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Musical Toys Offered to Gods at Miho Shrine Instruments for Renewing Ritual Communication

This article investigates the socioreligious roles that musical toys and miniatures have performed in the modern development of the Miho cult. Miho Shrine in Shimane Prefecture developed a distinctive practice of accepting donations of musical instruments to the deities enshrined there, which was supported by a local tradition that the deities are extremely fond of music. Along with sophisticated instruments, miniatures and simple musical toys also began to be brought into the shrine from the Meiji period onward. This article takes a comprehensive look at sociohistorical, ethnographical, sound-cultural, and other aspects to identify new networks formed through the toys' circulation. These networks helped to create modern conceptions of the ritual power imparted to small musical objects, giving new explanations to secular music, new ritual roles to miniature and toy musical instruments, and even new features to the Miho deities. In particular, the essential features of the toys—small musical objects that are physically manipulated—were a basis for the modern evolution of the cult.

KEYWORDS: musical instrument—Miho Shrine—toy—Ebisu—Mihotsuhime—*katashiro* (*hitogata*)

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MIHO SHRINE 美保神社, located at the east end of the Shimane Peninsula in Shimane Prefecture (FIGURE 1), has a unique connection to music. The shrine is well known for rituals connected to the myths of Okuninushi's ceding the land to Amaterasu, namely *Aofushigaki shinji* 青柴垣神事 (green twig fence rite) and *Morotabune shinji* 諸手船神事 (two ships rite).¹ The shrine also developed a distinctive practice of accepting donations of musical instruments to the deities enshrined there. Although the shrine insists on the medieval origins of this tradition, claiming that an old drum in their possession is the only offering that survived the disasters of the wars of the Genki period (1570–1572), the custom has likely flourished since the latter half of the Edo period.

The earliest donation with historical evidence is an *ōtsuzumi* 大鼓, a type of drum used for Noh and Kabuki, which, according to the catalog of treasures, antiques, and documents kept at the shrine, *Kokuhei chūsha Miho jinja hōmotsu kokibutsu komonjo mokuroku* 国幣中社美保神社寶物古器物古文書目録 dated to 19 June 1885,² was dedicated by the first lord of Matsue domain, Matsudaira Masanao 松平政直 (1601–1666) in 1645. This was followed by several dedications of refined instruments from the upper ruling class of the domain, wealthy merchants, and owners of large ships.³ As a result, the shrine has an extensive collection of musical instruments, including hundreds of high-quality examples from sophisticated musical genres such as Gagaku and Noh and from popular performance genres that developed in the Edo period. The collection includes 224 percussion instruments, 231 wind instruments, 34 string instruments, and 41 instruments of other types—including bells, wooden clappers, a music box, accordions, and a wind instrument made of stone. Some of these instruments are extremely rare, such as a Western music box and accordions, an *iwafue* 岩笛 (a stone whistle used for ritual purposes), and a *yakumokoto* 八雲琴 (an unusual

1. Detailed notes on the rituals held at Miho Shrine, including these two, are in WAKAMORI 1980, 145–261. The Miho cult attracted academic interest in its distinctive system of rituals centering on lay priests functioning as mediums.

2. The shrine priest explained that the catalog was edited based on evidence such as register books that list offerings or attached documentation that existed at that time, although they cannot identify which are the original sources now. In 1645, the deities of Miho were reinstalled in the newly rebuilt shrine.

3. Many of these instruments were donated at critical times, along with prayers for such things as recovery from serious disease, protracted and difficult voyages, success in warfare, safe childbirth, and the safe and healthy life of weak children (OUCHI 2018, 55).



FIGURE 1. The main building of Miho Shrine.

FIGURE 2. A miniature *shō* (mouth organ).



FIGURE 3. *Hato bue* (bird whistles).

	NAME IN JAPANESE	ENGLISH TRANSLATION	NUMBER	AVERAGE SIZE	DATE	NOTES
1. Offerings Listed as "toys" in the National Important Folk Cultural Property Catalog (<i>Kuni shitei jiyō yūkei minzoku bunkazai</i> 国指定重要有形民俗文化財)	A. Elaborate miniature					
		<i>shamisen</i> 三味線	9	15 cm long	n.d.	The only exception is the one donated by a local of Mihonoseki in 1906 (Meiji 39)
		<i>suzu</i> 鈴	7		n.d.	The most elaborate bell donated by the former Lord of Matsue Domain in 1877 (Meiji 9)
		<i>shō</i> 笙	11	7 cm long, 3 cm wide	n.d.	
		<i>koto</i> 琴/箏	12	15 cm long	n.d.	
		<i>sangyoku</i> <i>bue</i> 三曲笛	23	10 cm long	After Meiji period?	See note 18 in the text.
		<i>teppan taiko</i> 鉄板太鼓	29	1.5–5 cm long 3–4 diameter	n.d. After Meiji period, based on the material.	Shaped into <i>kotsuzumi</i> 小鼓 (Figure 11), <i>ōsuzumi</i> 大鼓, and <i>nōgaku / sarugaku daiiko</i> 能楽 / 猿樂太鼓
		<i>tebiragane</i> 手平鉦	3	4 cm diameter		
		<i>hamonika</i>	15	4–7 cm long	Showa period, based on the period of popularization of the original instrument.	
		<i>akōdion</i>	2		n.d.	
	<i>horagai</i> 法螺貝	4		n.d.		

	NAME IN JAPANESE	ENGLISH TRANSLATION	NUMBER	AVERAGE SIZE	DATE	NOTES
	<i>dō</i> 鞆	drum with a long body and drum-heads fastened with rivets			n.d.	Small <i>dō</i> -type drums listed in the group of musical instruments when designated as a national important tangible folk cultural property should be classified as miniatures of this type of drum
B. Simpler Toys for Children	<i>take bue</i> 竹笛	short bamboo flute	169	15 cm long	n.d.	
	<i>mizu bue</i> 水笛	water pipe	16	13 cm long	n.d.	
	<i>garagara</i> ガラガラ	rattle	13	13 cm long	n.d.	
	<i>hato bue</i> 鳩笛	flute in the shape of pigeon	3	11 cm long / 4 cm wide	n.d.	wooden
2. Offerings of Toy Instruments Not Included in the the National Important Folk Cultural Property Catalog		1. Rattles bearing the crest of Miho Shrine and the name of the town (Figure 7).		15 cm long	Taisho or Showa Era, based on their coloring and the inclusion of the town's name	Because of their miscellaneous nature, thorough research on these items is difficult. I include in this catalog some remarkable toys relevant to my argument
		2. Whistles probably shaped like a charamela		12–15 cm long	Taisho or Showa Era, based on their coloring	A charamela is a type of double-reed wind introduced from China in the sixteenth century. The Chinese original was called a <i>suona</i> 唢呐

TABLE 1. Miniature and toy musical instruments donated to Miho Shrine.

type of zither related to the Izumo cult).⁴ The collection was therefore designated as an important tangible folk cultural property by the Japanese government (Kunishitei jūyō yūkei minzoku bunkazai 国指定重要有形民俗文化財) in 1960.⁵

Aside from these instruments, the catalog of the important tangible folk cultural property includes 316 small objects shaped as musical instruments, which were also donated to the shrine and have broadly been defined as toys. In fact, these items can be divided into two categories: a) elaborate miniature renditions of instruments, hereafter referred to as “miniatures,” and b) toy instruments, hereafter referred to as “toys.” Other donated toys that have been kept at the shrine are not listed in the catalog (See TABLE 1). The miniatures are beautiful objects, probably not intended for use in actual performances. Among the objects in this category are *shō* 笙 (mouth organ) used for Gagaku (FIGURE 2), different types of metal drums such as *tsuzumi* 鼓 and *sarugaku daiko* 猿樂太鼓 used for Noh and Kabuki, *koto* 琴/箏 (long zither), *shamisen* 三味線, *sangyoku bue* 三曲笛, and so on. The toys, including *take bue* 竹笛 (bamboo flutes), *mizu bue* 水笛 (water pipes), rattles, and *hato bue* 鳩笛 (pigeon shaped flutes), seem to be capable of producing sound, possibly for children’s play (FIGURE 3).

