ARCHITECTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY
Architectural Anthropology:

SEMANTIC AND SYMBOLIC ARCHITECTURE

An architectural-ethnological survey into hundred villages of central Japan
Nold Egenter, Dipl. arch. ETH, ethnologist and architectural anthropologist. Ten years research in Japan (symbolic-semantic architecture of village Shinto in 100 villages of central Japan). Research on nestbuilding behavior of the higher apes (subhuman architecture) and studies related to architectural ethnology (domestic architecture, in particular Ainu, Japan). Works with numerous publications on the buildup of architectural anthropology and an anthropologically founded architectural theory. Occasional lecturer at the University of Zurich (ethnology). Director of the Documentation Office for Fundamental Studies in Building Theory, Zurich. Researcher at the Department of Architecture, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Lausanne. Co-director of the Indian Rural Settlement Survey Institute, Ahmedabad, India, with Miki and Madhavi Desai.
1.3 Other villages around the town (non-participants in the central festival)
1.31 Konoshō
1.32 Kitasuda, Yamaguchi and Shima
1.33 Nakakomori
1.34 Tanake/Jūrinji
1.35 Maki
1.36 Asakoi
1.37 Nishinoshō
1.38 Reed columns of one and two tiers
1.39 Jōrakuji and Konaka (Azuchi)
1.4 Uchino
1.41 Tarōbō with Imato, Shuku, Owaki and Miya
1.42 Hayashi
1.43 Suehiro
1.44 Tree forms
1.45 Chōkōji
1.46 Goshonai
1.47 Tomosada and Noda
1.48 Masa
1.49 Chōfukuji
1.5 Penfold forms
1.51 Shimohaneda
1.52 Kamihaneda and Nakahaneda
1.53 Kashiwagi
1.54 Compact hour-glass type
1.55 Nukazuka
1.6 Nishioiso and Minamisuda
1.61 Gokashō (Obata, Naka, Goide and Yanase)
1.62 Kinagase with Yamamoto, Shindō, Mitsumata, Oku and Shimonō
1.63 Kurimidesaiki
1.64 Kurimishinden
1.65 Bamboo columns
1.66 Kawahara
1.67 Sanno with Jingu, Chūshōji and Saso

2. TYPES ONLY OCCURRING LOCALLY

2.1 Maruvama
2.2 Takagai
2.3 Oda, Jū, Egashira
2.4 Noguchi
2.5 Hirata
2.6 Yuge
2.7 Kamihiraki
2.8 Ishidera/Kayao
2.9 Higashioiso
2.10 Taikoji

ANNEXE: BOOKREVIEWS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

COMPLETE LIST OF AUTHOR'S TEXTS AND PUBLICATIONS 1980-1994

CREDITS (Plates 1-7)
III. GENERAL ASPECTS OF THE TRADITIONS SURVEYED

1. THE REGION INVESTIGATED: DISTRIBUTION OF THE CULT OBJECTS STUDIED

Belonging as it does to the old province of Ami, the Amihachiman region is part of Japan’s oldest cultural landscape, as are the great plains of Nara and Kōshū. Many archaeological finds indicate that it has been an area of settlement from time immemorial. Finds from earliest cultural levels (Jōron) have been made along the old coastline, while others from later periods (Yayoi and Kōson) point to a progressive spread of settlements towards the hilly outskirts of the Sūzuka chain. Thus the broad, fertile plains surrounding Lake Biwa were probably settled in the Yayoi and Kōson periods by rice farmers moving out from Lake Biwa. The River Yodoogawa connects the lake directly with the Inland Sea, which played an important part in the settlement of central Japan.

The religious traditions studied in this work have survived in a more or less triangular region lying between the rivers Hinogawa and Echigawara. This sharp geographic delimitation is strange. However it must be added that religious festivals with temporary cult objects (SAIGOHO) are widespread in the whole south-eastern riparian region. In certain respects these are very similar to the cult torches we have studied; in others they are quite distinct. In these festivals too cult signs are built and burnt, usually in front of the village shrine. These signs are made of handy organic materials and in form triangle are formally so highly developed and why social motives that, for instance in the case of the famous war leader, Oda Nobunaga, could have been responsible for the preservation of the structure and outward appearance. Reeds are never used. As to Oda Nobunaga, could have been responsible for the preservation of this structure and outward appearance. Reeds are never used. As to Oda Nobunaga, could have been responsible for the preservation of this structure and outward appearance. Reeds are never used. As to Oda Nobunaga, could have been responsible for the preservation of this structure and outward appearance. Reeds are never used. As to Oda Nobunaga, could have been responsible for the preservation of this structure and outward appearance. Reeds are never used.
The names of the settlements in which cult structure traditions were found are marked with an oval frame and numbered. These numbers correspond to the list of village names in Japanese characters and their Romanized transcription in the following table (Fig. 30). Numbers after names of settlements in the documentary part refer to this map and the following list. Ueda (No. 1) is more strongly ringed and marked with a circle. Its festival is the subject of the case study summed up in Part II. Many of the settlements have recently been incorporated with the town. In the official maps this is shown by the addition of CHÔ (urban district) after the name of these villages. The transcriptions take account of this change while the text the original village names are used.

The names of the settlements in which cult structure traditions were found are marked with an oval frame.
speaks of UJIGAMI (village deity) or MIYA-SAN (personified ‘hono-

able’ shrine), meaning the shrine building, according to official

Shinto, is essentially bound up with history and

On the other hand, in other villages complicated social and

is placed on a systematic basis and raised to the status of a

 distinguish between elementary and complex components. Many shrine

Significantly, the

ens. Many examples reveal that the orders responsible for the cult

on any people, their objects of worship are gods with mythical Japanese names.

This type of religious behavioy will be approached not from the same is found

not objective in the strict sense of the word: it is idealistic

elements from different developmental stages: in a word as an

model for the understanding of

Shinto is strongly influenced by autochthonous, local traditions

and is consequently very various in its forms of expression. On the

other hand, State Shinto is essentially bound up with history and

has therefore attained supra-regional importance in canonized ste-

stems of cult marking, which must be annually renewed, is overlaid

by one whose cult sign (a shrine built of wood) no longer requires

this annual renewal. The temporary cult signs are thus to be under-

stood as relics of an earlier system of cult marking which nowa-

days only appears temporally. This then provides the basis for a

new understanding of the rituals, namely from the structural stand-

point. If one interprets the rituals as a series of events surrounding

objects of an earlier system of cult marking, which made use of pri-

vocal building means and in which earlier cult objects must have

been as deeply venerated as are the shrine buildings today then the

present ritual could be explained on the following material basis: if

the cult object is to be maintained, it must of necessity be frequ-

ently renewed, preferably annually when the ‘building material’ has

grown again. It is evident that the importation and diffusion of the

Chinese method of building in wood and the spread of the more
durable wooden shrines within the framework of the Edo period

shrine systems (see, Kusu-

gawa, Hatchiman etc.) must have led to conflict with the autochthonous

marking system. The annual renewal of the sacred system of order was.

after all, the real content of the local cult. But this lost its sense

with the arrival of durable wooden buildings. By way of compromi-

se, the earlier ‘layer’ of cult objects was kept, either underneath or

in front of the wooden shrine; in the second case the two cult ob-

jects competed for primacy.

Therefore the older religious observance was later reduced to a

formal procedure as much as the explicit destruction of the worn-

out cult object and the erection of a new one were projected on to

and the same temporary object, the relative time sequence of the

two procedures being reversed. In any case, from the stand-

point of building criteria this permits a reasonable interpretation

of events and also provides an objective explanation of the ritual.

This concept is basic to the interpretation of the shrines as pre-

sented in the following documentation. The study interprets the shrines

and festivals, not as an integrated whole, but as an agglomerate of

elements from different developmental stages: in a word as an

accumulation (Ogburn 1923). To this extent this documentation is

not objective in the strict sense of the word: it is idealtc typology

The work picks out those events which appear to be of primary

ergological importance and, by broad comparison and classifica-

tion, tries to bring the material into a reasonable, coherent system.

Thus, for instance, the shrines are understood solely as the basic

pattern for the spatial arrangement of the cults, not as their histori-

cal context.

If, considering the cult objects. shrine complexes and cult

arrange-

ments involved, this type of religious festival is regarded as an ac-

cumulation, it is logically possible to deduce the here

adop-

attitude towards the religious impulse which, naturally, is also involved.

This type of religious behaviour will be approached not from the

standpoint of theologically influenced preconceptions, but as an ob-

ject tradition in the strict sense of cultural history and, indeed, as an

object tradition in which the ideological component of the cult is tra-

ditionally co-transmitted. It will be pointless to seek for the spiritual

motivation of the events dealt with: for instance, whether the cults

are based on ideas of fertility. Such ideas could easily have accu-

mulated later and their explanation must be sought in other tradi-

tions. The spiritual motives inspiring the cult will be assessed from

the forms of the cult signs themselves and from the order which

they express. Finally, the method is also based on the assumption

that the object tradition probably preserves more ancient elements

does the ideological tradition, which always rationalizes moti-

vess of behaviour and adapts itself to the spirit of the time more ra-

pidly than is the case with active practice. Yanagita Kunio, by far

the best-known Japanese ethnologist, has always emphasised the

difference between Japanese popular cults and State Shinto. Popu-

lar Shinto is strongly influenced by autochthonous, local traditions

In the chapter headed ‘Interpretation’ there is a diagram (Fig. 66)
in which the relationship of temporary cult objects and permanent

wooden shrines is represented as a superimposition: namely a sys-

tem of cult marking, which must be annually renewed, is overlaid

by one whose cult sign (a shrine built of wood) no longer requires

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with the arrival of durable wooden buildings. By way of compromi-
This result of the investigation is largely in agreement with the views expressed by leading Japanese studies of religious phenomenology. Harada (1942) has emphasized the importance of the UJIGAMI cult for the Japanese village and has similarly stressed its socially and territorially representative character and its close ties with the history of settlement.

Fig. 31: Basic model of the study shown in perspective.

Shrine with cult zone and temporary cult structure as representative sign of the unity of the settlement.
3. MATERIAL AND BUILDING TECHNOLOGICAL ASPECTS

3.1 Material

In the building of the temporary cult signs (TAIMATSU) the following materials are used: tall reeds (YOSHI): different kinds of bamboo (TAKE), tall and short e.g. SASA-TAKE; rice-straw (INE); dried rape (NA); twigs and trunks of young trees (Japanese oak "KASHI", camellia "TSUBAKI") and the evergreen tree of official Shinto, "SAKAKI".

