

## Religious Rituals in Shugendo

### — A Summary —<sup>1</sup>

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#### *The Subject and My Methodology*

Shugendo refers to a religious tradition, still alive today, which developed a specific religious structure when the beliefs and faith with regard to mountains in ancient Japan were influenced by foreign religious traditions such as Buddhism, Taoism, and Shamanism. The core of this religious tradition consists of magico-religious activities performed in response to the religious needs or demands of people in local communities by *shugenja* 修験者, Shugendo practitioners who have acquired supernatural spiritual powers through cultivation of various ascetic practices, mainly in the mountains.

Shugenja traveled widely throughout the mountains and plains of Japan during the medieval period, but in later times, in part because of the restrictive policies of the Tokugawa government, they settled down and became a regular part of local communities. By this time local communities in Japan already had shrines which enshrined the local guardian deities, and temples which took care of funerary rites. The role undertaken by shugenja who settled in these communities was to respond to the various mundane needs of the common people in the areas of disease and problems of daily life, offering religious

<sup>1</sup> This is a translation of the concluding summary chapter of *Shugendō girei no kenkyū*, MIYAKE 1985a, pp. 686–695.

services such as fortunetelling and divination (*bokusen* 卜占), obtaining oracles through mediums (*fujutsu* 巫術), prayers (*kitō* 祈禱), and exorcism (*chōbuku* 調伏). Thus, in the Edo period the shugenja were responsible for offering "this-worldly benefits" within the context of the religious activities of the common people, and played a major role in these religious activities. It can also be said that Shugendo provided the central model for the religious activities of many of the "new" religions (e.g. sectarian Shinto) which proliferated from the latter part of the 19th century and continue to this day.

In this sense it can be said that it is impossible to understand popular religion (*shōmin shūkyō*) in Japan without taking Shugendo into consideration. The importance of research on Shugendo is not limited to religious studies but is also imperative for the areas of historical and folk studies. However, Shugendo studies so far have, with few exceptions, concentrated on such limited aspects of Shugendo as sectarian history or mountain practices. There have been no comprehensive studies of the religious rituals of Shugendo, which include festivals, fortunetelling, divination, prayers and incantations, exorcism, spells, charms, and so forth. These are religious rituals which are performed by shugenja in response to the daily needs and requirements of the people. They are the key to understanding Shugendo as a popular religion. In order to study Shugendo as a single religious system, it is important to grasp the aggregate relationships between and among these religious rituals. However, much of the information concerning these rituals is hidden behind the veil of oral and secret transmissions. Thus these activities have been inaccessible to academic research through normal research methods.

In my work I have examined the written documents concerning these religious rituals which are available, and then analyzed and clarified them further through on-the-spot observation of the practices of various Shugendo organizations, and have thus attempted to grasp the symbolic meaning of Shugendo rituals as a whole. In this article I will attempt to summarize my conclusions.<sup>2</sup> I have identified various categories of religious rituals which have an organic relationship with the entire system of Shugendo religious rituals:

<sup>2</sup> For details concerning the argument in this article and concrete examples of Shugendo rituals see MIYAKE 1985a.

● Practices in the mountains (*nyūbu shugyō* 入峰修行 ).

