

Jussi was also able to regulate the behaviour of other by using his own behaviour and thus strengthen the prevailing rules. In communicating with Jussi the villagers had to be careful to 'behave correctly' when they needed the help of a shoe maker. A disrespectful behaviour towards Jussi could result in surprising methods of mending shoes.

Although Jussi's social status was lower than that of the other villagers, he gained a respected status by using his intellectual gifts. By directing his intellectual energy and creativity into deviating behaviour, Jussi was also able to get intellectual satisfaction, which otherwise would have been difficult for an uneducated, talented person in a village society. The role of a local fool was also freer than those of the other villagers and allowed him to deviate from the prevailing rules of the village. Despite his low social status Jussi had more room in his role as a local fool than the other villagers. Therefore his status could in some situations be higher than that of the others.

FACING THE SPIRITS: ILLNESS AND HEALING IN A JAPANESE COMMUNITY

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The Japanese have long been known to subscribe to more than one religion at the same time. In particular, most Japanese are found to be parishioners both of Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, and these institutions have therefore often been regarded as complementary in that they fill different needs. This fact has triggered a controversy among scholars, whether religions such as Buddhism, Shinto, Taoism, various new religions and other popular expressions of religiosity 'constitute a multilayered structure or a single fused structure'.¹

The answer to this problem depends partly on the perspective one chooses for analysis. From the point of view of the clergy the religions are clearly distinct. The matter is less obvious when seen from the point of view of laymen. In this paper I will address the question by looking at the ways people conceptualise illness in religious terms and how such beliefs influence people's behaviour in their attempt to recover from illnesses through healing practices.

By taking a local community (Shingū in Fukuoka Prefecture)² as the unit of analysis it is possible to follow certain individuals through a number of religious activities.³ By this approach it will be possible to analyse to what extent

such practices constitute a composite whole or whether these practices are alternative roads to the same aim, i.e. in this context to regain health.

Healing has received wide attention in connection with the new religions,⁴ but less attention has been given to the role healing plays to people who belong to long established religious institutions. It has even been assumed that such practices are unique to, and in fact define, the new religions. Hardacre takes the issue with this view and shows – mostly through a historical analysis – how ‘traditional ideas and practices of healing’ have been transformed to the needs of new religions.⁵ This paper attempts to address this question from a slightly different angle by showing that healing is indeed a very powerful force in contemporary Japan also outside the realm of new religions.

Japanese Perceptions of Illness

The Japanese are by no means ignorant of the findings of modern medicine, and germs play a particularly important role in the Japanese perception of illness.⁶ Nor are Chinese ideas of illnesses as caused by imbalances of *yin* and *yang* forces in the body unknown to the Japanese. To most Japanese, however, illness etiologies provided by modern biomedicine as well as by Chinese medicine are not exhaustive. Germs are everywhere, but some people are apparently more likely to attract illness than others. One’s inborn ‘bodily constitution’ (*taishitsu*) – which can be weak or strong – accounts only partly for this difference. In addition to this some people have stronger immune systems fighting external germs or bodily imbalances. In contrast to bodily constitution, which is inborn and thus given, it is possible to influence the strength of one’s immune system.

The Japanese term for being healthy – *genki de* – means being at the ‘original’ *ki* (‘mind’, ‘spirit’, ‘soul’, or ‘heart’), which contrasts with the term for being ill – *byōki* – meaning ‘sick’ *ki*. Health is thus a condition of the mind and being healthy is its original condition. But this condition can easily be destroyed if the immune system is weakened so that germs can penetrate into the body and create imbalances. Stress, food additives, unhealthy environment, age, and climatical changes are all factors contributing to the weakening of one’s resistance against illness, as are greed, bad thoughts and insincere heart.⁷ Supernatural beings are nevertheless regarded by many people in Shingū (and in Japan generally) as more important than anything else.

Japanese spirits⁸ are basically neither good nor bad *per se*, but can manifest themselves as benign or harmful according to the treatment they receive.⁹ Accidents and illnesses are affected (*sawaru*) by spirits – some of which are more easily offended than others – and misfortunes are therefore interpreted as con-

sequences of some actions that have displeased one or more of these spirits. But there is some disagreement as to how these consequences ought to be interpreted. A common view is that accidents and illnesses are divine punishment (*tatari*) or even can be understood as a form of revenge. Such a view presumes in most cases that there is a relation between the afflicted person and the spirit, which in many cases clearly is not the case. Another view – which does not presume such direct relations and which is held by most of the ritual specialists – is that illness and other misfortunes are to be understood as ways by which spirits communicate their distress to human beings. They cry for our help.

This communication can take different forms: from a slight warning given in a dream, to more powerful means such as withdrawing divine protection and thus weakening the immune system or through possession which may cause mental disturbances on the offended. As the last resource desperate spirits are believed to be able to bring about calamities like earthquakes, floods, pestilence and so on.