In most places the procurement of material follows traditional rules. For instance, in some places near the lake reeds are jointly gathered by old-fashioned methods from communally owned stretches of the lake-shore (e.g. Minamitsuda, Jōraku). But most villages buy their reeds from commercial sources, paying for them with special money offerings from the community. Bamboo canes are felled with hatchets, usually in the shrine grove: rice-straw is always combed and is either collected by the families directly involved in the cult or is brought by farmers who visit the shrine. The same applies to the rape plants. Twigs are only used for the tree-forms. They too are usually gathered in a "wild" part of the sacred wood, one untouched by agriculture. This is equally true of the tree trunks used as central poles of the taller cult signs.

Since the forms are largely determined by the building material, its use is also traditionally regulated. Tall varieties of bamboo allow the use of bundled cult signs of considerable size, while similar types made of other material (e.g. reed columns of single length) may only reach a height of 4 m. This means that the height of one-tier types is directly determined by the length of the material used.

It is also possible to observe how the material influences construction. When bamboo is employed there is a decrease in the variability of a certain constructional type, because bamboo is less easily broken than reed. The type of reed that grows along the shores of Lake Biwa also has tall, stiff stalks, suitable for standing or covering purposes but not for binding. Unlike the shorter "kaya" kind with its much softer stalks, which can be used both for bundles and for their bindings. Consequently in the region investigated, rice-straw was almost the only material used for binding purposes. Its tough, flexible fibres are excellent for making ropes and string.

Stripped reed is preferred for covering outer surfaces, on account of its marked symbolic character. The decisive qualities of bamboo seen to be its stability, height and fresh green colour which contrasts so pleasingly with the warm, light brown of the reeds.

Consequently bamboo is used for the supporting posts, central pillar (with leafy tip), as central bush and also as a decorative external accessory. Splinters are produced by repeated splitting of the bamboo canes. These are then bent into rings or twisted and plaited like ropes and, though stiff, are used for binding purposes. Rice-straw is always used without the ears and mainly as a filling and for burning. As mentioned above, it is also made into ropes and string. In contrast to reeds and bamboo, which come from the wild, uncultivated zones, rice-straw has a quite secondary meaning. It is without the ritual significance that it has in certain agricultural rites, in cultivated zones, rice-straw has a quite secondary meaning. It is without the ritual significance that it has in certain agricultural rites, in which case the ears are retained. Here it is building material, pure and simple. Reeds, rice-straw and rape are often worked up like mats and are then incorporated into the structure as quasi "prefabricated" elements. Thus rape plants are usually worked up into single width strips (i.e. width of strip = length of rape plant). Their white umbels look like tufts of cottonwool and these contribute to the external form of the whole structure. In addition, the oil (NATA-NE ASURA) contained in their seeds is a first-class combustible material.

One important point remains to be mentioned. Watching the work for a while, an important aspect becomes evident, one which is due to the nature of the material used: apart from a few cutting instruc-
Fig. 33: Aspects of building order in the making of the studied cult objects.

A The method of construction generates geometrical forms
B Triangular elements and/or a Three dimensional framework arise spontaneously in the construction of the hypothetic al primordial form
C The column-type cylinder, the application of a covering that projects beyond the solid base leads to the creation of an empty internal space
D In some cases the solid underpart is constructed similarly to a round hut: a covering of reed is placed over a kind of roof truss.

E Natural and inverted positions of bundles
F 'Nails'
G The circular form arises spontaneously from the constructive procedure of bundling stalks
H Plant and building

3.2 Construction

3.2.1 Basic principles of construction

An important aspect of the tradition under consideration lies in the fact that it confronts us with ancient, even primordial, building methods. At first it is astonishing to see the wealth of constructive procedures that are possible with primitive methods (Figs. 32 – 36). Simple basic procedures such as layering, bundling, binding, rope-making, plaiting, intermingle to produce a remarkable range of constructive possibilities. The constructive build-up of different form-types is very varied. Compact, monumentally tall columns contrast with small earthbound structures. The range that we usually associate with primitive building methods is far exceeded. These are not simple, formally insignificant objects that rise before our eyes, things carelessly produced for momentary purposes, but differentiated constructive systems with careful dovetailing of their components.

Yet here too broad comparison must unravel the multiplicity to find the fundamental elements which explain the whole. Nearly all forms can be traced back to the simple bundle of plant material. Rope-making is a partial procedure detached from the construction of the bundle. Plaiting is a special case of binding in which several strands are used, each coming to the outside alternately. Similarly comparison of the forms shows clearly that they are based on the principle of the bundle. The process of variation can also be interpreted in terms of the bundle of stalks. In the first instance it is seen in the formal variability of the simple bundle (see Figs. 16, 44, 45) and secondly by way of the combinational possibilities of the specific styles of construction. These are: 1. Combination of different materials with different properties (colour, length, stiffness etc.) in the sense of circular addition of different layers (core and covering) or axial additions of graded bundles with or without overlapping and 2. Combination of different elements in various relative positions.

But the bundling of plant materials is not only the source of form variety, fundamental building features are also based upon it. The combination of elements to form taller units is to be understood literally here: the ‘raw material’ taken from nature is worked up into building elements, namely bundles, and these are assembled to make a complete structure with a definite form. Particular aspects generally considered to be attributes of developed building, namely the joining and fitting together of parts to form a structural whole and the setting of materials to form a mass, are produced here on exactly the same principle. In this case structure is only quantitatively different from mass. The bundling of many slender, parallel stalks produces volume or strong, stiff bodies, while the combining of a few oppositely angled stalks results in building structure. If the rooted forms are taken into account as well, one gains some idea of how stable structures came to be built, because there, in the concrete cover of the lower part, the most elementary building product of all arises spontaneously in consequence of a simple manipulation: a three-dimensional framework of triangles formed by the stalks and meeting at the point of fastening. The illustrations of Figs. 32 and 33 provide a graphic summary of elementary aspects which became evident during the study of the structure.
### Figs. 34/35: Structural typology of the main forms of cult objects.

#### Legends

- **Supports and piles**
- **Sacred symbolic centre**
- **Covering**
- **Filling core.**

### Table: Descriptive structural typology of cult objects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Central Axis</th>
<th>Core</th>
<th>Outer Sourcing</th>
<th>Relation to Post</th>
<th>Coord</th>
<th>In Scm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 heterogeneous bamboo + cult sign</td>
<td>rape, multi-tiered</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>slaked</td>
<td>vertical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 heterogeneous pine/bamboo</td>
<td>straw, multi-tiered</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>slaked</td>
<td>vertical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 heterogeneous bamboo</td>
<td>bamboo, one tier</td>
<td>loose straw</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>slaked</td>
<td>vertical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 heterogeneous bamboo</td>
<td>bamboo, one tier</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>slaked</td>
<td>vertical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 heterogeneous bamboo + twig</td>
<td>bamboo, one tier</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>slaked</td>
<td>vertical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 heterogeneous bamboo + cult sign</td>
<td>bamboo, one tier</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>slaked</td>
<td>vertical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 heterogeneous bamboo, budge at straw pine at top and twig budge</td>
<td>bamboo, one tier</td>
<td>natural, straw</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>slaked</td>
<td>vertical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 heterogeneous bamboo</td>
<td>bamboo, one tier</td>
<td>natural, straw</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>slaked</td>
<td>vertical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 heterogeneous bamboo, bulge at top</td>
<td>straw (shortcut)</td>
<td>natural, straw</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>slaked</td>
<td>vertical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 heterogeneous wooden post</td>
<td>rape, multi-tiered</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>on flat surface</td>
<td>vertical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 heterogeneous wooden post</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>on flat surface</td>
<td>vertical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 heterogeneous wooden post + cherry blossom branch</td>
<td>straw, multi-tiered</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>inverse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 heterogeneous wooden post</td>
<td>rape, multi-tiered</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>on flat surface</td>
<td>vertical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 heterogeneous wooden post</td>
<td>straw, multi-tiered</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>inverse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 heterogeneous wooden post + straw</td>
<td>straw, multi-tiered</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>slaked</td>
<td>vertical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 heterogeneous wooden post</td>
<td>straw, two tiers</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>slaked</td>
<td>vertical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 heterogeneous bamboo + blossom twig</td>
<td>straw, two tiers</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>slaked</td>
<td>vertical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 heterogeneous bamboo + blossom twig</td>
<td>straw, two tiers</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>slaked</td>
<td>vertical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 heterogeneous bamboo + straw</td>
<td>straw, two tiers</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>slaked</td>
<td>vertical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 heterogeneous bamboo + straw</td>
<td>straw, two tiers</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>slaked</td>
<td>vertical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 heterogeneous bamboo + straw</td>
<td>straw, two tiers</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>slaked</td>
<td>vertical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 heterogeneous bamboo + straw</td>
<td>straw, two tiers</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>slaked</td>
<td>vertical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 heterogeneous bamboo + straw</td>
<td>straw, two tiers</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>slaked</td>
<td>vertical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 heterogeneous bamboo + straw</td>
<td>straw, two tiers</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>slaked</td>
<td>vertical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 heterogeneous bamboo + straw</td>
<td>straw, two tiers</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>natural</td>
<td>slaked</td>
<td>vertical</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once the constructional method is recognized to be based on the principle of bundling, it is necessary to typify the structures. The following criteria have proved suitable for structural comparisons:

a. material constitution (for the sake of simplicity this excludes the axis): homogeneous, heterogeneous

b. axis: non-solid, solid (stick, pole post, tree)

c. core: tiering and disposition of the plants (one or more tiers: natural or inverted disposition)

d. covering: tiering and disposition of the plants (one or more tiers)

e. connection with the ground: fixed (staked, piled, heaped), multi-local [braced when ratio of base area to average diameter is less than 12]

f. usual position of the whole structure: (vertical, horizontal, otherwise) and relation of core and covering (standing on the ground, raised above ground level)

These criteria are the aspects considered in judging the structures. The table of Figs. 34, 35 lists the main types according to their constituent structure. The next following list (Fig. 36) gives the main material and constructive features corresponding to standpoints a-f. In this typology the following concepts are treated as primary in order to gain a general idea of how the range of forms could have developed.