There are three types of *nyūbu* (see MIYAKE 1985a, pp. 67–68). First is entering the mountain to make offerings of flowers, read or bury sutras, and so forth, in honor of various buddhas or other deities, based on the belief that the mountain is a sacred area like a mandala. Examples of this type of *nyūbu* are the offerings of flowers at Kinpusen, Hongu, and Shingu; the Higan ceremonies at Nachi in Kumano; the *nyūbu* by the Honzan-ha at Katsuragi for the purpose of burying sutras; and the summer *nyūbu* (*natsu no mine* 夏の峰) at Mt. Haguro. This first type of *nyūbu* eventually developed into ceremonies performed in preparation for the second type of *nyūbu*, i.e. entering the mountains for a certain period of time. Examples of this second type include the *nyūbu* of yamabushi from around the country at Kinpusen, the summer ascetic practices at Nachi in Kumano, and the fall *nyūbu* (*aki no mine* 秋の峰) of the Honzan-ha, Tōzan-ha, and at Haguro-san. All of these retreats in the mountains occur for a set length of time during which various ascetic practices are cultivated, culminating in the transmission of secret lore (*hihō* 秘法) or performance of initiations. This kind of *nyūbu* is an essential experience for any serious shugenja. At the present day, however, there are few transmissions of secrets or initiations during *nyūbu*, and there is increasing participation by lay people. This type of *nyūbu* was and remains the central and most popular practice of shugenja at major Shugendo centers throughout Japan.

The third type of *nyūbu* is the most severe, consisting of difficult ascetic retreat in the mountains during the wintertime. Examples include the *nyūbu* of the *misoka* 晦 (“new year”) yamabushi of Kinpusen, Hongu, and Shingu; the practices of *toshigomori* 年籠 (“retreat over new year’s day”) at Nachi; and the winter *nyūbu* (*fuyu no mine* 冬の峰) of Haguro. At Haguro-san only the most advanced yamabushi participate in this *nyūbu*. The purpose of this kind of *nyūbu* was to acquire special spiritual powers.

● Consecration ceremonies (*shōkanjō* 正灌頂 ).

Shugendo, as a movement very much influenced by esoteric (*mikkyō* 密教) Buddhism, involves a great variety of consecrations ceremonies (*kanjō*, Skt. *abhīṣeka*). The central and most important consecration, however, is the *shōkanjō* performed at the end of a *nyūbu* (for details see MIYAKE 1985a, pp. 93–108). *Shōkanjō* is a distinctly Shugendo

consecration, and is performed at Jinzen 深仙 towards the end of the Ōmine *nyūbu*. It is performed on the assumption that the shugenja has passed through the “ten realms” 十界 from hell to buddhahood during one’s practice in the mountains, and symbolizes one’s final attainment of “buddhahood in this body” (*sokushin sokubutsu* 即身即仏).

● Demonstration of magico-spiritual powers (*genjutsu* 験術).

The spectacular demonstration of spiritual powers attained through the cultivation of ascetic practices in the mountains is perhaps the most well-known aspect of Shugendo in present-day Japan. These demonstrations once included flying through the air, walking on swords, walking on fire, “hiding” one’s body, and entering boiling water. The details concerning some of these powers, such as flying through the air and hiding one’s body, are unknown, with only scant information concerning them in the surviving Shugendo records. Other demonstrations such as walking on fire are still performed today, often with much fanfare, in places such as Mt. Takao outside of Tokyo, Mt. Ishizuchi in Ehime, and by the Ontake *kō* 講 (see MIYAKE 1985a, pp. 109–129).

● Commemoration rites (*kuyōhō* 供養法).

By *kuyōhō* I refer to rites of worship whereby the shugenja expresses his reverence toward certain deities through the performance of the chanting of sutras or other offerings. U1 Hakuju classifies *kuyō* into three types: offerings of respect (*kei* 敬 *kuyō*, such as the decoration and cleaning of the worship hall; offerings of action (*gyō* 行 *kuyō*) such as the chanting of sutras and performance of worship; and offerings of “benefit” (*ri* 利 *kuyō*), such as the offerings of food and water (1980, p. 206). The *kuyō* offerings in Shugendo follow the same pattern (for details see MIYAKE 1985a, pp. 133–158). The central Shugendo *kuyō* is that performed for Fudō Myōō 不動明王 (*Fudō hō*), in which the presence of Fudō is solicited, offerings are made, and the shugenja becomes symbolically identified with him.

● Participation in matsuri for the kami 神祭, for the sun, moon, and stars (*hi-tsuki-hoshi no matsuri* 日月星の祭), and for small shrines (*shōshi no matsuri* 小祠の祭).