Although people might interpret misfortunes as a form of divine communication, most are unaware of the identity of the divine voice or the content of the message. As will be shown below such knowledge is in many cases not necessary because certain rituals are believed to have effect on a great number of spirits and causes. But on other occasions it is of great importance to know the identity of the spirit, the background for the message and to receive instructions how to appease the spirit and thus return to the ‘original’ state of affairs, i.e. regain health. Who then, are these spirits?

Who are the spirits?

The spiritual beings that work in order to weaken the immune system so that germs and other harmful agents can break through and cause diseases, can broadly be divided into two distinct categories. On the one hand, there are the spirits with whom one has a direct relationship, on the other hand there are the spirits with whom no such relationship originally exists.

Spirits with whom one has a reciprocal relationship

It is a commonly held belief in Shingû that the deceased will be reborn in the Pure Land, but that they are dependent on assistance from the living in order to reach this destination. This help consists in providing the deceased with food and drink on their long journey as well as offering prayers on their behalf. In return the deceased are in a position to protect the living. Descendants are particularly obliged to take care of their ancestors.¹⁰ There is thus a relationship of

reciprocity and mutual dependency between the ancestors and their descendants, a relationship that is the basis for the Japanese *ie* ('household') system. If the descendants fail to take care of the ancestors – by neglecting the Buddhist altar, the memorial tablets, the grave or the memorial ceremonies – this reciprocity is broken. In such cases the ancestors might not only withdraw protection but actively inflict harm upon the living. Attempts made by ancestors to communicate dissatisfaction and need for assistance is the most common reason for illness cited by healers in Shingû. In some of the new religions ancestors take on such a prominent role that there is hardly any roles left for other kinds of spirits to play. In Reiyûkai Kyôdan, for example, the 'etiology of illness implied in the (healing) ritual is always the same: human suffering originates in ancestral sufferings'.¹¹

Recently there has been in Japan a growing tendency to interpret illnesses as caused by the souls of aborted or stillborn children (*mizuko*), who are regarded as having been deprived of their right to live.¹² A large number of temples have made it into a booming business to provide services specially aimed to appease such spirits. In a sense these spirits can be regarded as a sub-group of the ancestors, and B. Smith¹³ writes that through memorial rites these spirits are firmly placed into the ancestral lineage. The priest of Kentokuji had, however, observed that the spirits of *mizuko* tend to afflict their own siblings, their mothers or their mothers' relatives, in contrast to most ancestors who address their descendants of the same household.

Ancestors are by most people in Shingû regarded as *hotoke*, i.e. buddhas, although they in certain cases can become *kami*, which is a central concept in Shinto. *Kami* can best be translated as 'sacred power' which may exist in anything beyond the extraordinary. *Kami* can be enlisted to support and protect individuals or, more commonly, a collective of people like a household, village, company, and so on. Among the *kami* thus enlisted in Shingû one will find first of all the tutelary deity (*ujigami*) who is enshrined in Isozaki-jinja and who is the main deity protecting the community against calamities.¹⁴ Various deities such as Ryûjin, Ebisu, and Daikoku protect occupational groups. Inari, who originally was perceived as the deity of good rice harvests, has become a popular deity for all kind of business activities, and is therefore venerated particularly by companies and family enterprises. Most households in Shingû have moreover an altar for the kitchen god, Kôjin.

But there is a price for this protection in that the arrangement between men and *kami* is a contractual one. This contract can easily be broken if the *kami* has been offended, which they repeatedly are. They are particularly offended by all kinds of defilement. Ignoring taboos relating to death, menstruation and childbirth can easily cause misfortune. Since dirt accumulates endlessly, negligence

in carrying out proper rituals also implies impurity, which again is offensive to many spirits.

Unattached Spirits

The second category of spirits includes those with whom one normally has no direct relation. These are spirits that for one reason or other choose to attack strangers. Some of them are evil in nature, such as *ma* ('devil', 'evil spirit') who is only trying to make life difficult to people. But others can be very benign when listened to and helped. Paramount among these spirits are the *muenbotoke* (lit. 'the buddhas of no connection') who are the souls of those who have died without surviving descendants who can attend to their needs, or who have been neglected by their descendants. Being closely related to the concepts of *gaki* ('hungry ghosts') and *yūrei* ('ghosts, i.e. the deceased who did not manage to become 'buddhas' after death), they are not only without assistance in their search for the Pure Land, but they are also constantly hungry and thirsty.

A related concept is the vengeful spirit (*onryo*) who is one who has suffered a 'bad' – e.g. unnatural or premature – death. Killed in wars, accidents, murder and so on, they are resentful because their lives have been cut short, and they try to take revenge, often on innocent people. The mental state at the time of death is thus essential for the afterlife, e.g. whether the spirit will set out on the path to the Pure Land or whether it will linger on as a vengeful spirit at the place of death where it will try to kill innocent by-passers in order to get company.

