

## Priest, Shaman, King

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Arthur M. Hocart, a scholar of the first rank on the subject of kingship, wrote the following words about the divinity of kings:

The earliest known religion is a belief in the divinity of kings. I do not say that it is necessarily the most primitive; but in the earliest records known, man appears to us worshipping gods and their earthly representatives, namely kings.

We have no right, in the present state of our knowledge, to assert that the worship of gods preceded that of kings; we do not know. Perhaps there never were any gods without kings, or kings without gods. When we have discovered the origin of divine kingship we shall know, but at present we only know that when history begins there are kings, the representatives of gods (HOCART 1969, p. 7).

Hocart suggests that not only did kings belong to the sacred sphere but they also were understood to be themselves gods. If that is the case, then, when seen from the viewpoint of their actual magico-religious role, what kind of beings were these god-kings?

Hocart's thoughts on the matter are as follows:

Students of customs both ancient and modern have long been aware that the line which divides a king from a priest is a very faint one and often disappears altogether. They have therefore coined a term priest-king or king-priest to indicate that doubtful personage of whom it is difficult to say whether he is priest or king. He is

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chiefly to be found in ancient times or in backward communities. Among modern civilized nations the distinction has now become a very clear one. There has therefore been a differentiation of an original genus into two species. The process is of the greatest interest, and it is therefore worth while to study in detail the parallelism of king and priest (p. 119).

He adds later that "it is abundantly evident that the king and the priest are branches of the same stem. Perhaps we need not have travelled half round the world to prove it, for Egyptologists almost show us the priest developing out of the king" (p. 128).

Thus, Hocart holds that the king-divine being was, functionally, also a king-priest, and he goes on to try to show that the priest was the result of a differentiation from the king. Now, the problem here is the definition of "priest." There seem to be two major trends when students of religion and anthropologists deal with magico-religious functionaries. One is the use of the word "priest" as referring to "presiding over ceremonies," which is the most typical role of magico-religious functionaries. In this case, insofar as shamans, magicians, and similar functionaries become the central figures in ceremonies and rituals, they are all called "priests." The other trend makes a distinction between the various functionaries according to their specific functions. For example, "priests" are those who, acting as representatives of people and society, appeal to divine and human spirits, while those who come into direct contact with the spirits and ghosts through trances and similar experiences are called "shamans," and those who try to solve down-to-earth problems making concrete use of magic and spiritual powers are called "magicians." Therefore, if we do not define clearly in what meaning we speak about magico-religious functionaries, we can invite considerable confusion. This point remains somewhat vague even in Hocart's treatment of the king-priest. For example, he states that in Fiji "the priest is elected and installed in the same manner as a chief by drinking kava. The main difference between a chief and a priest is that *the priest becomes possessed and prophesies*, the chief never" (p. 119; italics mine).

He infers from this that possession is probably a recent phenomenon, as spiritualism appears to have spread throughout Fiji in the last two centuries, and he states that, if we go back further, one of the chief distinctions between chief and priest vanishes altogether (p. 119). Apart from the question of whether spirit possession in

Fiji spread recently or not, examples of king-priests exercising their roles after becoming possessed are not unusual. And if we can call a functionary performing his role in a state of trance a "shaman," then we have the conditions and logical context for having the king-priest being a king-shaman, or a priest-shaman. If in this case we do not make a distinction between "priest" and "shaman," the concept does not satisfactorily describe functionaries, at least not on the present-day level. In this respect Hocart's concept of "priest" is lacking in clarity.

There are many scholars who point out that in ancient or primitive societies the king in reality often combined the nature and functions of priest and shaman. George B. Foucart, for example, writes that the "king of Egypt has never been merely a representative or interpreter of the Supreme God, or his 'vicar'; either he is the god himself, manifest upon the earth in a human body in which is incarnate one of the souls of the god, or he is the god's own son. . . . The true Pharaoh does not exist, theologically speaking, until he has received, at Heliopolis, all the magico-religious consecrations which transform him into a living incarnation of Rā, the sun-god, creator of the world" (FOUCART n.d., p. 712). He goes on to say, "*He is. . . the necessary mediator between the gods and men; to him the divine will speaks in divination or in dreams*" (p. 714; italics mine).

It would be dangerous to go on at once to call the Pharaoh a shaman. However, if we assume that through magico-religious rites the soul of the god comes to dwell in him, and that in divination and dreams, acting as mediator between the gods and men, he communicates with the gods, it is possible to suggest that he probably possesses a "shamanistic" nature in the sense this term is used in contemporary religious anthropology.

