *Iwato biraki* and the more locally oriented story of Susa-no-o 須佐の男 and the dragons, in which the hero god fights two enormous dragons who whirl around him, spitting fire and smoke. Other numbers depict heroic fights between samurai or *yamabushi* and demons.

Music in Ōmoto Kagura is commonly based on drums, flutes, and cymbals. The drummers accompany the performance with continuous singing of *kami uta.* Ōmoto kagura texts are exclusively narrated by the dancers themselves.

Ōmoto Kagura costumes are extremely shiny and colorful. They are heavily brocaded and embroidered, and equally flashy for both evil demons and righteous samurai. The masks are also spectacular, especially the enormous and terrifying *hannya* demon masks. Ōmoto Kagura feature some sophisticated stage pyrotechnics, where demon (*oni* 鬼) characters spit fire and fill the stage with their vile smoke. Various *torimono*, including fans,

sticks, bows, arrows, spears, and swords, feature in the dances. There is also a straw mat for acrobatic dancing (also considered a special *yorishiro*), and a decorated magic wheel to pacify the enemies. All these *torimono* serve as magical tools of purification and exorcism. The use of *gohei* is reserved for the priests in the ceremonial dances. Ōmoto Kagura uses a great variety of specialized *gohei,* which serve both as conductors of kami energy and as purifying agents. The great *misaki* 御崎 *gohei,* for example, is used to pacify the *taku dayū* (USHIO 1985; ŌCHI-GUN HOZONKAI 1982; TAKEUCHI 1995).

The kamigakari

The ritual dance sessions (*shinji*) where *kamigakari* is induced are inserted in between the kagura dances. Those are conducted strictly by the priests (*shinshoku*) in their pure-white garments. Thus a striking visual contrast is created between the colorful Kagura-nō and the ceremonial dances.

Today *kamigakari* is attempted during three ceremonial dances: the Tsuna-nuki 綱貫(Rope brace), Rokushō-mai 六所舞 (Dance of six directions) and Mitsuna-matsuri 御綱祭 (Rite of the sacred rope). During the Tsuna-nuki, the long straw snake is taken off its pedestal, stretched to its length, and carried on stage by a large group of priests. It is paraded around the stage in an "S" shaped line, with the parade's gait becoming faster and faster. The *taku dayū* (oracle master) walks along in the middle of the parade and holds on to the snake, while the priests "wrap" him inside the fast-moving coils. If he does not fall into *kamigakari* at that time, a second attempt will be made later. The priests then hang the straw snake inside the *tengai* canopy with white cloth, and position it so the tail is pointing toward the western pole and the head to the eastern pole. A magical purification dance called Goryū-ō 五龍王 (Five dragon-kings) follows Tsuna-nuki. This dance is influenced by magic of the yin-yang and the five elements of Onmyōdō and Shugendō.

The next attempt is during Rokushō-mai. The priests come on stage and form a tight circle around the *taku dayū*. They start to chant *kami uta* in ever stronger voices, while they walk-dance in a circle at a faster and faster pace, tapping the back of the *taku dayū* with their *gohei* to put him into a trance. *Kamigakari* is expected to occur during this priestly dance. Mitsuna-matsuri is the last chance for *kamigakari* in a given performance. Again the large group of priests and their trance candidate come on stage and call on Ōmoto-sama, while loosening the straw snake from the ceiling so it is at eye level. They begin to push and pull the snake back and forth, and while waving it thus they chant a poem: "Here we are, in this year and this month, making kami *asobi* in the kagura garden." *Kamigakari* may occur now as well. All attempts are usually repeated for each of the three different *taku*

dayū candidates, until one of them becomes possessed (YAMAJI 1987, 223–26; TAKEUCHI 1995, 22–27; USHIO 1985, 74–90).

If all goes well and one man falls into *kamigakari,* he loses consciousness, his body becomes very rigid, he makes strange sounds, and the color of his face changes. This change in countenance is reported as being very frightening.[15] More often than not, his trance is recognized as such when he begins to leap up and down violently and out of control, sometimes jumping as high as one meter. (This is reminiscent of the theory of the *odori* type dance of possession.) Then the priests immediately jump on him to restrain him. They catch him from behind and hold him firmly, leaning him on the straw snake. Restraining him is mandatory, for if the possessed sits down or becomes too restless, the spirit of the kami may separate itself and be lost, and if he jumps too high and over the rope the possessed will die.

There are also times when the *kamigakari* condition is quite subdued and manifested only by a loss of consciousness and a stiff body. Such a case from three years ago was reported to me in November 1996 in the village of Yamauchi, by the man who was possessed. These "mild" cases are either dismissed as nonauthentic or explained as manifesting a female deity (USHIO 1985, 85–86). After calming the possessed on the straw snake, one villager or priest questions him about next year's harvest, any foreseen calamities, and if he likes the *matsuri.* The possessed answers shortly, if at all: yes, no, good, bad, or else just snorts unintelligible sounds. When the questioning is finished, a priest chants the prayer of "sending off the kami" and waves a *gohei* of purification over the medium, who then quiets down and sleeps until the next day. Even if no meaningful *takusen* is obtained, at least it is acknowledged that the god has consented to come and visit his community.

There used to be various methods to induce *kamigakari,* but the one using the straw snake seems to be the most recent. An older method was dancing with a sword underneath the jumping *tengai* while avoiding the prancing *byakke* through which one became possessed.[16]

There are some eyewitness reports in the last several decades of *kamigakari* occurring in the areas of Iwami, Bitchū, and Bingo during performances of Ōmoto and Kōjin Kagura.[17] The interesting fact revealed in these reports, however, is that in most recent cases the *kamigakari* occurred not at its planned time (i.e., during the appointed snake dances of Tsuna-nuki or Rokushō-mai), but rather during the *tengai* number. It happened either on stage (as in Ota 小田 in 1980) or backstage (as in Yatto 八戸in 1968; see KIKKAWA 1991, 73–76; USHIO 1985, 86–90; YAMAJI 1990, 217–18). Thus it seems that the *tengai* method has worked better in recent years.[18] Also, it is not only the trance candidate who can become *kamigakari.* Often an unexpected member gets possessed (as did the host official in Yatto in 1968). This

fact seems to indicate how precarious, how unpredictable, and how uncontrollable, are authentic states of possession.

Successful *kamigakari* is rare, however. The ceremony is conducted once every seven years, and not many places have preserved the tradition of inducing possession. And then, it does not always work. Indeed, nothing happened during the Ōmoto Kagura performance that I witnessed in November 1996.

At any rate, the example of Ōmoto Kagura shows us that when real trance is possible, it gets priority in the kagura. The whole event is orchestrated around, and for the sake of, the *kamigakari;* i.e., around the actual appearance and actual presence of the kami, who converses directly with his villagers and gives them his advice for the future. The centrality of the *kamigakari,* its being the core and the essence of the kagura, is obvious as well as inevitable.

Thus, even when a whole night of kagura is successfully over, and even if the dances were beautifully executed, but no *kamigakari* had occurred, there is a sense of disappointment, not of satisfaction. Indeed, when nothing happened during the performance of November 1996, it caused a vague sense of frustration. This was expected, however. That particular performance was conducted out of its set year, just for making recordings. Only one trance candidate was prepared, and too many groups assembled to perform it. As one kagura master assured me, "No one thought *kamigakari* would occur." Still, the lingering feeling of disappointment was evident.

This shared feeling of disappointment pertains to our first question of "why." As noted above, the essence of kagura is *kamigakari*; if there is no *kamigakari*, "something is missing" (KIKKAWA 1991, 72). This "something" is sought in authentic *kamigakari* or, if this is not possible, in its imitation.

Against the authentic and living *kamigakari* tradition of Ōmoto Kagura, we can compare the other dance traditions that have lost, or never had, a trance during kagura. Real trance, of course, cannot be orchestrated or planned. It can be induced, but no one can foresee exactly how, to whom, or what will happen when it is, let alone what the bodily movements of the possessed will be. Though the *kamigakari* in Ōmoto Kagura is often associated with high leaps and violent, uncontrolled movements, it is not always uniform. The one possessed may leap high or not at all, may fall down on the floor, or may just become stiff and still. However, when people try to imitate the condition of *kamigakari*—try to show it on purpose—it is always associated with high leaps, trembling, fast whirling, and with imitations of loss-of-control. In Ōmoto Kagura we have seen a rare case of *kamigakari* par excellence, a performance of real trance with a real oracle. Let us now turn to the second example of trance imitation, in a place where authentic trance has been lost.