Muenbotoke and *onryo* are 'wandering spirits' and they tend to gather at crowded places where it is easy to find someone to 'jump' onto.¹⁵ Helping such a hapless spirit often produces a feeling of indebtedness (*on*) in the spirit, thus turning the wandering spirit into a benign spirit trying to repay its debts.¹⁶ But there is also the danger that the spirit wants to make itself dependent (*amaeru*) on its human benefactor, thus being a source for constant nuisance.¹⁷

Many spirits have no desires to establish relationships with people or are content with being left in peace. But like other spirits, they might easily be offended, at which time they strike back. Stories about Suijin, who usually is regarded as the god of wells, being offended and causing illnesses are particularly common, and several cases were reported in Shingū. Before building a house the land deity must be informed and appeased through a 'ground-breaking' ritual (*jichinsai*), but Shingū people have nevertheless observed that frequently a household member will die within three years after the completion of a new house. One informant attributed this to the possible presence of the 'mountain deity' (*Yama-no-kami*) in one of the logs used for the house, but most people are more likely to interpret such occurrences as a consequence of inauspi-

scious physiognomy of the house. Architects and housebuilders ought to be well versed in geomancy in order to avoid offending the spirits protecting various directions. Moreover, most people will consult the almanac at least before setting the dates for marriages, funerals and inaugurations of important new ventures, and some will also do so before moving to a new place or starting on a long journey in order not to offend the dreaded deity Mawari-Konjin.

According to the prevalent Japanese world view – and in sharp contrast to the Chinese one – all animals are endowed with souls.¹⁸ These animal spirits depend on human assistance in order to travel the long road toward Paradise, just like spirits of human beings. There are other similarities between human and animal souls as well. The souls of animals tend to stay near the place where they were killed and, like the wandering spirits, they are vengeful and try to possess people – frequently the person who caused their death or one of his or her relatives – in order to give a message. Foxes, snakes and dogs are most likely to possess people in this way.¹⁹

Through this sketchy outline we have encountered a number of different spirits, of which some are of Buddhist origin and others Shinto. Ancestors are in Shingû usually regarded as Buddhist spirits, although there are exceptions to this rule.²⁰ The tutelary deity is, on the other hand, clearly Shinto. Spirits associated with geomancy are probably of Taoist origin. Other spirits are more difficult to define because for centuries Shinto deities have been seen as manifestations of Buddhist ones and vice versa. Ebisu and Daikoku – who are both enshrined in Isozaki-jinja – are among the Seven Gods of Good Fortune, whose origin is Chinese. The kitchen and fire god Kôjin is particularly difficult to place. Usually understood as a Shinto deity, blind monks of the Tendai sect of Buddhism have made it their domain to address this deity whom they regard as a bodhisattva.

To most of the people in Shingû – including the mediums – it is irrelevant whether a spirit is of Buddhist or Shinto origin. What is important is that all the spirits are relevant to people's well-being in that the spirits can influence their lives here and now. Clearly then, the often assumed division of labour between Buddhism and Shinto – where it is claimed that Buddhism attends to the after-life while Shinto takes care of the present life – is untenable. Both are 'this-worldly' and spirits of Buddhist, Shinto and Tao extraction are equally important to the health of people.²¹

The Process of Healing

Since illness often is believed to be caused by one's immune system being weakened by spirits who want to convey messages to human beings it follows

that the healing process very much is a process of restoring the strength of the body's resistance to illness. This involves first of all the removal of the cause for the spirit's grievance, but it is often expedient – even necessary at times – to enlist healing support from other spirits. Thus healing consists often of two parallel processes, in addition to medical treatment.

The Ritual of Diagnosis

People often have clear ideas about symptoms caused by various spirits. People possessed by ghosts and animals frequently go mad, have strange eyes and talk nonsense. The soul of an aborted child is believed to cause pains in the shoulders, hips and the backhead. Headache is often associated with ancestors, and particularly with *muenbotoke*, but the latter is also associated with excessive thirst as well as with fever and pains in hips and legs. Eye problems can be caused by the Seven Gods of Good Fortune.

Nevertheless, it is seldom possible from the symptoms alone to make a diagnosis, but such a diagnosis is in many cases not required. Many people, particularly old women, have a basic knowledge of rituals which work well for a number of ailments, and they know from long experience and information-sharing the spirits which are known to be good for healing certain illnesses. Religious training (*gyô*) – such as pilgrimages, water austerities, reciting of sutras, and so on – is widely believed both to bring about cures and to rebuild one's resistance. Often such training is ordained by the spirits through the mediums. Moreover, in Shingû's western Jizô hall there is a figure of Okage-no-Jizô, who can give 'yes' and 'no' answers to such questions as 'shall I do so-and-so?' by making itself heavy or light when lifted. This figure is extremely popular among the old ladies in Shingû who ask this oracle all kinds of questions.