Raymond Firth, when speaking about the nature and characteristics of the "divine king," proffers the following opinion, rich in suggestion. In general, he maintains, there are three ways in which a king can be called "divine." The first is when the king himself is identified as a god or "becomes" a god. Augustus and later Roman emperors apparently belonged to this type; Augustus was not an incarnation of any other god but was himself deified, "translated" into divine substance from human substance. The second is when a god becomes incarnated as a human being. In this type, the human being (i. e., the king) is not identified with the god. The

human being is an "envelope for the god." Even when this envelope dies, the god continues to exist, and seeks another human being to be his envelope. The "Living Buddhas" of Central Asia and the Shilluk conception of Nyikang belong to this type. The third is when the human personality is only a temporary envelope of the divine personality; the god "dwells" in the fleshly body of the human being (the chief) for a short period of time, then departs without leaving the slightest divine afflatus. This third type was what applied to the chief of the Tikopia people among whom Firth conducted his research. The third type was further divided into two forms, one in which the god descended upon the chief when he was performing sacred rites and, without altering the human personality, looked out through his human eyes to see that the performance of the ritual was being done properly, and one in which the personality of the individual was altered, producing a state identified with spirit mediumship, though the entry of the god was only for a very brief time (FIRTH 1970, p. 43).

We can relate these three divine-king types with the three categories of magico-religious functionaries; setting aside for the time being the first type, we might call the second priestly in character, and the third type shamanic. In those regions where the priest and the shaman are differentiated, the divine in the priest (divine spirit, godhood, Buddhahood) is permanently inherited, whereas in the shaman it is often only a temporary manifestation. I shall go into this in more detail later.

Even if we are able in this way to define a certain person as king-priest, the reality is by no means that simple, and it is clear that some persons are included within this category who can be called shamans.

The statement of G. WEISS, that "the shaman is found typically in tribal cultures, the priest in state formations and so, presumably, later in appearance, although some overlap between the two may occur" (1973, p. 40), amply foreshadows the existence of king-priests along with king-shamans. What we have seen thus far has enabled us to trace in outline the fact that priest, king, and shaman can exist (or actually did exist) with mutual interconnections.

Next I would like to consider the basic concept latent in the relationships of priest, shaman, and king, and the functional features of each. All three have something to do with the sacred sphere, and I am looking for the source of their power and authority in

this sphere, but there are several points in common as well as differences in the ways in which they are involved with the sacred or express their power and authority, and in their social and cultural meanings. My immediate aim is to pursue this aspect of the matter. Another point I wish to make clear is the sense in which I use the word *king*. Strictly speaking, a king is considered to be a sovereign who emerges only where in some form or other authority, administrative structures, and a judicial system are centralized, and a "nation" has been formed where inequality exists among the people of that nation as regards wealth, privilege, and position, and there are corresponding class distinctions. Therefore, a king is different from the leader of a "tribal society" that lacks a central government and where notable inequalities in wealth, privilege, and position are not found among the members of that society; he is also distinguished from the chief, who is the leader of the "chiefdom" that some anthropologists posit as a mid-stage between "tribal society" and "kingdom" (YOSHIDA 1973, p. 56). In this paper, however, in dealing with the problem of the "divine king" I would like to follow the examples of Hocart and Firth, who included the chiefs of tribal societies in the category of king, and use the one term *king*, making distinctions in individual cases as need arises.

#### *Priest and Shaman*

That in many regions of the world the priest and the shaman (or sorcerer) manifest, in varying degrees, differentiation in their social position, role, and nature, is a widely-known fact. Still, there are societies, such as the Siriono of Bolivia and the northern Murngin tribe of Australia, where the two are not differentiated, and a single functionary undertakes both the role of priest and the role of shaman or sorcerer, with the result that there is also no differentiation in rituals (HOLMBERG 1950, pp. 90-92; WARNER 1958, pp. 213-23). While the causes for differentiation or non-differentiation are not amenable to facile explanation, generally speaking, in places where the social structure is extremely simple and conspicuous differences and inequalities in wealth, privilege, and position do not exist among the members of that society, there is undifferentiation between magico-religious concepts, functionaries, and rituals. In contrast to this, in societies where there are organs of centralized authority and power and stratification in the community is notable, various forms

of differentiation appear in the religious system as well, and differences also appear in functionaries and rituals. We can see how this applies in a number of specific instances.

*[Case Study No. 1: The Sherpas of Nepal]*

In this society the lama monks (priests) and spirit-media (shamans) called *lhawa* are the principal functionaries. The only things that can resist the evil spirits that plunge human happiness into peril are the power and skills of the lama. But before the evil spirits are lured out to be engaged in battle by the lamas, it is necessary to identify their true nature. Doing this is the function of the *lhawa*. The *lhawa* goes into a state of trance, during which spirits take possession of him and transmit their wishes through his mouth. Compared to lamas, *lhawa* are few in number, and their social position is low. Whereas lamas acquire their powers through learning and asceticism, *lhawa* acquire their powers through divine calling. Whereas anyone can undertake training and ascetic exercises in order to become a lama, only those who possess special gifts can develop the skill of a *lhawa*. In order to pacify the wrath of an evil spirit, a *lhawa* will recommend to people to have a lama recite sacred texts. When the supplicant's illness is not cured after the recitation of sacred texts, the lama will recommend that the *lhawa* be consulted for a diagnosis. The lama sometimes manufactures and administers medicines, but the *lhawa* never performs the role of medicine-man. And the lama never acts as a spirit-medium (FÜRER-HAIMENDORF 1964, pp. 254-63).