Shugenja have always been involved in “Shinto” matsuri for the *kami*. These activities include chanting sutras in front of the *kami*,

“calling” on the kami and making offerings, visiting shrines and participating in worship, performing rites of purification, and so forth (MIYAKE 1985a, pp. 163–191).

One type of matsuri in which shugenja were particularly active were those connected with the sun, moon, and stars. Matsuri for the sun includes rituals whereby shugenja and other believers gather together to worship the sun for the purpose of averting disasters or promoting prosperity. This ritual involves undergoing purification and then staying awake all night making offerings, reading sutras, and performing other rites until the sun rises in the morning. Matsuri which involves worship of the moon includes gatherings of shugenja and believers at certain phases of the monthly cycle to eat and drink together, watch for the rising of the moon, and pray for the realization of certain requests. Festivals for the stars include worship of the North Star and performance of various forms of divination based on the calendar and astrology (for details see MIYAKE 1985a, pp. 192–218).

Another kind of matsuri in which shugenja are often involved is matsuri for small shrines. In Japan there are innumerable small shrines throughout the country which enshrine, for example, the kami of the hearth, the family deities, and especially the unpredictable *kojin* 荒神 (“fierce deity”) of the kitchen. Shugenja were often called upon to participate in matsuri or rituals connected to these small shrines (for details see MIYAKE 1985a, pp. 219–242).

● Fortunetelling and divination (*bokusen*).

Shugenja were and are involved in many types of fortunetelling and divination, from the analysis of good and bad days of the calendar, yin-yang divination, the determination of lucky and unlucky directions, divining a person’s fate through astrological signs or guardian deities based on a person’s birthdate, and so forth (see MIYAKE 1985a, pp. 245–313).

● The art of obtaining oracles through mediums (*fujutsu*)

In addition to the aforementioned methods of divination, some shugenja obtain oracles by acting as mediums, calling on the spirits of the kami or buddhas to possess them and give oracles. However, I believe that the shugenja as medium is a marginal role within Shugendo. It is also difficult to draw the line between mediums who are affiliated with Shugendo and those who are not. Nevertheless

the art of obtaining oracles through mediums is not an uncommon occurrence within the framework of Shugendo (for details see MIYAKE 1985a, pp. 317-342).

● Prayers of possession (*yori kiiō* 憑祈禱).

*Yori kiiō* is a form of obtaining oracles peculiar to Shugendo. In this ritual a shugenja uses a medium as a vehicle for possession by a deity, which is then asked to reply to various queries or requests concerning the next harvest or one's personal fortune (for details see MIYAKE 1985a, pp. 343-372).

● Fire ceremonies for averting misfortunes (*sokusai goma* 息災護摩)

The *goma* fire ritual is a form of Shugendo prayer. A certain liturgy is performed, including various chants, before and while the fire is burnt. Offerings are burnt in the fire for the object of worship (*sūhai taishō* 崇拜対象), usually Fudō Myōō, and prayers are offered for the realization of certain requests. These ceremonies are much the same in content as the *Fudō hō* discussed earlier.

The *saiō goma* 採灯護摩 is a fire ceremony unique to Shugendo. This ceremony often forms the central part of major Shugendo ritual performances, especially before, during, or after a *nyūbu* (for details see MIYAKE 1985a, pp. 375-391).

● Rituals centered on various deities (*shosombō* 諸尊法)

In addition to fire ceremonies, Shugendo rituals include many ceremonies (*shūhō* 修法) utilizing mudras (*in* 印) and spells (*shingon* 真言; *dhāraṇī*) for the purpose of realizing the attainment of one's prayers. These ceremonies address certain deities; buddhas such as Yakushi 藥師 and Amida 阿彌陀, bodhisattvas such as Monju 文殊 and Kokuzō 虛空藏, various forms of Kannon 觀音, various Myōō such as Fudō, Indian deities such as Benzai-ten 弁財天, Japanese kami such as *kōjin*, Inari, and Daikoku. An examination of the ceremonies listed in Shugendo manuals show that these ceremonies are most often addressed to the Myōō or the Indian deities and their retinue, with Fudō Myōō the most common figure (for details see MIYAKE 1985a, pp. 392-420).