But at times it is necessary to enter into a dialogue with the grievous spirit. It is a widely held belief, however, that special training (*gyô*) is needed in order to be able to converse with spirits, and religious training involves such austerities as standing under icy waterfalls and fire walking. Only slightly less severe ordeals are long pilgrimages of which there are several in the vicinity of Shingû.²² A few people have devised their own methods of training. The priest at Kentokuji burns his hands regularly with matches, and a male medium who often comes from Sasguri to Shingû, is known for letting melting wax from more than one hundred candle lights drop onto his head and shoulders. Through such austerities one's spiritual powers are gradually being built up and one becomes a 'trained person' or ascetic practishioner *gyôja*).

A number of ladies in Shingû – and a few men – have gone through such training and some of them are able to receive messages from the spirits.²³ Most

of them are not supposed to receive messages for others than their closest relatives, however, and there are only two women who are licenced to perform as mediums. In addition a few male mediums do occasionally enter Shingû in order to perform such services. These mediums are usually called *sensei* ('teachers'), and to a certain extent they have taken over the roles earlier played by resident ascetic priests (*yamabushi*) and praying healers (*kitôshi*).²⁴

Both the Shingû mediums have gone through long periods of training and have been initiated into the Shugendô cult of mountain asceticism at the important national centre at Mt. Kinpu in Nara Prefecture from where they have received licences to practice. Both receive a number of clients, some on a regular basis.

The first step in the healing process – which Victor Turner would have termed 'ritual of affliction'²⁵ – is to diagnose (*omikuji*) the cause of the illness through a 'ritual of diagnosis' which includes a 'divination into the hidden causes of misfortune, conflict and illness'. After a short purification (*kiyome*) of herself, the paraphernalia and the client, the medium chants Buddhist sutras – of which the Heart Sutra or *Hannyashingyô* is the most powerful – in a very rhythmic manner while constantly beating and shaking various objects. Smoke from burning incense provides a temporary bridge between the human and the spirit worlds. Through these means the medium is transferred to a mental stage from where she is able to receive messages from the spiritual world. None of the two professional mediums in the community are usually possessed in the narrow sense,²⁶ although a couple of other trained ladies easily become so. During this ritual of diagnosis the medium usually employs a special spirit – or a patron deity – as a messenger, with which she has had a long-standing association. Frequently this is a bodhisattva – such as Jizô and Kannon – or it can be a popular deity from the Shinto pantheon – such as the fox deity Inari.²⁷

The Ritual of Curing

During the ritual of diagnosis the afflicting spirit is usually identified and a message is received as how to placate this spirit. Quite frequently a house has to be restructured or a well has to be dug up. But beside such practical solutions treatment unvariably also includes a 'ritual of curing'. Depending on the cause of the troubles, this ritual can take various forms.

Evil spirits (*ma*, *akuma*) that attack people for no obvious reason, can be driven away by shaking rattles, beating drums, flipping through prayer books or beating these or rosaries on the body of the client, which are all seen as forms of exorcism (*yakubarai*). If the client is possessed by a more 'reasonable' spirit, however, the medium will first try to make a deal with the spirit in order to make

it leave. Straightforward exorcism will not do much good since such a treatment does not remove the cause of the spirit's grievance and it will try to strike again later. Polite words when addressing such spirits are essential, and usually the spirit is coerced to leave in return for promises to perform some rituals, which basically fall into two main groups: memorial services for the dead and purification rites.

Memorial services (*kuyo*) are required if the spirit is an ancestor, a wandering spirit, an aborted child or a killed animal. Frequently they are performed at a later time and without the presence of the medium, but instructions will be given through the medium's messenger how these memorial services shall be conducted. Usually the ritual consists of chanting Buddhist sutras, burning incense and offering foods and drinks. But they can also involve the offering of new memorial tablets, rebuilding of tombs and ancestral altars, and the like. At times it is necessary to transfer the malevolent spirit onto a substitute object (*katashiro nagashi*) before one can get rid of it.

Memorial services can often be performed by the victims themselves, and the task of the medium is then fulfilled after making the diagnosis. The same holds true if the patient has been instructed to do religious training. But if the offending spirit is a *kami*, a purification rite (*harai*) must in most cases be performed by a ritual expert, usually the medium herself. Rites addressed to certain deities – such as those for water, fire and house compounds – are regarded as a part of esoteric teaching (*mikkyô*) and belonged previously to the realm of the *yamabushi* or Tendai and Shingon priests. Today most of these rites have been taken over by Shinto priests, and this is particularly the case in the cities. But the two mediums in Shingû do sometimes drive out evil forces from houses and wells by performing purification rites.

Although memorial rites usually are associated with Buddhism and purification rites with Shinto, this is by no means universal. In Shingû it was the Shinto priest who was invited by the fishing cooperative association to perform memorial services for killed fish, while Buddhist sutras are sometimes used in purification rites. Not seldom both memorial and purification rites are called for. Also from this perspective it makes little sense to make a distinction between Buddhist and Shinto spirits. Finally, we will see that the victims will seek assistance from spirits who are known to have healing powers, and these spirits can both be of Buddhist and Shinto origin.

