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The Eight Trigrams and Their Changes An Inquiry into Japanese Early Modern Divination

In this article I will study a peculiar divination method involving the eight trigrams known as *hakke* that, I will attempt to show, was among the most popular techniques used in Japan from the end of the sixteenth to the end of the eighteenth century. My goal here is to show how this mantic knowledge was passed on through a specific kind of manual while undergoing several transformations. These changes, far from being coincidental, may be linked to the inner evolutions of Japanese society and culture during the Edo period. Therefore such an inquiry should help us to gain a better understanding of the reciprocal informing relationship between mantic knowledge (correlative thinking) and people's general expectations and/or mentality. I will first present the nature of *hakke-uranai*, before tracking down how and by whom it was used. Finally, I will detail how its inner structure relates to the way the clients of the diviners were viewing fate, time, daily life, and the world.

KEYWORDS: divination—*hakke-uranai*—printed manuals—correlative thinking—way of yin and yang—popular knowledge

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DIVINATION (*uranai* 占い, *bokusen* 卜占) in Japan has yet to receive attention from scholars equivalent to that which specialists of China have given to continental *manteia*. To be more precise, although seminal studies such as BLACKER's (1975) have been conducted on "non-systemized" (or "shamanistic") divination (that is, divination that relies on the inner capacity of the diviner to directly communicate and transmit information from a superhuman source), the same cannot be said about "systemized" divination. Pioneer Western scholars, first SEVERINI (1874), but also ASTON (1908) and others, did show some curiosity toward the subject, and about half a century later, French researcher Bernard FRANK (1998) produced a detailed study on a peculiar aspect of ancient Japanese hemerology¹ that is still regarded as an essential contribution to the comprehension of Heian culture and lore.

Even in Japan, however, academic interest in what I shall define as a corpus-based technical knowledge used to decipher mundane events through a process of encoding and decoding reality in analogical/symbolical terms rarely leaves the boundaries of ancient Japan. Although valuable studies about the social status of "religious specialists" whose activities included divination have provided us with a more detailed understanding (HAYASHI 2006), the contents and the sources of these divination practices are still opaque.

Even though Japanese systemized divination was closely connected to Chinese mantic knowledge, considering how important (and numerous) the diviners seem to have been in premodern urban and rural Japan, it deserves to be examined for its own sake. Given the triangular relation of information between diviners, their source(s) of knowledge, and their clients (ZEITLYN 2001), it can be assumed that by studying the nature of Japanese mantic practices, one could unveil the specificities of the way people apprehend the surrounding world, fate, and everyday events at that time.

1. The various terms used in this article to refer to a precise type of divination generally follows the typology established by sinologists in KALINOWSKI 2003. Hence, "cleromancy" refers to any divination involving to draw/throw/toss/flip an item, in order to randomly obtain one or more figure from a preset list. Classical *Yi jing*-based divination (achilleomancy) qualifies perfectly for this labeling as it consists of obtaining one or two hexagrams, line by line or trigram by trigram, by separating at random a pack fifty sticks, and subtracting sticks several times until a meaningful number is reached. As for "hemerology," it is any kind of divination taking temporal parameters, such as year, month, day, hour, or any combination of these as its primary variable to determine either one's fate or the auspicious character of a given date regarding various activities.

This is precisely what this article attempts, by paying particular attention to a peculiar divination method involving divinatory figures commonly known as the eight trigrams (Jp. *hakka* or *hakke*, Ch. *bagua* 八卦). First, I will describe this technique, pointing out its importance in early modern Japan, before giving a brief overview of its origins, characteristics, and media of diffusion. Then I will consider evidence of its use from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, portraying its users by quoting testimonies from contemporaneous sources. Finally, I shall present what the mechanics and structure of this method reveal about the preoccupations and representations of the clients of the diviners.

Prologue: What is a trigram?

Before going into the details of the Edo-period usage of the eight trigrams, I shall try to clarify a few points regarding the nature and origin of these figures, as well as their relationship to divinatory techniques.

The first difficulty faced when trying to understand the *hakke-uranai* is that the eight trigrams are commonly associated with a specific kind of divination that differs greatly from the one I will try to discuss here.

Indeed, when looking at a dictionary like the *Nihon kokugo daijiten* 日本国大辞典, we can see that the word *hakke* refers implicitly to the famous Chinese classic, the *Book of Changes*, *Yi jing* (Jp. *Ekikyō* 易經), also known as the *Changes of the Zhou*, *Zhouyi* (Jp. *Shūeki* 周易):

In the context of the *Changes*, the eight forms are composed of three divination rods figuring yin (broken) and yang (plain) lines.

This book, assumed to have been first put together around 700 BCE during the Zhou dynasty (SUZUKI 1963, 15), at its core serves as a base and a referent for a divinatory technique involving a random drawing of yarrow stalks in order to obtain numerical values (cleromancy). These values are used to form, step by step, a divinatory figure ultimately composed of two sets of three lines. Both the three-line figure, or trigram, and the six-line figure, or hexagram, are called *gua* (Jp. *ka*, *ke*). The lines can be either plain (uneven, or yang) or broken (even, or yin), their status being determined by the numbers which were drawn. Moreover, depending on the values obtained, the capacity of each line to “change” from yin to yang or from yang to yin respectively is also determined. Therefore, on a practical level, a *gua* is nothing less than a figurative portent, to be interpreted by looking at the parts of the *Book of Changes* dedicated to each hexagram.

However, beside this practical aspect, the *Yi jing* itself, and the *bagua* along with it, are also a base for metaphysical speculations. This particular side has been extensively developed since the beginning of Confucianism (the commentaries called “ten wings” are attributed to Confucius himself), and is a part of

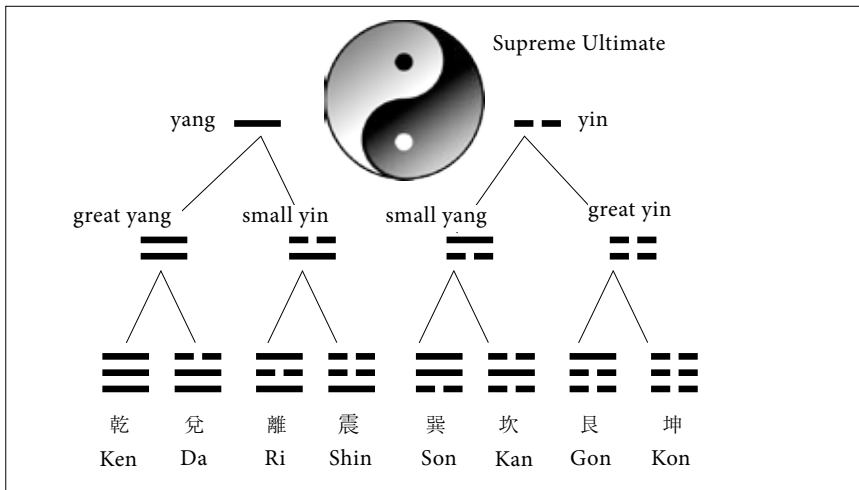


DIAGRAM 1. Formation of the trigrams.

the common culture of the various intellectual and religious traditions of China, including of course Buddhism and Daoism.

Thus, the formation of the trigrams is often depicted as a generative process resulting from a succession of combinations starting from the emergence of the two poles, yin and yang (monads), from the Supreme Ultimate (Taiji, Jp. *tai-kyoku* 太極). As such, this process can be considered as a symbolical expression of the creation of the cosmos itself.

This cosmological aspect is not absent from the divinatory use of the *Book of Changes*: the trigram and hexagram randomly obtained work as a symbolization of the state of the macrocosm at the time of the consultation, and the “changes” which might occur to the lines express the cosmic dynamics the diviner should catch to foresee upcoming developments.

However, along with the systematization of the various cosmological elements led by Han (202 BCE–220 CE) Confucian scholars like Jing Fang 京房 (77–37 BCE), the trigrams were integrated in a broader correlative framework, as well as the five phases, the twelve branches, the ten stems, and other markers of space and time (SUZUKI 1963). From these times onward, they were to be found in other divinatory techniques than the original cleromancy, most notably in hemerological practices. Contrary to cleromancy, which uses random variables (number of rods/coins) unrelated to the subjects’ individual data to obtain a portent, hemerology is based on calendrical elements and uses fixed variables organically linked to the subject (for example, the birth year of the client, the day and time an event occurred, and so on) as a basis for its prognostics. As such,



FIGURE 1. *Hakke-bon*, undated (Shidō bunko, Keiō Gijuku University).



FIGURE 2. *Hakke*, 1708 edition by SEISHŌ (Collège de France, IHEJ).

while cleromancy emphasizes the intervention of a divine design in the drawing, this set of techniques offers a visible and organic relationship between the omen and the client's individual situation. The *hakke-uranai* that was in use in Japan precisely pertains to this new category of techniques, as we will see below.