When these small objects were designated as important tangible folk cultural properties, they were classified under the general term of *gangu* or *omocha* 玩具 (toys), which led to a biased assumption that both types were donated to pray for the healthy growth and happiness of children (HŌRI 1959, 18). This apparently straightforward but unilateral association of musical toys with the protection of children overlooks the possibility of donation for other purposes, masking instead of revealing the complex cultic practices held at Miho Shrine.

My study goes beyond previous explanations, contextualizing the ethnographical evidence by considering these objects alongside historical and modern sources, and exploring how the practice of dedicating miniatures and toys formed, who brought musical objects to the shrine, what special roles the small objects performed, and how this practice related to the musical or sound culture at and around the shrine. My comprehensive approach identifies new networks created through the toys’ circulation that helped to create modern conceptions

4. I am deeply grateful to the head priest Yokoyama Haruyuki 横山陽之, who gave me special permission to access important property, and to the deputy head priest Yokoyama Naomasa 横山直正, who kindly provided me with a list of the musical instruments and explained the instruments and the rituals related to them. For a detailed analysis on the collection, see OUCHI (2018, 54–56).

5. See the page on the *Miho jinja hōnō narimono* 美保神社奉納鳴物 in the Kunishitei bunkazaitō dēta bēsu 国指定文化財等データベース at the official website of the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan: <https://kunishitei.bunka.go.jp/bsys/maindetails.asp> (accessed 21 July 2018).



FIGURE 4. Modern images of Ebisu and Mihotsuhime. The statue is at the entrance to Mihonoseki town.

of the ritual power imparted to these objects. This enables a better understanding of the rich socioreligious dynamics at the shrine.

Musical Offerings and Sacred Economies

Miho Shrine is well known for its important role in the myths of Izumo. According to the *Izumo no kuni fudoki* 出雲国風土記, one of the oldest gazetteers in Japan compiled around 750, there was a shrine dedicated to the deity of Miho at the eastern end of the Shimane Peninsula, which had been formed by combining parts of the Oki Islands, the Korean Peninsula, and the Noto Peninsula, and sewing them to the land of Izumo (*Izumo no kuni fudoki*, 160–61). This text also records that there was a shrine on the headlands of Miho dedicated to Mihosusumi no mikoto 美保須々美命, a child of Ōkuninushi 大国主 and Nunagawahime no mikoto 奴奈宣波比売命, who was a daughter of the god of Koshi 越.

According to Yoshida Kanetomo's 吉田兼俱 (1435–1511) *Engishiki jinmyōchō tōchū* 延喜式神名帳頭註 (A Commentary on the *Engishiki jinmyōchō*), two deities from Yamato mythology, Mihotsuhime no mikoto 美穂津姫命 and Kotoshiro-nushi no mikoto 事代主命, had been designated the main deities of the shrine (*Engishiki jinmyōchō tōchū*, 576). Senge Toshizane 千家俊信 (1746–1831), a member of the main sacerdotal lineage of Izumo Shrine, explained that Kotoshiro-nushi's enshrinement at Miho was based on descriptions of his frequent visits to

that site in the second half of the “Kamiyo” 神代 (Age of gods) chapter of the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (*Izumo no kuni shikisha kō* 出雲国式社考, 279–80).⁶

It is not until *Izumo no kuni Miho ryōgū engi* 出雲国美穂両宮縁起 (Origin Story of the Two Miho Shrines, 1753) that we find the earliest documentation connecting Miho shrine to Ebisu. This document shows that in the mid Edo period the shrine understood Mihotsuhime to be the guardian deity of rich harvests, conjugal harmony, and safe births, and Kotoshironushi to be a deity of safe voyages, family prosperity, successful business, prosperous fishing, and the great virtues of loyalty and filiality, who is also known as Ebisu (FIGURE 4).⁷

The document does not indicate that Ebisu is a music lover, but mentions a local story that a ship carrying musical instruments cannot leave from Miho Bay. Senge clarified that the deity enshrined there loves musical instruments so ardently that a ship carrying instruments can never set out to sea (*Izumo no kuni shikisha kō*, 280). This helps to explain the practice of donating musical instruments to the shrine, but does not necessarily indicate that the practice had become popular by the early nineteenth century.

Mihonoseki enjoyed immense prosperity thanks to the cult at Miho Shrine and its important position on the shipping route between Osaka and northern Japan.⁸ The shrine’s high status in Izumo was supported by this economic potential. Along with local products such as cotton, a special kind of carrot (*otane ninjin* 御種人参), iron, and talismans (*ofuda* お札) from Izumo Shrine, *Un’yō koku eki kagami* 雲陽国益鑑 (list of large revenue sources to Izumo, ca. 1820) describes three income sources related to Mihonoseki, namely *Mihonoseki mairi mono* 三保関参物 (income from pilgrims to Miho Shrine), *Mihonoseki ton’ya* 三保関問屋

6. Senge, an earnest follower of Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730–1801), led the Kokugaku movement at Izumo. The *Izumo no kuni shikisha kō* was published after an enlargement by his disciple Iwamasa Sanehiko 岩政信比古 (1790–1857).

7. Ebisu originated as a maritime god that emerged from the sea, typically from a stone on the seabed. Later he came to be regarded as a deity of prosperity, with specific associations for different professions; he ensured a good catch in fishing communities and flourishing rice fields in the countryside, as well as protecting markets and merchants. In the mythological discourse, he is identified with Kotoshironushi or Hiruko 蛭子 (the “leech child”), who was the first child of Izanagi and Izanami. Ebisu is identified with Hiruko at Nishinomiya Shrine (YOSHII 1999; KITAMI 1991). My previous investigation of the expensively produced instruments donated to Miho Shrine revealed the development of this unique tradition based on Ebisu as a maritime deity in conjunction with mythology about Empress Jingu 神功, performances of *kagura* 神楽 and other musical rites at the shrine, and theories established by local proponents of the Kokugaku movement during the late Edo period (OUCHI 2018).

8. The shipping route was called *kitamaebune* 北前船. *Wakan sansai zue* 和漢三才図会, the illustrated encyclopedia compiled by Terajima Ryōan 寺島良安 (1645–n.d.) in 1713, listed Mihonoseki as one of the ports of the route from Osaka to northern Japan (*hokkoku* 北国). There used to be many wholesale houses, each of which doubled as lodging for merchants and sailors from specific regions.

(trade income at Mihonoseki), and *Mihonoseki yūsho* 三保閑遊所 (income from entertainment). The most substantial income to the shrine came from pilgrims, but, even as they contributed to the well-being of the town, they did not necessarily make generous donations to the shrine. Most of their expenses were for lodging and purchases at shops in front of the shrine.

Entertainment, including feasts for which female musicians and dancers called “geisha” were hired, also brought large revenues to the region. Visiting merchants and sailors paid a great deal for these secular and partly sensual amusements, which added another attraction for visitors in addition to the divine power that could protect their voyages.⁹ The steady stream of visitors to the town provided local people with regular income that indirectly supported the shrine management, since local people were also tasked with carrying out designated ritual practices.¹⁰ They were grateful to the deities of Miho Shrine for being able to enjoy peaceful and happy lives.