Spirits with Healing Powers

When Ohnuki-Tierney did fieldwork for her book *Illness and Culture in Contemporary Japan* she became so impressed by the importance of religious

institutions in health care in Japan that she found it necessary to include two chapters on the medical roles of religions in her book.²⁸ In Chapter 6 she describes one Shinto and one Buddhist institution, while in the next chapter she takes up more theoretical issues concerning the interconnectedness between various Japanese religions. In an attempt to answer the question whether religions in Japan constitute a multilayered or a single fused structure, she turns to studies made by Mizobe²⁹ and Itoh³⁰ on the healing functions of various spirits, and she concludes from this material that most Buddhist and Shinto deities perform multiple and overlapping functions.³¹

Mizobe's study, in particular, is based on a survey of a large number of temples and shrines and his study does therefore not answer the question how different supernatural beings and their functions relate to each other within the mind of the individual. Through anthropological fieldwork it is possible to address this problem, however.

A large number of spirits are believed by Shingū people to have healing powers. Some of these supernaturals are capable of healing all kinds of illness. Foremost among these is Yakushi, and there are several places where this Buddhist deity of medicine is worshipped in the region. The Shinto deities enshrined at Hama-no-miya – which is an old forgotten stone 'rediscovered' and elevated to a shrine – are also believed by some people to have such wide powers.³²

Jizō and Kannon can also heal a wide range of ailments, and a large number of images of Jizō and Kannon are to be found both within Shingū and in its surroundings. Some of these images are known to be particularly powerful in dealing with certain illnesses. Emmei-Jizō enshrined in the western Jizō hall in Shingū is believed to be most effective in curing eye diseases and stomach troubles. Kosodate-Jizō enshrined in the eastern Jizō hall is, on the other hand, believed to cure sick children, as are Kudara-Kannon of Sainenji and the Shinto deity Hitomaru-hime enshrined in Hitomaru-jinja.³³

Fudo enshrined in the western Jizō hall is also good for stomach problems and Ryūjin helps against all kinds of pain. More specialised in her functions is the Shinto deity Awashima who has focussed on women's diseases, although she is also believed to be able to cure other ailments – such as eye diseases – both among men and women.³⁴ Even more specialised is Yōji-Kannon who 'cures' children who cry at night.

Moving away from Shingū, but still within easy reach from the hamlet, there are temples and shrines which are visited in order to recover from such ailments as troubles with ears, eyes, legs, arms, alcoholism, and fish-bones stuck in the throat. If one attempt fails people will try the powers of other deities, and people will often try a number of supernaturals in succession. Whether one approaches a shrine or a temple does not matter to a patient as long as it works.

This attitude is apparent, for example, in the case of barrenness, which often is looked upon as an ‘illness’ caused by some spirit blocking conception. Many couples have made a series of visits to various religious institutions, often within a very short period of time, while, at the same time, carrying out a number of memorial services and purification rites at home. After her initial instructions have failed to bring about the desired pregnancy, a medium will frequently come up with new instructions revealed by other spirits. Her reputation as a medium is not necessarily shaken because it is acknowledged that several spirits can be at work at the same time and that all of them must be satisfied before a cure can be secured.

Conclusion

I have discussed various spirits believed by people in Shingû to affect health. It was found that a multitude of spirits can each cause a large number of illnesses. In most cases people have clear ideas whether a deity is of Buddhist or Shinto origin, and it is often possible to identify the offending spirit as a ‘Buddhist deity’, an ‘ancestor’, a Shinto ‘*kami*’, a soul of a dead animal or something else. A few deities are nonetheless difficult to place. Both Shinto prayers (*norito*) and Buddhist sutras (*Hannya-shingyô* in particular) are read for the deity of kitchen and fire, Kôjin. The same is true for Fudo, another deity of fire and the protector of ascetic training, the water god Suijin, and the Seven Gods of Good Fortune. Ryûjin, the Dragon King who is the target of the fishermen’s Shinto festival held at Isozaki-jinja, is also enshrined in one of the Jizô halls. Although deities usually have different preferences regarding the way they ought to be worshipped – one claps one’s hands in front of the Shinto deities and light incense for the Buddhist ones, for example – there are many cases where this distinction is blurred.

In many cases the identity of the afflicting spirit is unknown even to the ritual specialists. It can therefore be argued that to most people it is irrelevant whether the spirit is categorised as ‘Buddhist’ or ‘Shinto’. What is of importance to the local people – including the mediums – is to obtain a message stating why there is a need for the offending spirit to communicate with the humans through illness (for this is how illness often is perceived) and what to do in order to remove this need.

Literature

⁴Ohnuki-Tierney, E. *Illness and Culture in Contemporary Japan – An Anthropological View*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 9.