*[Case Study No. 2: The Pahari in India]*

The Brahmin (priest) is a representative of traditional, Sanskritic religious culture, and he belongs to the highest stratum of society. The shaman, in contrast, represents non-Brahminical, non-Sanskritic practitioners, and generally he comes from the low castes. Whereas the Brahmin's position is hereditary, the shaman's is acquired. The Brahmin presides over a variety of periodic and special religious ceremonies connected with individual life-cycle rites and family and lineage observances. Rites of ancestor worship and for the prosperity of the village, and festivals to the village gods are his function. The shaman, with the help of his tutelary spirit, judges the causes for, and reveals the ways to remedy, illnesses, accidents, poor crops, barren cows, unfaithful wives, and so on. At such times the Brahmin sometimes conducts rites as a result of the shaman's advice. The

Brahmin is a religious technician; he uses his knowledge effectively and passes it on, but he does not bring change to religious concepts or to rituals and traditional practices. The shaman, in contrast, diagnoses the causes of misfortune and calamities, he has responsibility for decisions about people's actions, and he contributes to change and innovation (BERREMAN 1964).

*[Case Study No. 3: Northeast Thailand]*

Whereas the orthodox Buddhist monk (priest) chants sacred words in order to teach morality and to transfer merit and blessings to people, the exorcist (shamanic sorcerer) uses the sacred texts in order to frighten evil spirits and drive them away. While the monk occupies a high position and is respected, the exorcist's position is low and he is employed only in times of misfortune or calamity. The exorcist treats diseases of women, the monk deliberately keeps his distance from women. The exorcist goes to Buddhist temples and worships there, yet he is not pious nor well-versed in Buddhist teachings or the sacred texts. The reason he recites the sacred words is that they have magical power (TAMBIAH 1970, p. 322).

*[Case Study No. 4: The Nuer of Africa]*

The priest is a traditional functionary in Nuer society; the prophet (shaman) is a recent development. The priest has an appointed sacrificial role to perform in certain situations of the social life, particularly in homicide and blood-feud; the prophet's functions are indeterminate. The priest's powers are transmitted by descent from the first priest, whereas the prophet's powers are charismatic—an individual inspiration. The authority of the priest resides in his office; that of the prophet in himself. The most outstanding difference between the two is that whereas in the priest man speaks to God, in the prophet God speaks to man.

A spiritual being descends from the sky and fills the prophet; the prophet is the mouthpiece of the spirit, its interpreter. It is he who speaks, but it is the spirit that controls him. While the priest has, when acting as priest, dealings only with Spirit in its most comprehensive sense of God, the prophet deals with particular spirits, "spirits of the air" or "children of God." Though Nuer regard priests and prophets as very different sorts of persons, still, they do not think of them as mutually contradictory persons (EVANS-PRITCHARD 1956, p. 304).

## [Case Study No. 5: The Paiwan of Taiwan]

The special characteristic of the shaman (*miko*) is that essentially she is restricted to problems connected with the relief of the individual, with the good and bad fortunes of the individual. When an individual's life is confronted with danger of a certain type, the shaman's assistance is sought. In this sense, her role is in stark contrast to that of the priest, whose job it is to seek from the divine spirits the common welfare of the village or union and to try to avert calamities. A good example of such a contrast is found quite clearly at least in the Paiwan. Of course, there also exists among other tribes a hybrid of the two that one could call a shaman-priest. As to the question of whether or not the two originally started out from one prototype and later functionally split into separate ritualists for individuals and for the community, the data do not permit any hasty conclusions (FURUNO 1974, p. 243).

## [Case Study No. 6: Okinawa]

The pillars of the magico-religious aspects in folk society in the Okinawan region are the *kaminchu* (godlike people) such as the *nuru*, who functions as female deity (*norō*), the *nīgang* (root god), and *sasu tsukasa* (god servant), and others who practice as shamans, such as the *yuta* (mainly on Okinawa Island), the *kamkakaraya* (spirit-possessed person, Miyako Island), the *nigēbi* (prayer-person, mainly the Yaeyama Archipelago), and the *kampitō* (godlike person, mainly Yaeyama Island).

Of these, the former for the most part celebrate the religious ceremonies that take place at sacred sites such as *utaki* and *gushiku* or at sacred places worshipped from a distance, such as *ugwanju* or *haishu*, and they nearly always play the chief roles in the public festivals of hamlets and villages and the supplication ceremonies of communities. In contrast, the latter participate in the private sphere of magical belief among the people, in such things as judgments about the fortunes of individual houses or families within those communities, or the avoidance of misfortune, or prayers for the cure of illness, and so on. The *kaminchu* in general correspond to the priests of deities enshrined in sacred sites, and they hold strong beliefs regarding the avoidance of death-defilement or women's blood, and purification to get rid of the pollution of childbirth. *Yuta*, on the other hand, are closely linked with rites for the dead and



memorial services for the dead (SAKURAI 1973, p. 3). And the position of the *nuru* is generally higher than that of the *yuta*.