- homogeneous
- non-solid
- one-tiered, the material naturally disposed
- one-tiered, the material in inverted position
- fixed
- vertical, standing on the ground

On the basis of these criteria the typology shows a dynamic system that can be explained by the combinations of a-f. Since the basic criteria are also essential characteristics of the hypothetical form, the range of demonstrated forms can also be regarded as a series of developmental stages originating in the primordial form. As regards the tradition, this provides us with an instrument by which we can distinguish between the more primordial and the derivative forms. This not only allows distinctions to be made between primary
ry and secondary elements of complex rituals (as attempted in this study); conjectures can also be made concerning settlement history and interrelations between villages by comparing their cult signs.

3.3 Destruction

Having attempted to analyse this type of building, it soon becomes clear that the materials employed are not only handy and easy to work, but that when once worked up into shape, they are also very fragile. The form is easily destroyed in three different ways. Exposed to the weather, the material breaks down sooner or later, depending on the disposition of the plant-stalks. Compared with wood, for instance, it has a very short life. Again, owing to its fragility, the material can hardly withstand any assault upon the form. Thirdly the material is very easily burnt.

Decay from weathering does not concern us here. This only affects the type of cult object; still to be found in Japan, which stands for a whole year performing its function as a sign and is materially renewed at certain times: it would be a factor if the type represented here as degenerate and temporary (in the sense of the reconstruction shown in the chapter 'interpretation' (see Fig. 66), were interpreted as a 'one-year permanent' type. In this connection it would certainly be remarkable if such a primitively made artefact showed a tectonic structure resistant to the destructive forces of nature. The form is chiefly affected by mechanical destruction that damages, degrades or annihilates it. In some cases the vulnerability of the form may have contributed to its mystical obscurity. Such forms had to be rescued and concealed. But a mysterious quality also clings to the disorganization of their formal structure when they are approached with destructive intent. Whether they are approached with destructive intent, or whether they are robbed of their signal character by being overturned, by the deliberate changing of the disposition of their parts or by the cutting of their bindings, the basic form is reduced to a chaos of formlessness of the material only.

The astonishing thing is that these possibilities are actually put into practice in the rituals. Watching these festivals, it is strange to see a horde of young men suddenly go wild, ecstatically throwing themselves upon the cult sign that they have just built with so much care and reverence and tearing it to pieces with those same hands: or to see how tall pillars, which by day have towered majestically above their surroundings, are carried at night on the shoulders of dead-drunk youths and tossed hither and thither like ships in distress. The explicit formal depreciation of the cult signs is evidently significant and has apparently been transmitted as part of the traditional ritual behaviour. This phenomenon of deliberate destruction, which can be observed in many Japanese cults of similar nature, indicates indirectly but clearly that the sense of such cults is also to be sought in the form of the structure itself. In connection with the fire cult, this is a strong argument against the thesis that when a cult sign is burnt it is the fire that counts, not the object itself. From the building standpoint, fire is only one of several possibilities of achieving something that gives this type of cult its deeper meaning, namely, the depreciation and extinction of the form, the demonstration of its transitory nature or quite practically the making way for a new form. In particular, the occasion for the deliberate destruction of the newly built structure can be interpreted from the developed form of the ritual as tentatively reconstructed in the chapter 'interpretation'. If fire is no longer to be regarded as an essential element in the whole procedure, but rather as accidental, then it is quite conceivable that its association with the beautifully formed torch first appeared at a stage when the latter had already existed for a long time. In other words, fire may have appeared secondarily and been superimposed at a very developed stage of the building tradition, in the sense of an accumulation. This amalgamation, with its own profound traits, would no doubt have added to the mystic aura surrounding the structure, the aura of an emphatically emotional event (see Symbolism). Fig. 37 shows a typological summary of different kinds of destruction of primitively built cult signs. All these types find more or less clear expression in this region.

With regard to the durability of the material, an interesting observation can be made on a few structures: their varying degree of perishability. When these structures are burned, pieces often remain e.g. posts of freshly felled wood, which do not burn so easily as straw and reeds. Such remnants often betray the order that they shared with the extinguished form. Yet who could guess at the former structure if he only saw a ring of 12 charred pegs in the ground? Fig. 38 shows this observation in three cases.

Fig. 37: Typology of manner of destruction of primitively built cult objects.

A Loss of tectonic quality by overthrow
B Loss of symbolic value by destruction of the elements that project beyond the compact lower part
C Loss of shape by deliberate destruction or by being taken apart
D Loss of form or material by fire or by natural decomposition
E Displacement by being carried away or by being allowed to be washed away in the streams.
4. SPATIAL STRUCTURE

In conformity with their purpose, nearly all the structures are fixed, upright, free-standing signs. This is clearly so in the majority of cases. They are built on the spot around a supporting framework which is anchored to the ground. This type is immovable; otherwise the form would be destroyed. Thus it has a single location and, as long as it lasts, it identifies the place in which it is built. For us this is the primary basic type from which the meaning of the whole tradition can be grasped.

In addition to the fixed, unilocular types, there are others which, though primarily free-standing, are not permanently fixed to the ground. Their only contact with the ground is through the broad surface on which they stand and they can therefore be lifted and carried or dragged away with the help of ropes. Or in certain cases the connection with the ground proceeds from the form itself: that is, bracing ropes emerge from it radially at various points: these are tensed like the guy-ropes of a tent and fixed to wooden pegs, which are driven into the ground. Thus in these cases the connection with the ground is reversible. The reason for this potentially manifold placement and mobility is to be found in the special manner of construction. This is particularly true of the tall columns but also of the shorter forms, which are rolled on the ground. They are constructed in the horizontal and then erected, not built in the strict sense of the word. But there may also be ritual reasons for mobility if the ritual concept prescribes dynamic forms, as for instance in the antithetic confrontation of differently formed structures.

One-tiered structures can be moved in the vertical during the dynamic phase, but this is unusual and only happens with the smaller signs, for instance when they are mounted on a wagon and drawn by ropes or when they are carried around on cross-bars shoved through special lugs on the structure itself. As a rule the dynamic phase corresponds with the horizontal position. The structural parts are laid on their sides and horizontally displaced. This conforms with the pattern of contrast-thinking, which can be observed in the entire ritual behaviour of the region. The antithetical association of vertical and horizontal with static and dynamic conditions respectively would then explain the imitation of fish- and ship-forms that are to be found in certain cult signs. On the one hand, their concise formation is entirely due to the building method; on the other hand, they form incorporate well-known symbols of mobility (fish, ship). Incidentally, this opinion is not simply imported: the phenomenon can be observed in many Japanese rituals [see Figs. 1 - 7].

Fig. 38: Different grades of natural perishability

Not all materials are equally vulnerable to fire. After the burning of the cult structures, this shown by the traces still point to the vanished form. Yet, who could draw conclusions from them as to the form of which they were a part?

A Hilt-like structure with crown of reed-and-bamboo (IV, 1)
B Net spread out on the ground with a bamboo pole (IV, 3)
C Bamboo column (IV, 17)

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So what could be more obvious than to regard the clumsy “fishes” of Kamihiraki (their name, “catfish”, shows them to be such) as an instance of this singular development of form from analogies of movement? In the ritual too they are mobile objects, carried, burning, to the shrine on the shoulders of the throng. This is in strong contrast to the fixed structures. The same probably applies to those cult objects which imitate the form of a ship. Incidentally, the great variety of ships still ritually used in Japan suggests the idea of mobility could provide an interesting pointer for the history of ships.

Seen from the building standpoint, an ordering factor has been imposed on the regional phenomena. The forms built up around an anchored substructure are to be regarded as primary. We call this “tectonic primacy”. The potentially atectonic and the explicitly tectonic are then to be interpreted as derivative. This concept is supported both by the building standpoint and by comparison of the forms. It is also reasonable to proceed from the hypothetical, primordial form. Not least, this ordering of the material offers explanations both of the nature of the forms and their meaning. Certainly it is only by proceeding from the building standpoint and by seeing the stationary tectonic forms as primary that the whole phenomenon can be understood as spatial order. Only then does the relation of the cult objects to the ground begin to elucidate their territorial significance. Only then can the structures be understood as upright monuments in dialogue with the environment and with those who build them, the people. And only then is it reasonable to investigate their structure. Finally to those who approach them, they mean “so far and no further”: that is, it is only when we understand the cult objects as structures rooted in the earth and standing visibly in space, that they reveal their relation to the territory of those who build them. But earlier and later conditions also find expression in the operative structure of the cult objects.

Just as the forwardly directed knot finishes off the end of the rope that embraces and determines the whole structure, so too it terminates the operation as such: it embodies the moment when the builder stands back to survey his work. In other words, one obtains a 3-dimensional model (Fig. 39) that can be effortlessly recognized, both in the form of the structures produced and in the way in which they are to be treated, and even generally speaking, in the ritual behaviour. It is to be found creatively at work everywhere.

The deeper meaning of the vertical is only to be understood in connection with the formal structure, as explained in the chapter on “Form”. This is tectonic from first to last. It is only in tectonic terms that its meaning, very important for any building, is to be understood; namely that, standing upright in contact with both the solid earth and the empty air, it proclaims their dual nature in a humanly interpreted form (see Figs. 40 and 43).
5. FORM

5.1 Basic form, general aspects

The most striking feature of the basic forms is their abstract character. Only in a few exceptional cases do they suggest known natural or artificial shapes. They are neither patterned on nature nor on any other object created by the hand of man. The formal element is not due to human fancy. It comes from a tradition of handicraft in the ethnological sense, i.e. hand work. This is clearly shown by the fact that in these structures form has not become dissociated from technical conditions. Formal expression and objective value are related to the constructional preconditions.

The basic forms are abstract in yet another sense: they embody geometry. This is not because the builders are to be thought of as lovers of geometry, but for a perfectly simple reason: building technique itself loves geometry and of its very nature it generates geometry. It is omnipresent in the round cross-section of a bundle. The axial extension of this circle produces a cylinder, its basal spread gives the cone. Ropes and supporting frames describe polyhedra and by reduction of the contents of bundles, stalks become rods that produce forms such as tetrahedra, pyramids etc. The geometry of these structures is doubtless the fruit of the union of material and building method.

It is easy to see how a knowledge of this phenomenon provides an answer to the question: ‘How did geometry arise?’