HANA MATSURI: "THE LOST TRANCE"

Background

Hana Matsuri is a collective name of the kagura of the area of Okumikawa 奥三河, situated mainly in today's Kitashitara-gun 北設楽郡 in Aichi Prefecture.[19] Hana Matsuri belongs to the folk genre of *shimotsuki* kagura or *yudate* kagura 湯立神楽 (kagura of the boiling water ritual), classified under the general genre of Ise kagura.

Hana matsuri rites have been documented since the Muromachi period, though their roots are probably older. They were constructed by the *yamabushi* of Kumano Shugendō, who spread their esoteric Buddhist and Onmyōdō teachings along the Tenryū River, on their way from Kumano 熊野 to Suwa 諏訪 (TAKEI 1990b, 200–201). Hana Matsuri inherited many of the traditions of Ōkagura 大神楽, a dramatic kagura that died out some 150 years ago.[20] Its rituals still manifest strong Shugendō influence, despite the forced Shinto influence of the Meiji era. Nevertheless, Hana matsuri lost many of its traditional features after Meiji, including that of *kamigakari*.

Modern houses now often delegate performances to public halls,[21] though in certain villages traditional house performances continue. Hana Matsuri is performed annually, at fixed times (between the eleventh month and the New Year season, depending on the place), as a rite to renew the life forces of the community during the cold winter. It was once also performed as traditional kagura upon request to celebrate newly built houses, and to bless a certain family. No less than 225 deities are invited to be worshiped during the Hana Matsuri. They include mysterious deities like Kirume-no-ōji 切目の王子 (a male fire god of Kumano), Mirume-no-miko 見目の神子 (a female water goddess of Ise), as well as *oni* (earth and mountain deities with demonic appearances), and ancestral spirits.

Stage and canopy

The ritual complex for Hana Matsuri occupies several rooms, including a back room for preparation and purification, and a room with an elevated platform with a temporary shrine to which the kami is transferred for the *matsuri* and where the *matsuri* officials sit.[22] The functions of the officials, or *myōdo* 宮人 (in Tsuki 月 they are nine elders), and of the head priest, the *hana dayū* 花太夫 (the *hana* master), are hereditary. They conduct the various ceremonies and play the ritual music; there is a single drummer (often the *hana dayū*), and several flutists and cymbalists. They play and chant *kami uta* and narration all through the thirty-hour-long ritual in a mesmerizing monotone melody. The audience often joins in the singing.[23]

Next to the platform is the dancing area, or *maido* 舞庭. In the center of the *maido* stands the *kamado* 釜, an elevated clay stove with a cauldron on

top; it is nicknamed *yama* 山 (mountain), and it is the locus of the *yudate* ritual.[24] The *kamado* marks the center of the ritual enclosure around which the dancers revolve, and on which the *oni* lean their feet. The *oni* also "cut" it with their axes to purify and release its forces. The standing audience forms a tight circle around the *maido,* often encroaching on the dancers. This enclosure thus differs from those of other kagura, on whose stages there are only dancers; but it is no less shamanic.

A sacred rope encloses the dancing area, on which various paper pictures are hung as *gohei*. Over the enclosure is spread an elaborate *tengai* made of colorful paper streamers and five-colored paper boxes (*byakke*). The canopy of Hana Matsuri resembles the Ōmoto Kagura with its five-colored paper steamers, its *byakke,* and its directional orientation. It no doubt shares in the same Onmyōdō heritage: *sakaki* leaves and colored *gohei,* tied at the four corners and connected to the center, signify the five directions, and create a *kami no michi* 神の道, a route for the kami to descend through the canopy.[25] Unlike Ōmoto's, this *tengai* and its *byakke* are stationary. In the middle of the ceiling, directly above the hearth, hangs an especially great *byakke* called *yubuta* 湯蓋 (hot-water cover). The other *byakke* are also complex and elaborate. Dedicated by local families, they are considered precious and sacred as they contain the various families' requests for the descending gods.[26] Thus, when arriving to celebrate the Hana Matsuri, one enters a newly constructed ritual area, a pure world of fresh paper cuttings, fresh leaves and fresh branches that embody a path for the gods.

The performance

Hana Matsuri is a two-day, one-night, complex *matsuri*. During its thirty-odd hours there are three climaxes: the *yudate,* or ritual of boiling water; the appearance of the *oni* (kami-demons) in the middle of the night; and the *yubayashi* 湯ばやし (the "hot-water accompaniment"), the purification by boiling water, toward the end. In between them, various kagura dances are performed. Sacred water, fetched from the local waterfall, is poured into the cauldron on top of the clay *kamado* stove in the center of the enclosure. It is then joined with the purified fire, ritually lit with flint stones, to enact the *yamabushi* rite of *yudate.*[27] The hot steam rising from the *kamado* into the canopy creates a bridge between heaven and earth. Thus a "station on the route" for the descending kami is created. The steam and water sprinkled on the people around the area are a means by which the audience can come into direct contact with the gods, and be purified (YAMAMOTO 1994, 129–34). Towards the end of the ceremonies, the *yubayashi* takes place. Four youths with bundles of straw in their hands dance around the boiling water, and in the climactic end, they dump the bundles in the cauldron and spray the hot

waters around, until everyone in sight is properly wet. This signifies the purification of the community and the whole universe.

The midpoint climax in Hana Matsuri is the appearance of the *oni*. These are divine/demonic figures who are designated as mountain gods and earthly deities.[28] The *oni* are verily the inheritors of Shugendō practices. They are associated with fire, and appear in all-red garments carrying axes. The *oni* are represented with large, heavy, ferocious red masks weighing up to six kilograms each. During the night in Tsuki, the *oni* rush to a bonfire and raise a stream of sparks high into the night sky, creating a bridge of fire between heaven and earth.

The tradition of kamigakari

Until Meiji, there was a tradition of *kamigakari* and *takusen* under the *tengai,* recorded in the village of Yamauchi 山内 (Misawa 三沢). A priest would hide his upper body in the *byakke* and give *takusen* about the coming year's weather and calamities. Lots for the coming year were pulled, and divination arrows were shot as well. The tradition of trance with the help of the *tengai* was stopped by the police in Meiji 17 (1884) (HAYAKAWA 1994:1, 117; TAKEI 1990b, 205). In yet another village (Komadate 古真立) the priest still wears a scarlet *hakama,* a testimony to a time when a [female] *miko* performed there (HAYAKAWA 1971:1, 117).[29] This information points to the former function of the *hana dayū* as *otoko miko* 男巫 (male shaman), whose charisma allowed him to become possessed (TAKEI 1990b, 212). There are indeed modern oral reports of the *hana dayū* falling into *kamigakari* during one of his secret rites (Ama no matsuri 天の祭).[30] Also, in performing the Shizume rite a few years ago in Tsuki, the *hana dayū* suddenly got into a violent trance in which he leaped and shouted (Suzuki Masataka, personal communication). So the lost tradition of *kamigakari* in Hana Matsuri is of male shamans, as befits this characteristic Shugendō tradition, which was stopped by government force. Even now much of the Hana Matsuri is dependent upon the spiritual charisma of the *hana dayū,* and his power to summon the gods and to exorcise evil.

The shinji

In Hana Matsuri as well, there is a distinction between the ritual parts (*shinji*), which open and close the *matsuri,* and the dances. The rituals are performed by the *hana dayū* and the *myōdo*. The *hana dayū* conducts powerful Shugendō-style magical purification rites of exorcism, which include magical gestures (mudra), intonation of mantras and incantations, and magical steps (*henbai*), requiring special knowledge and training. The *henbai* (or

henbei) are sets of magical steps meant to pacify the great earth by drawing magic mandalas on it.[31] Especially powerful are the *henbai* performed by the *hana dayū* at the rite of Shizume, when he wears the mask of a *tengu*. As mentioned, the *hana dayū* may fall into *kamigakari* while performing this mysterious rite.