Because the preceding six studies have each been written by different researchers with several different methods and viewpoints, there is no uniformity in content, but I believe several things have been made clear insofar as concerns the contrast that can be seen in the positions, functions, and natures of priests and shamans. The contrasting natures of the two also are manifest in the processes whereby they each acquire their positions. Even though both have to do with the same sacred sphere, in most cases the position of priest is arrived at through inheritance or succession. In order to assume and maintain the traditional position of the practitioner, the priest usually spends a long time studying and training in accord with a prescribed formula, and devotes a certain amount of time to becoming holy. In tribal societies, the priest's family line derives from the tribal founder (i. e., the creator of that world/society), and the priest's position is endowed with authority by means of a variety of mythical oral traditions. Many of them also bear the authority of priest-king (or chief). For such priests, the structure of their society, its order, and the mode of culture were all things shaped by the skill of the "sacred founder" at its very beginning, and the priest's job is to carry out the sacred tradition by following strictly the formulas followed by previous generations of priests. Observing numerous taboos and undergoing ascetic exercises, he goes on perfecting himself so as to be a person fitting for the position of his lineage. Also, compared with other practitioners, he has a strongly contemplative temperament.

The shaman, on the other hand, regardless of lineage or pedigree, builds up his own position on the basis of his own spiritual powers and determination. There are roughly three ways to become a shaman: a) by divine "call" or "election"; b) by inherited succession; c) by one's own free choice or by the will of the tribe or clan (ELIADE 1964, p. 13). In any of these cases, the most important thing is that there be a personality change in the individual. This means that either the self (the spirit, the soul) leaves the bounds of its everyday sphere for a certain amount of time and has direct communication with a deity, or that he completely transfers his own body to the deity. At these times there must be a trance, or ecstasy, or a vision, or a dream, or the like; these can be looked upon as

the basic conditions for the human being to shed naturalness and everydayness and to enter directly into the sphere of the divine.

We can also see the differences between the two in their roles and attitudes as magico-religious functionaries. Whereas the priest has to do with order in society as a whole and in the cosmos, the shaman has to do with problems in a comparatively narrow range and with individuals' problems. The priest worships the creators and founders of the world and nations, tribes, clans, and lineages, and ancestral spirits going back for generations in each of the various communities; what this means is that the territory in which a community dwells and the order therein are taken to fall within the range of a god's powers, and the priest's worship guarantees that this situation will be maintained and will continue as it is without any change. Dealing as he does with a god who has a universal, all-embracing nature, the priest is therefore a representative of a society's universal-religion concept. Thus the priest officiates at religious services to national gods, tribal gods, clan gods, ancestral spirits of blood-related groups, village gods, etc., and the priest conducts annual rites and rites of passage, and so on—all the rites connected with order within the community and with the rhythm of the entire life cycle. When a society begins to stratify and rigid systems of social position such as castes become established, the concept of the upper classes being pure and the lower classes being impure tends to accompany this; when this happens, the priest, by belonging to the upper classes and preserving himself in a state of purity, sometimes fulfills the function of reinforcing the class system. And, finally, the priest in a world religion such as Buddhism or Christianity tries, while relating the grounds of human existence and the ultimate values of human life to the regularity or orderliness of the world and human life, or to a God who is the ultimate being, to explain and interpret them.

The shaman, on the other hand, comes into the picture to solve individual problems when there is a tear in a part of the greater society's fabric, or when the rhythm of a part of a life cycle goes wrong. In societies in which misfortune plaguing a certain family, decreasing crop production, an individual's illness, the loss of an article, the illness of livestock, and similar things are attributed to a supernatural being, the shaman, aided by the power of his tutelary deity, confronts the cause of the misfortune or disaster. The divine and human spirits that inflict misfortune or disaster upon individuals

or specific families do not possess the universal, comprehensive powers that would enable them to have a part in the order of the world or the rhythm of a society taken as a whole. Many times it is precisely because they departed from that order or were excluded from that rhythm that they turned into bitter or malicious spirits. People who were murdered or who died unmarried, women who died during pregnancy, ancestors for whom memorial services were not held, people who died in a state of despair, etc., invoke curses upon this world from that other world and bring about misfortune and disaster. Hence the shaman, after discerning with penetrating insight the causes of the problems, either removes them directly through his own supernatural powers or entrusts their removal to a priest. In either case, the functions of the shaman are direct, practical, concrete, and partial. He does not attempt to have a hand in the eternal aspect. Perhaps it is because of this that the shaman does not possess the power to become a "living god" except for only a determinate amount of time. Also, in many cases the shaman in stratified societies tends to be from the lower classes and, compared to the priest's being advanced in learning and culture, is an ignorant and uncultured person.

The following graph summarizes the preceding discussion of the differences between the priest and the shaman and lists their respective special characteristics in the form of ideal types.