Looking for the Trigrams in Early Modern Japan

Getting back to the definition of *hakke* in the *Nihon kokugo daijiten*, we are presented with a second meaning: “divination (by the means of the *Changes*). *Hakke-mi*, lit. one who looks at the eight trigrams. Diviner.”

We are then led to believe that there were, during the Edo period, diviners called *hakke-mi* 八卦見 using the yarrow stalks (cleromancy) as their main technique. Even if it might very well have been true by the end of the early-modern era, when *Yi jing*-based cleromancy manuals were flourishing (see, for example, below), we cannot make the assumption that the technique used by these *hakke-mi* has always been the same. The key to solving this problem lies in the meaning of the word *hakke* in the early-modern context. The *Nippo jisho* 日葡辞書 (ŌTSUKA 1998),

a Nippo-Portugese dictionary published by the Jesuits of Nagasaki in 1603, gives a rather different definition of the word:

Facqe: A calendar or repertory used by astrologers (*astrólogo*). *Facqeo miru*: To look at this book or repertory in order to know the destiny and fate of the people. (ÔTSUKA 1998, 150)

From this contemporaneous definition, we can say that around 1600 the word *hakke* did not specifically referred to the trigrams of the *Yi jing*, but to a kind of book used by diviners. Moreover, the comparison made with calendars, which are usually folded books (*orihon*), gives us a hint regarding the material form of said books.

However, this is merely the tip of the iceberg. Browsing through the *Union Catalogue of Early Japanese Books*, we find that at least a hundred books bearing *hakke* in their title were produced between 1611 and the end of the Edo period. We are in fact facing a whole genre, which might collectively be classified as books of trigrams, *hakke-bon* 八卦本.

BOOKS OF TRIGRAMS: TYPE, CONTENT, AND EVOLUTION

To date, only one academic article has tried to shed light on the books of trigrams: this is MASUKO Masaru's (2006) brief presentation of their global structure, which also gives valuable bibliographical information. Still, Masuko's study remains incomplete, and does not clearly explain the origins and transformations of these books. Therefore, having defined *hakke-bon*, I shall illustrate several hypotheses regarding their origins, and give an overview of their developments and achievements.

Hakke materials can be divided into three different types. First, we have a group of folded books, *orihon* 折本, and their reprints, whose "commercial" publishing started as early as 1611. According to their form, we can assume that these are the books mentioned by the Jesuit witnesses, which means—given the publication date of the dictionary—that they were already to be seen, probably as manuscripts, before 1611. The contents of these early books are essentially technical, providing mainly tables and diagrams, with almost no details about the procedures. Second, from c.1660, we find bound books that give detailed instructions about how to use divination techniques, and explanations of the meaning of the rather esoteric indications presented in the earlier folded books. This second category, quite different in nature from the earlier one, marks an important step in the evolution of the *hakke* material. Finally, at the end of the seventeenth century, "special" editions start to appear, which greatly exceed the two previous ones in content by including several other types of divinatory knowledge, such as physiognomy (*ninsō* 人相) and the like, almost unrelated to the original technique. The most exciting observable feature, when looking at

the transition, or rather evolution, from the original folded books to the latest compilations, is how it parallels developments seen in other types of early modern publications. As such, it echoes the changes occurring in broader intellectual tendencies, mainly Neo-Confucianism, but more broadly the emergence of the *kōshōgaku*, which I translate as “philology” in various fields of knowledge such as classical studies, historical studies, linguistics, and so on. Through the content and structure of these manuals, we will see how divinatory techniques evolved from complex, esoteric knowledge reserved for rather educated elites, to a more practical, simplified, and yet diverse knowledge, made available to a broader audience by self-asserting compilers and authors.

EARLY FOLDED BOOKS AND THE CORE TECHNIQUE

As a whole, beside their titles, trigram books can be defined by their lowest common denominator: the divinatory scheme they all provide. This consists of eight square-shaped diagrams, each divided into nine square sections, with one trigram in the center and eight others disposed around. Each central trigram has the name of a Buddha or a bodhisattva associated with it, and the eight other trigrams have different positions with specific names attached, as well as other elements, numbers, directions, agents, and so on. These names, *zettai* 絶体 (collapsing body), *zetsumei* 絶命 (collapsing destiny), *kagai* 禍害 (disaster), *seike* 生家 (birth house), *fukutoku* 福德 (fortune and virtue), *yūnen* 遊年 (annual transfer), *yūkon* 遊魂 (soul transfer), and *ten'i* 天醫 (heavenly doctor) represent what we may call “mantic functions”: they lead to the results of the divination, depending on the variations of the parameters and mantic variables. Thus, the diagrams can be seen as specific configurations of the parameters. The following schematic representations bear all the features I just described, and can be considered as archetypical of what these diagrams are.

The core technique involving the diagrams is a form of hemerology/horoscopes based on calendrical values. Most of the books begin by presenting two key variables and ways to obtain them. First comes the subperiod of the birth of an individual, *gen* 元, which designates a span of sixty years (one complete cycle in the hexadecimal calendar), included in a super-cycle of one hundred and eighty years, so there are three successive *gen*, a superior, a middle, and an inferior. Second, we usually find a table detailing the “induced sound,” *natchin* 納音, associated to each of the sixty combinations of stems and branches. These sounds are in fact a developed form of the five phases (wood, fire, earth, metal, and water) and therefore represent the peculiar agent of an individual according to his year of birth. According to these parameters, and the sex of the person concerned, the attributed (lit. “hit upon”) trigram, *tōke* 当卦, and subsequently the corresponding diagram, can be determined. From there, the diviner can










 Fortune 5 wind dragon 3 snake 4	 Annual transfer 3 fire 5 horse	 Soul transfer 8 earth sheep 6 monkey 7
 Birth house 4 wood 2 rabbit	 Seishi (<i>Ri</i>) fire 8 rooster	 Heavenly doctor 2 metal 8 rooster
 Disaster 7 mountain tiger 1 ox 12	 Collapsing body 6 water rat 11	 Collapsing destiny 1 heaven boar 10 dog 9

DIAGRAM 2










 Heavenly doctor 5 wind dragon 3 snake 4	 Soul transfer 3 fire 5 horse	 Annual transfer 8 earth sheep 6 monkey 7
 Disaster 4 wood 2 rabbit	 Dainichi (<i>Kon</i>) earth 8 rooster	 Fortune 2 metal 8 rooster
 Birth house 7 mountain tiger 1 ox 12	 Collapsing destiny 6 water rat 11	 Collapsing body 1 heaven boar 10 dog 9

DIAGRAM 3










 Soul transfer 5 wind dragon 3 snake 4	 Heavenly doctor 3 fire 5 horse	 Fortune 8 earth sheep 6 monkey 7
 Collapsing destiny 4 wood 2 rabbit	 Fudō (<i>Da</i>) metal	 Annual transfer 2 metal 8 rooster
 Collapsing body 7 mountain tiger 1 ox 12	 Disaster 6 water rat 11	 Birth house 1 heaven boar 10 dog 9

DIAGRAM 4










 Disaster 5 wind dragon 3 snake 4	 Collapsing destiny 3 fire 5 horse	 Collapsing body 8 earth sheep 6 monkey 7
 Heavenly doctor 4 wood 2 rabbit	 Amida (<i>Ken</i>) heaven	 Birth house 2 metal 8 rooster
 Fortune 7 mountain tiger 1 ox 12	 Soul transfer 6 water rat 11	 Annual transfer 1 heaven boar 10 dog 9

DIAGRAM 5










 Birth house 5 wood dragon 3 snake 4	 Collapsing body 3 fire 5 horse	 Collapsing fate 8 earth sheep 6 monkey 7
 Fortune 4 wood 2 rabbit	 Senju Kannon (<i>Kan</i>) water 5 horse	 Disaster 2 metal 8 rooster
 Heavenly doctor 7 mountain tiger 1 ox 12	 Annual transfer 6 water rat 11	 Soul transfer 1 heaven boar 10 dog 9

DIAGRAM 6










 Collapsing destiny 5 wind dragon 3 snake 4	 Disaster 3 fire 5 horse	 Birth house 8 earth sheep 6 monkey 7
 Soul transfer 4 wood 2 rabbit	 Kokūzō (<i>Gon</i>) mountain 5 horse	 Collapsing body 2 metal 8 rooster
 Annual transfer 7 mountain tiger 1 ox 12	 Heavenly doctor 6 water rat 11	 Fortune 1 heaven boar 10 dog 9

DIAGRAM 7

<p>Collapsing body 5 wind</p> <p>dragon 3 snake 4</p>	<p>Birth house 3 fire</p> <p>5 horse</p>	<p>Disaster 8 earth</p> <p>sheep 6 monkey 7</p>
<p>Annual transfer 4 wood</p> <p>2 rabbit</p>	<p>Monju (<i>Shin</i>) wood</p>	<p>Collapsing destiny 2 metal</p> <p>8 rooster</p>
<p>Soul transfer 7 mountain</p> <p>tiger 1 ox 12</p>	<p>Fortune 6 water</p> <p>rat 11</p>	<p>Heavenly doctor 1 heaven</p> <p>boar 10 dog 9</p>