Here we see that the *chinkon* element of exorcism and purification is wedded to *kamigakari* (in spite of their supposedly different origins). The *kamigakari* and *takusen* of the male shaman is obviously related to the magical techniques of the *yamabushi*: mudra, *henbai,* and other exorcistic formulas that may lead to possession.[32]

The dances

There are also two kinds of dances: the "ceremonial" dances, which are performed first, partly by the *hana dayū* and *myōdo,* and the kagura dances, which proceed into the night. Various dances are assigned to different generations, but from old men to three-year-old children, the whole village dances kagura.[33]

In Tsuki, the opening ceremonial dances are done to purify the *yudate* water and invite the kami in, to purify the drumsticks, and one to purify the whole *maido.* Another is the special dance of Ichi-no-mai 市の舞, described below for its choreography of possession.

Among the following dances of youth groups, the popular Hana-no-mai, danced bravely by children three to five years old, is one of the highlights. The dances, which take most of the night, are quite uniform (with the exception of the *oni* dances and their special *henbai*). In the dance circling around the *kamado,* the two, three, or four dancers carefully revolve themselves towards all directions, marking the edges of the sacred enclosure with their dance line. Their dance itself is elegant, though repetitive, with small hopping steps and arms spread wide. They thus create an air of jumpy lightness, in spite of the repetitive circling movements that are reminiscent of the original meaning of *mai* (HAYAKAWA 1994:1, 166).

In striking contrast to the gaudy and flamboyant Ōmoto Kagura costumes, the clothes in Tsuki are dark-green or blue cotton garments with wide sleeves and a pattern of cranes, leggings, and headbands. The youth dances are all unmasked.[34] The dancers of Hana Matsuri use a variety of *torimono:* fans, bells, swords, special jagged wooden swords, and a variety of branches. The *oni* use their characteristic axes and sticks. In Hana Matsuri different *gohei* are used, each with a name and a function. They are primarily featured in the ritual parts of the *matsuri,* and to a lesser extent in the hands of the dancers. The sword is also used as a purification device in the hands of the *hana dayū.* All *torimono* are considered as parts of the *kami no michi,*

the route for the gods to come to the kagura. Thus they are the intentional, purposeful shamanic tools of the kagura.

Kami no michi

In Hana Matsuri the kami are thus invited to come down in a variety of ways and are given a choice of paths, or *kami no michi*: the complex *tengai* and its *byakke*, the hot water and steam, the fire, the masks, the *torimono* in the hands of the dancers, the *gohei*, and (tradition has it) the leading priest's body. The dances themselves create the sacred locus for the kami to come down. The kami are summoned to the dancers' *torimono,* to be shaken out and spread their blessing to the whole community. This accords with the shamanic character of the whole *matsuri,* with its being a *kami no kura,* seat of the kami. In an abstract way, as INOUE remarks, the dancer becomes the kami when dancing, for the kami comes into his *torimono* and dances through it (1994, 152–54). However, when the kami come to the *kami no kura,* the locus of kagura, it is still in the abstract, and not as authentic as when the kami manifests in a person through possession. An authentic possession notwithstanding, however, a dance that imitates a state of possession is a more convincing form of "proof" of the presence of the god than an abstract notion. In the tradition of Hana Matsuri there used to be authentic *kamigakari*, which is now lost. However, it is still preserved, remembered, and reactivated through the choreography of trance. In Hana Matsuri it is seen in the dance called Ichi-no-mai.

Ichi-no-mai

Ichi-no-mai is one of the ceremonial dances, performed by a single dancer and repeated two or three times by different men. This dance is special and important, and there is no village that skips it. Ichi-no-mai calls for skill; it offers a chance to show off talent, and it is thus quite prestigious. The dancer wears an upper garment with wide sleeves tied so as to resemble wings, straw sandals, leggings, and a headband. He holds *torimono* that include an opened fan, bells, and *sakaki* branches (or young bamboo branches; in some places, both kinds). These *torimono* place the dancer in the category of *miko*, for he holds the traditional *torimono* of Ame-no-uzume. Indeed, the meaning of the name Ichi-no-mai is "*miko no mai*" 巫女の舞, the dance of the *miko* (*ichi-miko* is the nickname for *miko* in this area). It is thus generally acknowledged that this dance imitates the dance of a *miko*, i.e., the dance of *kamigakari* (HAYAKAWA 1994:1, 160–65; HAGA 1977, 56).

Compared to other places, the dance in Tsuki is not particularly impressive. Still, the choreography is very clear: the dancer enters and faces the *kamado,* bows to the *kamado* and the four directions with his *torimono* hands

joined together. He then spreads his arms wide, and starts twisting his whole body—left and right, up and down—imitating the flight of a hawk or a crane (HAYAKAWA 1994:1, 162). The hands holding the branches are trembling, and the whole image of the dancer is elegant, agile, and fluid.

After this "flight" the drum changes suddenly to a faster tempo, and the dancer starts jumping up and down in place, facing the *kamado,* with his *torimono* hands again joined together and stretched upward. He leaps high three times in a zigzag; with each leap he faces to the left or right. Then he runs over to the side of the *kamado* and, facing it from the left side, leaps high thrice again. He goes on to run-and-jump in all five directions: east, south, north, west, and east again, which indicates the center.

These high leaps are unique in the circular dance style of Hana Matsuri, and are definitely meant to imitate *kamigakari.* They are, in effect, a choreographed possession-trance. As we saw, high leaps are the prime traditional means to identify possession and are related to the origin of *odori.*

Ichi-no-mai is even more powerful in places like the village of Futto 古戸, as is recorded by HAYAKAWA (1994:1, 160–65). In that village, for example, the dancer holds long *sakaki* leaves with trembling hands. When he jumps with his arms stretched upwards, he sweeps the *tengai* with his branches. This in itself is an indication of *kamigakari,* for the branches are the *yorishiro* of the kami, and in touching the *tengai* they "sweep away" the kami from it onto the *yorishiro* branches, and into the dancer. The Ichi-no-mai dance in Futto apparently gets to be quite violent. The dancer runs to the audience and whips the people around the *kamado* with his branches. The dancer often loses his mind and acts crazy, sometimes falling down, even on purpose, to amuse the audience. (The Ichi-no-mai in Shimoawashiro 下粟代 [GRIM and GRIM 1982, 170] is also reported as being quite energetic; the one recorded in Misawa [Yamauchi], however, seems more subdued [HONDA 1954, 391–92]).

In the context of Hana Matsuri's circling dances, the high jumping dance of Ichi-no-mai is conspicuous, indicative, and purposeful. They are choreographed to show the kami entering into the dancer to produce the state of *kamigakari.* And it follows closely all the "rules" of trance behavior: imitating the flight of a bird (an explicit kami-behavior), the appropriate *torimono,* agile twists, trembling hands, high leaps in the five directions, and losing control of oneself with mock-falling. All these elements indicate an imitation of a dance of possession, a choreographed *kamigakari.*

Thus we see in Hana Matsuri that the *kamigakari,* which was once an authentic part of the *matsuri,* is remembered in a special dance, a particularly sacred dance, which imitates possession-trance quite faithfully. *Kamigakari* is therefore performed, because the raison d'être of these kagura is to show

the appearance of a kami (i.e., to "prove" the kami has appeared). The rituals, and even the masked dances, are not enough. A real authentic appearance of kami is only acknowledged through *kamigakari*.

It is of interest to the scholar of religion that the tradition of *kamigakari* is not forgotten. As mentioned above, there are many examples of dance or ritual traditions in Japan that show that the dance once included *kamigakari*. Thus, when a kagura school claims no such tradition, it is likely that it was not just forgotten, but was never really there. Let us now turn to Hayachine Kagura, which does not indicate a tradition of *kamigakari*. And we shall see how, even with no such tradition, it still performs the choreography of *kamigakari*.