	PRIEST	SHAMAN
General	Contemplation	Trance
	Unilateral approach to god	Mutual exchange between god and man
	Hereditary	Acquired
	Study	Divine calling
Social	Upper classes	Lower classes
	Groups	Individuals
	The ultimate	The actual
Sacred	Other-world	This-world
	This-shore	That-shore
	Superior position	Inferior position

Needless to say, this graph shows ideal-type features of cases in which priest and shaman are clearly differentiated, and it sometimes happens that in actual reality some of these features are not so clear because they overlap or blend together. Furthermore, one can naturally expect that, depending on the extent of differentiation between the priest and the shaman, one or other of these features will show complex variations. Nevertheless, for analyzing magico-religious relationships within a particular society, the establishment of "priest" and "shaman" as analytical concepts is thought to be, under present conditions at least, especially effective. The reason for this is that, because various analytical concepts for magico-religious functionaries are uncertain, even under present conditions there still exist some things that put obstacles in the way of research on the religious phenomena of a particular society, or that make it difficult to do comparative studies of the religious phenomena of one society with those of other societies or other regions. Furthermore, these ideal-type features are, of course, tentative suggestions and are open to revision in the light of future knowledge.

#### *The Shamanic Character of the King*

The shaman is a specialist technician who is able to associate directly and practically with the world of divine spirits. Because of this technical ability he removes misfortune and disaster from society and is believed to be someone who will bring good fortune and prosperity. Every region has its examples of the shaman being an object of veneration, of dealing with the inhabitants of his region with authority. This tendency is stronger in societies where the priest and shaman are undifferentiated and the shaman-priest performs the central roles. In order for the shaman to be a powerful figure, it is necessary for him to maintain possession in himself of his powerful tutelary spirit. It is the power of this spirit that is the principle that brings prosperity to the inhabitants and exorcises bad luck. Accordingly, the shamans in societies where there is a firm persuasion that malicious and bitter spirits have something to do with fortunes and disasters are inevitably required to be people who possess spiritual powers strong enough to exterminate or remove evil spirits.

Let me remark in passing that the examples are not rare of rituals being conducted in enthronement or other ceremonies to have the

king-priest designate take possession into himself of the "spirit of the land" (*kuni no tama* 国の靈) or the "central spirit" (*chūshinteki na tama*). One of the reasons why the king is looked upon as endowed with an out-of-the-ordinary, supernatural character is, it would seem, that he has special privileges as the possessor of a powerful spirit. Furthermore, it is worth noting that, in places where differentiation in social and cultural institutions and structures has progressed and there is a corresponding clear differentiation between the priest and the shaman, even though the king may be strongly endowed with the character of priest, there still takes place a symbolic rite of "spirit possession" at the time of his accession to the "king's throne." Between the divine spirit and royal authority can be seen, subliminal though it may be, a strong bond. Allow me to give a few examples.

*[Case Study No. 1: The Shilluk of Africa]*

The Shilluk live under one king. The king is believed to derive everything from Nyikang, the leader of the Shilluk in their heroic age. Nyikang the spirit dwells in the king and passes down the line of successors from king to king. The rule of succession is that only a son of a king can be invested with the kingship. The election of a new king is something that concerns the whole tribe, and tribal members participate through the chiefs from the two parts into which they are divided, northern and southern. To be elected king, a person must receive the backing of the whole tribe. In addition, for the enthronement ceremony that takes place approximately one year after the person is chosen, the collective participation of both halves of the tribe, the north and the south, is necessary. Rather than fulfilling legislative or administrative functions, the Shilluk king engages in ritual duties. On important occasions, especially when praying for rain or for victory in battle, the king performs sacrifices.

Nyikang being immortal, the kingship is an abiding institution binding the past, present, and future. For the enthronement ceremony the effigy of Nyikang is carried forth from its shrine and carried to all regions of the tribe, after which it is placed on the royal stool. After some time it is removed from the stool and the king-elect sits upon it. At this point *Nyikang's spirit enters the king's body and makes him tremble*. This shows that he has been possessed by Nyikang, and he officially becomes king. When the king dies, his spirit (i. e., Nyikang) leaves his body and takes up residence in a

new statue especially made for the purpose, whence once again it will enter into the body of the new king and perform its functions. In this way Nyikang is an eternal, immutable being, a divine spirit who borrows the body of the king to continue in existence; this is what gives the kingship a permanent, sacred place in that society (EVANS-PRITCHARD 1962).

*[Case Study No. 2: The Dalai Lama]*

The Tibetans believe that the Dalai Lama is a reincarnation of a bodhisattva (Avalokiteśvara) who came to save all sentient beings. Living deep within the Potala Palace, he reigns, as his name (Dalai, "the vast ocean") suggests, as the god of the whole earth. His authority was so immense, and he had concentrated onto himself the reverence of the people of Tibet to such an extent, that, even if religious assemblies and the national assembly were to unite to oppose a proposal of his, he would be able to get it accepted.