● Incantations (*kaji* 加持).

The word *kaji* is often combined with *kiiō* 祈禱 ("prayers") to form the compound *kaji-kiiō*, and in the popular mind this is believed to

be the most common activity or function of a shugenja. However, *kaji* and *kitō* are not the same. *Kitō* refers to the prayers offered to a deity as a form of request in ceremonies such as the *Fudō hō*, *sokusai goma*, and *shosonbō*. *Kaji*, on the other hand, refers to the identification (*ka* 加) of the shugenja with the deity in order to realize (*ji* 持) a certain purpose.<sup>3</sup> Therefore *kaji* is a religious ritual wherein the shugenja achieve identification with the deity and manipulates the power thus obtained in order to gain certain benefits (see MIYAKE 1985a, pp. 421–441).

● Exorcism (*tsukimono otoshi* 憑きものおとし, *chōbuku*).

Shugenja also perform rites of healing by determining the cause of a disease (such as the spirit of an evil deity, the dead, or an animal), and then perform ceremonies to exorcise these spirits. Shugenja were known as figures who could control or manipulate such spirits of possession (*tsukimono*) (for details see MIYAKE 1985a, pp. 445–474).

There are some cases of possession, however, which cannot be resolved through ceremonies of *tsukimono otoshi* and require the more demanding ritual of exorcism called *chōbuku* (“subduing” of spirits). An example of this ritual is the *kuji* 九字 (“nine letters”) ceremony which utilizes nine mudras and nine formulas to draw on the power of supernatural deities. This ceremony is based on a Taoist practice but is one of the most fundamental practices of Shugendo (for details see MIYAKE 1985a, pp. 475–509).

● Spells and charms (*furuji* 符呪, *majinai* まじない).

Finally, shugenja utilize various forms of charms and spells in response to simple requests by people for healing, safe childbirth, protection from theft, and so forth. These spells are simpler than the aforementioned prayers and incantations, often consisting of a short phrase (the gist of a sutra, an esoteric formulae, or the name of a deity) written on a small amulet. These amulets are carried by people in their pockets or around their neck, or placed somewhere such as the oven in a house, and so forth, in order to divert misfortune or solicit good fortune (for details see MIYAKE 1985a, 513–569).

On the basis of the concrete examples outlined above, I understand the structure and function of Shugendo religious rituals as follows:

<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless one must admit that in practice there is a mixture of these concepts. For example, various forms of *kaji* are incorporated into ceremonies of “prayer” such as the *Fudō hō*.

each of these individual religious rituals assumes a symbol system which reflects a specific religious worldview. In other words, the activity undertaken in each of these rituals is symbolic action, and the various devices used in the rituals are symbols. These numerous symbolic actions and symbols combine to form a symbolic system which reflects a certain religious worldview.

The symbol system of the religious rituals, and the religious worldview, of Shugendo is revealed through the activities of the shugenja themselves. The rituals as a symbol system must have a motif, which is based on the religious worldview of Shugendo. By analyzing and clarifying this religious worldview in light of the concrete religious rituals, we can avoid the pitfall of an overly abstract or inconsistent analysis.

Each of the individual rituals, in order to symbolize a religious worldview, fulfills a proper ritualistic function within that religious worldview, and forms a symbol system centered on a motif which is close to the daily lives and concerns of the shugenja and the faithful. A set of numerous symbolic actions or symbols are the elements which form this symbol system. The elements which form each religious ritual have a nucleus—a central motif—from among these elements. These elements are bound together and mutually related, and thus form a single, ordered mechanism. My study of these individual Shugendo rituals involves analyzing this mechanism and clarifying the central motifs. In the other direction, the religious worldview of Shugendo is re-interpreted through the motifs from the perspective of the religious rituals.