Hayachine Kagura: "The Show of Trance"

Background

Hayachine Kagura is centered on Mt. Hayachine 早池峰 in central Iwate Prefecture, northeastern Japan; it includes two rival or "sister" schools of kagura that form a "female-male" relationship:[35] the "female" school of Ōtsugunai 大償 and the "masculine" school of Take 岳 Kagura. In Honda's classification, Hayachine Kagura belongs to the Yamabushi kagura stream in the general genre of *shishi* kagura; it indeed displays strong Shugendō influence.

The roots of Hayachine Kagura may be dated to the middle ages, when wandering Kumano *yamabushi* brought their Gongen cult to the area. The kagura's focus of worship is manifested in a wooden *shishi* head, reverently called Gongen-sama 権現さま.[36] This physical manifestation of their kami, which has the head of a black unidentified mountain animal with golden clacking teeth, is always carried along with the kagura.[37] The *shishi* dance (Gongen-mai 権現舞) is the oldest and most sacred dance of Hayachine Kagura, as well as its central ritual part. The Gongen-sama is worshiped by being danced with: this is called "*asobaseru,*" making the kami play. The Gongen-sama of Hayachine Kagura embodies the kami of Mt. Hayachine and brings its blessings of water and fertility.

In contrast to both Ōmoto and Hana Matsuri, which are local traditions performed by native priests, Hayachine Kagura is a semiprofessional, itinerant kagura of the former *yamabushi* of Mt. Hayachine, who used to make the rounds among the villages of the outlying area near the mountain for two or three months every spring, earning their livelihood by performing their ritual dances.[38]

On arriving in a village, the kagura group worshiped with their sacred music (*gokitō* 御祈祷) at all the village shrines, and performed the dance for Gongen-sama's blessing and protection (Gongen-mai) in every house, thus consecrating the whole village. They would then perform a full-night program

of kagura in the house where they lodged. Today as well, Hayachine kagura schools perform by invitation, but private house performances are rare. Kagura groups are usually invited by villages to perform as part of their local *matsuri,* on their special shrine stages.

The specialty of this kagura is magical power. Here the *yamabushi* rites are combined into the theatrical dance performance. All the techniques of *yamabushi* magic are present here: mudras, mantras, *henbai,* and *torimono* manipulation. Though not as detailed as in Hana Matsuri, they are still as strong and effective in performing their function of magical protection, exorcism, fire prevention, healing, and increasing fertility. The kagura performance itself forms a *matsuri:* there is no distinction here between "ceremony" (*shinji*) and dance. In older times, the *gokitō* music and the Gongen-mai fulfilled the role of the standard Shinto rite, for the *yamabushi* of old functioned as religious priests. Today the kagura *gokitō* is played alongside the Shinto music and overlaps with the worship of the deity.[39]

The kami worshiped in Hayachine Kagura is not the local ancestral kami of the villagers; it is a "foreign" deity, the god from Mt. Hayachine, who comes to visit in their homes and bestow blessings upon them. The Gongen-sama who moves throughout the village "visits" and "blesses" the local ancestral kami. Thus (unlike Ōmoto Kagura), there is no ancestral *kamigakari* or *takusen* tradition recorded in Hayachine Kagura (though *miko takusen* is mentioned once in it; see below).

Even though there is no *kamigakari* tradition in Hayachine Kagura, shamanic elements abound in it. It is deliberately structured as shamanic rite, in which every facet symbolizes the summoning of deities.

The stage

Hayachine Kagura stage structure displays its shamanic character. Square with four tall branches of green leaves erected at its corners, it is enclosed by a sacred rope with white paper *gohei* hanging from it. A curtain is drawn along the back of the stage, hiding a dressing room, from which the dancers appear and into which they retreat. In contrast to both Ōmoto Kagura and Hana Matsuri, there is no canopy in Hayachine Kagura. Instead, the shamanic structure is here imbedded in the special ritual orientation of the stage: the drummer sits at the front, facing the curtain with his back to the audience, and is flanked by two cymbal players. The flute player and the narrator are hidden from view behind the curtain.

Set up as it is, the stage symbolizes this world of humans, where the kami come to visit. The dressing room is the heavenly realm of the gods, and the curtain is the marker between the two realms. The role of the drummer is visually displayed by his facing the curtain rather than the audience. He

serves as the orientation point for the dances, gives them rhythm with his drum and the singing of *kami uta;* at times he conducts poem-exchanges with the dancers. The drummer is thus the *yamabushi*-shaman who draws the kami out of their abode and into this world.[40] However, the dancers also stand for the shamans (or the manifested deities), as in the old recorded rituals that induced possession. A symbolic universe is thus created on stage, in which the dancers are both the manifestations of the kami, and the shamans who summon them into their bodies with their dance (AVERBUCH 1995, 79–82).

The performance

On the whole, the clothing of Take Kagura is meant to create the appearance of travelers. As in Hana Matsuri, the costumes are made of plain cotton; they are colored blue and turquoise with prints of cranes and pine trees, which are divine signs. Headdresses are distinctively tall and pointed and serve as *yorishiro* "channels" for the kami to descend into the dancer (AVERBUCH 1995, 92–96). Hayachine Kagura uses small Nō-style masks. They feature many characters: the old Sarugaku pair of Okina 翁 and Sambasō 三番叟; various women, *oni,* and hero masks; young heavenly deities, and dark earthly clowns. In Hayachine they use the verb "to attach" (*tsuku*) a mask, which implies possession by a kami or spirit (AVERBUCH 1995, 97–100).

The basic *torimono* used in Hayachine Kagura are the fan, the bell-wand (*suzuki* 鈴木), the sword, and the *gohei*. Hayachine Kagura's *torimono* share in the original shamanic function but have taken on an additional symbolic layer of magical protection. The exorcist sword, which displays the *yamabushi* magical character of this kagura, is prominent. Take Kagura still uses "live" swords in its dances, and is famous for its spectacular sword routines.[41] Other shamanic *torimono* of fresh leaves and branches are also used. Unlike the elaborate and numerous *gohei* of Ōmoto Kagura and Hana Matsuri, Hayachine Kagura has but a single type of *gohei* in its dances, the *gohei* unique to the kami of Mt. Hayachine. It is appropriately manipulated in the dances as a *yorishiro* and as a marker of a purifying divine presence (AVERBUCH 1995, 102–10).

The kagura music is composed of drum, flute, cymbals, and the singing of *kami uta* (AVERBUCH 1995, 83–92). The drumming style of Hayachine Kagura is very powerful. The drumsticks are prepared by the drummer from a special tough sacred tree. This emphasizes the shamanic role of the kagura drum (as we saw in Hana Matsuri), which not only summons the kami but also makes them dance to its rhythm. The occasional drummer-dancer poem exchange is based on the *mondō* 問答 (question-and-answer) routine

of *takusen* in which the priest converses with the deity via the possessed shaman. Indeed, Prof. Honda once suggested (in a personal communication) that the rare utterance by the Hayachine dancer, be it a poem-line or a word, can be considered as "divine utterance" or a sort of *takusen,* to emphasize the deity's epiphany on stage. That is because the Hayachine dancers do not usually speak on stage the way Ōmoto dancers do; their stories and purposes are chanted in the narration from behind the curtain.

Hayachine kagura is an intentionally and carefully constructed performance. It is symmetrical and balanced, from the relations between the two schools to the structure of each dance. Its structure is guided by Shugendō thought. Each performance of Hayachine kagura starts with the six dances of Shiki-mai 式舞 (the ceremonial dances) (AVERBUCH 1995, 125–68). Those are fixed in order, and depict the process of creation of the universe. The first three Shiki-mai are based on the tripartite performance of the Sarugaku tradition (HONDA 1971, 60–61); the fourth is the dance of Hachiman. The fifth is Yama-no-kami-mai 山の神舞, the dance of the mountain god, discussed below; and the last is the dance of *Iwato biraki.* This last dance describes the first shamanic ritual, which established the channel for transferring energy and life-forces, as well as communication, between the realms. The dance depicts Ame-no-uzume's dance of possession (see below).

There are other dance categories that follow in performance: Kami-mai 神舞, featuring mythical stories; Za-mai 座舞, dramatic dances with epic stories; Kyōgen 狂言 humoresques; and Gongen dances. A Gongen-mai concludes all Hayachine Kagura performances (AVERBUCH 1995, 115–23).