When the structures are one-tiered, the size of the basic form is determined by material and technique. A column of bundled reed easily reaches a height of 4 m and 6-10 m if made of bamboo, depending on the variety used. But the height can be increased by joining two or more bundles together. That is, by building techniques. If several tiers of bundles are bound around one or more central supporting posts, it is possible to build structures of monumental size (see Figs. 1-7). The direct dependence of the size of these cult objects on the material used in one-tier structures has an important consequence for the overall phenomenon of ‘non-domestic building’ (see Fig. 41). If we regard the production of signs and symbols of this kind as building, we must also interpret as buildings those signs and symbols for a ‘built’, according to exactly the same principle, of short-growing materials (e.g. rice-stalks etc.), which may be only 30-50 cm long. The matter is chiefly of importance from the standpoint of cultural history. From the earliest stages of several ancient cultures (Sumer, Egypt, Crete, China) we have written characters inscribed on durable materials which, for structural reasons, leave no possible doubt as to their material and technical origins and their prototypes. The suggestive connection between building and the history of written characters could be of great value in clarifying their past.

Another notable aspect: the basic form is not simply form, it is organized form. Fundamentally different parts of it can be separately described. So greatly do they differ from each other, one might think that the Dionysian and Apollonian were united in one and the same form (to express it drastically in art terms). However, the organizer is not an artist, but tradition, inspired by technique. Just as a certain building component, for instance a supporting element, may largely determine the organization of a whole house, so here too there is an important functional part, the most important indeed, that determines the form. The main binding rope that, at mid-point, visibly determines the form, also organizes it in its main parts, into two fields of totally different formal nature. We shall now examine these parts more closely.

5.2 Formal parts

5.2.1 The cult rope as means of construction and as centre of organization

In most forms there is a thick cult rope laid around or fixed to a conspicuous place. This is sometimes imitated in other materials. The Cult rope (SHIMENAWA) is the commonest cult symbol in Japan. It is usually hung between the upright posts of symbolic gateways (TORII) and at New Year it hangs over the entrance to every house. It marks the threshold between sacred and profane zones and its presence on the cult objects of the region studied can, in the first instance, be taken as a token of sanctity.
Fig. 41 The arbitrary size of non-domestic building structures. Freed from the need to be tailored to the size of the human body, non-domestic building structures can fulfill their essential function as monument, sign and symbol by means of the same structure in any number of chosen dimensions. The assessment of size probably links building history with that of sign and symbol.

It hangs on many structures, as mentioned, it is laid around them, but some forms betray its essential nature more clearly. In the case study (Egenter, 1982) an attempt is made to indicate the original significance of the cult rope as the main integrating factor of a simple tectonic structure. The objects discussed in this work not only display forms similar to those of the experimentally constructed primordial forms, but in them the cult rope lies at the functionally determinative position.

Admittedly the constructive function of the cult rope as demonstrated in this ideal construction is largely superseded in many forms of the region, but in most cases the recollection of a need to hold the form together is still very much alive. In these cases the character of the main rope as means and centre is abundantly clear. It always lies transversely to the axis of the structure. In forms where its function is more symbolic it lies loosely around the form: in the ideal case it compresses the material. In cylindrical forms it sits like a 'bolster'; in hourglass forms it lies, of necessity at the narrowest point of the figure, the waist.

The rope and its knot are together the main integrating factor. The knot is the closure. It secures the material content and the whole form: held by the knot, the rope encircles the whole structure. Thus the knot becomes the source of the whole. This is no doubt the reason why it is accorded such formal importance and is most clearly shown in the experimentally constructed hypothetical primordial form. Here the integrating agent is not only reversible: when the knot is untied, the whole form disintegrates into nothingness, into its material components; from the building standpoint too, the knot represents the end of the construction of the form. After the knot is tied the builder steps back to survey his handwork. He becomes a spectator. Therefore the knot marks the most important horizontal radius. It determines the 'face' or the 'front' of the whole.

The position of the integrating agent is not absolutely fixed. Together with its content it constitutes a formally dynamic structure inasmuch as, extremes apart, its height is variable (Fig. 42). When certain stalk lengths are used in a one-tier structure, it thus brings the tower and upper parts into quantitative balance. In other words, if one part broadens out above the rope, it will be balanced by another fixed part of proportional dimensions below the rope. This position of one part above another concisely illustrates the meaning of the word 'proportion'. Thus we can say that the main rope not only brings the main parts into proportional relationship: it also provides a particularly illustrative example of this basic architectonic idea.

Fig. 42: The vertical shifting of the integrating medium and its influence on the form. From the tip of the bound stalks to the standing surface, the position of the integrating medium can be imagined in a variety of positions. Assuming the same base in each case, between forms A and H such changes could produce the series of differently proportioned forms B - G. For practical reasons however, A and H are excluded; B and G are constructively dubious, so that only C, F, remain as constructively realistic, leaving the range D and E as that with the optimal proportions, as the golden mean, so to speak.
We mentioned extreme cases. In the most exaggerated instances the rope completely loses its sense as a means of integration. It is then devoid of even an approximate functional purpose. If the stalks project too far forward, they are broken off. If the rope is placed too near the top it cannot grasp its contents and slips upward. In the best case it finds a middle position in the so-called section aurea where, so to speak, it harmoniously separates two formal components. It is astonishing that the harmony between the proportional parts of this forms has its constructive postulate. It may be noted here that, in the sense of building and construction, the concept of harmony originally meant 'fitting together'.

5.22 Dual formal structure

So the rope binds the material to formal unity in the constructive sense while dividing it in the middle in the formal sense [Fig. 43]. If we now examine the fixed forms from the above-mentioned angle of tectonic primacy, they can be seen as formal structures with special characteristics by virtue of the binding together of flexible stalks. Ignoring the borderline cases of 'absolute instability' and 'absolute stability', and assuming at least 3 stalks as minimal content of the bundle, the result consists of partial forms always superimposed one on top of the other, and having at least one contradictory characteristic: the upper part is always more or less flexible, depending on the strength of the stalks, the lower part is tightly bound together in a triangle and is thus stable. The upper, projecting parts of the stalks produce an individualizing effect while their lower parts in total form a dominating structural unit. Further, the lower part is generally stripped of branches or outer skin while the upper part is allowed to retain its natural outgrowths. A further polarizing category consists in the following contrast: the upper part is left in its natural state while the lower part plus binding expresses something unnatural and technical. In this form the upper part is not only emphatically mobile (moving leaves), but also vague in outline. By contrast, the lower part expresses clear, well-defined, mostly fixed, depending on the strength of the stalks, the lower part is tightly bound together in a triangle and is thus stable. The upper, projecting parts of the stalks produce an individualizing effect while their lower parts in total form a dominating structural unit. Further, the lower part is generally stripped of branches or outer skin while the upper part is allowed to retain its natural outgrowths. A further polarizing category consists in the following contrast: the upper part is left in its natural state while the lower part plus binding expresses something unnatural and technical. In this form the upper part is not only emphatically mobile (moving leaves), but also vague in outline. By contrast, the lower part expresses clear, well-defined, mostly fixed.

5.3 Variability of the basic form

We have already pointed out that the forms are essentially determined by two criteria, 1. the autonomous tendency of the binding materials to give the bundle a round horizontal cross-section and 2. the vertical cross-section, the relatively limited formal variety of the homogeneous, the unlimited variability of the heterogeneous tectonic bundles. In both the homogeneous and complex structures the round cross-section dominates, whether the structure as a whole takes the shape of a cylinder, a pair of fused cones, a sphere, a skull-cap or some other shape (Fig. 44). If the round cross-section is no longer directly imposed by the bindings, it is copied, so to speak preserved by the use of special provisions [supporting frames etc.] Forms that are not round in cross-section (tetrahedra, double tetrahedra, pyramids, double pyramids etc.) are borderline cases of the binding method of building. They arise when the number of bound stalks is small (3, 4, 5, 6, ...).

Here too, or rather, precisely here, we find confirmation of the idea that the rope is something abstract, but one which gains an astonishing degree of clarity in its concrete expression. Its abstract generality must also be recognized as a source of the rich variety of ritual behaviour that has developed in the region. How can we otherwise explain the many motives of mobility that impel the local people to carry and drag these pillars around? What other reason can there be for their night festival and drunkenness? The dualism of formed and uniformed even finds expression in the music that accompanies the ritual. May we not assume that the basic dualism seen in the structure of the cult objects is also the model for the entire ritual behaviour of the region?

When one is aware of the significance of this multi-categorical dualism, perhaps by comparison with Chinese Yin-Yang symbolism, it is clear that the real meaning of these structures must lie in their almost breathtakingly simple and vivid power of suggestion. In other works, the unifying of irreconcilable opposites within the compass of a single form must be the very essence of the symbolism that has preserved these structures throughout the ages, perhaps even the basis of their sacred meaning. But something else would be gained in this process. We would then have completed a circle of very significant forms of ritual folk art in which the basic formal principle and the ideal content of the form could be directly deduced from the synthesis of material and technical procedures. From the standpoint of art that would certainly be a very valuable indicator.

Fig. 43: The union of irreconcilable opposites in a single form.

This is the formal principle. always more or less explicitly honoured by all the abstract, geometrical forms of the region. The body of the structure determines a certain place in man's sphere of movement. Simultaneously, it sets a limit whereby the axis of mobility is affirmed, and leads back from there. Thus the sign stands at the dividing line between here, where one is, the point at which one has arrived, this side, and the beyond, the other sphere. And, like an upright bar-magnet the cult sign sends cut lines of force permeating its surroundings with its own peculiar opposing categories. It characterizes the upper part as something vacuous and undelimited, free movement as the dominant principle, with no place for the firm and solid. On the other hand, the cult monument marks the lower part as something solid, limited and clearly delineated. Insofar as it is tied up by the hand of man, this spatial medium also stamps the surrounding area as belonging to active, transforming man. Here things are tangible and thus feasible, changeable. There can be no doubt that in this abstract free-standing sign and in the opposing lines of force that it emits one finds something of those great and important symbols that seem to be deeply and strongly interwoven with the world of men.
The table presents a survey of typical forms arising from the bundling together of stalks. The structures are transparent and schematically marked so that the principle of their construction is clearly visible.

That, in view of the multiplicity of forms, this type of building cannot do otherwise than produce geometrical shapes. That which man has always imagined to be his most original idea, geometry, is here shown to be spontaneously generated by material and technique. Yet another type of regularity can be observed. In simple structures the basic form is only quantitatively variable by extension along the central axis. It stretches out or it widens. There are no extravaganzas apart from accessories. In terms of this principle too the forms strike us as very uniform. The relationship of the forms is technically evident from the fact that the stalks can spread out both above and below the binding. Many formal variations of simple bundles can be derived from this principle (Figs. 45, 46). In the case of intact stalks there is restricted variability, starting with the cylinder in the frame of various strongly extensive paraboloids (spiral course of the stalks). On the other hand, when stalks can be broken, the field of variations increases markedly as can be seen from Figure 45.