²Shingû is a hamlet of about 850 inhabitants living in 250 households. Originally a village of fishermen and traders, it has lately turned into a 'bed town' for the neighbouring Fukuoka City with its more than one million people. A stroll around Shingû will reveal several religious objects. Most imposing is the Buddhist temple Sainenji located in the western end of the hamlet. Almost as imposing is the Shinto shrine Isozaki-jinja in the eastern end. In 1976 at least 63 percent of the households were parishioners (*danka*) of Saijenji – which belongs to the Seizan branch of the Pure Land Sect – and 65 percent supported (being *ujiko* of) Isozaki-jinja (Kalland, A. *Shingû: A Study of a Japanese Fishing Community*. Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series No. 44, London, 1981, p. 57). It was largely the same households that supported both institutions, thus conforming to the general Japanese pattern. Those who are not parishioners of Sainenji are members of a number of other Buddhist sects – most noteworthy of Sôkagakkai – and a few other new religions – most noteworthy Konkôkyô. Most of those who do not support Isozaki-jinja do not support any shrine at all. In most Shingû homes one will find a Buddhist altar for the ancestors and two Shinto altars; one for Shingû's tutelary deity (*ujigami*) and the other for the deity of kitchens and fires, Kôjin. Perhaps even more relevant to this study are two small buildings where the bodhisattva Jizô is enshrined. A third building is dedicated to the bodhisattva Kannon, and a fourth one to the Shinto deity Awashima. Finally, a smaller building houses the Buddhist saint Kôbô Daishi. The buildings for Kannon and Kôbô Daishi are located within the temple precinct. Within the compound of Isozaki-jinja there are several small shrines (dedicated to Ebisu, Kôjin, Tenjin, Inari, Sumiyoshi) as well as a fertility stone which is believed to make barren women pregnant. There are, moreover, several sacred stones dedicated to various deities throughout Shingû, and one of these stones became in 1989 a shrine in its own right. Just outside the borders of the hamlet there are the Konkôkyô Church and the temple Kentokuji belonging to the new Buddhist sect Nakayama-Shingo-shôshû.

³Some of these are performed within the community, at the Buddhist temple, the Shinto shrine, small worshipping halls, or in front of stones with religious significance. Others are performed at famous religious institutions often located at long distances from home.

⁴Offner, C. B. and van Straelen, H. *Modern Japanese Religions*. New York, 1963; Davis, W. *Dojo: Magic and Exorcism in Modern Japan*. Stanford, 1980; Hardacre, H. The transformation of healing in the Japanese new religions. In: *History of Religions* 21(4). 1982, pp. 305-320; Hardacre, H. *Lay Buddhism in Contemporary Japan: Reiyûkai Kyôdan*. Princeton, 1984; Hardacre, H. *Kurozumikyo and the New Religions of Japan*. Princeton, 1986.

⁵Hardacre, H. The transformation of healing in the Japanese new religions. In: *History of Religions* 21(4). 1982, p. 307.

⁶Ohnuki-Tierney, who has devoted a chapter in her book *Illness and Culture in Contemporary Japan* to germs, places these germs in the context of space. Germs exist in the 'outside' world, which is associated with dirt. The 'outside' is always a threat to the pure 'inside' world, and health is thus closely connected with the concepts of dirt and cleanliness as well as of purity and pollution (see Note 4, 1984, pp. 21-22).

⁷There is thus a holistic approach to health, but this is conditioned by a Japanese

trend to equate one element with the totality in which the element appears. This metonymisation is also evident in health care in that one element – the *ki* – stands for the whole. This has caused some new religions to reject modern medicine altogether, claiming that all illnesses are caused solely by spiritual factors. There is another related problem caused by metonymisation. A physical handicap, for example, can easily be taken as a representation of the person's personality and moral qualities (see Kawai, H. Egalitarianism in Japanese Education. In: *Japan Echo*, 11(4) 1975. Kawai 1975). Illness implies impurity of the mind and thus immorality. This is one process which works to stigmatise various groups – such as victims of the atomic bombs and pollution – in Japan.

⁸In this paper I will use 'spirit' as a generic term for all supernatural powers, whether they are Shinto or Buddhist deities, ancestors, ghosts etc.

⁹Blaker, C. *The Catalpa Bow – A Study of Shamanistic Practices in Japan*. London, 1975.

¹⁰The term 'ancestor' (*senzô*) should not be understood in the narrow sense but as a deceased person of one's household, regardless of relative age and actual kinship relation. See Smith (Smith, R. J. *Ancestor Worship in Contemporary Japan*. Stanford, 1974) for a discussion on who the ancestors are.

¹¹Hardacre, H. *Lay Buddhism in Contemporary Japan: Reiyûkai Kyôdan*. Princeton, 1984, p. 180. Also in Mahikari and in Tenshō-kôtai-jingûkyô the ancestors are seen as extremely important in this regard (Davis, W. *Dojo: Magic and Exorcism in Modern Japan*. Stanford, 1980; Lebra, T. S. Ancestral Influence on the Suffering of Descendants in a Japanese Cult. In: William H. Newell (ed.) *Ancestor*. The Hague, 1974). This contrasts with the view held by Yoshida (Yoshida, T. *Nihon no tsukimono: shakai jinruigakuteki kosatsu*. Tokyo, 1978), and shared by Smith (Smith, R. J. *Ancestor Worship in Contemporary Japan*. Stanford, 1974, pp. 123-125), who state that ancestors seldom punish their own descendants. If there is a growing tendency to see misfortunes as caused by ancestors – and there are indications that this might be the case – it is an important field of research in the future to study this change in relationship to the changing family structure in Japan.