### *The Structure of Shugendo Rituals*

Let us first concentrate on the structure and the central nucleus—the motif—from among the elements of these individual Shugendo rituals, and clarify them in light of the religious worldview of Shugendo.

First, practices in the mountains (*nyūbu shugyō*) and consecrations (*shōkanjō*) involve spiritual identification with the central deity Fudō Myōō through reception of a secret transmission while the shugenja is in the mountains. These rituals signify the rebirth of the ascetic as a Buddha who has acquired the ability to control or utilize the power of Fudō. Therefore the central element which forms both of these rituals is the symbolic action exhibited in a state of identi-



cation with the central deity Fudō Myōō. The performance of various practices and rituals in the mountains assumes that the mountains are a supernatural spiritual realm, the dwelling of various deities and objects of worship such as Fudō Myōō, separate from the realm of our daily lives. This belief is based on a religious worldview which considers the mountains to be a symbol of the universe.

The demonstration of magical/spiritual powers (*genjutsu*) involves rituals in which the shugenja who has achieved symbolic identification with Fudō Myōō then demonstrates this identification by entering the spiritual realm. Identification is the central element of these activities. An underlying assumption of these activities is the shamanistic idea that the shugenja who has become identified with the figure of Fudō Myōō can in fact enter the spiritual realm.

Next, commemorative rituals (*kuyōhō*) and services for kami, for the sun, moon, and stars (*hi-tsuki-hoshi no matsuri*), and for small shrines (*shōshi no matsuri*), are rituals often performed by shugenja. A typical example of *kuyō hō* is the service for Fudō, a ritual in which Fudō Myōō is invited by the shugenja as a guest to the altar (*shūhōdōjō* 修法道場) for the purpose of achieving identification with the deity. The “object of worship” (*sūhai taishō*) is welcomed and favored with the chanting of scriptures (*dokyō* 読経) or performance of matsuri for the kami. Thus the structure of this ritual consists of the elements of communication and identification between the shugenja and the object of worship.

Rites in honor of the sun, moon, and stars consists of bringing down these heavenly bodies and achieving their identification with Fudō Myōō, for the purpose of “extinguishing the seven kinds of adversities” (*shichinan sokumetsu* 七難即滅) and “arousing the seven kinds of blessings” (*shichifuku sokushō* 七福即生).<sup>4</sup> The festivals of small shrines, which celebrate local kitchen gods 荒神, deities of the earth 地神, and so forth consist of the shugenja achieving identification with Fudō Myōō, whereupon he removes evil influences by exorcising evil deities or evil spirits 邪神 which are causing misfortune, and invites good spirits to take their place. In a broad sense these two rituals both have prayers for the removal of evil influences

<sup>4</sup> This phrase is found in a passage from the *Jên-wang ching*, T. 8, 832b–c. The “seven kinds of adversities” are calamities connected with the sun and moon, astrological calamities, fires, floods, strong winds, overly-luminous sunlight, and violent insurgences; the “seven kinds of blessings” are not listed. It is best to understand these in a general sense of gaining relief from all adversities and welcoming all blessings.

as their central structural element. And both rituals are based on a religious worldview which accepts as normal the possibility that the shugenja, through identification with Fudō Myōō, can remove misfortunes by exorcizing evil spirits or modifying the unfortunate influences of heavenly bodies.