The dances

Hayachine Kagura dance style is unique and outstanding. Especially in the "masculine" Take school, it is ferocious and energetic, featuring powerful stamping, swift turns, abrupt stops, and high leaps that exert heat that is felt all around the dancers. Though called *mai,* as all kagura dances, most of Hayachine dances feature *odori*-style leaps.

There are no unmasked *torimono* as opposed to masked "Nō dances" in Hayachine Kagura. Instead, the dances have the unique feature of Yamabushi kagura: a binary structure of a first masked, slow part (*neri* ねり) and a second unmasked, fast part (*kuzushi* くずし). The masks are removed in mid-dance, on stage (AVERBUCH 1995, 113–15). There is a practical explanation for this: Hayachine masks are small and fit tightly, providing limited vision, and so are removed to facilitate the second and faster part of the dances. Still, this unique practice is quite peculiar and remains a puzzle. It seems to reverse the expected shamanic process of masked dances, as for

example in Nō's Okina and in Gongen-mai, where an introductory unmasked trance-inducing dance is followed by a masked manifestation of the deity.

In most cases of masked kagura in Japan, the dancer appears masked on stage. The mask usually indicates the presence of the deity. When the mask is donned on stage, as in the case of the Nō play *Okina,* it is meant to depict the very process of possession and the dancer's transformation into a deity. It is thus rare indeed for the process to be reversed, for the mask to be taken off on stage. Why choose to reverse the order? Why show the kami masked on stage, and then deprive them of their divinity?

Some scholars insist that the second unmasked part is a dance of offering to the gods, and that the dancers remove their masks to return to their human nature and dance as priests (HONDA, 1974b, 203; HOFF 1978, 173).[42] Still, the public transition from kami to human is logically awkward. Hayachine Kagura is a carefully and deliberately structured performance and such a strange structural event cannot be simply accidental: it must have a reason and a purpose. It is thus doubtful that the divine manifestation is meant to be lost. The dancers, who gathered divine powers while dancing in the masks, might represent shamans in whose bodies the kami continue to reside.

I tend to agree with KANDA (1984b, 7) that removing the mask in the second part was a *yamabushi* device meant to emphasize the divine powers in their own bodies. For, no matter the historical process that crystallized the dances' structure in this particular way, it is quite likely that the performing *yamabushi* added their concepts to this peculiar choreography (AVERBUCH 1995, 209–10).

Miko-mai 神子舞

Though there is no tradition of *kamigakari* and *takusen* in Hayachine, there are references to them in the context of the kagura. In a dance called Hashikake 橋架け, a female *miko* is called upon to give *takusen* of a tree kami. This may point to the historical tradition of a *miko* who performs during Yudate-kagura, a tradition extinct in Hayachine but alive elsewhere in the vicinity. In Kuromori 黒森 Kagura of the Sanriku 三陸 coast of eastern Iwate Prefecture, there are still some *miko* who perform Miko-mai and *takusen* during the rite of *yudate* conducted by a *yamabushi* in conjunction with a kagura performance (KANDA 1984a, 1985). I witnessed this Miko-mai and *takusen* in October 1996. The *miko* character who appears in Hayachine's Hashikake may imply such former association between oracle-giving *miko* and Hayachine Kagura. However, neither a *miko takusen* nor *yudate* are performed in Hayachine Kagura and there is no memory of it. In Hayachine,

the concept of *takusen* refers only to the speech of the *miko* character in that particular dance, which belongs to the more dramatic category of Za-mai and which tells a folktale with no sacred function.

Of greater interest is the Miko-mai of Hashikake, and the better known Miko-mai of the goddess Ame-no-uzume in Iwato-biraki-(ura 裏)-mai. Tradition claims that this dance preserves the authentic steps of a *miko*, who might have performed with this kagura. Uzume's Miko-mai is indeed similar to the aforementioned dance of the *miko* associated with Kuromori Kagura in eastern Iwate Prefecture. The dancing *miko* waves her shamanic *torimono* of bamboo leaves in, out, up, down, and to all directions, thus purifying the stage. She does this while moving in a circle, tilting her head and bending her body in an expression of a loss of control. Thus the dancer imitates a *miko* dance of possession.

The *miko* dance in Iwato-biraki-(ura)-mai and in Hashikake, however, is a show-of-a-show of a trance: a set choreography of the mythical, ritual-trance. A male dancer wears a mask of a *miko*, and performs a stage role: *kamigakari* does not, and cannot, happen to *him*.

Yamabushi kagura was always an all-male enterprise, with traditional prohibition on female participation. In former times, women were not allowed to set foot on any Hayachine Kagura stage; and in Kuromori Kagura, women were not allowed even to *watch* Yama-no-kami-mai. The female *miko* might have performed her outside role, but could not participate in the kagura dance itself It is not in this Miko-mai, then, that we should look for our choreography of possession.

As is acknowledged by the performers, Hayachine Kagura has no *kamigakari* tradition, no memory of male trance, no role of *otoko miko*. Still, such trance choreography is present in their dances, apart from the Miko-mai. The special instances I refer to present a depiction of male type, violent possession, conducted in appropriate dances; for example, during the most sacred dance of the kagura repertoire, Yama-no-kami-mai. As I will presently show, it is achieved both by choreography and by structural devices. I suggest that the choreography of trance is an intentional one that serves a doctrinal purpose.[43]

Yama-no-kami-mai

In Take Kagura, Yama no kami is the male mountain god of agriculture who comes down every spring into the rice-fields and returns to the mountain in the autumn. This mountain god belongs to the ferocious *oni* type of deities who bring fertility and protection (to which also belong the *oni* of Hana Matsuri; ITAYA 1990). Yama no kami, the ruler of the "other world" of the

mountain, is a magic-oriented god of mixed Shugendō origins with a strong shamanic tradition.[44]

Yama-no-kami-mai is considered the most sacred and the most difficult of the kagura dances, and is surrounded by various taboos. It employs the whole variety of magical gestures: *henbai* steps, stamps, jumps, hops, magical esoteric mudras, spectacular sword routines, spreading rice, and hand clapping as means to summon the gods. These are repeated toward all directions, to form an imaginary mandala universe on stage. Yama no kami's "power-dress" costume and *torimono* are activated in the dance to render effective their powers.

The dance as a whole depicts the gradual approach of the kami to his people. The masked kami who comes from afar, gradually sheds parts of his costume during the *neri.* Most of his dance expresses valor, power, magical protection, and the blessing of fertility. In the last part of the *kuzushi,* in the *gohei* dance, we can see a description of shamanic possession.

The shamanic choreography begins in the structure of the dance. This structure is unique.[45] After the *neri,* the mask is taken off, and the dancer appears showing his face. The unmasked *kuzushi* starts with the purification sword-dance. Then the narration is given, in which the mountain god's powers are counted; he conquers fire, theft, and war, and brings harmony and fertility to fields and wombs. Lastly comes the *gohei* dance, in which a choreography of possession-trance is displayed. The manifestation of the kami begins when he first enters the stage in his mask; but as mentioned, the dance takes a dramatic turn when he takes it off, and builds up towards his last "real" manifestation, expressed in the choreography of this last *gohei* dance.

Many shamanic elements are concentrated in this *gohei* dance. The *gohei* itself, the traditional shamanic tool, symbolizes the presence of the Shinto kami. To emphasize the shamanic manifestation, the aforementioned rare "divine utterances" occur during this *gohei* dance. Four times (towards the four directions) the dancer shouts the first line of a *kami uta,* which the drummer completes.

The *kamigakari* elements here include fast jumping-and-spinning, frenzied flailing of the *gohei* in the air, and violent shaking of the bells. Simultaneously with his *kami uta* cry, the dancer waves the *gohei* right and left, jerks his body backward, and staggers back three steps, hands stretched forward as if he were drunk. The backward staggering step imitates a state of lack of control of one's movements. He then circles around his *gohei* with quick steps so it seems as if the *gohei* is leading and dragging the dancer. Next comes a climactic routine. "Piercing" the air with the *gohei* the dancer leaps high, lands low, kneeling on one knee, and "plants" the *gohei* on the

floor on both sides. He repeats this leaping-and-landing routine to the four directions, four times.