The community of visitors and locals that formed around this religio-economic complex was maintained into modern times, as is indicated in travel essays written by authors such as Lafcadio Hearn (1850–1904) and Tayama Katai 田山花袋 (1872–1930). Hearn visited the town three times, in 1891, 1892, and 1896, and turned his authorial, folklorist eye to this subject. His vivid descriptions include important evidence about the souvenirs sold at Mihonoseki.

And in Mionoseki¹¹ there are sold beautiful little saké cups and saké bottles, upon which are pictures of the four pines, and above the pictures, in spidery text of gold, the “Seki no gohon matsu.” These are for keepsakes, and there are many other curious and pretty souvenirs to buy in those pretty shops: porcelains bearing the picture of the Mionoseki temple, and metal clasps for tobacco pouches representing Koto-shito-nushi no-Kami trying to put a big *tai*-fish into a basket too small for it, and funny masks of glazed earthenware representing the laughing face of the god. (HEARN 1894, 2: 565)

9. *Hokkoku kaijō nikki* 北国海上日記 (Diary of a Sea Trip Through the Northern Regions) by a skipper named Kawato Jindai 川渡甚大夫 (1807–1872) shows sailors’ deep faith in the deities enshrined at Miho and the vivid presence of prostitutes in the port town Mihonoseki (*Hokkoku kaijō nikki* 290).

10. The Miho cult maintained an earlier system by which senior community members—non licensed priests—organized events. Temporary priests appointed by divine oracle served the deities, taking turns working as mediums, whose words powerfully supported the community. After priests licensed by the Shirakawa family came to lead the system during the mid Edo period, the locals continued to be involved in managing the main rituals of the shrine. It seems to be after the Meiji period that licensed priests came to lead the main rituals. See the detailed historical and ethnographical research on the Miho cult in WAKAMORI (1980).

11. “Mionoseki” is Hearn’s original spelling of the name of the town.

On the way to Miojinja,¹² I notice, in multitudes of little shops, fascinating displays of baskets and utensils made of woven bamboo. Fine bamboo-ware is indeed the *meibutsu*, the special product of Mionoseki; and almost every visitor buys some nice little specimen to carry home with him.

(HEARN 1894, 1: 235)

Very sleepy and quiet by day is Mionoseki.... But at night Mionoseki is one of the noisiest and merriest little heavens of Western Japan. From one horn of its crescent to the other the fires of the *shokudai*, which are the tall lights of banquets, mirror themselves in the water; and the whole air palpitates with sounds of revelry. Everywhere one hears the booming of the *tsudzumi*, the little hand-drums of the geisha, and sweet plaintive chants of girls, and tinkling of *samisen*, and the reassured clapping of hands in the dance, and the wild cries and laughter of the players at *ken*.¹³ And all these are but echoes. Verily, the nature of sailors differs but little the world over. Every good ship which visits Mionoseki leaves there, so I am assured, from three hundred to five hundred yen for saké and for dancing-girls. Much do these mariners pray to the Great Deity who hates eggs to make calm the waters and favorable the winds, so that Mionoseki may be reached in good time without harm. But having come hither over an unruffled sea with fair soft breezes all the way, small indeed is the gift which they give to the temple of the god, and marvelously large the sums which they pay unto geisha and keepers of taverns. But the god is patient and long-suffering—except in the matter of eggs. (HEARN 1894, 1: 237–38)

These passages contain two points that are relevant to my discussion. One is that sailors' faith in the "Great Deity," namely Kotoshironushi as Ebisu enshrined at Miho Shrine, brought in large profits to the locals who served the deities. The other is that, although Hearn describes the lively atmosphere of the village and noted that almost every visitor bought special local products such as baskets and bamboo utensils, he mentions nothing about the sale of toys or about instrument offerings. An observant writer with ardent curiosity about Japanese culture, including its music, Hearn would not have failed to notice and record the presence of musical toys related to religious customs. This suggests that the custom of offering toy instruments was not popular in his time, but developed afterwards.

Moreover, Hearn describes the nights of the shrine town Mionoseki as full of secular sounds. Some of them are musical sounds (of *samisen*, *tsuzumi*, hand-drums [*sarugaku daiko*], singing, and hand clapping), while others are the wild cries and laughter of banquet pleasures.

12. "Miojinja" is Hearn's original spelling of the name of the shrine.

13. *Ken* probably refers to the game "rock, paper, and scissors." As a banquet game, losers would have been given penalties such as having to drink saké.

It should be noted that music was profoundly involved in the economic circulation among the guests, the community, and the shrine, attracting geisha and, eventually, their families and relatives. The noisy nights caused by the mariners embracing the Great Deity brought prosperity to the community, which consequently supported the shrine economy, even though far less money was directly dedicated to the shrine.

The geisha played instruments, danced, and sang songs, but also occasionally worked as prostitutes. Some were from the town and, according to extant contracts from the late Edo period, some were bought on long-term indentured contracts from other places by slave trade agencies (MIHONOSEKICHŌ-SHI HENSAN INKAI 1986, 358–73).

Tayama Katai, a leading author of naturalist literature and the editor of the *Shinsen meisshō chishi* 新選名勝地誌 (New topography of scenic places), provides us with additional information about the town. In his travel essay *Sansui shōki* 山水小記 (Short Essays on Landscapes), Tayama, who visited Mihonoseki about twenty years after Hearn, describes nights filled with lively music:

Every girl in this town serves feasts by playing the *shamisen*. People here wish to have daughters rather than sons. Most guests here call in this type of woman and have a good time. They explain that hiring local geisha to perform means dedicating *kagura* to Miho Shrine. Then the sounds of *shamisen* and drums fill the small town.

(TAYAMA 1994, 662)

Tayama's report conveys that, despite its partly licentious characteristics, people of the town had a positive attitude toward the income they got from entertaining with music. Importantly, the guests explained (perhaps based on what their local hosts told them) that boisterous merrymaking with music was identical to offering *kagura* 神楽 to the deities of Miho Shrine. On the one hand, this can be read as an excuse for having a noisy feast accompanied by female performers. On the other hand, it can be seen as indicating a local system in which the proceeds of somewhat vulgar banquets indirectly supported the shrine management. As we will see later, the local newspaper *Mihonoseki shinbun* shows that the locals highlighted the appealing figures of geisha who served at banquets as attractions of the town. Female *shamisen* performers were one of the most powerful sources of economic development in the town.

Kagura is a comprehensive term covering different types of ritual performance formed by song, music, dance, and plays. A performance of *kagura* can be enacted for a variety of purposes such as offerings to deities, blessing people, exorcisms, and pacifying the dead. The core idea common to the variety of performances carried out under the appellation *kagura* is to invite deities to this world and activate their power for gaining divine messages, protection, and blessings. Apart from those performed during imperial rituals, a variety of

kagura styles have been maintained throughout Japan.¹⁴ In Western Honshu, *kagura* performances depict a mystic world based on stories collected in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. In these performances, the dance of Ebisu is a popular part of the repertoire (ISHIZUKA 1979, 164–66). As a general method of worshipping deities, visitors to shrines occasionally sponsor *kagura* by performers affiliated with the shrines. These ritual dances accompanied by music mediate various kinds of prayer to the divine world.

Miho Shrine has maintained a *kagura* tradition of dedicating ritual dances performed by *miko* 巫女 with the accompaniment of drums and flutes at designated times as daily services and when offered by visitors.¹⁵ Since *kagura* dedications need to be funded, Tayama's report about the banquet music raises two points. One is that the locals and visitors regarded geisha performances as an equivalent to *kagura*. The other is that consorting with geisha brought in revenue that was used, in part and indirectly, to pay for daily or regular *kagura* at the shrine, which substantially supported the shrine system.