Various forms of divination and fortunetelling are used to discover the causes of misfortune and the fates of human beings. Fortunetelling methods such as *kikkyō* 吉凶 and *unsei* 運勢 use the motif of analyzing the smaller realm of human beings within the larger universe through the structure of the five elements of Yin and Yang 陰陽五行 and the ten calendar signs and twelve signs of the zodiac 十干十二支. In this case the religious worldview involved is that, for example, daily fortunes depend on the power of various deities or vengeful spirits, or that the fates of human beings depend on the astrological influences of the stars. There are also rituals for determining the cause of disease, and so forth, through *bokusen*, *kikkyō*, or *unsei*. These rituals are based on the assumption that disease is caused by angry spirits or spirits of the living or dead which hamper the proper and normal course of the universe.

The practice of obtaining oracles through mediums (*fujutsu*) involves rituals through which a shugenja makes his or her guardian spirit possess him or her in order to obtain an oracle. In the case of *kuchiyose* 口寄せ oracles by Itako-type mediums, the mediums achieve identification with their guardian spirit and use the power thus acquired to call forth the requested spirit (of the living or dead), which then takes possession of the medium. "Prayers of possession" (*yori-kiō*) are one specifically Shugendō-type practice which consists of a shugenja achieving identification with Fudō Myōō in order to manipulate deities (usually tutelary deities 産土神) so the medium is possessed by them and grants an oracle.

Fire ceremonies for averting misfortune (*sokusai goma*) are rituals wherein a shugenja achieves identification with Fudō Myōō in order to manipulate the deity of fire (*katen* 火天) and the fates (*yōshuku* 曜宿) for the purpose of removing evil influences. This activity is based on the religious worldview that it is possible to obtain good fortune by determining the cause of misfortune through divination, and that one can then "burn away" misfortune. *Shosombō* involves a shugenja attaining identification with a certain object of worship and then performing certain actions which symbolize salvific activity. The central structural element of both these rituals is prayer. *Kaji* prayers

or incantations, on the other hand, are rituals which utilize the power of the object of worship in order to remove or exorcize evil influences, or which seek the protection of the object of worship by transferring its power into a tool, weapon, clothing, and so forth.

Another type of religious ritual which shugenja often perform is exorcisms (*tsukimono-otoshi* and *chōbuku*). *Tsukimono-otoshi* is a ritual of exorcism wherein a shugenja drives out a possessing spirit by teaching it the error of its ways or by threatening it. *Chōbuku*, on the other hand, involves identification of the shugenja with Fudō Myōō so that the shugenja can control Fudō Myōō's retinue of servants and have them bind, kick, beat, or otherwise subdue evil deities or evil spirits. Both of these rituals are based on the religious worldview that evil deities or evil spirits are the cause of misfortune, and that the shugenja through identification with Fudō Myōō can directly utilize his supernatural power, or can manipulate Fudō Myōō's retinue, in order to control and defeat these evil deities and spirits.

On a simpler level various charms (*fuju*) and spells (*majinai*) are also utilized. The motif here is the removal of evil influences by using charms onto which the shugenja has transferred the supernatural power of a deity, or by manipulating magical instruments. Thus the last four types of rituals, i.e. incantations, exorcism, charms, and spells, all have the removal (or exorcism) of evil influences as their central motif.

#### *The Logic of Religious Rituals in Shugendo*

The individual religious rituals of Shugendo outlined above have the following inter-relationship within the total structure of Shugendo rituals.

The primary Shugendo rituals are those associated with *nyūbu* and consecration, through which shugenja achieve identification with a deity and gain the ability to control the power thus attained. Next, these powers are manifested to the shugenja's followers through rituals such as *genjutsu*, the demonstration of magical powers. The identification and communication with deities continue in rituals such as *kuyō hō* and various activities connected with *matsuri*. On the basis of these preparations, shugenja respond to the requests of their followers by performing divination and the art of obtaining oracles through mediums to avert misfortune by clarifying the causes of these misfortune, that is evil deities, evil spirits, or unlucky stars.

Evil influences are removed and blessings solicited through the performance of *goma* fire ceremonies, rituals centered on various deities, and services for the heavenly bodies and small shrines. At other times evil deities or evil spirits are exorcized. Other accessible means for averting misfortune or soliciting blessings include *kaji* incantations, charms, and spells.