The choreography of this part clearly evinces stylized trance routines, imitations of a shamanic possession. Again, it follows the "rules" that indicate loss of control: the swift jumping and whirling around; the vigorous shaking and "planting" of the *gohei*; the circling around the *gohei* as if pulled by it; the falling forward and staggering back. And of course, the high leaps and low landings are the most obvious indications of choreographed trance. Thus the dancer-*yamabushi* displays his shamanic abilities through his dance.

This stylized, choreographed state of possession brings immediacy to the manifestation of Yama no kami on stage. The kami has completed his approach to his people: he looks human and behaves like a shaman. In other words, in his final manifestation, the kami is present in the person whom he possesses.

The choreography of trance is especially significant in the context of this kagura, which does not have a *kamigakari* tradition. Here we have a well-constructed kagura obviously intended to propagate its particular doctrinal worldview, in addition to maintaining its very shamanic core. All the trance "symptoms" are present; only here an additional statement, an additional lesson beyond just the manifestation of the kami, is intended. This "lesson" is imbedded in the special structure of this dance. *Kamigakari* is depicted without a mask, and the structure of taking off the mask in mid-dance serves to emphasize the human face. This brings home the idea that everybody can become a kami, that is, a *yamabushi* with the power to embody the kami and produce divine powers. It says, "if you follow the *yamabushi* way, you can become a deity in your very body, as we do here on stage, before your very eyes!" The gradual approach of the kami to the people is thus meant to remind the spectators of their own possible gradual approach to becoming divine. So here we see how an explicit choreography of trance is still maintained in a kagura that has no *kamigakari* tradition.

Conclusion

In most forms of kagura, real shamanic trance no longer exists. Still, many kagura schools can point to a specific dance, to a certain occasion in the performance, when a trance once occurred. This practice of "showing trance" is also kept in kagura schools that have never actually performed shamanic trance.

In the beginning of this paper I raised two questions concerning this practice. The first pertained to the question "Why display possession behavior where possession is no longer actually enacted?" As we have seen, the

reason is that it preserves the character and function of kagura as a ritual in which the kami manifest themselves and communicate directly with their believers. *Kamigakari,* we found, is the very essence and the raison d'être of the kagura. Thus every kagura school tries to display its lost *kamigakari*, even if in stylized form. And those kagura schools that never had the tradition of *kamigakari*, try therefore to recreate and imitate it in their dances.

The second question was, "How is *kamigakari* displayed in performance?" In order to answer this I presented three examples of kagura schools. The first was of a kagura school in which authentic *kamigakari* is still experienced; it served as a point of comparison for the "displayed" possession-trance of the other two. We have seen how *kamigakari* is performed in Ōmoto Kagura in the context of its ritual parts, and how unpredictable and uncontrollable it is. The second example was of a kagura that preserves the memory of a lost *kamigakari* tradition in the form of dance. We discussed the Ichi-no-mai of Hana Matsuri, the imitation of a former trance that is now ceremonial, well choreographed, and self-conscious. The third and most intriguing example was of a kagura that never had a tradition of possession, but that nevertheless displays *kamigakari* behavior in the choreography of its dances. We saw how possession is clearly depicted in the deliberately structured Yama-no-kami-mai of Hayachine Kagura, which adds to it its own hidden agenda of *yamabushi* propaganda. Here, however, the trance behavior is not self-conscious, for it is not acknowledged by the dancers as a tradition of *kamigakari*. Nevertheless, the choreography of trance is conspicuously and undeniably there, woven into the sacred dance.

It has been said that trance behavior is culturally defined, socially agreed upon. In Japan, the presence of the kami is thus understood through accepted forms: the dance of kagura, the appearance of certain masks on certain occasions, and certain choreography that indicates possession-trance, even when it is not there.

It is a combination of dance structure, of agreed upon tools and external signs like masks and *torimono*, or the setting of a sacred space, that culturally shows, and expresses, the possibility of shamanic possession. But it is the choreography, that is, the dance, that "proves" it. Jumping and leaping high in the air, and loss of control and trembling, are the main publicly recognizable traits of *kamigakari*. Form is important, symbol is important; but the action, the *dance,* is essential. Dance is the forte of kagura that has preserved its core of *kamigakari* through the ages.

Understanding why a trance is preserved when it is not there is significant not only for the study of kagura, but more generally for understanding the forces that shape the preservation of traditions through rituals. It is also significant for the study of shamanism in Japan and its expression in the folk

performing arts, and should lead us to pay particular attention to the agency of dance, the agency that has perpetuated the world of kagura.

NOTES

1. The discussion about the definition of "shaman" and "shamanism" is still ongoing, but it lies outside the scope of this paper. Many now agree that these and related terms are culturally defined. To briefly define my use of these terms in this paper: I favor the broad definition that sees the "shaman" as a social functionary (HULTKRANTZ 1993; HAMAYON 1993). I agree with the general consensus among Japanese ethnographers, that native shamanic experiences are mainly those of the possession type (SASAKI 1992, 77, 232, 238; MIYATA 1984; ISHIZUKA 1984, 279–85; SAKURAI 1994, 9–10). I thus treat the terms "trance" and "possession" as synonyms here, and use them interchangeably. Also, I try to avoid the term "shamanism" (which implies an established system) and prefer to speak about "shamanic elements." I call "shamanic" any element or facet of ritual behavior and performance, be it a costume piece, a musical instrument, a stage prop, or a dance routine—all that pertains to summoning the deities into the body of the shaman, or into the kagura dancer, and to bringing about divine blessing and oracle.

2. The connection between "shamanism" and the performing arts is universally recognized (see KIM et al. 1995). It forms a part of the general discussion on the relation between ritual and theater, that has been considered extensively in recent years. In comparing the shaman to an actor, and the shamanic ritual to performance, scholars have come to realize that, as with any ritual, performance is effective, and thus the shaman's efficacy is not dependent on whether his or her trance is "genuine" (HAMAYON 1993, 11–22). This realization will help us understand Japanese shamanic phenomena in their context of ritualistic performing arts.

3. Thus, as Iwata claims, the study of kagura is inseparable from the study of *matsuri*. Iwata's criticism points to a fault in the study of shamanism in Japan, which bypasses the study of kagura. (IWATA 1992, 427–29; and HAGIWARA 1990, 359–61).

4. The *Kojiki* version can be summarized thus: When the sun goddess Amaterasu 天照 hid herself in the Heavenly Cave, the whole world plunged into darkness. The myriads of kami gathered to perform a rite to lure out the sun. At the climax of the rite, the goddess Ame-no-uzume bound up her sleeves with a sacred cord, held bamboo leaves in her hands, overturned a bucket upon which she started stamping and dancing. She then became possessed (*kamigakari* 神憑り) and took off all her clothes. Then the heavens shook as the eight-hundred myriad deities laughed, arousing the curiosity of Amaterasu, who opened the door a crack to inquire. She was then pulled out of the cave, and light and life returned to the world (PHILIPPI 1968, 81–85). The *Nihongi* version disregards the "strip show" but mentions "a divinely-inspired utterance" (*takusen*)(ASTON 1972, 44).

5. On *chinkon* see: ŌBAYASHI 1984; MIYATA 1984; ORIKUCHI 1975; IWATA 1990, 31–81; IWATA 1992.

6. Shaking was believed to have an energizing effect, hence the essential role of dance (IWATA 1990, 32–50; 1992, 129–30). According to Iwata, the element of pacification and exorcism became the dominant influence in the development of kagura; the element of *kamigakari* (characteristically female) has therefore been weakened, if not entirely lost (IWATA 1990, 34; 1992, 61–62).

7. Orikuchi has remarked that the dance in order to get *kamigakari* is not *geinō* 芸能 (performing art), but the dance that imitates the dance of *kamigakari* is the birth of *geinō*.

(HAGIWARA 1990, 359). Thus, the "showing" of the possession-trance constitutes an artistic performance, while the "real thing," the authentic trance, is not a performing art: it is ritual. Yamaji commented that the performing arts were born from the imitation of the spirit world, which only few could see, to benefit greater audiences (YAMAJI 1987, 220–21).