It is believed that, when a Dalai Lama dies, his spirit is reborn in a child somewhere in Tibet. As he lies dying, he tells the people around him the place where he will be reborn. Once he has died, the Grand Lamas and the abbots of the principal monasteries in Lhasa and representatives of national and other oracle sites gather, and they decide on where the new Dalai Lama's birthplace is, the dates of birth of the Dalai Lama as well as his parents, the types of trees to be growing near his house, etc. Since he is a reincarnation of Avalokiteśvara, he must have physical features different from that of an ordinary child, and his face must give off a mysterious light that cannot be explained in human terms. Even the chief ministers and close attendants would be unable to look directly at his face (BELL 1924, chap. 6). The reincarnation and transmigration of the Dalai Lama is not the orthodox Buddhist theory of rebirth as a result of Karma; it is held that *the spirit of the deceased Dalai Lama is reborn in a child* (WADDELL 1959, p. 229).

*[Case Study No. 3: Ancient Israel]*

In the Old Testament there is an account of how, when a prophet poured oil on someone whom God had chosen, God's spirit came down upon the person and he would thenceforth carry out the role of king. The prophet Samuel took a jar of oil and poured it over Saul's head and embraced him, saying, "Has not the Lord anointed you prince over his people Israel? You are the man who must rule the Lord's people, who must save them from the power of the

enemies surrounding them" (1 Samuel 10:1). When Saul left Samuel and arrived at Gibeah, he met a group of prophets. Whereupon *the spirit of God came violently over Saul and he prophesied among them* (10:9–11). After the spirit of God had descended upon him, Saul overcame all enemies he met in his path and achieved great deeds as a mighty king. However, God forsook Saul and looked about for someone else; when He had Samuel pour oil over this latter person, from that day forward the spirit of the Lord descended upon him violently and he became king. This person was David (1 Samuel 16:12–13).

When the spirit of the Lord left Saul, an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him. Whenever the evil spirit afflicted Saul, David would take up a harp and play it and Saul would grow calm and recover and the evil spirit would leave him (16:14–23).

*[Case Study No. 4: The Japanese Emperor]*

In ancient Japan the body of the Son of Heaven was thought to be the "receptacle of the spirit" (*tamashii no iremono* 魂の容れ物). His body was called "Sumemima-no-mikoto"; *mima* refers to physical body, *sume* is a word that expresses the sacred, so the meaning of the whole term is "lord who has a sacred body." *When the imperial spirit entered this Sumemima-no-mikoto the Son of Heaven became a being with power.* Accordingly, it was possible for the body of the Son of Heaven to die, but the spirit that filled that body was ever immutable. The body might be different, but once this spirit entered it, that person became one and the same Son of Heaven. The ceremony to have this spirit, the imperial soul, attach itself to a particular body is the *chinkonsai* 鎮魂祭, and at this time the Son of Heaven covers himself with a futon known as the *madoko-ofusuma* and fasts. During this time the imperial soul attaches itself to the body of the Son of Heaven, and when the fast is over and the *madoko-ofusuma* is removed, the *hitsugi-no-miko* 日嗣の皇子 (crown prince) becomes, as the Japanese name indicates, the Imperial Child of the Sun, in other words, the Son of Heaven. The *daijōsai* is an occasion for performing this as a grand ceremony on a most imposing scale (ORIGUCHI 1966, p. 196).

The fact that such things as "possession by a spirit," "succession to a spirit," "descent of a spirit," or "attachment of a spirit" take place in this way as fundamental conditions for a person to reign as king speaks eloquently of the direct relationship between a king

and a divine spirit. Such a person does not belong to either the priest category or the shaman category within the three types of magical-religious functionaries distinguished earlier. Strictly speaking, such a person is a being who fits midway between the priest and the shaman: the king is not purely a being who makes appeals to divine spirits as a representative of other human beings, as a priest does, nor is he like a shaman, who can engage intermittently in direct communication with divine spirits; while inclining strongly towards the former, he also is endowed with the special characteristics of the latter, even if only symbolically. Implicit here, it seems to me, is the logic related to the fact that, if a person only makes appeals to divine spirits, he cannot qualify as a "sacred king," yet on the other hand if he is only an intermittent "receptacle" of a divine spirit, he does not have what it takes to be the symbol or ruler over a long-term, wide-ranging order or social system.

An explication of this logic is difficult with our present knowledge, but we do have a few leads.

#### *The Shaman King and the Priest King*

One of the leads is to study the mutual relationship between priest and shaman within a chronological flow and a spatial distribution, to go on to consider the relationship between king (headman, elder, chief, etc.) and priest and shaman, and then finally to link these findings up with social and cultural institutions and see what the results are. At this point, as a first step I would like to consider the mutual relationships between priest, shaman, and king historically and attempt a few tentative summaries. Let us begin from some examples.