In heterogeneous bundles of one-tiered form the variability can be increased by using materials of different kinds and especially of different lengths. Under conditions of tectonic primacy and the single tier, composition is limited to radial additions of material. Figure 47 shows the range of variations for a simple case, which is frequently to be seen throughout the region. A longer or shorter bushy core is incorporated into the reed bundle, practically determining the external appearance of the completed form. But if one interprets the term 'composed' in its broadest sense, i.e. with all possible combinations of more stable and more flexible materials, with long and short plants, with inter-penetration of bundles and free disposition of the axial direction of secondary parts, the result is an incredibly wide range of formal variations of which some idea may be had by reference to the illustrations given in the introduction (Figs. 1-7). One thing can be seen from these tables: reality far exceeds all theoretical expectations. Forms that imitate nature also emerge clearly from the basic symbolic building tradition. These include human figures, sometimes abstract (cf. Ueda: see case study. Ergenter 1982), sometimes natural-sized reproductions or monstrous giants: others
show animal shapes, some being abstract forms that are completely determined by the constructional element (e.g. fish, crabs etc. in this documentation; see Kamihiraki, Kurimidesaizke), others much closer to the original model (birds, snakes, dragons etc). There are also structures which resemble other natural objects, e.g. the deceptively realistic-looking artificial trees (see Goshoi, etc.).

Is Japanese symbolic building a grandiose game based on a great capacity for variation, in which man reaches out towards natural forms from the basis of one of his most fundamental activities, building? With the enormous plasticity of form shown us by this range of signs and symbols, one could certainly guess where to find the point of intersection between traditional cultural form and nature-imitating form. But these are by no means to be thought of as experiments in free composition. The forms are not the product of deliberate creative ideas: in each case they stand in the context of a more or less secluded conservative tradition going back for many centuries. It is not a play upon form which tradition presents to us, but a process of development that has lasted over long periods of time. Changes of form in this conservative culture can only be due to the clashes and mingling between ethnic groups and their cultures. Only such enforced mingling and superimposition produce reinterpretations and re-combinations of form. Thus, in all their rich variety, Figures 1-7 are not an illustration of free experimentation with forms; they reveal a very old system of traditional building, pro-

Fig. 45: Principle formal variations of the reed bundle.

The table is a diagrammatic presentation of the main features determining the variability of the bundles. With unbent stalks (excluding those where there is intermingling of stalks) the forms are relatively limited (Row a). But formal variability increases markedly when the stalks are broken. It emerges in the variable relation of the angle of opening of upper (O1 - O3) and lower (U1 - U3) cones. One independent variable is the radius, which determines the slenderness or bulkiness of the structure.

Fig. 46: Diagram of variation in the form of the reed bundles.

The diagram shows the same as the previous table but in a different way. The variants in which the opening of the upper funnel has an angle exceeding 45 are only suggested (see alpha). Since they are constructively critical the diagram shows how starting from the cylinder, the vertical shift of the leading organ (between points 1-7) affects the form. Theoretically, variants BCD and T-Y are possible at each of stages 1-7. But of these, stage 1 is generally critical for X and Y as are D and E for stages 5, 6 and 7. In brief, the diagram shows that in the proportioning of this form, constructional criteria are of decisive importance. If it is not to remain in the initial stage but to embody the categories proper to its nature, then a constructional field is prescribed that lies within the range marked by the black line.
5.5 Accessory variability of the basic form

So far we have dealt only with the variations of the basic form. This has shown an immense range of formal differences. But there is a type of formal variation that plays a part in the finer network of ethnic distinctions; though the basic form is taken for granted, so to speak, it is nevertheless given a distinctly individual look by the use of accessories. This can be achieved in many different ways. A few of which will be indicated here. Superimpositions, e.g. of the sacred Shinto sign, can be variously interpreted. Important formal elements can be made of different materials (e.g. the cult rope of straw [SHI-MENAWA] can be replaced by a wreath of rape plants). Certain elements can be symbolically re-interpreted and then re-formed (e.g. the cult rope treated as a snake or dragon: or the knot of the cult rope as the male sex organ). Borrowings from other rituals also provide accessory variations (e.g. fastenings corresponding to the Buddhist series of lucky numbers). Sometimes there is a direct borrowing from well established signs: the cult objects are ‘inscribed with inlays of leaves in the form of Chinese characters. A case of accessory variation of a basic form (reed roof with crown of bamboo) is shown in Figure 49. The illustration shows how certain villages taking part in the Amihachiman ritual vary the same basic type, for instance by exchanging the usual bamboo (TEDAKE) on the front for a thicker or thinner bunch of reeds or by using the sacred sign of Shinto (GOHEI) as a symbol of the month or year. The diagram clearly shows how the ropes and knots can contribute to a rich variety of changes. Whether arbitrarily or traditionally determined, the sense of the thing is clear on closer examination, even similar-looking cult objects are found to differ. First of all, it is important to discern rough variational structure associated with typical local or regional, single or composite basic forms. The principle is protected on the one hand by local conservatism, but on the other, unable to isolate itself from other influences.

5.4 Regional distribution of the basic forms

The distribution map of the different forms also indicates a connecting network of traditional relations (Fig. 48). There are certain villages that are alone in possessing their ‘unusual’ forms. Elsewhere there are zones where several neighbouring villages have the same basic forms, varying only in their ‘trimmings’. In such case the villages are or were also cult-related and their festivals fall at the same time. The relationship of the villages, their common settlement history and genetic background can often be directly read from the names of their shrines (MOTOMIYA = WAKAMIYA), so that it can be assumed that identical or similar forms are pointers towards relationship in the history of settlement. Thus the building tradition gives formal expression to the relationship of generically connected villages that would otherwise be accessible only to the historian and only if written evidence existed. Another group of ritual objects (tall columns) is to be found throughout the region around the town of Amihachiman. Since this kind of mobile cult object is always of minor significance in places which have fixed structures as well, they would seem to be a late introduction, perhaps for reasons of religious policy. The developmental stage and distribution of the cult objects allow us to distinguish tracts where only bamboo is used, not reeds, (e.g. in the North-East of the region) and zones where more original forms have been preserved, in contrast to the more derivative forms found in other places. Like the so-called ‘housing landscapes’ of developed traditional building, such common characteristics provide unexpected indications of the small-scale ethnic differentiation of a region.

5.6 Development

We have tried to illuminate the forms from different angles. Emphasis has been laid on the connection between form and idea on the one hand, and structure, material and specific building method on the other. The variability of basic forms has been analysed from different standpoints. In the sense of fine structure, variability through accessory changes has been recorded, whereby manifold connections have been revealed. They speak not of a development (in view of the complexity of the subject that would be pointless), but of the multitude of possibilities. With the help of intermediate forms, the case study attempted to reconstruct the sequence...
Fig. 46: Map of distributions of forms (Map of style zones).

The map is a diagrammatic representation of the distribution of the forms. Areas with large numbers indicate basic forms that are found in several places and are thus of regional significance. The small numbers in circles indicate types that only occur locally. Since close relationships exist not only between the regionally distributed types and since the forms are generally more or less closely related to each other, an interesting conclusion is immediately apparent.

The map shows a small self-contained landscape of traditional sacred folk art and the principles according to which it manifests itself. Seen from the angle of art research, it could be said that a sort of elementary stylistic behaviour emerges, most readily explicable on the basis of traditional and settlement-historical conditions.

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6. LOCATION

6.1 Types of location

The general criteria governing the location of cult signs in the region investigated seem to be as follows: all cult signs stand in front of the shrine to which they belong. They were never found behind the shrine. There is a clear tendency towards an axial location in relation to the shrine, although this is sometimes modified according to circumstances and functional requirements. This is the observed tendency, regardless of whether it concerns single types, similar pairs, dissimilar pairs or several similar or dissimilar forms. In most cases the cult objects stand within the shrine precincts, particularly just prior to the fire ritual. Occasionally they may be moved for special reasons but even so they mostly stand immediately before the entrance to the grounds of the shrine and always on land which belongs to the shrine. As a rule, the proximity of a cult object to the shrine is a measure of its importance as compared with that of the other cult signs. Horizontal directional elements such as knots, outer bamboos and anteriorly inserted signs made of white paper (GOHEI) usually face the shrine (most frequent) or point away from it. In the case of paired cult objects, placed on either side of the shrine axis, such elements can also be directed in opposite senses. It is typical of the non-fixed types that, after their completion on some spot peripheral to the shrine, they are left standing for a certain time and are then transferred to the central shrine just before the fire festival and re-erected there. Table 50 shows a range of typical locations.
The table shows a range of different aspects of the same basic form of a hut-like structure with reed roof and bamboo crown. The variation on the basic form is effected by minor additions or small changes. Nos. 1-6 indicate the different cases (villages around the town of Omihachiman).

The capital letters mark:

A Substructure (compact heaped or with supporting round roof structure) general view
B Substructure: general view
C Covering: view down on to the covered underpart
D Front view of the cult structure
E Detail: main binding of cult rope with sacred sign attached: front view
F Detail: anterior reed bundle: with sacred sign attached
G Detail: leafy tip with sacred sign and pine twig

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7. TERRITORIAL AND SOCIAL REPRESENTATION

Territorial (Fig. 51) and social (Fig. 52) representation refers to the circumstance that primitively built cult objects can be signs of territorial units and social groups.

This signal character and the range of its functions can only be appreciated after an investigation of the whole area in question. Single, relatively isolated phenomena, even when showing a certain degree of complexity, are nevertheless too different to be of much use in throwing light on essential features. It is only when a sufficiently large number of similar instances are observable that the principle bases of classification of the cult objects become apparent. Comparison of many similar situations helps us to distinguish the general from the particular.

The signal character of the cult objects rests on two fundamental features: on their artificial nature and on the formal variability of the constructional principle.

Artificial character the cult objects are artificial things: they must be made by someone. They presuppose authorship. This authorship is

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Fig. 50: Types of localisation.