8. "Shugendō" means "the way of gaining magical powers by ascetic practice" in the mountains. Those ancient mountain cults drew their doctrinal concepts and practices from esoteric Buddhism, Shinto, old Taoist lore, and mountain worship. The Shugendō practitioners aspire to "become Buddha in this body," as well as to gain magical powers.

9. A special *yamabushi* shamanic technique is the *yori kitō* 憑祈祷, an induced possession used to obtain an oracle or to force an evil spirit to move to the body of a medium before exorcising it. Another *yamabushi* service is *kaji kitō* 加持祈祷, a magical prayer-ritual in which the *yamabushi* partakes of his deity's powers, to use for exorcism, healing, or blessing.

The *yamabushi* display their magical powers in rituals that often lend themselves to artistic performance. They employ techniques such as drumming, reciting sutras and mantras, and manipulating mudras. In their rituals the *yamabushi* use weapons for magical protection: the sword, ax, bow and arrow, as well as the shamanic *gohei*. These tools were incorporated as props in the folk performing arts. Since the middle ages, folk kagura has spread throughout Japan largely under the impact of Shugendō. On Shugendō and the folk performing arts see: MIYAKE 1984 ed.; GORAI 1980; HONDA 1971; ISHIZUKA 1984, 279–85.

10. The Japanese word "mask" also means "front," or "face." Masks are a kind of *yorishiro,* and serve as a reminder of the kami's presence. It is of interest that the original women shamanesses of ancient Japan did not use masks, and that the use of masks to depict divine presence developed under Chinese and Buddhist influence. Even so, masks have a long history in Japan, and are often treated as sacred objects. The two forms of masked and unmasked kagura dances coexist everywhere. There is a general sense, however, that the masked dances are "inferior" to the unmasked, for they are a less "authentic" expression of divine manifestation. One scholar even thinks that when masks came into use the kagura had lost its unique meaning (see IWATA 1992, 236–37; also KIKKAWA 1991, 72, 77; 1989, 182–83).

11. See: IWATA 1990, 35; HONDA 1983, 99–100; MIYATA 1984, 40–42; HAGIWARA 1990, 359. Today *mai* is associated with a person on stage dancing with accompaniment, as in the *miko*/priests "set"; while *odori* is associated with the common folk, anyone can participate, and it is usually danced in great numbers. Yamaji adds an interesting interpretation, saying that in *odori* (as seen in many forms today), the dancer often plays his own music (e.g., a drum tied to the waist); thus the origin of the dance and rhythm comes from inside the dancer. In *mai,* however, the origin of the dance and rhythm comes from outside the dancer, who is caused to move by it (YAMAJI 1983, 106; 1987, 217–18). Though I agree with Yamaji's formal observation of the folk dance data, I question the logic he uses in his thesis about the origin of *mai* and *odori* dance in *kamigakari*. For example, if the dancer prepares intentionally for trance (in *mai*), does the dance not come from within her? And if the dancer jumps (*odori*) in possession, is he not moved from outside?

12. I observed an all-night Ōmoto Kagura performance in the Hachiman Jinja at Ota, Sakurae-chō 桜江町, Ōchi-gun 邑智郡, Shimane Prefecture, on the night of 18 November 1996. I also witnessed the thirty-hour-long Hana Matsuri at Tsuki 川, Tōei-chō 東栄町, Kitashitara-gun 北設楽郡, Aichi Prefecture, on 22 and 23 November 1996. And I have conducted participant-observation research in the Take School of Hayachine Kagura in 1985–1986, and during the fall of 1996. See AVERBUCH 1995.

13. Ōmoto Kagura is often mentioned and described along with the Kōjin Kagura 荒神神楽 school of Hiroshima Prefecture (from the areas of Bingo 備後 and Bitchū 備中), the other kagura school that still preserves authentic trance. In Kōjin Kagura, a special group of

people perform the *kamigakari* and the dances, and the *yamabushi* influence remains strong (SUZUKI 1990). In Iwami, however, the *yamabushi* converted to Yoshida Shinto and became Shinto priests (ISHIZUKA 1984, 274–75). In places where there was no such local organization (as in Hana Matsuri), the *kamigakari* tradition has been lost.

14. The kagura *tengai* is connected to the Buddhist *tengai*, the sacred canopy of Indian origin. In kagura it has various names, like *byakkai,* or *byakke,* implying "white cover." It is connected to the white cloth of funeral rites and to the ancient *yamabushi* rituals of rejuvenation, or *umarekiyomari* 生まれ清まり, "being born again and purified." It is also related to the Shirayama Gyōji 白山行事, a rite for rejuvenation in paradise performed until late Edo period in Ōkagura, which is related to today's Hana Matsuri (see below). See the discussion on *tengai* in KATŌ 1984, 364–68.

15. As USHIO admitted, he could not sleep the whole night after seeing this red and black face of an *oni* (1985, 88). KIKKAWA also reported his fear at lodging at the possessed man's house even after the trance was over (1991, 74–75).

16. In Kōjin Kagura the candidate becomes violently possessed while dancing near the straw dragon. Those around him, hold him and sit him down, then coil the dragon around him, and question him. Other techniques of inducing trance during kagura recorded in the connecting areas include waving and dancing with a long white silk cloth. Another method (in a different place) for becoming possessed was to dance wildly with a sword in front of a pillar on which a sacred straw sac, signifying a kami-seat, is tied, and then, using the sword, to pierce the sac; the moment the sac was pierced the dancer would become possessed. In another place the kagura dancer used to dance with a bow and arrow, shoot the arrow into a bag of rice hanging inside the *tengai,* and lose consciousness. In yet another place, the dancer falls into a trance by people singing around him (ISHIZUKA 1984, 274–79; IWATA 1992, 267–73; USHIO 1985, 86–89; KIKKAWA 1991).

17. The most famous cases are reported in USHIO 1985, 74–90; but also see KIKKAWA 1991; YAMAJI 1987; 1990; SUZUKI 1990; and ISHIZUKA 1984.

18. In 1980, for example, the *taku dayū* suddenly leaped on stage towards the end of the *tengai* number and held on to the *byakke* ropes. Holding the ropes, he jumped out of control and his whole body convoluted. The program was immediately stopped, and the Tsuna-nuki was conducted out of turn. The priests quickly brought out the snake, hung it from the ceiling, leaned the possessed on it, and questioned him. The possessed gave his *takusen* and was calmed down and taken to rest. (This can be seen in the video recording *Shugen to kagura* 1990.) The kagura night continued afterwards as planned, but with no real attempt at *kamigakari*, for it can only happen once in a given performance.

19. Hana Matsuri is conducted in twenty-three villages, with variations between them. Most villages are in Aichi Prefecture, three are in Shizuoka, and one is in Nagano Prefecture. On Hana Matsuri see HAYAKAWA 1994 (vol 1); HAGA 1977; YAMAMOTO 1993; 1994; TAKEI 1990b; HONDA 1954. For a description of Hana Matsuri in English see GRIM and GRIM 1982.

20. The original Ōkagura included three initiation rites: the *umarego,* to ask the kami to help bring up the baby; *kiyomari,* an adulthood initiation rite; and *Jōdo iri* 浄土入り, celebrated at the age of 60, a request to be reborn in paradise (YAMAMOTO 1993, 95–224; 1994, 128–29; KOBAYASHI 1995, 9, 24; on Ōkagura see HAYAKAWA 1994: 2).

21. The Hana Matsuri I attended on 22 and 23 November 1996 at Tsuki (Tōei-chō, Kitashitara-gun) was conducted in the community center on the main road of the village.

22. In effect, the ritual area encompasses the entire village. Elaborate rituals of summoning the deities before the performance of Hana matsuri are conducted all around the *matsuri* hall, on the mountain side, and in the fields around it. Also, all through the Hana matsuri night, the *oni* circle the entire village from house to house to bless and protect each one.

23. In Hana Matsuri there are no narrated masked dramas as in Ōmoto Kagura. The exceptions are the *oni* or demons, and the Okina figure appearing at dawn, who conduct question-and-answer (*mondō*) sessions with one of the priests.