DIAGRAM 8

<p>Annual transfer 5 wind</p> <p>dragon 3 snake 4</p>	<p>Fortune 3 fire</p> <p>5 horse</p>	<p>Heavenly doctor</p> <p>sheep 6 monkey 7</p>
<p>Collapsing body 4 wood</p> <p>2 rabbit</p>	<p>Fugen (<i>Son</i>) wind</p>	<p>Soul transfer 2 metal</p> <p>8 rooster</p>
<p>Collapsing destiny 7 mountain</p> <p>tiger 1 ox 12</p>	<p>Birth house 6 water</p> <p>rat 11</p>	<p>Disaster 1 heaven</p> <p>boar 10 dog 9</p>

DIAGRAM 9

proceed on to two different kinds of operations. The first and most obvious is to use the diagram as a guide to annual (month by month) predictions and recommendations for a given individual. Depending on the position of the mantic functions, auspicious or inauspicious months, days or directions can be inferred, and the results refined through the relation of each trigram and the attributed one and/or their respective agents. In fact, this is the only method the folded books expose, though manuscript annotations point toward other possible uses. The other method, which became visible to the public eye with second-generation books, is rather different, as it assigns numbers to various “objects” of divination (seen things, excepted things, awaited person, and so on) and introduces external variables such as time. Ultimately, the procedure consists of a calculation in order to obtain one of the numbers attributed to each mantic function. This technique represents a significant evolution compared to those found in the first-generation books, and went through several transformations over time. I shall examine it more precisely in the last part of this article.

In addition to this core, *hakke-bon* typically present at least three other hemerological methods. Two of them are rather pervasive through the different types of manuals, while the last one progressively appears less and less frequently as we approach the later publications. We thus find a system referred to as the twelve conducts, *jūni-un* 十二運, which establishes five cycles of twelve stages for each agent. These cycles govern the fortune of an individual according to the stem of his birth year. The second system involves nine “luminous stars,” *kuyōshō* 九曜星, that is, the two luminaries, the five planets (Mars, Venus, Mercury, Jupiter, and Saturn), and two extra “pseudo” planets, Rago 羅候 and Keito 計都.² It is used in a fashion similar to the attributed trigram, but only gives one type of result for each planet. The last essential hemerological scheme, comparatively short-lived in the Edo period, consists in a full table listing the 28 (27) lunar lodges for every day of the year.³

2. These two additional planets originate in Indian astrological views that were passed to Japan through Buddhist scriptures such as the *Sukuyō-gyō* 宿曜經 (*Treatise of the lodges and luminaries*), compiled under Amoghavajra’s (Jp. Fukū 不空) direction. They can be spotted in various iconographic material depicting Buddhist astral deities such as stars mandalas, often bearing a dreadful appearance. Due to the close association between Buddhist astrology and court *onmyōdō* 陰陽道 since the beginning of the Heian period, they were soon incorporated into *onmyōji*’s hemerological practices, eventually becoming associated with other deities of Chinese origin (though such an association might well have been already established in China, before coming to Japan). Linked to the eclipses and the comets, they are known in Western astrology as the Dragon head and tail, Caput and Coda Draconis. On Buddhist astrology see YANO 1986.

3. The 28 (27) lunar lodges (Sk. *nakṣatra*) which should not be mistaken for the 28 mansions of Chinese astronomy (though they bear the same Chinese characters), are a product of Indian astrology. Basically, they form a lunar zodiac (division of the ecliptic) of 28 signs or lodges. The



FIGURE 3. *Hakke*, 1708. Diagram of the borrowed path (left) and diagram of the nine luminous stars (right). (National Diet Library)

All those elements, as well as other content specific to each book, did not pop out of nowhere at the beginning of Edo. However, due to the lack of detail in the first editions (they basically give the bare bones diagrams and tables, without even trying to explain the actual methods, much less quoting sources), it might prove quite difficult to trace the origins of these methods. Fortunately, besides the early manuals, I have been able to retrieve a manuscript, probably dating to the middle of the sixteenth century. While its content bears great similarity to the first printed books, the specifics of this example shed some light on the process that led to the development of the *hakke-bon* genre.

It opens with a table showing correspondences between the twelve hexagrams and the twelve earthly branches, symbolizing the months of the year, immediately followed by an introductory part, which is almost systematically found in the first printed books. This introduction reads as follows:

The method of yin-yang and the eight trigrams: it is said, in the *Nine Palaces Treatise* brought by Kibi no Saneyasu Ason,⁴ that when Heaven and Earth parted away, a Kinoue-ne [yang wood-rat] year, the first subperiod started. It is also said this was 61,672 years before year 1, yang wood-rat, of Jinki in Japan.

list is usually limited to 27, as the moon needs approximately one day to go through a lodge, but there is a intercalary lodge, Abhijit, or the Ox lodge in Sino-Japanese denomination (*gyūsuku* 牛宿), held for “hidden” (*hisuku* 秘宿), and inauspicious.

4. Although there is little evidence as to whom this name is supposed to refer, it feels reasonable to assume this is Kibi no Makibi 吉備真備 (695–775), who allegedly brought yin-yang texts and knowledge from China.

The three periods complete a cycle every 180 years. Anticipating that many untutored people will experience difficulties in understanding, this text tries to calculate the periods. The inferior period ended in Jian 3, yin water-boar [1023], then, in Manju 1, yang wood-rat [1024], we entered a superior period. In Ken'nin 3, yin water-pig [1203], an inferior period started. According to the same treatise, the superior period rose in the first palace⁵ in yang wood-rat, the middle period rose in the fourth palace in yang wood-rat, the inferior period rose in the seventh palace in yang wood-rat, and so on. In Kakitsu 3 [1443], the superior period ended, and in Bun'an 1 [1444], the middle period started. It ended in Bunki 3 [1503], and in Eishō 1, yang wood-rat, we entered an inferior period.

In other words, it offers an example of a calculation of the subperiods vital to this method of divination. We notice a reference to a treatise, which I shall introduce later. The manuscript then continues on with the kind of content described above, adding some elements to the diagrams like, for example, figurations of the numbers by counting rods, or internal organs. Most noticeably, the writer felt the need to include several mantras written in Sanskrit. Lastly, results corresponding to the nine luminous stars (or planets), *kuyōshō*, the twelve conducts, *jūni-un*,⁶ and the twenty-seven lodges are prominently described, compared to the folded books, and most of all, the main objects of divination seem to be either illness or warfare. Moreover, the results concerning the former include—aside from the eight positions of the trigrams—another function, great misfortune, *daiyaku* 大厄, which is never to be seen in the *orihon*.

From all these clues, we can already make a few educated guesses about the origin of the described methods. First, looking at the association between hexagrams and months, the symbolist theories that are characteristic of Han divination immediately come to mind. The inclusion of the *Yi jing*'s figures to a broader analogical reseau is already clearly established in the thought of Jing Fang (SHIN 2002, 102–17). Furthermore, this peculiar combination, which in fact represents the increase and decrease of the yin and yang during the year, can be found in Xiao Ji 蕭吉's *Wuxing taiyi* (Jp. *Gogyō taigi*) 五行大義 (Compendium of

5. The notion of the three monads or subperiods, *sangen* 三元, is closely related to the one of the nine palaces, *kyūgū*. See KALINOWSKI 1985, 774–811.

6. These twelve conducts represent the cycle of the five phases according to the months. They are supposed to influence the destiny of one individual, depending on the stem of his birth year, and thus follow the course of human life. We have, in order, the embryo, *tai* 胎, nutrition, *yō* 養, birth and growth, *chō(sei)* 長(生), purification, *moku(yoku)* 沐(浴), maturity, *kan(tai)* 冠(帶), taking of position, *rin(kan)* 臨(官), reign, *tei(ō)* 帝(旺), deliquescence, *sui* 衰, illness, *byō* 病, death, *shi* 死, tomb, *bo* 墓, and expiration/formation of the “breath,” *zetsu* 絕 (between the parentheses, I have filled in the signs usually found in *hakke* books according to the *Wuxing taiyi*).

the five phases) (KALINOWSKI 1991, 93, 236–37). This work of the Tang period is well known for having been introduced in Japan along with the Chinese bureaucracy, and was highly regarded by the specialists of the Divination Bureau.⁷ The connections between the *Wuxing taiyi* and the *hakke-bon* do not end there: Xiao Ji’s book also contains various elements that we can relate to the manuals and that were, moreover, allegedly the source of divinatory practices during the Heian Period. The method of the attributed trigram, for instance, greatly resembles the calculation made by court diviners to determine the annual “trigram forbiddance” for an individual, *hakke no imi* 八卦の忌 (FRANK 1998, 88, 118). In return, this practice is clearly based on the *Wuxing taiyi*. What is more, this book directly quotes the *Kyūgū-kyō* 九宮經, the treatise cited in the introductory part of the trigram books. This lost text seems to have presented a system precisely involving magic squares in relation to the calendrical calculation of a “mantic deity,” the Grand One, *Taiyi* 太一 (KALINOWSKI 1985). Yet, several differences preclude the assumption that there was a direct relation between the two methods. The subperiods, most noticeably, although they are somewhat described in the *Wuxing taiyi*, are not involved in the determination of the forbidden trigrams. Moreover, even if the *Gogyō taigi* evokes mantic functions, it only



FIGURE 4. Table of the 12 birds and beasts in the early version of the *Hakke-bon* (International Research Center for Japanese Studies [IRCJS], top) and the 1708 SEISHŌ version (bottom).