The table shows the typical sites Of temporary cult signs in relation to the permanent cult place, the village shrine (HONDEN of the JUJIGAMI). A1 and A2 show positions of fixed signs; B stands for the elementary case of a mobile cult sign and C shows examples of combinations of A and B. In A1, the signs stand in the shrine precincts and are orientated in direct relation to the permanent cult place: in A2 they stand outside the shrine precinct (but still on land belonging to the shrine) and are thus still orientated towards the shrine precinct as a whole. In B, a shows the secondary cult place in front of which the cult sign is erected after completion. Before the fire festival it is then brought to the primary cult place, where it is set up and burnt in front of the shrine 'b'.

Fig. 51: Cult structures as signs: Territorial representation.

In the analogous contrasting of the two elementary cases, the principle of territorial representation is clear: the cult group of the village builds a cult object of form A before its own village shrine and that applies similarly to B. This elementary relationship can be observed in the whole region, including the most complex types of festival.

Fig. 52: Cult structure as sign: Social representation.

Social representation is based upon the synthetic character of the cult sign. Building and ritual handling of the different forms are exclusively restricted to certain cult groups.

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Legends:

A1 + A2

1 Site marks
2 Gate marks (paired, equal)
3 Gate marks (paired, unequal)
4 Path marks
B Mobile cult sign which relates two permanent cult places
C Positional variations with fixed and multilocal temporary cult signs

1-6 Various examples of combinations. Note the direction of the knots: when single, either towards or away from the shrine; when paired, then often in opposite senses.

- permanent cult place, shrine (HONDEN)
- shrine precinct
- path zone

- temporary cult sign (fixed) with knot direction
- temporary cult sign (multilocal) with knot direction
one of the features which form the close bond between a certain settled territory and a certain cult object. The production of the sign is subject to more or less strict exclusivity. For instance, women are generally excluded from ritual handwork and therefore from the building of the cult objects. In many villages only the members of old-established families (Uiko) are admitted to the cult. The composition of the local cult groups taking part in the building and ritual handling of the cult objects is subject to strict traditional rules. Builders are also responsible for the rites. This status is maintained throughout the ritual. The rank of the cult object and its constructors is also reflected in the localization of the building activity. The cult signs are traditionally built and erected on the village’s own

settlement area. If they are brought on to territory outside their own settlement area, this is always the expression of a hierarchical relationship.

Identification with the cult sign is not only determined by authorship but also by the formal plasticity of the building principle. Differences in form and size play an important role (see Symbolism). The difference in form is often an indication of the social difference of the group. Similarity of the forms (with differences of detail) signifies similarity of classification (for instance, genetically related villages or several groups of young men within one settlement). Marked difference in the forms also means a difference in social level (representative and non-representative groups in one settlement) or different villages without genetic relationship. The building of signs is quite clearly related to authorship. The traditional character of the signs implies that it is only those groups making a certain form who really know the building procedures necessary for its production. The differentiation of the signs is dealt with in the chapter Form and Symbolism. It might be worthwhile making a closer study of this differentiation with the help of material from sources of local history. Should its relationship to settlement history be established with certainty, such building traditions could also be drawn upon as a source for studies on settlement history. In such cases it is possible that entire regions of Japan may have preserved traditions which point to origins beyond the local point of settlement.

On the basis of the principles described, namely territorial and social representation, complex systems of classification can be worked out to show both the status of settlement units and social differences as reflected in cult status. In the following illustrations (Figs. 53 - 65) an attempt is made to show different types diagrammatically in perspective and graphically.

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**Fig 53: Variants of territorial representation.**

Each of the five villages A - E makes a cult sign of a given basic form in its own area and embellishes it with accessories. Before the fire festival these are then set up in a definite ranking order in front of the common shrine (see Tarobo and surrounding villages).

**Fig 54: Variants of territorial representation.**

In contrast to the previous case, here the village shrines have been preserved in the settlements. A central shrine has precedence over them. A joint festival before the central shrine is celebrated in advance of the village festivals A - D which run either parallel or successively. Each village building before its own shrine a cult sign which differs from the others only in its accessories. These village celebrations are preceded by a joint festival before the common shrine at which a single cult sign in built by each of the five villages in annual rotation.
Fig. 55: Organization with socially and territorially representative cult signs: basic model 1 (territorial representation).

This is a simplified presentation of the example of territorial representation shown in perspective in Fig. 51. It serves as basic model for the following example. The drawing is to be read as follows: settlement A and B each build a fixed sign \( \sigma \) of different shape in front of their own village shrines.

Fig. 56: Organization with socially and territorially representative cult signs: basic model 2 (social representation).

This is a simplified yet complete presentation of Fig. 52. It serves as basic model for the following example, whereby however the children's torches \( \text{M2} \) are omitted. The scheme reads as follows: in village A, with 12 cult families \( \text{UJKO NO IE} \) the 12 heads of these families \( \text{KOSHU} \) jointly build a fixed cult sign \( \text{SUETAIMATSU} \) \( \sigma \) before the village shrine. Young men of a certain age build in the village a multilocal tall column \( \text{M1} \) \( \text{KASATAIMATSU} \), which, before the fire-festival is brought to the shrine and erected there. The fathers of boys of a certain age make a small multilocal cult sign \( \text{M2} \), a so-called children's torch \( \text{KODOMOTAIMATSU} \). This is at first placed before the doors of the houses and then brought to the village shrine.

Fig. 57: Organization with socially and territorially representative cult signs: Example 1 (see Nishinosh). The settlement of Nishinosh is divided into two halves ABC and DEF. Each of these halves (South and North) builds a fixed sign \( \text{M3} \) before the shrine. The young men of the hamlets A-F each build a multilocal tall column \( \text{MA-F} \). The six tall columns are erected in two rows in front of the shrine.

Fig. 58: Organization with socially and territorially representative cult structures: Example 2 (see Oda). The settlement complex associated with the Oda shrine consists of 3 villages: Oda with three hamlets \( \text{A, B and C} \), Ichijyo with two hamlets \( \text{DE} \) and Egashira with two hamlets \( \text{EG} \). Each hamlet brings a multilocal cult sign \( \text{M1} \) to the front of the central shrine. In addition, 12 long established families build in their area the smallest but most important cult sign \( \text{M2} \) and it too is brought before the central shrine.
Fig. 59: Organization with socially and territorially representative cult signs: Example 3 (see Ueda case study).

The village of Ueda consists of 4 hamlets (A, B, C and D). Each hamlet has its own hamlet shrine. That of C is larger and represents the entire settlement. The three hamlets A, B and D build three fixed cult signs (O) before their shrines. These three parallel festivals of the hamlets are followed by a superior festival at which, in annual rotation, one of the four hamlets (A, B, C, D) builds a cult structure of higher rank (O) before the whole shrine.

Fig. 60: Organization with socially and territorially representative cult signs: Example 4 (see Tarōbō).

Five villages belong to the settlement complex at the loo of the shrine (A-E). Their local village shrines have been abolished. All villages belong to the central shrine. Each village builds a multilocal two-tiered reed column (M) locally and then brings it to the central shrine, before which all the columns are ranged in a definite order in readiness for the fire festival.

Fig. 61: Organization with socially and territorially representative cult signs: Example 5 (see Maki).

The village of Maki is subdivided into 10 neighbourhoods, each of which builds a multilocal structure (M) next to the village shrine.

Fig. 62: Organization with socially and territorially representative cult signs: Example 6 (see Yuge).

The village of Yuge is divided into two hamlets, A and B, each of which builds a differently shaped multilocal structure (M) before the common village shrine.
Fig. 63: Organization with socially and territorially representative cult signs:
Example 7 see Kamihaneda.

The settlement complex of Kamihaneda embraces four hamlets with 10 settlement units. Five units make up each hall (A, B, C in the north; D in the south). This subdivision determines the symmetry of the entire temporary cult zone. Each settlement unit builds its cult sign on its allotted place outside the shrine precincts. On a big field in front of the central shrine. In the shrine precincts four cult signs are built.

Dorf Kamihaneda mit vier Weilern und zehn Siedlungsabteilungen ist zugleich in zwei Halften gegliedert. Deren Repräsentanten (Lungmännergrösse Mole mit Doppelbindung, ein alterer Vorsteher mit kleinen Moli) bauen die Marken innerhalb des Schreinbezirkes (siehe 'Stadort').

Legends:
A Hiraishi (1 hamlet)
B, Nishikata (2 hamlets)
C, Kitakata (2 hamlets)
D, Minakata (5 hamlets).

Fig. 64: Types of a few differentiated cult festivals with territorially and socially representative cult signs.

The figure shows a few typical examples of organization with cult signs. A represents the basic type of simple village festival, B the socially differentiated variants of A. The schemes C-H describe different variations of A and B.

A Basic type (1 representative cult group, 1 cult sign)
B Socially differentiated basic type (2 different cult groups: old/young, representative/non-representative and 2 different cult signs: fixed/multilocal)
C Two parts of a settlement build different forms before the common village shrine

D Four settlements each build a cult sign before their village shrine. At the central festival one of the 4 Settlements (in annual rotation) builds a superior sign before the central shrine
E Six settlements, each with its own village festival and village shrine, are associated in two groups of three settlements each. Representatives of the sections build for each a fixed sign of similar form before the central shrine. The 6 settlements each bring a separate cult sign to the central shrine
F Four places without village shrine each bring a multilocal sign to the common shrine
G At four places with 4 villages shrines, 3 each build a sign before their own shrine for their simultaneously held village festivals. The village shrine of the fourth hamlet serves as central shrine. Before it the four settlements each, in annual rotation, erect a fixed sign. The multilocal signs are built by non-representative groups at the periphery of the villages and are then brought to the central shrine
H Here the two halves of the settlement are reflected not only in the symmetrical arrangement of the cult sign but also in the corresponding division of the festival into two analogous phases which are enacted one after the other.
The great central festival of the villages around Omihachiman is the most complex in its organization. The settlement complex includes an upper (\(A-J\)) and a lower (K-N) section. The uppermost line on the table shows the festival held before the central shrine. Two groups representing the two sections each build a fixed cult sign (O,) before the central shrine. The multilocal signs are now built on the same spot by the cult groups of the settlement section (formerly built peripherally). In addition to participating in the central festival, nearly all the sections hold local village festivals of their own. The cult signs built for these village celebrations are shown on the lower lines. Most of them show the same division into one fixed sign and several multilocal pillars.