##### *[Case Study No. 1: Okinawa]*

On Okinawa Island, formerly there was a *niduku* (head family) in every village, and the wife or sister of the head of that family, the *ninchu*, was called a *nigang*, and she assisted him in village management. About the eighth or ninth century, *anji* appear on the scene to rule over groups of villages united into regions about the size of provinces. The wife or sister of the *anji* was called a *nuru*. Both the *nigang* and the *nuru* were supernaturally possessed; the former gave people guidance in their lives on the village level, the latter on the province level. Without the activities of these shamanic



women, the rule of both the *ninchu* and the *anji* would have been incomplete. The divine spirits possessing the *nigang* and the *nuru* were the ancestral spirits that descended upon the sacred forests created by them in their respective territories. Later, the *nigang* and the *nuru* lost their shaman character and became priestesses, and the shaman function passed over to women known as *yuta*. On a national level, prior to the Meiji Restoration and under a king, it was a female member or a widow of the royal family who performed the *nuru*-type function, and she was called the *kikoe-ōkimi* 聞得大君. Once the highest woman's position in Okinawa, it later came to be placed below that of the empress. Though the *nuru* in the *anji* period and the *nuru* in the king period shared the same name, the names had vastly different meanings. The earlier *nuru* was the supreme religious functionary under *anji* rule; chosen from among the *anji*'s sisters, she established a double sovereignty together with her brother. The later *nuru*, on the other hand, following upon national unification by the king, became only one small part within the shrine maiden (*miko*) organization systematized under a royal official, and as a lower-class *miko* sent to a village as an administrative organ of the government, she was no more than the person in charge of religious services in the village (WAKAMORI 1973, pp. 52–54; SAKURAI 1973, pp. 3–11; TORIGOE 1944, chap. 7). Here can be seen the fact that national unification and centralization of authority are accompanied by a progressive decline and diffusion of shamanist aspects and character, and on the other hand a rise and institution-alization of priestly aspects.

[Case Study No. 2: Ancient Japan]

In ancient times there existed innumerable powerful regional clans who claimed large villages, or "provinces," as their lands. The rulers of several of the villages were gradually subjugated by the rulers of stronger villages, and eventually the names of the largest and strongest villages came to include the smaller ones. Akitsushima, Shikishima, Yamatai and the like were all names of large villages in the Yamato Plain. The rulers of villages possessed influence in the villages as shrine priests, and they were able to become both proxies and symbols of the gods. They were able to exercise the power of the village god(s). Even in the Yamatai Palace the Son of Heaven himself served the gods as a shrine priest. The women of the village ruler's bloodline acted as intermediaries with the gods, asked what

the gods wished done, on behalf of the ruler taught ways to protect the livelihood of the village and all villagers. Below these high-class *miko*, there were several lower-class *miko* called *saijo* 采女. The same structure obtained at the Yamatai Palace as well: below the Son of Heaven as shrine priest there was an upper-class *miko*, equivalent to a queen, who lived in close contact with the gods; she was chosen from among the close relatives of the Son of Heaven. Below her there were *saijo*, who were almost like domestic servants of the Son of Heaven. In the system that existed just immediately prior to this form, *the miko who later came to be under the ruler of the villages was herself the ruler of the villages*. The ruler of Yamatai, Pimiko, was a woman, and her successor was a girl; they ruled over the villagers by using their magical powers as *miko* (ORIGUCHI 1965, pp. 147–50). By this is suggested that the shamanic figure gradually came to be differentiated into the two functionaries of priest and shaman.

*[Case Study No. 3: Ancient China]*

In the *Chu yu* 楚語 the *wu* 巫 (shaman) is highly respected, the *zhu* 祝 (shrine priest) follows next, and in last place is the *zong* 宗 (priest), but in the *Zhou li* 周礼 the order is reversed, and the *zong* presides over religious rites, the *zhu* performs ceremonies and congratulatory speeches, while the *wu* performs menial service under them. Also, according to the *Zuo chuan* 左伝, it seems the *wu* was not a government post, the *wu*'s social position was extremely low, and their religious status among the populace was gained as a result of their shamanic powers. The shamans were very simple in regard to worldly matters, but abnormally sensitive when it came to the world of divine spirits, and they often gave themselves over to divine possession. The *zhu* were people who assumed as their function the praying for blessings of the gods by recitation of words, while the *zong* were people who were well-versed in authentic traditional texts for religious rites and who venerated the most august deity. In other words, first of all there was an age of *union of king and shaman*, and next the shaman lost the position of supreme sovereign and had the position of councilor under the king. His next position was that of high official, then that of low official, and finally the shaman was relegated to a low-ranking supernumerary official. The *zhu* that started out below the shaman did not experience as extreme a drop in position as the shaman, while the *zong* remained a high-ranking official many centuries later (FUJINO 1951, pp. 23–37). Here we find

that the shaman had influence prior to the Zhou dynasty, but after the Zhou dynasty the position of the priest came into ascendancy.

What is common in all three of the above examples is that there are stages: king to shaman to priest, or at least king to shaman, and that the extent of differentiation between them corresponded to changes in the times, in society, and in culture. And we notice that the concept taken up by Hocart of the king-priest must be modified and understood, rather, as king-priest-shaman. The question of why the king of a nation that has come to have centralized authority, administrative structure, a legislative system, etc., and where there exist inequalities and class distinctions in regard to wealth, privilege, and position, loses some of his shaman character and gains in priestly character is yet to be solved. I once offered a bold explanation (SASAKI 1974). It was based on a view that agreed fairly much with HOCART's position that "among modern civilized nations the distinction [between king and priest] has now become a very clear one" (1969, p. 119).