7. According to the Code (the *Taihōryō*), the *onmyōryō* 陰陽寮 was an administrative organ of the state dedicated to calendar production, astronomy (astromancy), and divination proper (FRANK 1998).



FIGURE 5. *Shinsen in'yō hakke narabini shō*, 1667, table of contents (Collège de France, IHEP).



FIGURE 6. *Shinsen in'yō hakke narabini shō*, 1667, list of results.

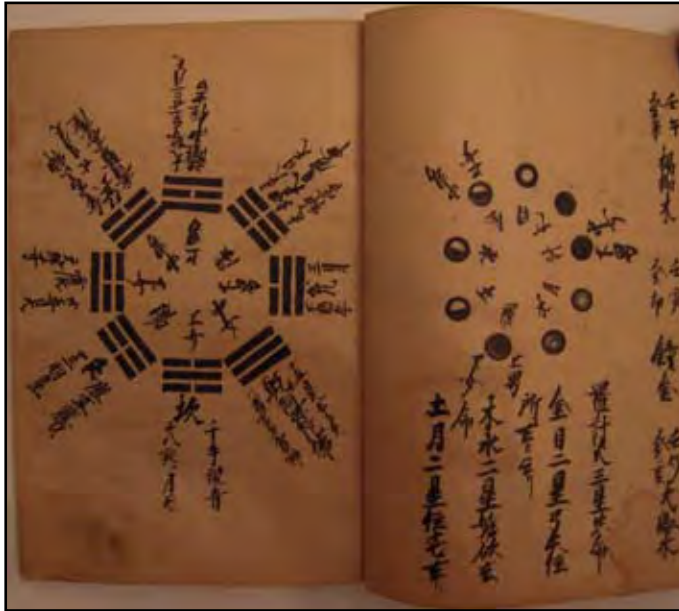


FIGURE 7. *Shingon himitsu hakke kuden*, HIGASHI 1693. Manuscript, diagram of the borrowed path (Collège de France, IHÉF).



FIGURE 8. *Daikōyaku shinsen hakke-shō genkai*, 1718, Ri diagram and explanations (IRCJS).

refers to two or three, not to eight. However, various Tang manuscripts found in the Dunhuang caves do include divination techniques very similar to what can be seen in the *hakke* books, most noticeably one called “annual transfer on the eight trigrams,” *bagua younian* 八卦遊年 (with subperiods and mantic functions), but also the nine luminous stars, lunar lodges, or twelve conducts. In particular, a treatise of medical hemerology bears many common points with the Tenmon manuscript, notably the calculation of the great misfortune (KALINOWSKI 2003, 502). Therefore, one may suppose that such compilations were transmitted to Japan at some point, and served as a base to what became *hakke-bon*.

The folded books themselves also give some insights regarding the origin of their contents, especially on what they do not share in common with the manuscript of the National Observatory. There are more than ten different books of this type that have made their way to us, now preserved in various Japanese and European libraries. The oldest, *Hakke zue* 八卦図会 (1611), presents an unmatched specificity: it doubles each diagram with an illustrated magic square. Though the exact meaning of the pictures has yet to be unveiled, it is possible to find some redundancies pointing to a logical association between the depictions and each mantic function.⁸ Among the other books of this type, usually entitled *hakke bon*, or *hakke sho*, only a few can be precisely dated, but most of them are very similar to the *Onmyō hakke no hō* 陰陽八卦之法 (1628), which is presumed to be the oldest next to the *Hakke zue*. However, later editions show several differences, including new diagrams and a lack of some minor features.⁹ Concerning their sources, upon examination we can see that they heavily reuse whole passages of the *Sangoku sōden onmyō kankatsu hoki naiden kin’u gyokuto-shū* 三國相傳陰陽館轄篋內伝金烏玉兔集 (see NAKAMURA 2000), usually abridged as *Hoki naiden*, an esoteric compilation of hemerological knowledge, including elements from both the curial and the monastic (Buddhist) mantic tradition (mostly in the parts devoted to astral deities like Konjin 金神 or Daishōgun 大將軍).¹⁰ Furthermore, they innovate by

8. For example, pictures of people lying on the ground are associated with the *zetsumei* function, and horses to the *kagai* function.

9. Interestingly, the last known version (1708) met with an important downscaling in terms of size (almost reduced to half what it used to be) and quality (most of the pictures are absent and replaced by simple names). Such a transformation might be interpreted as a loss of influence of this type of book at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

10. Regarding the *Hoki naiden*, there are several theories about when and by who it was compiled. Usually presented as Abe no Seimei’s apocryphal work, it seems to be closely related to the Yasaka shrine in Kyoto, as well as to Esoteric Buddhist schools. As a whole, the *Hoki naiden* can be characterized as the greatest example of how divinatory knowledge has been transmitted through the medieval period in a mythologized form: most of the first part of this text describes various mantical elements embedded in a mythical narrative about Gozu Tennō 牛頭天王, the deity of the Yasaka shrine, and his struggle against the great king Kotan 巨旦, his arch enemy. See NAKAMURA 2000, 237–330; SAITŌ 2007, 140–97.

including elements from a Song almanac, *Yanqin doushu sanshixiang-shu* (Jp. *Enkin tosū sanzesō-sho*) 演禽斗数三世相書, like a horoscopic system involving twelve birds (MASUKO 2006, 52–55).¹¹ Therefore, the early *hakke-bon* as a whole appeared as a first attempt to exotericize a peculiar kind of mantic knowledge that passed from China to Japan before falling under secret transmission during the Middle Ages. They reveal a panel of techniques whose main use was seemingly to determine the outcomes of illnesses and military campaigns, while adding more “popular” devices focused on individual fate. Though early manuals are usually devoid of elaboration, they do not give any kind of results associated with the diagrams, nor explanations about the aims of the method, and some of them include annotations prefiguring the listed results of later books. In fact, given their format and contents, they can be characterized as “tools” and it is thought that more detailed guides explaining divinatory methods circulated among the users in manuscript form.¹²

THE FIRST MANUALS: UNVEILING THE TECHNIQUE

A second generation of *hakke* material appeared as early as the middle of the seventeenth century, around the Kanbun era. Contrarily to the folded books, the first bound books bearing the word *hakke* in their title contain only a few diagrams. Rather, they offer detailed presentations of the method. As such, we can assume they were supposed to be used along with a folded book, providing the user with explanations while the *orihon* served as a basis for divining. The *Shinsen in'yō hakke narabini shō* 新撰陰陽八卦并抄, published around 1667, is a perfect example of this early type of handbook: it gives precise instructions on how to do *hakke* divination, as well as lists of results. By the end of the seventeenth century, publishers thought of mixing the content of the folded books with the explanations, producing top-annotated books (*tōchūbon* 頭注本). The original content of the folded books is reproduced on the lower part of the page, where

11. According to KALINOWSKI (2003, 231), this “zodiacal” system was already to be seen in Dunhuang manuscripts, though they never became widely popular.

12. A manuscript entitled *Tōryū hakke kikigaki hiden-shō* 當流八卦開書秘傳鈔 from a collection at Hikone Museum (Kindō bunko 琴堂文庫) is a good example. Another one, supposedly dating from 1668 (Kanbun 8), can be found inside a broader *shugen* 修驗 manual used by *yama-bushi* in Echigo province. See MIYAKE Hitoshi 2007, 163–91. What is more, a manuscript manual in two volumes from 1693, *Shingon himitsu hakke kuden* 真言秘密八卦口伝, written by a Buddhist-related diviner named HIGASHI Rintō (1693), is now conserved at the Bibliothèque du Collège de France (Institut des hautes études japonaises). For the most part, it duplicates the contents of the early printed manuals, like the *Shinsen in'yō hakke narabini shō*. Judging from that book, we can see that the same kind of knowledge circulated in manuscript and printed form at the same time, ultimately leading to uniformize the technique. The same can be said about a 1708 version of the folded book conserved at the same place: it is heavily annotated with excerpts from the printed guides.

the upper part is dedicated to various annotations explaining the meaning of the text, giving hints, results, or alternative methods.