Additionally, the revelries with sensual music and dance at such occasions can bring about a distinctive atmosphere beyond that of ordinary life, causing a type of ecstasy. This may also be behind the insistence that merrymaking with geisha was equivalent to *kagura* dedication. If so, the sounds of *shamisen*, drums, and singing were regarded as *kagura* music dedicated to the divinities at the shrine.

Thus, at Mihonoseki during the Edo period, a close correlation formed between the shrine management and the local economy, which survived into modern times. Divine power attracted visitors, who paid for musical and sensual entertainment provided at the town, and the profit gained through local business supported the shrine's financial system.

Such dynamic correlations crossing the border between the divine and mundane spheres were not unique to Mihonoseki, but were seen at many pilgrimage towns from the late Edo period. A typical example is the popular pilgrimage to

14. There are still debates as to how *kagura* should be classified. In his monumental research, Honda Yasuji 本田安次 organized popular *kagura* based on detailed fieldwork. Honda's categories, widely accepted among academics, are: *miko kagura*, Izumo-type or *torimono* 採物 *kagura*, Ise-type *kagura*, *yamabushi* 山伏 *kagura*, *shishi* 獅子 *kagura*, and other types performed for rituals. However, recent scholarship casts doubt upon the validity of these classifications. For a recent discussion, see the report of the symposium "Kagura no honshitsu to hen'yō" (MINZOKU GEINŌ GAKKAI, 2015), particularly the keynote speech entitled "What is *kagura*?" by Yamaji Kōzō 山路興造; see also INOUE (2016). For the history of modern research on *kagura* begun by scholars like Orikuchi Shinobu 折口信夫 and Kodera Yūkichi 小寺融吉 in the early Showa period, see IWATA (1990).

15. According to the present shrine priests of Miho Shrine, the *kagura* performed as daily services and ordinary rituals there, called *Shin no mikagura* 真御神楽 ("proper" *kagura*), was introduced from Izumo Shrine. However, both the music and dance differ from those performed at Izumo.



FIGURE 5. Water whistle inscribed with the donor's sex and age.



FIGURE 6. Used toys.



FIGURE 7. A rattle inscribed with the crest of Miho Shrine and the name of the town.

FIGURE 8. *Sangyoku bue* and its case.

Ise (*ise mairi* 伊勢参り) or *ise kō* 伊勢講), which was both a religious practice and pleasure trip, setting pilgrims free from worldly constraints, including the sexual and moral (SHINJŌ 1966, 112–25).¹⁶

What is noticeable in the case of Miho is that the music culture was deeply involved in this correlation. Although the role of music in pilgrimage may not be unique to Miho, the community around Miho Shrine tended to use music in positive and intentional ways to support a profitable religio-economic system. As we have seen from Tayama's report, townspeople even regarded boisterous sounds as divine offerings. Therefore, it is reasonable to surmise that new customs were developed based on the traditional notion that the deities enshrined at Miho Shrine were fond of music.

Offering Miniature and Toy Instruments to the Shrine

Now that we have explored the social background for the practice of donating musical instruments, let us see what the material ethnographic evidence reveals about devotion to the deities at the shrine, the town's economic system, and the music/sound culture. Along with the miniatures and toys dedicated to the

16. Hara Jun'ichirō investigated how the popularization and secularization of pilgrimage to Ōyama in the Sagami region developed in the seventeenth century, addressing the custom of breaking abstinence after devotional practice (*shōjin otoshi* 精進落とし), including through prostitution (HARA 2007, 137–61).

shrine, most of which are listed in the catalog submitted for designation as a national important tangible folk cultural property, I will examine the register books that list offerings for the shrine, the local newspaper *Mihonoseki shinbun*, and my interviews with shrine priests and locals as supporting materials.¹⁷

The modern donations have three notable features. First, many are inscribed with the donor's sex and the age or the year of birth in Chinese astrology (FIGURE 5). Donors believed that this information was important when offering the objects. Second, the worn-out surfaces of some of the musical toys suggest that they were offered after their use (FIGURE 6). This differs considerably from the pristine or well-kept instruments donated in earlier times. Third, the crest of Miho Shrine and the name of the town on the rattle suggest that these toy instruments were probably sold in shops around Miho Shrine (FIGURE 7). We can imagine that some of these items were offered to the shrine while others were brought back home as souvenirs for children.

The miniatures are detailed, faithful reproductions. Making them required both knowledge of the original instruments and considerable craftsmanship. The donors probably offered these items to the shrine for the same reason that people in the Edo period donated full-sized high-quality musical instruments: because the Miho deities loved musical dedications. The objects reveal important features of this new trend. Examples such as *koto*, *shamisen*, *shō*, *kotsuzumi*, *ōtsuzumi*, and *nōgaku/sarugaku daiko* indicate that the donors were from a social class familiar with the musical arts and thus educated enough to recognize the original instruments and to appreciate their cultural value. This is particularly evident in the *sangyoku bue* (FIGURE 8), which shows the influence of a *nishikie* 錦絵 work entitled *Yokobue* 横笛 (transverse flute) by Utagawa Kunisada 歌川国貞, the second (1823–1880) from his series *Omokage genji gojūyo jō* 佛源氏五十四帖.¹⁸ The elaborate miniatures were less expensive than full-sized high-quality musical instruments, while not being cheap. This may also suggest the social class of the new type of donors. But what caused the shift from actual instruments to miniatures? A closer investigation of the craftsmen of such sophisticated objects, as well as the donors and how they acquired the miniatures, is

17. I am deeply grateful to the second head priest, Yokoyama Naomasa of Miho Shrine, the local people, particularly local historian and leader of a local development project in the town, Mishihiro Nubumi 三代暢實, and the senior curator of Matsue Rekishikan, Shinshō Masanori 新庄正典, for helping me to gather meaningful ethnographical information for this research.

18. The print depicts an ensemble of *koto*, *shamisen*, and *yokobue*. This is not a regular combination of instruments for a *sangyoku* ensemble, which generally consists of the *koto*, *shamisen*, and *shakuhachi* 尺八 or *kokyū* 胡弓 (a type of fiddle introduced from China). Without Kunisada's print *Yokobue*, therefore, the idea of creating this miniature *sangyoku bue* would not have come about. Further supporting the likelihood that this *nishikie* influenced the miniature, the case containing the miniature is decorated with a branch of blossoming plum, and *Umegae* 梅が枝 (Plum Branch) is the title of another work in the print series *Omokage genji gojūyo jō*.



FIGURE 9. Toy bamboo flutes.

needed to fully answer this question, and I have not found the sources to pursue these avenues of inquiry at this point. I here confine myself to examining some clues for the distinctive features of toy dedications, looking at what the miniature offerings themselves suggest.

Official registration confirmed karmic ties between the donor and the deity to whom a donation was offered, but, unlike the dedications from earlier periods of expensive and sophisticated full-sized instruments, most of the miniature and toy offerings were not entered in the shrine's offering register. Therefore, we do not know the dates, the names of the donors, or the purposes of the miniature and toy offerings, even though they are listed in the national tangible folk cultural property catalog. Two exceptions are three sets of small bells dedicated in 1876 by Matsudaira Sadayasu 松平定安 (1835–1882), the former Lord of Matsue domain, and two miniature *shamisen* offered by a native of Miho in 1906.