I have attempted to grasp the whole of the Shugendo ritual system as one which is structured from central elements found in these individual rituals. I have concluded that Shugendo rituals as a whole are made up of seven major elements:

1. Rituals for the purpose of identification with the object of worship (*nyūbu*, consecration, the demonstration of magical powers, rites for Fudō Myōō).
2. Rituals for the purpose of communication with the object of worship (chanting of sutras, matsuri for deities).
3. Rituals as means to achieve identification with the object of worship (divination, obtaining oracles through mediums, prayers of possession, *goma* fire ceremonies, rites for deities, *kaji* incantations, exorcism).
4. Rituals to achieve the power to manipulate these deities (prayers of possession, *goma* fire ceremonies, *kaji* incantations, exorcism, charms, spells).
5. Rituals to receive oracles (divination, oracles through mediums, prayers of possession).
6. Rituals of prayer (services for the sun, moon, and stars, and small shrines, *goma* fire ceremony for averting misfortunes, rites for various deities).
7. Rituals of exorcism or removing evil influences (*kaji* incantations, removing a possessing spirit, "defeating" spirits, charms, spells).

When considering the inter-relationship between these elements, we can reach the following conclusions concerning the structure of Shugendo rituals as a whole.

Shugendo rituals begin with the shugenja attaining a spiritual identification with Fudō Myōō, the main deity, and the attainment of the ability to control this spiritual power. When a shugenja receives a request from a follower, he must first determine the cause of misfortune through divination. There are many possible causes for misfortune: the spirits of animals, the spirits of the living or the dead, evil deities, and so forth. The most common means for putting

an end to this evil activity is to pray to a deity. In Shugendo the more common approach is to have the shugenja experience identity with Fudō Myōō, and have the evil activity cease through manipulating the supernatural power of Fudō Myōō or his retinue.

Thus it can be said that the structure of the Shugendo ritual system is as follows. First, the shugenja identifies himself with a deity in order to learn, through an oracle, which evil deity or evil spirit is causing misfortune. He then wields the supernatural power of his deity or its retinue, and finally exorcizes or removes the evil influences. Within this structure one can see that the three elements of identification, manipulation, and exorcism are the three central motifs of the Shugendo ritual system.

These three motifs are particularly suitable to the function of Shugendo rituals from the perspective of the religious worldview of Shugendo. The explicit function of the religious rituals of Shugendo, especially the people's appeal for "this-worldly benefits," is to remove evil influences and misfortunes from their daily lives. The implicit functions of these rituals for the believers, on the other hand, include the transmission of the teachings and supernatural revelations possessed by the shugenja, and integration with already-existing forms of folk religion.

The fact that an explicit function of Shugendo rituals is to remove the cause of misfortunes is a reflection of the "exorcism" motif. Next, the implicit functions such as the revelation of the shugenja's supernatural power to the believers and the dissemination of teachings reflect the "identification" motif, i.e., that the shugenja is identified with Fudō Myōō and his activity. A particularly graphic illustration of this motif is *genjutsu*, the demonstration of magical powers, where the shugenja symbolically enters the spiritual realm after his identification with Fudō Myōō. Also, these teachings of Shugendo, the religious worldview which has been authorized by its organization, is expressed in manifestations or often clearly expounded in the course of various rituals.

The idea that Shugendo rituals have served to integrate Shugendo with previously existing forms of folk religion is reflected in the role shugenja play at shrines or at matsuri such as those for small shrines. An interesting aspect of this idea, in connection with the "manipulation" motif of Shugendo rituals, is that the retinue of powers manipulated by the shugenja after his identification with the deity often turn out to be the tutelary deities of the local society wherein

the ritual is being performed. By controlling these powers the shugenja could succeed in having his religious activity accepted by the local community, and his rituals could eventually achieve a more prestigious status than the religious activities which existed previously within the local society.