Pure manuals or hybrid, these books feature lists of results, while progressively cutting out other elements, mostly the astrological ones (like the twenty-seven lunar lodges). Though the bird zodiac is never to be seen in these books, they are still linked in some fashion to Chinese almanacs. To be more precise, while it is difficult to judge which genre influenced the other, bound *hakke* books share some similarities with the Japanese version of *Sansesō*. Thus, the buddhas and bodhisattvas associated with each annual trigram are sometimes graphically depicted, a feature that can also be found in *Sansesō*. Some manuals even add Japanese deities corresponding to these buddhas, with variations from edition to edition, such as in the *Daikōyaku shinsen hakke-shō genkai* 大廣益新撰八卦鈔諺解 (1718). As opposed to the folded books, most of these items seem to be targeted at an audience of “new-comers,” that is, people who do not already know the technique nor possess a complementary guidebook. Still, early annotated manuals basically retain the essential structure of the first *hakke-bon*, giving only practical directives and lists of results. In that sense, although they represent a step further in the exotericization process of mantic knowledge, they neither put their contents in perspective nor clearly disclose their sources. Designed to be used in combination with the folded books, they can be said to continue to diffuse a “medieval” view of divination.

COMPENDIA OF THE EIGHT TRIGRAMS:

TRANSMISSION OF KNOWLEDGE, AUTHORSHIP, AND CRITICAL THINKING

Third generation books show rather interesting changes, both in terms of form and content. Their evolution can be summed up by pointing to three main features: a refinement of the core method, a broader spectrum of techniques, and a tendency to show more and more of the presence of the author/compiler. Such an evolution follows what can be observed in the realms of Confucian scholarship and literature around the same period, with the emergence of thinkers and authors like Kaibara Ekken 貝原益軒 (1630–1714) or Ihara Saikaku 井原西鶴 (1642–1693). Along with the explosion of commercial printing, such authors began asserting their presence in their books, so that publishers, knowing they would be able to increase their sales on their name alone, were asking them for new works (KORNICKI 1998, 227–30). Regarding the divination manuals, the first two new features contribute to a significant augmentation of volume, and the third is accompanied by an increase in critical attitude.

Starting with the *Kokon hakke taizen* 古今八卦大全 (1671), these new manuals usually take more liberties with the original content as they present themselves as selections or compilations. Thus, not only do they drop the traditional introduction in favor of more detailed, if not always accurate, depictions of the transmission

of divinatory knowledge in Japan, but they also claim to refer to precisely identified sources. The complication of the main method relies on a (re)integration of the “original” properties of the trigrams, to be combined in order to form *Yi Jing*’s sixty-four hexagrams. The results associated with each mantic function for each diagram are thus drawn from the hexagrams obtained by combining the central trigram to the peripheral ones. These new procedures result in a dramatic augmentation in size, since in a few extreme cases, such as the *Hakke (mokuroku) ketteishū* 八卦(目録)決定集 (CHIZŌIN 1697), each diagram requires a whole volume.

Aside from this expansion, which in the end does not seem to have been retained in later books, probably because it made the manuals quite unwieldy to use and handle, not to say far more expensive, these compilations also include various explications of other techniques that may or may not be related to the techniques described in earlier compilations. Although the *Kokon hakke taizen* presents more divination methods than before, the *Wakkan hakke shoshō taisei* 和漢八卦諸鈔大成 (OKAMURA 1695) and the *Hakke ketteishū* greatly outweigh their predecessor in that matter. In the latter two, we can find articles about *kasō* 家相 (topomancy applied to the houses), which I have chosen to translate as “domogonomy,” sigillomancy, *han hanji* 判はんじ (divination of personal seals), and even glances at an arithmomantic system attributed to Song-thinker Shao Yong 邵雍 (1012–1077). Thus, they give us an accurate overview of what kind of mantic knowledge was circulating at the time of their compilation. In this regard, the *Wakan hakke* is the most precious item of its kind, since it offers a list of thirty-five reference works, including “*hakke* books produced in our country,” *Hoki naiden*, along with Chinese texts of various horizons, like Song-period buddhist monk Mayi 麻衣’s physiognomy treatise, commentaries by the Cheng 程 brothers (Confucian thinkers of the twelfth century), or even rhyming dictionaries.¹³

By exposing their sources, the compilers of these books clearly seek a new kind of legitimization, substituting referenced authority for secret transmission. More often than not, they make no mystery of their goals. For instance, the compiler of the *Kokon hakke taizen*, presumably someone of Buddhist obedience, judging by the numerous esoteric references he put into his commentaries, explains that “having studied the eight trigrams of the Shingon 真言 and Tendai 天台 schools, but also of the astronomers tradition,” he “gathered the secrets of various traditions, correcting what was bad and selectively abridging what was too verbose, while giving detailed explanations.” Similarly, the compiler of *Hakke ketteishū*,

13. The compiler, OKAMURA Kotōken (1695), gives to his readers no less than forty different references, sometimes in the form of generic titles (for example, *Honchō ruidai hakke shoshō* 本朝累代八卦諸抄 [Books of trigrams of our country]). Among them we can recognize texts like the one simply entitled “Mayi’s physiognomy,” *Mai ninsō-hō* 麻衣人相法, which will play an essential role in the development of new mantic techniques during the Edo period. See OGAWA 1996.

another Buddhist literatus of the Tendai school, basically tells us that he took the good and discarded the bad from divinatory knowledge, in order to present it to beginners. Likewise the author of the *Wakan hakke* states in his introductory remarks as well as in various parts of the book that he has corrected erroneous content of other traditions and proposed an introduction to authorized Chinese texts in simplified language (using the *kana* syllabary) to help beginners. Criticisms of the past, correction of mistakes, and establishment of authoritative referenced knowledge for the uneducated are thus the three main goals the compilers of these new manuals assigned to themselves. This tendency comes to its zenith with Baba Nobutake 馬場信武 (?–1715), a late seventeenth-century physician and literatus (HAYEK 2008). During his life, he published some forty books, most of them divination manuals, but also popularizations of Chinese military tales, and even an introduction to new astronomical theories. Two of BABA's works can be regarded as part of the *hakke-bon* genre, the *Shūeki hakke zōshō shūsei* 周易八卦藏鈔集成 (1698) and the *Tsūhen hakke shinan-sho* 通變八卦指南書 (1703), the second being an expanded version of the first. In these as in other writings, Baba clearly states that he intends to rectify improper interpretations and calculation errors, while giving useful explanations and tips for beginners, *hatsugaku* 初学. Thus we can see that through the evolution of trigram books, the efforts made to exotericize divinatory knowledge go with an aim to homogenize and rationalize that knowledge, to purge it of its “medieval” obscurantism, in order to modernize it in all senses of the word. In this regard, divination manuals reflect a global tendency of the eighteenth-century mind. For instance, it is possible to find quite similar views among literary critics of the same period. The seventh lesson of the *Shika shichiron* 紫家七論, professed in 1703 by Andō Tameaki 安藤為章 (1659–1716), precisely stresses the necessity to “correct erroneous traditions,” as does Ozawa Roan 小沢盧庵 (1723–1801) one century later in his *Furu no nakamichi* 布留の中道 (GROUPE KOTEN 2009, 26–27, 64). All in all, the will to offer a correct(ed) knowledge to guide the ignorant on the right path is congruent with the Confucian ideal of self-cultivation and conformity to the Principle which was brought to the foreground by early-modern Japanese thinkers.

Early Modern Diviners

Having shown how trigram books were a media of one of the main divinatory methods of Edo Japan, I shall now examine to what extent these manuals, or more precisely the kind of knowledge they bear, were in use in premodern Japan. Such a task might prove problematic, since it is obviously not possible to directly question long-dead practitioners about their activities. However, literary and historical sources reveal indirectly that these books were indeed widely used among professional diviners, or at least they were so perceived.

A KYŌGEN SOOTHSAYER

The oldest trace I have been able to isolate presenting evidence of *hakke*-related knowledge is a Kyōgen 狂言 farce entitled *Igui* 井杭/居杭. It features a diviner, referred to as *san'oki* 算置, who gives a lengthy example of divination during the course of the play. I will not assert that the content of this play should be taken as historical reality, but simply that the way the fortune-teller is depicted, comic relief aside, draws on actual observation by the original creator.

The script comes in three versions, one for each of the surviving Kyōgen schools, Ōkura 大倉 and Izumi 和泉, and one for the extinct Sagi 鷺 school.¹⁴ The Ōkura version is said to be older (end of the sixteenth–beginning of the seventeenth century) than the Izumi, which in return seems older than the Sagi version. All in all, the three versions present only minor variations, and the plot is identical.

To give a brief summary of the plot: the main character, Igui, has gained the interest of a protector (referred to as master, *teishu* 亭主). However, he is rather upset by the master's attitude toward him. Every time they meet, his protector feels it necessary to slap him on the head. After addressing a prayer to the Kannon 観音 worshiped at Kiyomizudera, Igui is granted a hood with the power to render him invisible. He then returns to his master's dwelling, and just before the expected slap, he uses the hood and disappears. Quite conveniently, a fortune-teller happens to pass by the mansion of the puzzled patron at that very moment.