The absence of information in the register suggests that either the shrine office did not think these donations needed to be registered, or the donors did not want to register that information. Although it is unclear why this was the case, the most plausible reason is that the size of the objects may have made them somewhat less precious and thus not worthy of being recorded. Miniatures were also not meant to be used in any way that was not purely aesthetic, unlike the actual instruments that could be used to produce sounds. In fact, as we will see in a discussion below about a special ritual maintained at the shrine, in this cultic context the sound of instruments was connected to musical dedication to the deities or to the emergence of the deities. Thus, the donation of objects shaped like musical instruments that were not actually created to make music may not have been considered of the same standing. The toy instruments, not all of which were registered, could be used for making sounds, but they are simple and less sophisticated than the actual instruments. This indicates the reason for the omission from the registers. Yet, size and lack of sound may not be the only explanation

for their omission; these unregistered objects also indicate that donors sought a way of sending offerings to deities without the mediation of the shrine. Although prepared and donated with clear ritual intent, they were conceived as donations that did not warrant or require official registration. We can see here the development of a new relationship among the deities, the donors, and the shrine, with a looser but more direct tie between the donors and the deities. This is a remarkable feature of the modern development of the distinctive practice of offering instruments to Miho Shrine. But were donors satisfied with an unauthorized and looser tie to the deities enshrined at Miho? A clue to answering this question may lie in considering the type of donors who privileged this type of silent donation, although the lack of records makes an investigation extremely difficult. One is left wondering whether the donors were not recorded on purpose, due to their social status, or accidentally, due to the context of their donation. Either way, I argue that this resulted in the formation of a direct tie between the donors and the deities.

The donation of toy instruments to Miho Shrine provides further information about what this modest relationship signifies. The musical toys differ from the miniatures in several ways, aside from the toys' practical use as sound-producing objects for children. First, they are apparently cheaper and simpler than the miniatures. Second, the similar appearance of a large number of bamboo flutes and water whistles shows that they were easily acquired merchandise (FIGURE 9). A researcher who worked on the survey of the offerings for designation as a national important tangible folk cultural property reported that souvenir shops in front of the shrine sold toy drums in the late 1950s and used to sell toy flutes in earlier times as well (HÖRI 1959, 18). Therefore, it is highly possible that people bought these toy instruments at shops in front of the shrine. In this case, the toys may have been improvised and spontaneous donations, unlike the proper instruments and their miniatures which would have been prepared in advance with a clear intention of petition. Third, the worn-out appearance of some toys indicates that they were brought into the shrine after their use.

An important clue for investigating the cause and signification of this new development is ethnographical evidence given by shrine priests and locals. According to them, the toys used in dedications used to be made at *setsubun* (the last day of winter according to the traditional lunar calendar) far more than other days of year.¹⁹ According to the *Mihonoseki shinbun*, the town's tourist association put great effort into attracting visitors from neighboring towns for the *setsubun* ceremony performed at the shrine (*Mihonoseki shinbun*,

19. This information is based on an interview with the second head priest of Miho Shrine, Yokoyama Naomasa.

1 February 1952). It is possible that the town's promotions included the new practice of donating toys for *setsubun*.

As with the *Ise mairi*, visiting famous sacred places for pleasure is not a modern invention. In the late Edo period, pilgrimages that included visits to famous shrines became popular in the Izumo region, too. *Izumo jinja junpai ki* 出雲神社巡拝記 (a guidebook for pilgrimage to shrines in Izumo), which introduces 399 shrines to visit in Izumo, explains that the deities at Miho Shrine have special powers to support safe voyages and rich harvests. A pilgrim following the guidebook would not necessarily have had deep faith in the deities enshrined in any specific shrine. In fact, such pilgrimages were more like sightseeing excursions.²⁰ The development of modern transportation to the village, such as the roads and the shipping route from Matsue established in the mid Meiji period, and particularly the San'in railroad line between Fukuchiyama 福知山 and Taisha 大社, which opened in 1912, greatly encouraged such visitors to come to Mihonoseki.

In 1924, the village of Mihonoseki was reorganized as a town. Under the new system, the community began planning for local development. In 1925, leading community members launched a monthly town newspaper called *Mihonoseki shinbun*, which has been published continually ever since, with the aim of educating and informing community members about their plans. Despite being a small newspaper of only two to four pages, it provides reliable evidence of how the community tried to stimulate local prosperity and informs us that the custom of offering toy instruments was one approach among their efforts.

The title design of the newspaper combined images of *torii* and pine trees, symbolizing the image the town had of itself, represented by Miho Shrine and the most famous showplace of the town, Seki no gohonmatsu 関の五本松 (Five Pine trees at Mihonoseki).²¹ The content of every issue can be divided into three main categories: subjects related to Miho Shrine, such as its main rituals, important rebuilding projects, history, and oral traditions; topics connected to the development of tourism and entertainment for visitors; and political affairs of the town and community projects. It should be noted that every issue provided space for discussions of popular geisha and their popularity ranking. These columns dis-

20. The movement of pilgrims around Japan became easier from the mid Edo period. Recent research has revealed the actual conditions of this type of pilgrim by analyzing travel diaries. For example, Kamada Michitaka has explored the late Edo-period formation of the idea of travel as entertainment, addressing the pilgrimage to Ise (KAMADA 2009, 32–55). Yasuda Makiko has investigated the vital activities of travel guides in the late Edo-period Yamato area (YASUDA 2010).

21. The five pine trees on the hill behind Miho Bay were well known as a guide for sea navigation. One of the five had been cut down earlier for some reason, an event that inspired composition of a banquet song entitled “Seki no gohonmatsu.” The song seems to have been very popular from the Meiji period onward. Lafcadio Hearn also enjoyed the song during his trip to Mihonoseki (HEARN 1894, 2: 565).

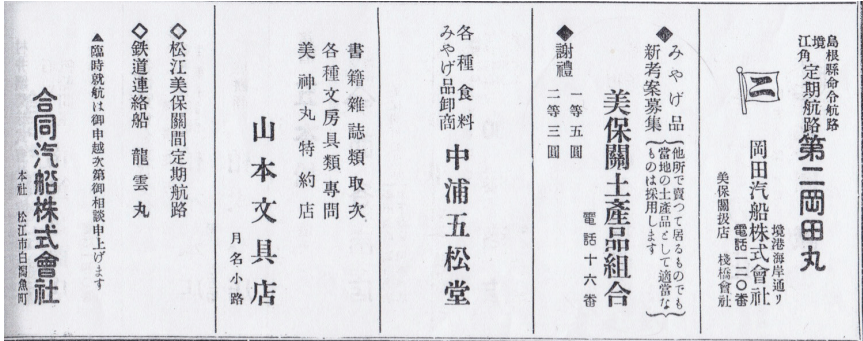


FIGURE 10. Newspaper advertisements (*Mihonoseki shinbun*, 15 July 1931).

cuss their musical arts, their skills at serving guests at feasts, and their personal magnetism. They were indeed the subject of much interest within the community, which indicates that the positive attitude towards banquet music noted by Hearn and Tayama continued. In fact, the presence of geisha and the nights filled with sounds of *shamisen*, drums, sensual songs, and guest’s wild laughter was thought to be indispensable to the town’s prosperity.

The issue of local development was repeatedly featured at the top of the newspaper. For example, in the second issue published on 15 February 1925, the head priest of Miho Shrine at that time wrote an article on the subject, emphasizing the merits of Ebisu enshrined there and encouraging young people to learn about the shrine’s cultural value. The sixteenth issue dated 15 April 1926 reported on a lecture on Mihonoseki’s present and future given by an intellectual from Hiroshima Prefecture, who insisted on the importance of advertisements and producing special souvenirs.