Legends:

A. Takagai, Moto
B. Takagai, Ekimae
C. Ibi
D. Nakamura
E. Obayashi, Higashi
F. Obayashi, Nishi
G. Kitano, Kyoto
H. Tsukahara
I. Utsuro
J. Taga
K. Kofunaki
L. Ofusasa
M. Ofusasa
N. Minamitsuda
8. INTERPRETATION

8.1 Reconstruction of the original situation in relation to periodicity: the cult sign of one year's duration

In most Japanese festivals where cult signs of the kind described are to be found in connection with village shrines, these signs are temporary inasmuch as they are usually destroyed at the end of the festival, that is, shortly after they are made. This pattern of events is found in the region investigated. But besides these temporary signs there are others to be found in Japan, fewer in number and associated with other cult systems (YASHIKIGAMI). This latter type is to be regarded as primary Cult objects of this type are either completely replaced by new material or new material is added to the old. Examples B - F in figures 66 and 67 show types of renewal of cult signs that are still practised in Japan today. They point to a primary kind of renewal of rooted material (example A) that can still be seen in present-day Japan, though not with the same dual form and not in association with ritual activities: they are simply magic signs of territorial occupation that are used to mark areas of common gathering rights. Fig. 66 shows renewal types in regard to position while Fig. 67 is a graphic presentation of the corresponding periodicity.

8.2 Meaning in terms of settlement history

Having found a primordial type (implicitly, of one year's duration), and assuming an annual renewal of its substance in harmony with the vegetative cycle of the building material, we are inevitably led to envisage a continuing series of such events. This poses the question of its beginnings. Since these signs are artefacts, it is not difficult to connect them with the history of settlement. Furthermore, if this type of cult behaviour is regarded as primordial among Japanese religious rites, the socio-political structure of the Japanese village would also seem to point to its association with the founding of settlements. Incidentally, the comparative history of material and technology (ergology) would also support this view. Early historical texts speak clearly of old Japan as the 'land of the wide reed-beds'. This is naturally not to be taken as meaning that the whole archipelago was covered with reeds. The reference is to the flat coastal strips which were the scenes of early settlement. If one imagines such a wide 'sea' of reeds, for instance around Lake Biwa, then it is easily conceivable that such signs could have been important, not only in respect of sacred territorial rights, but also as space-structuring objects. Figure 68 attempts to illustrate this interpretation graphically.

Fig. 66: Types of renewal in relation to location.

The table shows the kinds of renewal of cult signs (and magic signs of occupation) still practised in Japan, in which easily manipulable plant materials are employed.

Legends:

- Cult place
- New cult sign
- Old cult sign

A REGENERATION AND RENEWAL: rooted sign of occupation. The new sign is made on the spot by binding together the stalks of newly grown plants. The regeneration of the material on the spot compels periodical reconstruction of the form. If it is to be maintained permanently inasmuch as they are usually destroyed at the end of the festival, that is, shortly after they are made. This pattern of events is found in the region investigated. But besides these temporary signs there are others to be found in Japan, fewer in number and associated with other cult systems (YASHIKIGAMI). This latter type is to be regarded as primary Cult objects of this type are either completely replaced by new material or new material is added to the old. Examples B - F in figures 66 and 67 show types of renewal of cult signs that are still practised in Japan today. They point to a primary kind of renewal of rooted material (example A) that can still be seen in present-day Japan, though not with the same dual form and not in association with ritual activities: they are simply magic signs of territorial occupation that are used to mark areas of common gathering rights. Fig. 66 shows renewal types in regard to position while Fig. 67 is a graphic presentation of the corresponding periodicity.

Fig. 67: Types of renewal in relation to time.

This table supplements the previous one in respect of the temporary structures resulting from the different kinds of renewal of primitively constructed cult signs (and magic signs of occupation).

A REGENERATION AND RENEWAL

B ADDITION: Cult sign made of cut and displaced material. The new material is pulled over the old sign (superposition) or bound around it (circular addition)

C REPLACEMENT: Cult sign made of cut and displaced material. Before the new sign is made, the old one is removed

D SYSTEM OF DUAL LOCATION: Cult signs made of cut and displaced material. The new sign is made beside the old one. The latter is left to decay or is removed after completion of the new one

E INFRAPOSITION IN RELATION TO SHRINE: Superimposition of a shrine of durable wood over a cult sign made of cut material. The primitively constructed sign is annually renewed as in B. When the shrine is replaced periodically the cult sign is renewed as in C or D

F TEMPORARY POSITION BEFORE THE SHRINE: The renewal is only realised in a ritual sense (i.e. in a changed form) and not before the cult place which is now occupied by a wooden building: the renewal is of type C, but with interchanged phases (building before destruction) projected upon the same cult sign. F is the most frequent type of Japanese religious festivals with primitively constructed cult signs.
Legends:

W Shrine wood
H Wooden shrine
K Cult sign
G Founder's house/family
Z Branch houses of the founder's house
N Newcomers
S Reed
F River, lake
0 5 Stages of development in the history of settlement.

Fig. 68: Graphic representation of the meaning of the cult signs for settlement history (hypothetical).
9. SYMBOLISM

9.1 General

A symbol is generally understood to be a visible sign that stands for an invisible, spiritual reality. In contrast to the kind of sign that merely marks something, a symbol is a sign that merges with its invisible inner meaning. It is the point of meeting of two the symbol participates in the reality that it symbolizes. It stands at the point of intersection of the two levels of being, the invisible and the visible. Eymologically, it is usually explained as something composite (a putting together, a joining together) and, for this purpose, reference is often made to the vivid example of the ring, broken by Parting friends, later to be put together again as the sign of recognition, as the symbol of belonging together, of unity.

Turning from this brief consideration to the tradition as customarily presented, we are struck by the following aspects: firstly the fact that we are dealing with sacred signs (abodes of the gods) makes us aware that we are, so to speak, in the customary home of symbolism. At the intersection point, par excellence, of corporeal and spiritual levels of being: furthermore, the primitive methods by which the sacred symbols are made suggest that we are not far from the roots of symbolism. Not least, the symbol, seen as a ‘joining together’ in the sense of building, holds more meaning than does the dubious rejoining of something previously divided. In building, the ‘joining together’ becomes an act of creation in which form and meaning are simultaneously created.

Thus there is good reason for assuming that the cult objects we have been considering are symbols of a very primordial kind. This concept is supported by the many similar signs and symbols which, in terms of a broader definition of building, can be discovered in the earliest stages of several ancient cultures (Sumer, Egypt, Crete, China). Thus it can only be rewarding to take a closer look at the symbolism as revealed in the region studied.

9.2 Relative symbolism

One can first look at the cult objects from the usual standpoint in which the whole or parts of them are either associated with more or less definite meanings, mostly through names that relate to other cultural concepts or by formal adjustments. We call this ‘relative symbolism’. It can be found in rich variety throughout the region (see Fig. 69).

Anthropomorphic symbolism.

Some tall columns bear names such as ‘belly’, ‘trousers’, ‘belt’, ‘head-band’ etc., indicating that the structures are regarded as human figures. At one place a one-tiered type of reed column is recognizable as anthropomorphic because the different shaping of formal parts clearly indicates an intended representation of man and woman. These cult signs are also named accordingly (OTOKO, ONNA) (see Egenter 1982).

Biomorphic symbolism.

Associations with animals are evoked by elementary formal means. Ropes with a snake’s head, wound spirally around the cult sign is looked upon as a fire-breathing dragon. In another place the cult ropes are interpreted as signs of dragon bodies, correspondingly formed and provided with strange dragon heads.

in one Village Specially formed cult objects known as ‘fish’ or ‘cat’-fish’ are carried to the shrine on the shoulders of the crowd. Plant forms are also imitated. Several villages build tree-like forms. These can be interestingly compared with tree worship, which is also widespread throughout Japan (see Egenter 1981).

Fig. 69: Relative symbolism.

The table shows the range of cases of relative symbolism found in the region.

1. Anthropomorphic symbolism

   a) male figure
   b) female figure

2. Symbolism of origins. The cult rope (a) counts as origin (MOTO)

3. Mythical symbolism. The cult structure was formerly called ‘sunspear’ (HIBOKO)

   a) BONTEN b) cult sign c) jewels (TAMA) d) mirror (KAGAMI) or sun (HI NO MARU) e) spear (HOKO)

4. Cosmic symbolism. The bushy upper part (a) is called ‘heavenly canopy’ (TENKAI)

5. Cosmic symbolism. The capital (a) is called ‘sun wheel’ (NICHIRIN)

6. Time symbolism. The radiating ropes (b) are looked upon as Japanese signs of the Zodiac. The circular ropes (a) stand for the months (JUNISUKI, ‘12 months’) and the year.

7. Symbolic centre. The central bamboo pole bears the sacred sign (OCHI) and is called ‘heart bamboo’

8. Symbolic centre. The ‘heart bamboo’ (b) stands in symbolic contrast to the outer bamboo (TEDAKI).

9. Dualistic symbolism. The upper part made of reeds (a) is called INYO (Sino-Japanese for Chinese Yin-Yang)

10. Snake symbolism. The cult rope that hangs for a long year over the entrance to the shrine is looked upon as a two-headed snake (DAI-JAI). Before the start of the festival the rope is cut in two. The resulting pair of one-headed snakes is laid around the cult signs.

11. Dragon symbolism. Burning tall columns (b) are dragons (FUYU) while they are being carried around.

12. Dragon symbolism. The thick ropes of bundled straw (a and b) count as dragon’s tail. The dragon heads are each made of a bundle of reed ears. They merely imitate the movement of the dragon’s head

13. Tree cult symbolism. A tree shape is reproduced by primitive constructional means. The structural symbolism of the sacred artificial tree is strongly reminiscent of certain features of the tree-of-life complex

14. Crab symbolism. Parts of certain forms (b) count as ‘crabs’ (EBI)

15. Snake symbolism. The cult rope (a) and pieces of rope that are similarly fixed around the cult signs are regarded as snakes (EBI)

16. Snake symbolism. Ropes with a snake’s head, wound spirally around central and outer bamboo, are regarded as snakes (EBI)

17. Ship symbolism. The cult structure has the form of a ship. Formerly during the ritual it was displaced by ropes

18. Fish symbolism. The form of this cult object has little resemblance to a fish (a — ‘tail’, O-PO: the front part is called atama. ‘head’). Nevertheless this type is called ‘catfish’, NAMALU and at night it is carried shoulder-high as it burns.