24. The setting of the cauldron in the *yudate* ritual differs slightly between the two genres of Hana Matsuri, the *furikusa* 振草 and the *ōnyū* 大入: the *furikusa,* to which Tsuki belongs, has a clay stove with the cauldron set on top, and the *ōnyū* has just an elevated cauldron for boiling water.

25. The northwest is designated as the entrance to the "route of the kami." The directions, however, are not consistent with the natural ones.

26. The main *yubuta* contains a bag full of small presents, which is to be brought down in the end by one of the *oni* and distributed for good luck. The *tengai* contains a variety of other paper cuttings. See HAYAKAWA 1994:1, 70–82; GRIM and GRIM 1982, 164–65.

27. Boiling water is the meeting place of the two universal forces, fire and water, and in esoteric Buddhism it signifies the joining of polar opposites: yin-yang, male and female, the Womb and Diamond mandalas, etc. The Shugendō ritual of *yudate* is widespread in Japan; it is performed in Ōmoto Kagura as well .

28. These *oni* have evolved from being purely evil demons of hell (in the 16th century) into mountain gods and earthly deities with divine names (like Sakaki oni 榊鬼 or Yamami oni 山見鬼), and transformed their dwelling to the mountains. They became divine, though ferocious, manifestations, identified with mythological earth gods (of Chinese origin) and with mountain gods of *yamabushi* characteristics, like Saruta-hiko and the *tengu* 天狗 (the *yamabushi* mountain goblin, possessor of secret lore) (YAMAMOTO 1994, 136–41). In Hana Matsuri the *oni* hands over the land to humans in a way that is similar to an old Kamakura rite in which an ax was used to signify the opening of new land (TAKEI 1990b, 209). The *oni*, who also impersonate the locals' ancestral spirits, are purified by the *yudate,* achieve salvation, and return to their world (KOBAYASHI 1981). The *oni* also reflects the villagers themselves by holding tools of mountain people (e.g. axes, sticks, and saws).

29. That *kamigakari* was related to the lost Ōkagura ritual of *umarekiyomari.* The philosophy of this rite is preserved in Hana Matsuri and is seen in the *byakke.* See KATŌ 1984, 364–68; YAMAMOTO 1993, 95–224.

30. This tradition is also reported in the 1993 documentary film "Hana matsuri" (in the series *Eizō jinruigaku: Nihon no matsuri* 映像人類学—日本の祭 [Visual anthropology: the festivals of Japan], produced by "Visual Folklore").

31. As an integral part of *yamabushi* lore the *henbai* are found in many Japanese rituals. Their presence in Hana Matsuri testifies to its original meaning as *chinkon* kagura, meant to pacify the spirits of the dead and of the earth. Another function of the *henbai* is to bring out treasures from the earth to make the earth produce its powers of growth. This is the power of Yama no kami, the *tengu,* and the *oni* of Hana Matsuri, as it is the power of the *yamabushi* themselves (YAMAMOTO 1994, 139–41).

32. The *yamabushi* techniques of possession have been pointed out by scholars such as Miyake and Gorai (see MIYAKE 1971, 315–509; MIYAKE 1984; MIYAKE 1984 ed.; and GORAI 1980) and can be seen in the form of induced possession in Ontake-kyō 御岳教. This is reflected in the words of the *kami uta:* "Kami of the golden peak, he jumps and leaps and drives away all evil spirits, bringing in the good luck." This song describes a power dance into which the kami comes, enters the dancer, dances himself and performs exorcism. It is true also for Ōmoto Kagura (ITAYA 1990, 244–45), and for Hayachine Kagura. Another song says there are only male shamans (*otoko miko*) in the "east" (i.e., "here"; TAKEI 1990b, 212).

33. Thus the kagura in Hana Matsuri is strikingly different from Ōmoto and Hayachine Kagura. In Ōmoto, only selected dancers, mostly young men, dance Kagura, while in the

itinerant Hayachine Kagura, the groups are fixed and composed of semiprofessional dancers.

Hayakawa counted thirteen types of dances that are shared by all locations, and eight unique types. He also distinguished between two dance types according to their location in the *maido*: either before or all around the *kamado*. Then there are the unmasked vs. the masked dances, which usually refer to the *oni* (HAYAKAWA 1994:1, 154–60; INOUE 1994).

34. The few masked dances are performed toward the morning, using typical Sarugaku masks. They feature a pair of clowns who chase the audience to smear miso on their faces with phallic sticks, as well as Kirume-no-ōji, Mirume-no-miko, the famous Okina, and a *shishi-mai* to end it all. The spectacular huge masks of Hana Matsuri belong to the *oni* (TAKEI 1990a, 173–77; 1990b, 209).

35. Expressed as A-UN 阿吽, an esoteric combination of Shugendō concepts that conveys the idea of the unity of opposite principles. On Hayachine Kagura see, for example, HONDA 1971; SUGAWARA 1979; HOFF 1978; MORIGUCHI 1971; and AVERBUCH 1995.

36. Gongen 権現 is a Buddhist word meaning "manifestation." It refers to a kami as a manifestation of a universal buddha; "*gongen*" thus implies an object of worship that is both a kami and a buddha. The use of this concept indicates *yamabushi* influence.

37. An indigo hemp robe is attached to the *shishi* head. This robe forms the "body" of the *gongen,* and carries the school symbols of the *gongen* and the name of its shrine of origin. The dancer enters this long "body" to manipulate it from within. It is interesting that, as with Ōmoto Kagura, the main deity is manifested in the form of a wild (mountain) animal.

38. Rice does not grow in the high altitudes on Mt. Hayachine, and the yearly rounds of kagura were the means to gain rice for the whole year. This kagura was once performed exclusively by *yamabushi,* but since the famines in late Tokugawa , the two Hayachine schools started teaching their art to local farmers, establishing disciple-groups in the area.

39. This is not without its tensions, for the itinerant kagura strives to preserve its traditional religious status in spite of the former national Shinto trends. An example of this can be seen in the refusal of the master of Ishihatooka Kagura (a Take Kagura disciple-group) to give up his purple (a high-ranking priestly color) *hakama,* against the protest of the Shinto establishment.

40. This puts the Hayachine Kagura drummer in the same charismatic role as the *hana dayū,* or the priests of Ōmoto Kagura who induce trance.

41. The paper rings, called *kuji* 九字, are a unique feature of this kagura. The *kuji* is a magical charm transformed into a tangible object. The *kuji* charm is performed by intoning its mantras and forming the mudras of the nine syllables, followed by the sword-mudra drawing of a magical net in the air (MIYAKE 1971, 87–92). The *kuji* rings, made of white paper, are worn as rings on the fingers (AVERBUCH 1995, 100–102).

42. This may at times be a fair explanation. In several of the *kami mai* dances, where the last line of the narration proclaims, "let us dance the kagura of the thousand ages," the unmasked group dance that follows can be understood as a dance of human joy and celebration for the kami. At least this seems to be the consensus among the kagura members.

43. All conclusions drawn from our example of the Yama-no-kami-mai of the Take school of Hayachine Kagura, also apply to the same dance in Kuromori Kagura, and to other Yama-no-kami-mai of Yamabushi kagura.

44. Every *yamabushi* kagura school includes Yama-no-kami-mai in its category of ceremonial dances (HONDA 1971, 434–40). The Take Kagura Yama-no-kami is identified with the mythical mountain god Ō-yama-zumi-no-mikoto 大山祇命 (PHILIPPI 1968, 56, 92, 144–45, 552). SUGAWARA marks this dance as *kaji kitō,* that is, a rite in which the practitioner draws on the deity's powers to perform a magic act (1979, 142–43). For a detailed description of the dance in Take Kagura, see AVERBUCH 1995, 169–212.

45. In most cases, the mask is taken off on stage before the *kuzushi*. Here, the dancer sticks his head inside the curtain to take off his mask and to put on a horse-mane headdress, which partially covers his face. Also, the narration is usually heard when the dancers are masked. Here, however, the mask is taken off before the narration, to show that the kami speaks via his narrator, who is the unmasked shaman.

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