In this way the motifs of identification, manipulation, and exorcism are intimately related to the function of the religious rituals of Shugendo. It must be noted, however, that these motifs are ways to symbolize the religious worldview of Shugendo through the form of religious rituals. With this in mind let us take another look at the motifs of identification, manipulation, and exorcism from the perspective of the religious worldview of Shugendo and revealed in Shugendo rituals.

#### *The Religious Worldview of Shugendo and Shugendo Rituals*

First, the religious worldview which underlies Shugendo rituals assumes the existence of at least two realms of existence, that of the daily lives of human beings, and a separate, supernatural spiritual realm behind, and which controls, that of the daily lives of human beings. The mountains are seen either as a sacred space which is part of both of these worlds, or is seen to actually be a part of the spiritual world. The altar space during the fire ceremony, or the area of a matsuri, is also considered to be this kind of sacred space.

The supernatural spiritual world of Shugendo contains a large syncretistic pantheon of various kami, deities, Buddhas, spirits, and so forth which are believed to control the daily lives of human beings. Fudō Myōō plays a central role in this pantheon. The residents of this spiritual realm, with Fudō Myōō in the center, can be classified into three types of entities.

First are various Buddhas and other Buddhist *mikkyō*-type figures such as Fudō Myōō and Dainichi Nyorai (大日如来, Mahāvairocana), specifically Shugendo objects of worship such as Zaō Gongen 蔵王権現, and kami which are enshrined by many shrines all around Japan or which have a universalistic character. These *kami* often serve to symbolize the universe as a whole.

Second, kami with a more individual or local character such as tutelary deities, guardian deities, the retinue of more powerful figures, and so forth. The members of this second group often serve as the retinue of those in the first group. Zaō Gongen and some of

the kami enshrined in many shrines around Japan were originally local figures like those in the second category, but later took on a more universalistic character.

Third, the evil deities and evil spirits which are the actual causes for various misfortunes. When these evil deities and spirits are brought under control by the shugenja and "enshrined" in a small shrine, these deities take on the character of those in the second category.

Shugendo teaches that a human being is a product of the universe and is himself a "small" universe. Thus all things, including human beings, are thought to have the same nature or character as the divine, the primary and original form of all things. Therefore it is possible for a human being to become a divine being. A shugenja, by cultivating ascetic practices in the mountains (a symbol of the supernatural spiritual world or of the universe itself) and by receiving secret transmissions, can become spiritually identified with Fudō Myōō, who already possesses a universalistic character. If you will recall the structure of Shugendo ritual as outlined above, shugenja first enter the mountains and receive consecration in order to achieve identification with Fudō Myōō and gain the ability to control Fudō Myōō's spiritual power. The shugenja who have obtained this spiritual power can communicate with the more local and individual spiritual entities who are believed to have a more intimate relationship with the daily lives of the people, and can thus discover the causes of the people's misfortunes, and identify which evil deities or spirits are to blame. On this basis the shugenja use their universalistic spiritual power to manipulate the individual deities (category 2) and control the evil deities and evil spirits (category 3), and thus exorcise or remove evil influences.

In conclusion we can say that the three motifs of identification, manipulation, and exorcism in Shugendo rituals are based on the following religious worldview. First, the structure of the universe is such that behind the world of daily human life there is a separate spiritual realm which transcends yet controls our lives. Second, this spiritual world is inhabited by a syncretistic pantheon of various buddhas, kami, deities, and so forth, which can be categorized into three types: those having a universalistic character, those having an individualistic or local character, and evil deities or spirits. Third, shugenja, by cultivating ascetic practices in the mountains, which symbolize the universe as a whole or the spiritual realm, can attain

spiritual identification with the figures of universalistic character and directly utilize their power to manipulate the deities of individual character and control the evil deities and spirits to exorcise or remove evil influences. This religious worldview is revealed and symbolized in and through Shugendo rituals.

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