¹²See Brooks (Brooks, A. P. *Mizuko kuyo* and Japanese Buddhism. *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 8 (3-4). 1981, pp. 119-147), Hoshino and Takeda (Hoshino, E. and Takeda, D. Indebtedness and Comfort: The Undercurrents of *mizuko kuyo* in Contemporary Japan. In: *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 14 (4) 1987, pp. 305-320) and B. Smith (Smith, B. Buddhism and Abortion in Contemporary Japan: *Mizuko kuyo* and the Confrontation with Death. In: *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 15 (1). 1988, pp. 3-24) for information on the *mizuko* phenomenon in general. Although memorial services for *mizuko* might be a recent phenomenon, they resemble those performed for whale fetuses during the Tokugawa period (1603-1868), in order to release the spirit of the unborn whales so that they could be reborn and live a full life as whales.

¹³Smith, B. Buddhism and Abortion in Contemporary Japan: *Mizuko kuyo* and the Confrontation with Death. In: *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 15 (1). 1988, p. 18.

¹⁴There are other deities – such as Koshin, alias Sarutahiko, and Kōjin – that guard all the entrances into the community.

¹⁵It is often believed that wandering spirits are particularly likely to possess people of religious inclinations, since such people are more inclined to listen to their cries for help. On the other hand, it can also be said that religious people are more inclined to interpret headaches and other ailments as being caused by wandering spirits and other restless spirits.

¹⁶Fishermen are often troubled by the spirits of those who have drowned at sea. Taking care of such a corpse and bringing it to shore for a proper burial is, however, many places believed to bring in large catches of fish (Yoshida, T. The stranger as god: The place of the outsider in Japanese folk religion. In: *Ethnology*, 1981, No. 20 (2), pp.87-99), a belief held in Shingū as well. Failing to rescue such a corpse can, on the other hand, cause misfortune. Recently a fisherman from Shingū's neighbouring village Nata turned mad after such a failure.

¹⁷Several informants did not want to help *muenbotoke* for this reason. 'It is impossible to get rid of another person's ancestor', one informant complained.

¹⁸See Note 12, Hoshino, E., Takeda, D.

¹⁹One typical case occurred in Shingū Town a few years ago when a man killed a fox. Soon afterwards his daughter turned mad. She was taken to a medium who quickly diagnosed fox possession as the cause. When the father had promised the fox to give milk to her two puppies, the fox left the girl who then turned normal.

²⁰The most important exception in Shingū is the Konkōkyō believers who might have a Konkōkyō altar (*saidan*) where the ancestors (*mitama*) are enshrined. Most of these believers are, on the other hand, also parishioners of Sainenji and keep a Buddhist altar for their ancestors as well. The other exception is the ancestors of Shinto priests. Until Buddhism and Shinto were separated by the authorities early in the Meiji era (1868-1912), deceased members of these households were given normal Buddhist funerals, although the household grave is still located inside the village cemetery adjacent to Sainenji.

²¹With the Japanese view on illnesses it follows that a lot can be done in order to prevent an illness from occurring, in addition to a sound way of living. A number of festivals and other rituals – of which many observers will label as 'magic' – are performed in order to secure continuous divine support in the future, and great care can be taken in order not to offend any spirit. There is, moreover, an extensive usage of charms (*ofuda*) and amulets (*omamori*) and it is popular to consult diviners. It is also possible to actively seek the support of protective spirits by entering into a relationship of reciprocity. Finally one can build up one's defence against illnesses and other misfortunes through spiritual training. It is impossible here to go into these various ways to prevent illnesses. A few will be touched upon when discussing healing practices, however, and I hope to return to the others on later occasions. For an analysis of the main Shinto festival held in Shingū every 18 years, see Kalland, A. *A Japanese Shinto Parade: Does it 'say' anything, and if so, what?* - Paper presented at the 5th Japan Anthropological Workshop, Leiden, 1990.

²²The most famous pilgrimage in which Shingū people take part is the Shikoku circuit covering 88 temples and shrines. Closer to home is the Sasaguri pilgrimage which

is a smaller 'copy' of the Shikoku one. Sasaguri is within easy reach from Shingū, and many inhabitants go monthly to temples in that circuit. There are also local pilgrimages, one of which includes the worshipping halls for the two Jizō and Kannon in Shingū itself. See Reader (Reader, J. Miniaturization And Proliferation: A study of small-scale pilgrimages in Japan. In: *Studies in Central and East Asian Religions*, 1988, No. 1, pp. 50-66) for a study of such local pilgrimages.