Finally, an article in the issue dated 15 January 1931 by Sasaki Yoshio 鷓鷯義夫, one of the foundering members of the newspaper and an assistant town master at that time, explicitly highlights Ebisu’s powers in order to attract visitors to Mihonoseki and to the shrine. He wrote:

Mihonoseki has been famous for the God Ebisu since ancient times, which encouraged an increase of visitors. After the popular song “Seki no gohonmatsu” became famous throughout Japan, a number of visitors came here because of it. Many of them do not know about Miho Shrine. They return home without visiting the shrine, or visit the shrine without realizing its significance.... We should make every visitor to Mihonoseki, even those who originally came to visit the women in Seki or to see the famous five pine trees, realize the value and power of the shrine before they return home. At their hotels, they should be guided to visit the shrine in full dress before relaxing



FIGURE 11. A miniature metal-plate *kotsuzumi*.

in their rooms, and not permitted to visit in their nightwear.... Providing a guidebook instructing the benefits of the deities would be useful to them.... Souvenir shops should be able to give visitors kind and appropriate explanations of the enshrined deities, if asked.... Every advertisement by associations in the town is to emphasize the god Ebisu. By trying to attract visitors through shedding light on Ebisu and at the same time introducing the famous five pine trees, visitors will continue to increase. (*Mihonoseki Shinbun*, 15 January 1931)

Thus, from the 1920s to 1930s, a senior member of the community tried to enhance local development through tourism by combining faith to the deities, particularly to Ebisu who was popular as a god of good fortune in general, with sources of entertainment such as the wonderful views and attractive geisha women. Advertisements by souvenir shops in the town were placed on the bottom of the newspaper, indicating that they were involved in the efforts to attract tourists. The association of souvenir store owners in Mihonoseki even invited new ideas for souvenirs to sell at shops in the town (FIGURE 10).

One of the town's most substantial aims was to arrange to invite visitors to the *setsubun* ceremony at Miho Shrine, which may eventually have led to the concentration of toy dedications on that day. Some of the donors may have visited the town in response to tourist advertisements and to have offered toys sold at shops in front of the shrine. We find here a new group of donors—tourists—who were able to establish a spontaneous relationship with the deities at the shrine through toy instruments.

Toy Instruments as New Devices of Manipulating Divine Power

Two questions remain: Why did donors choose musical toys, and why were used toys brought into the shrine? Senge Toshizane mentioned that the deities of

Miho Shrine loved musical instruments, but that they did not want dedications of instruments that were covered with something dirty because of their nature of purity (*Izumo no kuni shikisha kō*, 280). Donations of used toys should therefore have been against the divine wish. Without strong sociocultural agencies, these changes in the nature of donated objects could not have happened.

Mihonoseki shinbun never mentioned the tradition of offering musical instruments to the deities enshrined at Miho Shrine and none of the older sources of information about the shrine—such as *Izumo no kuni Miho ryōgū engi*, the *Izumo jinja junpai ki*, and the essays written by Hearn and Tayama—mentioned the practice either. This indicates that the town did not attempt to disseminate or encourage this practice, although based on the register books that list offerings kept at the shrine, instrument donations to the Miho cult undoubtedly existed from the early Edo period on.

This may suggest that the custom of donating musical instruments to the deities because they enjoy music came to be widely and deliberately publicized only after the 1930s at the earliest, eventually leading to toy donations as well. This coincided with an attempt to revamp the appealing features of the town by promoting its ritual music traditions. One clear example of such an attempt can be seen in a radio broadcast by one of the leading members of the community, Nomura Kenji 野村憲治 (1890–1942), which aired in Hiroshima on 24 April 1931.²² Nomura contributed a great deal to Wakamori Taro's 和歌森太郎 (1915–1977) monumental work on the Miho cult by providing him with detailed notes on the rituals performed at Miho Shrine (WAKAMORI 1980, 138–311).²³ Nomura insisted that:

Mihonoseki has maintained a ritual designated Kamimukae shinji 神迎え神事 (ritual of welcoming gods). Every 5 May, priests of Miho Shrine go to the islands off Miho, Oki no gozen 沖の御前 (Lord of the Deep Sea) and Chi no gozen 地の御前 (Lord of the Land) to invite the deities.... The ritual is performed in order to invite the gods of fortune from the east of the sea. It is thought to be a ritual for welcoming the Shi no gozen 四の御前 (Four Lords) who are relatives of the god Ebisu. Tradition says that Kotoshironushi as Ebisu enshrined at Miho Shrine used to enjoy fishing at the islands Oki no gozen and Chi no gozen, so local fishermen venerate them. They say that you can hear music from the bottom of the islands on a calm night.

In the early morning of 5 May, local people and a number of visitors welcome the deities on the ship at the shore in front of the shrine. We clearly feel that the deities of fortune come to us while the ship is nearing the shore with the sound of *kagura* music across the sea.

22. A summary appears in the *Mihonoseki shinbun*, May 1931.

23. The manuscript of his original notes on the rituals, *Miho jinja shisai shōkai genkō* 美保神社私祭詳解原稿, is included in the first volume of *Mihonosekichōshi* 美保閩町誌 (MIHONOSEKICHŌSHI HENSAN IINKAI 1986).

The shore is filled with numerous visitors gathering in the expectation of gaining good fortune.
(*Mihonoseki shinbun*, 15 May 1931)

Presently, Miho Shrine conducts four important annual rituals: Aofushigaki shinji 青柴垣神事, Morotabune shinji 諸手船神事, Kamimukae shinji, and Mushibarai shinji 虫探神事.²⁴ The former two are connected to a story contained in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*. The version in the *Kojiki* says that, when the messengers of Amaterasu visited Ōkuninushi to tell him to surrender the land to her, he told them to ask his son Kotoshironushi what he should do. Kotoshiro-nushi, who was at that time fishing and hunting for birds off the coast of Miho, answered that his father should accept Amaterasu's demand and, transforming his upturned boat into a green twig fence (*aofushigaki*), he disappeared (PHILIPPI 1968, 131, note 13). *Izumo no kuni Miho ryōgū engi* explains the Aofushigaki shinji and the Morotabune shinji as two significant rituals performed at the shrine, while nothing is said about the latter two rites, Kamimukae shinji and Mushibarai shinji. *Miho daimyo jinja chō* 三穂大明神社帳, submitted to the domain government of Matsue in 1764, tells that the Kamimukae shinji was performed by that time (WAKAMORI 1980, 43–44). It is easy to see that the two rituals derived from the dramatic story in the authoritative mystic tradition were foregrounded in this legend compiled in the eighteenth century.

But why did Nomura emphasize the Kamimukae shinji even though it had not been accentuated in these traditional sources? The performative and highly musical characteristics of the ritual illustrates the reason, as Nomura's description demonstrates. Nomura's use of the term *kagura* here refers to an instrumental ensemble of flutes and drums that accompanies the *kagura* dance performed by *miko*, along with daily services to the deities and special dedications by believers at the shrine.

According to my field research, the Kamimukae shinji is an elaborately constructed ritual with musical performativity. It is carried out in the very early morning in darkness without any words or sounds other than the music, giving audiences the profound impression that the deities of the shrine have come to this world lured by the music.²⁵ Audiences in the 1930s would have been moved by this ritual performance. In fact, according to Nomura, the locals used to call this ritual the Den chan festival (*Den chan matsuri* デンチャン祭), inspired by the sounds of *kagura* music performed on the ship (WAKAMORI 1980, 145–46). We can see here the intention of using music effectively to refine the ritual perfor-

24. Mushibarai shinji, whose original purpose was the airing (*mushiboshi* 虫干し) of masks and musical instruments kept at the shrine hidden from the public, is another ritual related to music and dance. Based on the relatively closed nature of this performance, I do not treat it here. On the present-day performance, see OUCHI (2018, 61).