The differentiation between priest and shaman means nothing more nor less than a differentiation between sacred values. The extent of differentiation is greater, the greater the scale of the nation or society, but when it occurs the result is that the sacred values exist in the form of either a priest-type culture or a shaman-type culture, as we saw in the graph given earlier. In such cases the king more commonly puts himself at the top of the priest group and strengthens his priest-king character, while the shaman group is, on the contrary, more commonly placed at the opposite pole. Looking at it from another viewpoint, one might say the king's position stands upon a religious culture formed by a priest axis and a shaman axis; hence, in order to explain the realities of a king or kingship endowed with a sacred character or a priestly character, it is not enough to consider the matter merely from the perspective of a sacred-versus-profane dichotomy or in terms of power structures. What is needed is an approach from a perspective that looks carefully at the whole picture of the religious culture and the religious structure itself.

We are still left with many difficult problems. Still, from what we know at present, I would like to do no more than suggest that there are two types of king, the "being who through close contact with the god(s) is a god, i. e., shaman king," and the "being who

is considered a god because of accession to the god's throne, i. e., priest king," and that there is an extremely close internal relationship between the two. I would also like to add some observations here, in connection with these two types of king, regarding the meaning of the *daijōsai*, the Japanese ritual whose objective is the divinization of the emperor.

I have already presented (p. 119 above) Origuchi Shinobu's thesis that, during the *daijōsai*, when the emperor covers himself with the sacred futon and fasts, the imperial soul attaches itself to the body of the new emperor, so that when the fast has ended he is truly the Imperial Child of the Sun, the emperor. In the secret ceremony there are, as is known, two key elements; one is the fasting done so that the imperial soul would attach itself, the other is thought to be a sacred meal with the spirit of the Sun Goddess. In recent interpretations of the *daijōsai*, however, the spotlight falls entirely on the sacred meal, and there seems to be a tendency to keep the secret ceremony for the attachment of the imperial soul hidden in the shadows. There no doubt are various reasons for this. Judging from the materials produced, it would seem that the concrete contents of the fasting are a little bit unclear.

A discussion of what happens in a secret ceremony should not be entered into lightly, but nobody can say data are not available. Even today fasting plays a part in the rite of installation of a *nuru* in Japan's southwestern islands (Amami and the Okinawa region). Hereditary women priests in the villages, *nuru* are the principal celebrants of the communal rituals celebrated for the prosperity and safety of village communities. Origuchi said that in ancient Japan the village *miko* (shamans) were themselves the rulers of the villages (see p. 122 above); the *nuru* of the southwestern islands are thought to correspond to the *miko* Origuchi spoke of. They are indispensable figures in the village communities, and they are looked upon with respect by the villagers.

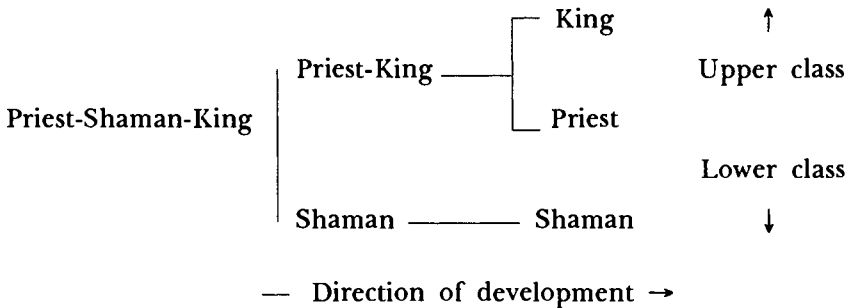
There are variations in installation ceremonies of the *nuru*, but in the example of the northern part of Okinawa Island, the *nuru* candidate is led out late at night by a senior female priest, or *kaminchu*, to the village *asagi* (shrine in the sacred grove), where she is to pass the night sitting alone until morning. When she arrives at the shrine she sometimes vows to be joined with the god. Vow or no vow, though, by being confined in the shrine and fasting until morning she becomes a divine human being.

Is it unreasonable to conclude that the fact that the *nuru* who has been confined by herself in the shrine at night and fasted is deemed to have become one with the god, and the fact that the new emperor who has been confined by himself at night and fasted in the specially constructed shrines (*yukiden* and *sukiden*) is deemed to become the Imperial Child of the Sun, are both in form and in meaning too similar to disregard? While it seems to be true that in recent times it is rare for the *nuru* candidate to become possessed by the spirit, it is still not uncommon for some of the women who have been born into *nuru*-line families to manifest shamanic traits (TAKAHASHI 1989).

Considered from this perspective, the essence of the *daijōsai* could be said to lie in the symbolic performance of an event that was a real, vivid union-of-god-and-king that took place in earliest times.

Finally, as a means for thinking about priest, shaman, and king along these lines, the following graph summarizes the conclusions reached in this study.

**Mutual Relationships of Priest, Shaman, and King**



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