D: Fortune-telling and calculus, fortune-telling and calculus, and rather good at it...

P: Ah! Here comes a diviner! For these are such strange events, I might as well give it a go.

D: Indeed very good at it...

P: Diviner!

D: Are you addressing me?

P: Indeed, I am. Please come inside, I would like to consult you on a little matter.

D: So, what is the matter?

P: Something I lost.

D: And when was that?

P: Just now.

D: Today we are the X month, X day, X year. *Tan, Chō Ken, Ro, Gin, Nan, Ba, Haku, Dō, Shitsu, Shi, Kō, En.* Place, Reign, Assistance, Death, Detention, Aging. Isn't it something alive?

P: Well, as a matter of fact, it is. How good you are!

14. See ŌTSUKA 2006, 436–43; YOSHIDA 1959, 3–27; and the Sagi version, in YOSHIKAWA and NONOMURA 1956, 142–51.

[The diviner performs divination by throwing sticks]

D: Sorting this out, it gives: one-virtue, six-damage, water, two-righteousness, seven-yang, fire, three-birth, eight-trouble, wood. Metal generates water, thus first there is a generative relation. But because there is also prevalence, since metal prevails over wood, we cannot see it. However, it is something that has not left this residence. (ÔTSUKA 2006, 438–39)

This extract is from the Ôkura version, and does not give enough detail to confirm the *san'oki* is indeed portrayed using *hakke* divination. Nevertheless, I shall point out that the divination process starts with a precise date (performers of the play use the current date), and seems to involve various elements related to the five phases. The terms “reign,” “assistance,” and so on refer to a cycle of the phases of the year, which can be seen in the *Gogyô taigi* as well as other Chinese sources, and were reportedly used during the Heian period as bipartite forbiddances, *ôsô* 旺相.¹⁵ Essentially, these terms somewhat resemble the *jianchu* 建除 system,¹⁶ insofar as they are only depending on the seasons and not of a person's birth year. The phrases preceding the enunciation of these phases by the *san'oki* can be partially found in the *Hoki naiden*, and are also referenced in Terashima Ryōan's famous encyclopedia *Wakan sansai zue* 和漢三才図会 (the three powers of Japan and China in pictures and diagrams). According to the latter, these terms pertain to a system used to determine one's induced sound using a single hand. Fifteen “sounds” are distributed among the phalanges of the hand, and the ten stems to the finger tips, allowing the diviner to “calculate” with his hand (TERASHIMA C1713?, vol. 5, 12th folio r°). The second part of the divination, called “thrown calculus” in the Ôkura version, involves a suite of numbers associated with a word and an agent. They can also be found in the *Hoki naiden*, in an article dedicated to the “nine diagrams,” and before this in Dunhuang manuscripts closely related to the method of the eight trigrams

15. *Ôsô* here refers to a kind of cycle of auspicious (or inauspicious) elements according to the seasons. There were already several traditions regarding the *ôsô* during the Heian period, mainly based on the *Wuxing taiyi*. Court *onmyōdō* seem to have preferred a simplified cycle with only two elements, *ō* (reign) and *sō* (assistance) over the full system, counting eight elements and associated with the eight trigrams (FRANK, 1998, 216–41). However, what can be found in premodern manuals is another *ôsô* system, with five elements connected to the five phases. This last one, namely reign *ō* (旺), aging *rō* (老), detention, *qiu* (Jp. *shū*) 囚, death, *si* (Jp. *shi*) 死, and assistance, *xiang* (Jp. *sō*) 相, is strongly linked to divinations concerning illness, and, moreover, military prospects.

16. This refers to the so-called *jianchu* (Jp. *kenjo*) system, or, as it is usually to be seen in Japanese books, the twelve direct relations, *jūnichoku* 十二直. It is also a kind of monthly cycle, based on the rotation of the Big Dipper. It starts each month when the direction pointed by the tail of the dipper corresponds to the branch associated with a given day. The following days are then considered auspicious or not for several types of activities (rites, plantations, and so on).

(KALINOWSKI 2003, 235). This suggests a connection between the *san'oki's* action and our books. Most interestingly, the Izumi and Sagi version gives a rather different list of mantic terms: *yūnen*, *yūkon*, *zettai*, and so on, that is, the mantic functions described in the *hakke* books. Moreover, in the same Izumi text, various stage directions refer to an object in the diviner's possession, an item he places in front of himself, unfolds, and points to while performing his divination. Unsurprisingly, this object is called *hakke*, eight trigrams, and is quite obviously a folded book.¹⁷ Finally, the Sagi version draws an even stronger link by depicting a calculating *san'oki* who obtains as a result the trigram *da* 兌, referred to as *Dajōdan* 兌上断 (interrupted in the upper part): this way of calling the trigrams is the same as what can be found in *hakke* books.

Therefore, we can assume that, although the play may have gone through different versions before it was written down in a final shape, and while the depiction of the divination process might not be entirely accurate, the *san'oki* in this farce is intended to represent an actual user of the eight trigrams method.

I have already studied the features and characteristics of these late medieval diviners in another article, and the conclusions can be summed up as follows: 1. the origin of the *san'oki* can be traced back to diviners of the Kamakura period, specialized in the “way of calculation” (*sandō*); 2. they were popular itinerant diviners, although some of them may have had proper stands in big cities, like Kyoto; and 3. their main divinatory method method was *hakke uranai*, using folded “calendar-like” trigram books, along with manuals and guides (HAYEK 2010a, 20–22).

I shall add here that the *san'oki* in this play calls himself Tenguzaemon in some versions, where in others he declares his method to be “thrown calculus sticks of the Tengu.” Reference to *tengu* clearly identifies him with the usual depiction of mountain ascetics, *yamabushi* 山伏, or practitioners seeking magical powers through asceticism. These religious specialists are closely related to Buddhist temples, and their beliefs and system of reference are highly syncretistic. I have already stressed that manuscripts prefiguring trigram books, as well as these manuals themselves, retain a strong Buddhist coloration (Sanskrit scriptures, associated buddhas, and so on). Even if they draw on texts related to *onmyōdō*, such as the *Hoki naiden*, these sources were already tainted with Buddhist concepts. Therefore, there is little doubt that the *san'oki* were bearers of a

17. An illustration confirming this hypothesis can be found in a picture scroll of the Muramochi period, the *Kumano honji emaki* 熊野本地絵巻, conserved at the Kumata jinja 杭全神社 shrine of Osaka. In this scroll, which tells the story of the divinity of Kumano à la *Life of Shaka*, a peculiar scene shows a diviner perform a divination to predict the future of a child to be born (who will eventually become the divinity of Kumano). Although the diviner is described in the text as a “seer” *sōsha* 相者 or *sōnin* 相人, he is depicted in the scroll using calculus sticks. At his side lies a folded book, which is quite obviously the same kind of item as the one described in Igui's scenic indications, that is, a *hakke* book.

kind of knowledge closer to medieval *yamabushi* than to Abe no Seimei 安部晴明 (921?–1005), the famous diviner of the Heian period.

MONKS OR PRIESTS? THE ELUSIVE STATUS OF GENROKU DIVINERS

Tracing the occurrences of *san'oki* leads to new “evidence” that early Edo diviners were indeed using trigram books. The *Jinrin kinmō zui* 人倫訓蒙図彙, an opus of the end of the seventeenth century, presents the term as a synonym for diviner, *uranai-shi* 占師.

The description, though very informative about the state of divinatory knowledge during the Genroku era, is not what will retain our attention here, and a picture accompanying the *Jinrin kinmō zui*'s presentation gives more valuable clues about what I am trying to establish. In this portrait, a diviner, dressed like a monk with a shaved head, sits under a tree. Two clients are facing him while he points to the sticks scattered on the floor, reminding us of the diviner from *Igui*. In front of him is an open book with a circular diagram on one of its pages (*Jinrin kinmō zui* 1990, 118). This schema is very likely to be a round version of the *rokujū-zu* 六十図, “diagram of the sixty,” used in *hakke* divination to determine someone's inner agent, or the *shakuto-hō no zu* 借途法之図, “diagram of the borrowed path” which is required to calculate the personal trigram of an individual. This illustration confirms at least two points. First, Genroku diviners were usually seen as close to Buddhist monks. Second, they were using books while they performed divination—probably *hakke* books.

Baba Nobutake provides an interesting statement regarding the identity of *hakke* diviners. After attempting to amend the eight trigrams divination, in *Shosetsu bendan* 諸説辨断 (his *zuihitsu* 隨筆) he criticizes those who make indiscriminate use of this mantic technique. Having stated that “Priestesses (*miko*) and priests (*kannushi*) and so on use the eight trigrams, the nine luminous stars, and the twelve conducts to tell the luckiness or the unluckiness of people,” he points out their lack of knowledge of the “principles of the Changes” (BABA 1978, 48).