25. According to Nomura, the ritual procedure was reconstructed in 1937 and forms the basis of the present-day performance. Detailed notes on the ritual are included in WAKAMORI (1980, 145–51). A field report on the present-day performance of this ritual is included in OUCHI (2018, 61).

mances of the shrine and consequently to heighten the perception of the presence of the deities enshrined there. Unlike the famous rituals of the shrine such as Aofushigaki shinji and Morotabune shinji, it would have been easier to alter the construction of the Kamimukae shinji because there was less determined in the literature. It is probable that the content and process of this ritual were reconstructed musically in order to heighten its ritual effect. Under these circumstances, musical objects were rediscovered as a useful tool for attracting visitors. Those who bought a toy instrument in front of the shrine, whether as an offering to the deities or as a souvenir to take home, could sense divine power.

It is impossible to trace exactly how the new practice of toy dedication developed or who was responsible for this development. Yet, we can see that as part of the community's development efforts, they attempted to shed new light on music and musical instruments, which may have led to the new practice of toy donations.

The practice of bringing used toy instruments to the shrine at *setsubun* gives us another perspective of the new trend, as the day acquired layers of ritual meanings. For Heian period aristocracy, *setsubun* was a day for staying at a place to avoid traveling in an unlucky direction (*katagae* 方違え) and where sutra recitation ceremonies for escaping evil fortune and gaining longevity were also held. In the late medieval period, a ritual for driving out devils (*tsuina* 追儺) was combined with the ritual for avoiding misfortune (OKUNO 1997, 181–201).

These purposes for rituals held on the day of *setsubun* caused the introduction of another method of driving out accumulated sins and defilement through transferring them to paper dolls shaped like the human body (*hito katashiro* 人形代 or *hitogata* 人形). This practice originated from the Great Purification ritual (*ōharae* 大祓) performed at the imperial court. Ancient rituals using objects shaped like the human body are evident from archaeological finds. These practices were reconstructed into the purification ritual in the ancient court by also introducing ideas and practices of yin-yang (*in yō* 陰陽) thought. The purification practice using human-shaped objects further merged into various folk customs such as *koshōgatsu* 小正月 (New year's day in the lunar calendar), *hina nagashi* 雛流し / *hina matsuri* 雛祭り (doll rituals), *minazuki harae* 水無月祓 / 六月祓 (purification in June, also called *chinowa kuguri* 茅の輪くぐり), and the Tanabata festival 七夕祭 (OKUNO 1986).²⁶ These types of purification practice were also

26. Okuno also mentions different directions of development of the ritual using *hito katashiro*, including for curses, at funerals, and as a *yorishiro* of deities (OKUNO 1997, 251–62). Sasao Mamoru gives a historical overview of the rituals using dolls in the Japanese religious context (SASAO 2013). He also investigates the ritual role of human-shaped things at ancient purification practices, focusing on clay dolls (SASAO 2012). Among early research on this theme by Western academics is Jane Marie Law's anthropological and epistemological survey of the varieties of ritual uses of effigies in Japan, addressing the relation between effigies and the human body (LAW 1997, 17–48).

conducted on *setsubun*. In the Izumo region, the custom of purification using a *hitogata* during *setsubun* was widely carried out in the early modern period.

Lafcadio Hearn mentioned the *hitogata* practice around Matsue 松江, the major city of Shimane Prefecture, in a field report about this special day in his essay “Two strange festivals.”

One more feature of the *setsubun* festival is worthy of mention, —the sale of *hitogata* (“people-shape”). These are little figures, made of white paper, representing men, women, and children. They are cut with a few clever scissors strokes; and the difference of sex is indicated by variations in the shape of the sleeves and the little paper *obi*. They are sold in the Shintō temples. The purchaser buys one for every member of the family, —the priest writing upon each the age and sex of the person for whom it is intended. These *hitogata* are then taken home and distributed; and each person slightly rubs his body or her body with the paper, and says a little Shintō prayer. Next day the *hitogata* are returned to the *kannushi*, who, after having recited certain formulæ over them, burns them with holy fire. By this ceremony it is hoped that all physical misfortunes will be averted from the family during a year. (HEARN 1894, 2: 503)

A *hitogata* here becomes an adequate substitute for a person by having her or his sex and age written on the surface of the paper body and by touching her or his body with it. Then the *hitogata* is offered to a shrine to be burned for its possessor. The main purpose for many people who visited Miho Shrine at *setsubun*, partly as a result of campaigns conducted by the town’s tourist association to attract visitors,²⁷ was to expel defilements and ill fortune. It is highly probable that the toys brought into the shrine took on a special ritual role.

Although the used toys do not resemble human figures, they meet the other conditions for performing the same role as a *hitogata* or *katashiro*: they too are small objects that are easy to discard and that are brought into direct contact with the body. The inscription of the sex and age of the donors onto the surface of the toy supports my contention that the toy offerings could perform a similar role as *hitogata*. Additionally, the toy flutes and whistles that owners breathed through meet another condition of *katashiro* used for the purification rites that originated in *ōharae* in which a *katashiro* was to be breathed into in order to be a substitute for an emperor (MIYAKE 1990, 37–38). However, there is a crucial difference between the toys brought into the shrine and the traditional *hitogata/katashiro* in ritual treatment. Unlike *katashiro*, the toys were not burned, destroyed, or discarded along waterways. Instead, they were stored at

27. Although this evidence postdates the developments under discussion, the *Mihonoseki shinbun* edition of 1 February 1952 reports that the tourist association of Mihonoseki carried out a campaign for attracting people from neighboring towns to the *setsubun* ceremony at Miho Shine in 1952.

the shrine. This suggests that the toys were expected to perform another ritual role along with or apart from that of a type of *katashiro*.

The dedication of used toys to the shrine may rather have performed a *kuyō* 供養 function.²⁸ The term *kuyō* originated with the Sanskrit term *pūjā*, which means to treat those courteously venerated by dedicating objects. It came to have multiple uses in Japanese religious contexts, including *kaigen kuyō* 開眼供養 (consecration ritual of a newly made Buddhist image), *gaki kuyō* 餓鬼供養 (food offerings to hungry ghosts), and *hari kuyō* 針供養 (memorial services for needles). What should be noted here is the memorial function.

The idea that things used over a long time can obtain a soul and transform into a *tsukumogami* 付喪神 appeared in medieval tales such as *Tsukumogami ki* 付喪神記 (Record of Tool Specters, Muromachi Period)²⁹ and *Hyakki yagyō emaki* 百鬼夜行絵巻 (Handscrolls of Night Processions of One Hundred Demons),³⁰ in *yōkai* 妖怪 images such as those depicted by Toriyama Sekien 鳥山石燕 (1712–1788) and Kawanabe Kyōsai 川鍋暁斎 (1831–1889), and were described in folkloric tales. Modern developments of this idea brought about memorial rites for different kinds of used objects, such as needles, nails, scissors, brushes (*fude* 筆), dolls, chopsticks, fans, clogs (*geta* 下駄), shoes, glasses, credit cards, and even high-tech equipment. Such rites are supported by different types of manufacturing industries (MATSUZAKI 2004, 16–37). In the view of folklorists, memorial rites are needed not only to show gratitude to used tools but also to draw out their spirits or *tama* (TANAKA 1987; MIYATA 1995, 158). There are a variety of explanations about the origins of this spirit or spiritual power. Some insist that it comes from outside, while some say that it originates inside the things themselves. Another line of explanation is that, during the medieval period, certain products were imparted such powers because craftsmen were thought to possess magical powers (KOMATSU 1984, 247–51, 253–55).