²³Both Sainenji and Isozaki-jinja have had resident priests for several centuries, and they perform rituals in order to protect the village and its inhabitants, but do not operate as mediums, since none of them are *gyoja* and they are thus unable to communicate with the spirits in the required way. Until late 19th century there was in Shingū a household of *yamabushi* who were married ascetic priests within the syncretistic Shugendō movement, and 'fulfilling all kinds of magico-religious services for the common people' (Earhart, H. B. *A Religious Study of the Mount Haguro Sect of Shugendō*. Tokyo, 1970, p. 172). Among these services were divination and exorcism. In contrast to the *yamabushi*, who had long religious training behind him, the *kitōshi* was a common village fellow who was able to heal through prayers. Moreover, blind Buddhist priests (locally termed *zatō* but more correctly called *moso*) of the Tendai sect of Buddhism came regularly into the community to perform rites in front of the Kōjin altars.

²⁴The youngest medium Noriko (fictitious name) is about 50 years old and has her own altar at home, while the 20 years older Kiku will bring her clients to the Western Jizō hall. There is some competition between them, which is somewhat brought under control by the fact that Noriko's mother belongs to Kiku's group. Kiku is still in firm control and regards the Jizō worshipping hall more or less as her private property and training ground (*gyoba*). Every month she leads other women of her group in prayers to Jizō on his special memorial day, *meinichi*. The younger medium is somewhat peripheral to these activities.

²⁵Turner, Victor 1985: *On the Edge of the Bush – Anthropology as Experience*. Tucson, 1985, p. 41.

²⁶Sato, N. The Initiation of the Religious Specialists *kamisan*: A Few Observations. In: *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 1981, No. 8 (3-4), pp. 149-186.

²⁷Kiku has special relations with Jizō and Inari. In her case Jizō uses Inari as an investigator, and he transmits the results of Inari's investigations back to Kiku. Inari is also investigating matters for Kannon and serves the ancestors as well. Thus Jizō and Inari both serve as messengers for Kiku. Noriko has, on the other hand, a close relationship with Kannon, but claims to be able to hear the voices of all kinds of spirits.

²⁸See Note 1, pp. 123-166.

²⁹Mizobe, R. *Gendai jūin to gensei riyaku*. In: Nihon Bukkyo Kenkyukai (ed.). *Nihon shukyo no gensei riyaku*. Tokyo, 1970.

³⁰Itoh, M. *Shinko seikatsu*. In: T. Umehao (ed.). *Nihonjin no seikatsu*, Koza Hikaku Bunka, Vol. 4. Tokyo, 1976.

³¹From this Ohnuki-Tierney goes on to argue that all Japanese supernaturals 'are patterned in terms of one basic symbolic structure. That is, whether they are deities in Shintoism or Taoism, or Buddhas, their symbolic meaning at a structural level derives from the symbolic opposition of purity : impurity = inside : margin' (see Note 1, pp. 165-166). It may thus come as a surprise when she concludes vaguely that 'my interpre-

tation is only one of several possible ways of looking at Japanese religions, which may be fused in some areas and multilayered in others' (see Note 1, p. 166).

³²This stone is located between the hamlet and the beach and was long covered by grassland. When I arrived Shingû in 1988 the ground had been cleared and the stone was placed on a neat concrete basement. During my fieldwork in 1989 a shrine gate (*torii*) with the sign 'Hama-no-miya' (the 'beach shrine') was added. A group of believers had formed around this stone, which originally was the vessel (*shintai*) of seven deities of which one had 'fallen out'. Among the members of this group there are two women who belong to the new religion Konkôkyô, a carpenter who is well versed in esoteric Buddhism, the honorary chairman of the last Shinto festival which is held at the Isozaki-jinja once every 18 years, and his wife who is a member of Noriko's group of believers.

³³Hitomaru-hime was a young girl who in the 13th century travelled to Shingû in search for her exiled father. She caught ill and died, and she was enshrined some 4-500 years later.

³⁴There is a hall for Awashima where a mirror – which is a typical Shinto symbol – symbolises her presence. This building is located next to the eastern Jizô hall, and the same group of people take care of both. In the Tokugawa period it was the resident *yamabushi* who took care of Awashima and Jizô. It is common for believers to donate small votive paintings depicting the body parts of their illnesses both to Awashima and to the adjacent Jizô. The inside walls of these two buildings are covered by such paintings as well as by votive paintings donated in gratitude for recoveries. A new worshipping hall for this deity has been built within the temple compound of Kentokuji, where the deity is symbolised by a doll.

MUSIC INSTRUMENTS IN THE RITUAL CEREMONIES OF THE OB-UGRIANS

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The Voguls and Ostyaks, or, as they are called collectively, the Ob-Ugrians, live in the greatest distance from us, though in the sense of language affinity, they are our closest relatives.

The religion of the Ob-Ugrian people was based on animism, that is, on the belief in the existence of gods and spirits living all over the world. Beliefs connected with totemism were also developed among them. The especially great respect for the bear can serve as a good example for that. Members of the family group Por respected the bear as a totem ancestor, and showing their respect they