Baba clearly identifies *hakke* users as “Shinto priests and priestesses,” whose main concern is to determine causes of diseases by means of the *hakke*, nine luminous stars, and twelve conducts. Thus, judging by the evidence, from the *san'oki* in *Igui* to this statement by Baba, it can be said that *hakke* divination was used by a wide range of specialists who belonged to one or another religious group, usually with strong connections to Buddhist or Buddhist-related factions.

However, judging by the rest of the description of the *Jinrin kinmō zui*, they also had other skills such as sigillomancy, and “domognomy,” which were not covered by the earliest manuals. Therefore, though we can assume eight trigram divination was still dominant at that time, this statement might not stand true for the whole Edo period.

When Kitamura Nobuyo 喜多村信節 (1783–1856), in his *zuihitsu* entitled *Kiyū shoran* 嬉遊笑覧, comments on *Jinrin kunmō zui*'s picture, he states that such a portrait is old-fashioned (KITAMURA 1979, 350–51), which implies that by his time this kind of diviner, and maybe the divination method itself, was no longer seen as reliable, at least in Edo city.

Did the *hakke uranai* fade away after the 1750s? It probably did, in urban contexts, where it was progressively replaced by “newer looking” *shin'eki* 心易 (a numerical *Yi Jing*-based method attributed to Shao Yong), *dan'eki* 斷易 (a hexagram-based method emphasizing more on the correlative properties rather than on *Yi jing* itself), and later by new yarrow-stalk techniques (re)created by Japanese authors, such as Hirazawa Zuitei 平澤隋貞 (1697–1780) and Arai Hakuga 新井白蛾 (1715–1792). This evolution is congruent with what can be observed in manuals. As Masuko has already shown, *hakke* books become more and more formulaic after the middle of the eighteenth century (MASUKO 2006). Moreover, with the (re) introduction of the nine stars (*kyūsei* 九星) technique via “domogonomy” books based on the Qing compilation *Xieji bianfang shu* (Jp. *Kyōki benhō-sho*) 協紀辨方書, *hakke* divination was driven to the verge of extinction, or assimilation (HAYEK 2010b). The nine stars technique is very close to annual transfer on the eight trigrams, and both can be seen coexisting in Dunhuang manuscripts (KALINOWSKI 2003, 269–81). However, Qing orthodoxy seemingly forgot about this ancient relation, as it declared the *hakke* divination to be a recent degradation of the nine stars method and tried to merge the two techniques. This judgment was not without consequence on the situation in Japan.

Nevertheless, judging from some transcripts of quarrels opposing *onmyōji* (diviners franchised by the Tsuchimikado family) and diviners of other obedience (HAYASHI 1987; 1994), some practitioners in the Edo area, lay or religious, were still using *hakke-bon* as references in 1770, and one could assume that eight trigrams divination did survive in the countryside, even if not in big cities. Not unlike what Yanagita Kunio asserted about dialects—that some words that are used at the cultural center of the time of their creation slowly but surely progress to the periphery, where they remain even after having disappeared from the center (YANAGITA 1930)—it seems that trigram divination was still in use in more rural areas up to the beginning of the twentieth century. I was able to find this method, with the lists, in a manual partially copied in 1928 which appears to have been circulating in a family of folk religion practitioners of the *Izanagiryū* イザナギ流 in the Kochi area, along with Meiji reprints of Edo “domogonomy” classics.¹⁸

18. I wish to express my gratitude here to Professor Komatsu Kazuhiko (IRCJS) for showing me the manuals he found during his own field work in the area.

The Early-Modern World View as seen through Divination

Having presented the evolution of *hakke* divination and established the identity of its users, I shall now discuss what can be learned of Edo mentality by analysis of the particulars of mainstream divination. As I have already pointed out in the first part of this article, the main addition made to trigram divination during the Edo period is indisputably the “list calculation” procedure.

At its core, list calculation (*mokurokusan* 目録算) is a technique by which a full hexagram can virtually be derived by means of a double or triple numerical conversion. Each trigram in the eight diagrams has an assigned number, and so does each object. Parameters such as direction, day, and hour are also reduced to primary numbers. First, the diviner needs to determine the attributed trigram of his client, depending on his birth date. Then, by a succession of additions and subtractions of numbers, he obtains a numerical result giving the position of the mantic function on the diagram corresponding to the attributed trigram. Subsequent procedure basically comes in two fashions, a complex one, which tends to disappear from books during the eighteenth century, and a simple one. The former considers separately the sixty-four possible combinations of trigrams—that is, full hexagrams. The latter yields results that are indexed to mantic functions.

The first folded books presented some elements, often manuscripts, indicating a form of correspondence between mantic functions, objects, and results was already established prior to the appearance of the second generation of books.

Early examples of these lists to some extent mirror what can be found in Chinese texts—they associate eight “purposes” or queries to each mantic function. This can be seen in “big” *hakke* books of the Genroku period that give a complete overview of each combination of trigram. Thus, the *Hakke ketteishū* provides the following eight categories: rank and remuneration (*kanroku* 官禄), diseases and epidemics (*shippei/shitsubyō* 疾病), husband and wife (*fusai* 夫妻), domesticity (*kenzoku* 眷属), habitation (*jūsho* 住所), warehouse (*kozō* 庫藏), enemy and resentment (*onteki* 怨敵), and finally longevity (*jumyō* 寿命). Besides these Chinese words we also find phrases in vernacular Japanese. These categories varied from book to book, but usually they can be broken down into some ten different queries: seen things (*mimono* 見物), heard things (*kikigoto* 聞事), obtained things (*emono* 得物), awaited person (*machibito* 待人, with sometimes a distinction between awaited person proper, and intrauterine awaited person *tainai machibito* 胎内待人), strange things (*keji* 怪事), lost things (*usemono* 失物, often works also for fugitive, *hashirimonō* 走物), hoped-for things (*negaigoto* 願事), travels (*kadoide* 門出), transactions (*baibai* 売買), trials and judgments (*kujizata* 公事沙汰), and dreams (*yume* 夢). Though most of these categories existed in divinatory methods long before the Edo period, they became considerably more numerous, detailed, and centered on individual fate during premodern times.

When embedded in lists, trigram divination primarily consists in numerical calculation. Upon asking the client what he wants to have looked at, the diviner needs to obtain a numerical parameter. Conveniently, the twelve earthly branches, as a key element of the Chinese correlative system, were used to represent time as well as space, that is, not only hours, days, months, and years but also directions were expressed by the branches. In the divinatory method in question, these twelve items are yet again associated with numbers from one to eight as follows: rat=6, ox-tiger=7, rabbit=4, dragon-snake=5, horse=3, sheep-monkey=8, rooster=2, dog-boar=1.

Another number is attached to each divination object, hence the word *nimokuroku* 二目録, “double entry list.”¹⁹ Having obtained the two numbers, the diviner adds them and then subtracts eight from the result if it is greater than eight. The final number indicates which mantic function should be used to produce the result of the divination. The soothsayer then refers to the list corresponding to this function. Of course, various other numerical operations or factors, based on the personal agent or the client, for example, might be invoked to refine the judgment. To make the process easier to understand, I shall try to simulate a divination by list.

Let’s assume that we are in Genroku 11 (1698), older earth-tiger. A thirty-two-year-old man (in the traditional counting fashion, *kazoedoshi* 数之年),²⁰ asks about something he saw at the hour of the dragon (between eight and ten in the morning). First, we need to determine his attributed trigram, *tōke*. Being thirty-two now, he was born in Kanbun 7 (1667), yin fire-sheep. He therefore belongs to the superior monad and to a group called *to*. We then check the diagram of the borrowed path. It indicates that we should start from the *Ri* 離 trigram, and count counterclockwise while skipping or counting twice several trigrams according to the rules.²¹ In the end, we obtain *Ri* as the *tōke* of that person. Besides, according to the graphic of the sixty (induced sounds), the agent of that

19. Another popular method, often added near the end of second or third generation *hakke* books, involved four different items/numbers, and was hence called “quadruple list,” *shimokuroku* 四目録.

20. In the traditional system, one is already one year old at birth, and gains one year every new year, without regard for the actual birth date.

21. The skipping and jumping of the trigram, or *koyuru-odoru* 越踊, implies that starting from the trigram corresponding to a given subperiod and sex, we should skip (*tobikoyuru*) the first 8th trigram, jump (count twice, *odoru*) on the 41st, skip the 48th, jump on the 81st, skip the 88th, and jump on the 101st. These rules are usually given with several ways to make the calculation easier. For example, early manuals suggest to count the years past twenty ten by ten or to abridge the first steps by counting 10 on the second trigram, and so on. For instance, starting from the *Ri* 離 trigram, one should skip *Son* 巽, count 10 on *Shin* 辰, skip *Gon* 艮, count 20 on *Kan* 坎, and so on, while “jumping” when necessary.

man is fire (over the sky). Next, we have to convert the parameters (hour of the day) into numbers as follows:

In our case, we retain 5, the number corresponding to the hour of the dragon. The “seen things” category is associated with the number 3.²² By adding the two values, we obtain 8. Since there is no need for subtraction, we then check the proper diagram in order to know the applicable mantic function. If *Ri* is the central trigram, the eighth position is held by the trigram *Kon* 坤, with the function *yūkon*, soul transfer. Here are the results given by BABA (1698): statue of Buddha (*honzon* 本尊), something adamant, nut, bone, quadruped, glittering thing from the sky, something unstable on its feet, wife. To know if the vision was a good or a bad omen, we have to match the agent of the consultant (fire) to that of the function (earth in this case). Since fire generates earth, we conclude the encounter was auspicious. Even if these results are sometimes obscure, they are seldom redundant (for a given category) or contradictory. On the contrary, they often prove to be surprisingly precise, especially when they give directions or places.