It should be emphasized that physical contact between the user or possessor and the objects is essential to activate the spirit or spiritual power contained in the tools. In other words, bodily manipulation is what animated these things. Such feelings are retained in modern times. According to recent socio-

28. Fabio Rambelli gives a comprehensive survey on the vast and fluid field of rituals performed under the name of *kuyō* in the chapter on memorial services for inanimate objects in his study on materiality in Japanese religious culture (RAMBELLI 2007, 211–25).

29. An English translation of the text is included in REIDER (2009). She also discusses *Tsukumogami ki* in the context of the development of Shingon theories. Tanaka Takako has pointed out the Chinese influence on the idea of *tsukumogami* (TANAKA 1994), analyzing the stories written in the Six Dynasties and Song dynasty, such as *Soushenji* 搜神記 and *Taiping guanji* 太平廣記 (TANAKA 1994, 211–13).

30. Tanaka Takako examined the *Hyakki yagyō emaki* through addressing its thematic connection with the *Tsukumogami ki* by analyzing different versions of manuscripts. She also suggests that the *Hyakki yagyō emaki* depicted a festival modeled on the Kamo festival (TANAKA 1992).

psychological research on memorial rites for dolls, the main reasons that donors need memorial rites for dolls are the following: they feel pity for the dolls; dolls they spent such a long time with should not be thrown away without suitable treatment; and something shaped into a human figure is animated (IKEUCHI 2010, 171). Dolls are special to us because they are shaped in human forms.

Beloved toys of other kinds can be as close to their possessor as dolls are. Among them, musical toys enjoy a special status. Children play with them by clasping, tapping, rubbing, and touching them with their hands—and sometimes with their lips. Such intimate bodily interactions with toys can cause strong empathy for used toys. Toys that elicit this reaction from their owners need to be cut off from their owners and handled with an appropriate ritual procedure, namely a memorial rite, when they end their functional roles (see Fabio Gygi's article in this issue).

But if, as Senge Toshinobu reported, the deities at Miho were ardently fond of musical instruments “as long as they stayed clean” (*Izumo no kuni Shikisha kō*, 280), which deity at Miho Shrine could accept used toys? The tradition did not designate exactly which deity was attached to music. The image of Miho Shrine's Ebisu as a music lover was cleverly created at least by the Edo period, in the sociocultural dynamics that took place around the shrine, as I mentioned above. But the shrine today insists that the other main deity Mihotsuhime is also a guardian deity of music, along with her protection of rich harvests, conjugal harmony, safe birth, and the prosperity of a family.³¹ This means that after the image of Ebisu as a music lover was created, the characteristic of a guardian deity of music was shared with the other deities enshrined there. The modern development strategy of the town highlighted Ebisu as a widely known deity of good fortune. Unlike Ebisu, Mihotsuhime is not popular throughout Japan, but as a guardian deity of the harvest she has attracted many believers from the agricultural communities of neighboring regions.

Pilgrimages to Miho Shrine, designated as a *seki mairi* 関参り or *seki kō* 関講, were conducted by the religious associations (*kō* 講) formed in these areas.³² Such groups of pilgrims were another target of the modern tourism project. According to my informants many members of *seki mairi* groups used to take their children or grandchildren with them to Miho Shrine.³³ They could have been among those who donated musical toys. It would have been natural for them to consider Mihotsuhime, a guardian deity of safe birth and family prosperity, as a deity who

31. See the official website of Miho Shrine, at <http://mihojinja.or.jp>.

32. Many books registering *seki mairi* groups kept at the shrine show that the *kō* association of the Miho cult spread widely throughout western Japan in the Edo period.

33. This is based on my interview with the proprietress of one of the historic inns at Mihonoseki and with local historian Mishiro Nobumi.

would welcome toys used by children. This in turn led the shrine to add another characteristic to Mihotsuhime: as a deity fond of music.

We should also note that Mihotsuhime came to be allotted a new role in the circulation of ritual donations here. The deity no longer only acts as the receiver who enjoys the votive at her pleasure but also appears as the caretaker of the toys brought into the shrine as substitutes of the ex-users, mostly of children. It is important to know that the toys once brought into the shrine, after having been stored there for some time, were given away to children who wanted them during World War II (HŌRI 1959). This suggests that under Mihotsuhime's care the toy offerings were detached from their original possessors, purified, and initialized as new usable toys. The simple and low-priced toys are highly accessible and disposable. Yet they needed to be treated properly after their use because they were in intimate contact with their possessor physically and consequently mentally. In the cult, no other entity but Mihotsuhime could accomplish this task. The cheap, small, and child-related nature of toys exploited her potential for transmuting things.

Conclusion

The distinctive tradition of musical instrument donation that has been maintained at Miho Shrine developed in complex ways, giving new explanations to secular music, new ritual roles to miniature and toy musical instruments, and even new features to the deities enshrined there. The religio-economic system of Mihonoseki as a shrine town and an important maritime port brought about the idea that lively secular banquet music is identical to offering *kagura* to the deities at Miho Shrine. This may have been an excuse for holding wild social gatherings in front of the shrine, but visitors who were attracted by such parties with music performed by geisha brought in large profits to the town and consequently supported the shrine management. Furthermore, the idea that banquet music was *kagura* may have given both visitors and community members, including the geisha, a feeling of having ties with the Miho deities through their dedication of *kagura*. The sensual secular music worked as a powerful means to establish a spiritual association.

The group of miniature instrument donations represents the appearance of a new type of donor who could not or did not want to develop an officially authorized relationship with the deities. They brought into the shrine elaborate miniatures, encouraged by the tradition that the deities at Miho Shrine loved music. Their nonregistered donation may indicate their intention of having rather looser ties with the shrine, which is still an unexamined assumption at this point. Rather, I should emphasize that for some reason, they seem to have wanted to create a direct bond with the deities without the agency of the shrine administra-

tion. This may reflect changes in the position of the shrine in the Miho cult in its modern development. The miniature fulfilled these complicated new needs. The task remains to find out who brought these miniatures to the shrine and who produced and merchandised them, along with figuring out the position of the shrine in the modern era. Such information about their circulation could contribute to better understanding the specific nature of these miniaturized objects in the broader religious context.

The town's modern tourism project initiated another new feature of traditions at the shrine. The project emphasized the divine power of the fortune god Ebisu at Miho Shrine as a means of attracting visitors, while shedding new light on the musically constructed ritual. The town invented an idea that merrymaking with geisha was equivalent to *kagura* dedication in its religio-economic background. Under these circumstances, the sounds of *shamisen*, drums, and singing were regarded as music dedicated to the deities at the shrine. This encouraged the toy dedications, many of which were sold at souvenir shops in front of the shrine. The toys took on special ritual roles: expelling the misfortunes of their possessors like *katashiro* and being subject to memorial rites as objects that were intimate parts of their owners' lives. The worn-out material features of the toys represent the close relationship between children and toys established through making sound with toys. Moreover, the more a child used the toy to produce sound, the greater the chances that it qualified as a substitution for the owner. In the process, the sounds inscribed the owner's existence on the used toy in invisible form. Therefore, despite apparent anonymity, a toy could establish an intimate association between the deities and the toy owner, which could have made the authorized registration inessential to the donation.

Unlike more expensive elite objects, a toy is highly accessible to anybody. As a newly available method of forming a close tie to the deities, toy dedications could have contributed to attracting a wide range of believers of different backgrounds to the Miho cult. Through these processes, the other main deity, Mihotsuhime, was endowed with a new characteristic, as a guardian deity of music, and with a new ritual power of transmuting exhausted things into a usable mode. The essential features of the toys—small musical things physically manipulated—were deeply involved in all of these dynamics.

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