As one can see through this brief introduction to the method, its core nature can be summed up by a process of numerical encoding of the world through a correlative system in order to put the different factors in a simple equation, followed by a decoding of the results in the same way. Such a structure implies that diviners not only had to assimilate the correlative system written down in books, but they also had to be skilled in basic arithmetic. They had to be above average in terms of knowledge and education. Furthermore, given the relation between a diviner and his client, involving a double transaction—monetary on the one hand, and cognitive on the other—the encoding structure must have been explained in layman’s terms to the clients, informing their way to see the world and themselves. Moreover, the very categories of *hakke* divination are to be taken as an expression of the clients’ expectations and concerns.

As far as list calculation is concerned, it seems probable that the preoccupations of Edo commoners mainly revolved around three matters: the outcomes of ongoing actions or events (trials, requests, illness, and so forth), the consequences of things a client had experienced or would experience (strange events, encounters, verbal exchanges, travels, and so forth), and the whereabouts of

22. The fact that the number 3 is associated with the item “things seen” is highly relevant to how a mantic technique from China was transformed to fit in with Japan’s own correlative thinking. The Japanese reading for 3 is *mi(tsu)*, and so is the one for “to see,” *mi(ru)*, hence the connection. There is no way such a correlation could have preexisted in the Japanese adaptation of the *hakke* method. This kind of word play is crucial to understanding how Japanese diviners, as well as their clients, were able to link together phenomena which would seem totally unrelated. Such analogical thinking, deeply related to the very nature of the Japanese language, serves as a basis for other folk beliefs aside divination. Homophonic taboos, for instance, widely rely on similar associations (the most well known being the relation between the number 4, *shi*, and death, *shi*).

things and persons that were beyond the range of the client's vision or understanding (lost things, robbers, expected person, supernatural influence, and so forth). All of these have in common that they target something that has yet to actually happen. Therefore, it appears that trigram divination in its list calculation mode primarily concerns phenomena which are still in the realm of potentiality. One might object that this is true of any kind of divination, but this would be omitting the explanatory role divination can play: for example, unveiling the supernatural cause of an illness in order to find the most appropriate remedy used to be a crucial role of court diviners in the Heian period (HAYEK 2005).

What is more, it must be noted that most of the items in the lists are centered on individual fate, and the outcomes of the processes are depicted from the client's point of view. This is particularly true for the expected person category, an item that was already in Heian manuals and still appears today on paper omens (*omikuji* お御籤). As opposed to the Chinese word for this object, usually *xingren* 行人 (person who is going), the Japanese *machibito*, focuses on the individual who stayed behind, a Penelope expecting the arrival of her Ulysses who went away, where "away" appears as an utterly different and unknowable space.²³

Nonetheless, results of divination regarding these objects strike the viewer by their level of precision (directions, places), thanks to the expansiveness of the correlative system and the low redundancy for any given category. Such a specificity should be considered in association with two other properties of the technique: first, the rather linear character of the process; and second, the fixity of variables (time, objects, and so on). These variables are transformed in numerical data integrated via an invariant formula (addition then subtraction), so that with the same parameters one will always obtain the same results, and those results do not depend on an interpretation but rather are to be found on a preexisting list. All of this points out the utterly predetermined structure of this mantic method.

This is not to say that Edo commoners were living under the pressure of an unavoidable, preset fate, since there are indeed exceptions and limits to predetermined results. Illness, for instance, is clearly the most ambiguous object of divination. Some manuals simply avoid including diseases among the items of listed results, while others give up to six parameters to a list calculation for

23. This perception of the outside of a given social group/space as "another world" echoes Komatsu Kazuhiko's views on the status of the "stranger" *ijin* 異人在 Japanese folklore. The *ijin*, a kind of absolute "other," when arriving in a group he does not pertain to, coming from "another world" might be taken as a scapegoat and murdered for no other reasons than his "otherness." The *machibito* here is in some way the reflection of the *ijin*: to the group where the *ijin* arrives, he is a stranger coming from the "outside" and therefore carrying various "negative," inauspicious omen potentially harmful to the community. However, for the people he left behind, he is someone who went to the unfriendly "outside" and who they anxiously long for (KOMATSU 1995).

illness, or clearly warn the reader to make the appropriate verifications (that is, to double-check the result via another method) before stating the result of divination. Therefore, though there is a strong tendency for both parties to the divinatory transaction (diviner/client) to prefer predetermined results, there are several arrangements made to circumvent the intolerability of a totally preset fate.

All in all, I would say that predetermined results themselves express a form of systemized thinking, insofar as they relate to a categorization of the phenomenal world, and also a form of rational thinking: even if the results are predetermined, the relation between them and their causes, for example original data transformed and encoded through mantic parameters and functions, follows a well organized formula. In that regard, we can try to find some sort of symmetry between the systematic character of these relationships and the social organization of the Edo period. In the highly hierarchized and relatively static Edo society, with a central power (the *bakufu*) trying to categorize people in a rigid and easily controllable classification, the clients of the diviners were seeking systemized relations of consequences, with the same causes inevitably producing the same effects.

Conclusion: Divination, Beliefs, Superstitions, and Their Sociocultural Context

Divination, as a cultural feature bound by social and historical borders, tells us a great deal about its users. In this brief overview, I have tried to shed light on a largely unknown, though essential, type of mantic technique. *Hakke* divination, as I observed, began to fade away at the end of the Edo period (the first half of the nineteenth century). It was either supplanted by newly-formed techniques, like the abridged yarrow stalks method of Hirazawa Zuitei and Arai Hakuga, or else absorbed, as was its Chinese avatar, in a new form of “nine stars” divination. Over the more than two and half centuries of Tokugawa rule, it had the time to be widely popularized, not only by the diviners, but also by household encyclopedia (*setsuyō-shū* 節用集, *chōhōki* 重宝記) and almanacs (*ōzassho* 大雑書) directed toward readers of commoner status (HAYASHI and KOIKE 2002, 193–94).

Although it declined in the last decades of the Edo period, its influence is still palpable in various terms remaining in contemporary Japanese. The expression in four characters used to design an inextricable situation, *zettai zetsumei* 絶体絶命, for instance, though mistakenly linked to “nine stars” divination in most dictionaries, comes directly from the *hakke-bon*. This is also true for the expression *honkegaeri* 本卦還り, which marks the fact that someone has turned sixty years old and is sometimes used in place of a more common term, *kanreki* 還暦 (literally, complete calendar loop). *Honke* here designs the main trigram, that is, the attributed trigram afferent to the birth year.

However, the exact meaning of these expressions is almost, if not totally, lost to common understanding. Correlative schemes that were once used routinely by

Japanese (and Chinese) to define their place in the universe and to obtain some insight regarding their personal interactions have gone out of use. Though the practice of divination based on the analogico-symbolical network is still alive, the intricate relation between that system and a given individual cannot compare to what it used to be.

As I have shown in this article, one of the key features sustaining most mantic procedures of Chinese origins involving fixed variables is the capacity to integrate any phenomenon into a mantic “formula” via a correlative encoding. Trigram divination is no exception to this feature. Directions and dates share the same symbols, and so do human beings, mainly through their birth dates. More often than not, the main purpose of such a divinatory system is to provide, in addition to a glance at the future, simple categories whose interactions can be predicted through a correlative preset. Ultimately, the *clef de voûte* of the integration of individuals into the system is the sexagesimal calendar, hence the predominance of the subperiod calculation in *hakke* books. The suppression of this calendar interface at the beginning of the Meiji era and its replacement by a “new” (Western) calendar, lacking such correlative properties (at least to a Japanese audience), inevitably led to a loosening of the bonds between people and their “traditional” world view. This might have been done on purpose: Meiji reformers did want to put an end to what they labeled as “superstitions” (*meishin* 迷信). What this word meant in the mind of the reformers could be subject to discussion, but from the point of view of sociology of knowledge, a superstition is a form of belief in an arbitrary causal relation, that is to say, a relation of the type [if A, then B] lacking any explicative premise (BRONNER 2003). Going back to the shift of calendar, we can say that by cutting out the correlative network, which played the role of a cognitive interface between divinatory parameters and divinatory results, the reformers actually contributed to the creation of superstitions, in the sense that all the hemerological lore, having lost its premises, became a mere set of arbitrary beliefs.

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