19. Knot symbolism. The knot form imitates that of a gift-knot. At the same time the knot embodies the idea of the year

20. Knot symbolism. This special form counts as male (OTOKO-MUSUBI)

21. Knot symbolism. This special form counts as female (ONNA-MUSUBI). Note that the rope is not really such, it is modified as a plant.
Technomorphic symbolism.

In one village the tectonic sign is turned on its side like the fish mentioned in the previous example and in this case it clearly represents a ship, the impression being strengthened by the movements imparted to it during the ritual procession. In Ueda (see Egenter 1982) this element is present in the name given to the perambulated high columns. These are called ‘lantern ships’ (CHOCHINFUNE) but the idea of a ship is not formally expressed.

Mythical symbolism.

In Kurahashibe differently formed pairs of cult objects are interpreted as male and female forms, by analogy with the official Shinto deities. Izanami and Izanagi who as the creator pair are honoured in a double shrine. However, it was not possible to ascertain whether these cult objects were intended as direct images of Izanami and Izanagi. In Sensõkô a movable cult sign, once called ‘sun spear’ (HI-BOKU), symbolizes the jewels (TAMA), mirror (KAGAMI) and sun (HI), all things that play an important part in the myths surrounding the Japanese imperial family.

Cosmic symbolism.

In Ueda the upper part of a hut-like structure with a crown of reeds and bamboo is called ‘heavenly cover’ (TENKAI) (see Egenter 1982). In some places in the neighbourhood of this village the capital of the tall pillars is known as ‘sun-wheel’ (NICHIRIN). In some places too the name of the reed section of the tall pillar is IN-YO, the Japanese equivalent of the Chinese YIN-YANG.

Time symbolism.

In many places certain parts that are especially important because of their sacred meaning, such as the cult rope (SHIMENAWA), special fastenings and sacred Shinto signs (GOHEI), are used in a context of time symbolism. A particularly striking element then represents the year and twelve smaller, subordinate elements signify the months (JUNITSUKI).

Sex symbolism.

In some places phallic symbols are found on the front of tall pillars, below the capital. They are also found on other types of cult object and are usually named accordingly (OTOKO NO SEI) but are clewly to be regarded either as re-interpretations of the knot of the cult rope or of something similar.
The table is a compilation of the main instances of structural symbolism among the cult objects.

A Opposing categories

1 natural-technical
2 mobile-immobile
3 unlimited-limited
4 plurality-unity
5 empty-full

B Different existential phases of the cult signs

1 No form
2 Concrete form

C The dualism of the form standing in position and the horizontally-lying, moving form

1 Tall column standing in position
2 Lying, moving tall column [so-called 'lantern ship', CHOCHIN-FUNE]
3 Lying, moving, one-tiered reed pillar [ridden by the town elders]
4 Standing, moving cult sign (the erect position during the dynamic phase is locally explained by analogy with the Gion-Festival of Kyoto, upon which the 'wagon' is said to be modelled).

D Light form as sign and symbol

The light form takes over the signal character and the symbolism of the constructed forms (1-5).

Centristic symbolism.

In many places the middle axis of the structure is symbolically emphasized both by such designations as SHIN-TAKE (heart bamboo), SHIN-KI (heart tree) and by formal means. Where, for static reasons such as the height of the sign, an extra support is needed, this is usually decorated at its projecting top with symbolic attributes, such as the sacred Shinto sign (GOHEI) etc. If the size of the bundle is such that no support is indicated, the centre (axis) is marked by a bamboo which overtops the body of the form and which then counts as the 'heart bamboo'. While the lower part of it is freed of twigs, it usually retains its natural tuft of foliage on top. At the lower end it is hidden in the body of the structure and marks its invisible axis. The official sacred signs of white paper are usually fixed to the upper, visible part. Central symbolism is often stressed by fixing a bamboo (TEDAKE) or a bundle of reeds to the compact anterior part of the structure, as a visible counterpart of the invisible centre.

Number symbolism.

Number symbolism is rarely found. It is true that the numbers of accessory elements play an important role, but in such a case they are to be understood as representing certain orders, e.g. the calendar. The same applies to the use of the series of lucky numbers, 3, 5, 7, 9... This sometimes determines the number of fastenings around the tall pillars. The association probably has its origins in the Chinese number categories. In certain places hierarchical relations are denoted by the number of turns of the cult rope. The minor cult object has only one, the major structure has two turns of the cult rope (see Fig. 70).

Looking at this relative symbolism as it is found in the whole region, two aspects are striking: first, the broad distribution with regard to type and content; second, its sporadic incidence. We have a very varied inventory of symbolic types but each is represented in certain spots or in small groups of places. In view of the highly stereotyped nature of the cult system and the close relationship between the cult objects, this is really astonishing. One has the impression that it does not involve anything of ancient traditional nature. Something closely bound up with the stereotypic object tradition, but rather interpretations taken over from other traditions [e.g. the myths of the imperial family Buddhist religious ideas] and superimposed on the cult objects. This becomes patent clear when in different places the same formal element is interpreted quite differently in relative symbolic terms. Thus, as mentioned, the binding can be interpreted as a girdle or a head-band, but also as a snake, a crab or the body of a dragon: then again it is sometimes regarded as...
9.3 Fundamental symbolic structure

If attention is now directed to the relationship between this kind of relative symbolism and the structure and form of the cult objects or their parts, it can be seen that this relationship is not fortuitous. The hinted analogy of the symbolic designation is always helped by something in the nature of the cult object itself. In other words, the features of the cult object actually support the symbolism (Figs. 71-73). For instance, anthropomorphic associations are clearly related to the standing position of the objects. They suggest people standing upright. The fish, a creature which by nature moves in water without any visible source of support, finds its analogy less in the form than in the horizontal position of the cult sign and in the fact that it is carried around on the shoulders of the people. And the formal analogy to the tree, with its trunk and crown, rests on the dual structure of the cult object, its compact lower part and its loose, bushy upper part. We find the same in the cosmic symbolism. The heavens, symbol of higher things and of boundlessness and, with its clouds and stars, of change, is associated with the non-defined, mobile upper part. The snake analogy is no doubt derived from the long form of the ropes and their snake-like mobility: but, on the other hand, the same rope can fall into the group of the time symbols when it is regarded rather from the standpoint of its constructive importance to the structure as a whole and the latter again in terms of its ephemeral nature and annual need of renewal.

In the last example, the rope, part of the whole structure, already has a clear temporal, periodic meaning. It merely becomes explicitly visible by relative symbolic association with the Chinese calendar, a system of order that is certainly of later date in the case of Japan. This must also be assumed of the other instances of relative symbolism. No doubt the sequence of analogy in this region proceeds from cult object to human figure, to tree, to fish and not in the reverse sense.

Generally speaking, this would mean that relative symbolism, to be significant, can only become associated with other symbolic systems on the basis of a pre-existing order.

The effect of this fundamental symbolic structure, this ‘underground’, is shown elsewhere, but in the first instance in the immediate surrounding of the cult object and in its creative force. If the simple basic type of ritual is compared with the more differentiated types, it is astonishing to see what a multitude of systems distinguish...
Fig. 73: Structural symbolism (continued): Behaviour of form in the course of time.

A

The form is like the 'small' annual cycle of life (reed, in this case) since, like the spring itself, it reappears each year in fresh garb.

B

It differs from the 'big' life cycle (of man, tree etc.) in that it neither changes nor ages with the passage of time. It is 'eternally young and ever the same'.
guish the latter from the former. A glance at the figures in the chapter 'Territorial and social representation' is sufficient to show what is meant (Figs. 74, 75). But it is quite evident that the formative power that shapes these complex cult systems has its roots in the structure of the cult objects themselves (Figs. 74, 75). Only its dualistic structural principle can explain how such incomprehensible modes of behaviour arise: for instance, that the most venerable representatives of a small town 'ride' to the shrine on a pillar made of reeds, or the nocturnal peregrination to the shrine with burning 'fishes'. At the same time one begins to grasp certain things that directly concern the people: e.g. why they get drunk on ritual wine during the ritual procession of the pillars, or why the rhythm of the accompanying music suddenly dissolves into chaotic noise when the order of the cult object breaks down. The documentation shows us many instances of such apparently odd behaviour that can simply be described as symbolic actions. But, seen from the standpoint of symbolism, its value lies in the revelation of its creative connection with the symbolic building tradition and its structural categories.

In showing how the general nature of these categories is able to draw everything into its circle of influence, and how its contradictory quality generates not only changes, contrasts, promotions and demotions, but also adjustments in deference to the principle of organization, it reveals to us a new creative impulse of symbolism in an elementary sphere. 'Elementary', because these symbols are evidently a concentrated embodiment of the most opposing, most general criteria. Thus, little by little, they become models of a type of symbol created by human hand with the simplest means, symbols which can stand in a dialectical relationship to the immediate reality of man, to his creations and to that which he merely perceives. The relationship is dialectic in the sense that the model itself supplies the categories for its representative meaning (or relative symbolic meaning). For its transformation not only shows symbols that are created to embody a deeper meaning: they are at the same time symbols embodying the motive of symbolism itself — in the most general form possible.

The 'mechanism' of the relationship is easily understandable. It is always the generalized standpoint (categories in the Aristotelian sense), that acts as go-between in relative symbolic relationships. The criterion 'mobility' of the whole structure leads from cult sign to fish; the specific mobility of rope and its attenuated form lead to snake; mobility and non-delineation point to 'heaven', and the dualism of compact base and loosely projecting top leads to the tree form. In the reverse sense, the analogy with a natural form exerts an influence on the artificial form. The rope acquires a snake's head, the fish a caudal fin, and the tree-crown is trimmed to the idealised

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Fig. 74: Structural symbolism (continued): Dual association at the same cult festival.

The table shows a few examples of the contrasting of different cult signs in the same festival. The signs differ not only in size, circumference and basic form but also in other respects:

- vertical/horizontal: (1,2,3)
- upright/inverted: (10)
- male/female: (9,11,12)
- fixed/movable: (2,3,4,6,7,8)
round form (again under the reverse influence of geometry and the ideas behind the cult sign).

Thus the relation between explicit relative symbolism and the characteristics of the cult sign reveals a fundamental structure that is not immediately apparent but which constitutes the essence of these structures, above all in respect of their symbolic meaning. In speaking of 'fundamental structure' as the precondition of relative symbolism, what is meant is the total of what has been described as structure in the foregoing chapters, everything that depends on the specific characteristics of the cult object. This could now be understood as the implicit foundation of the well-known relative symbolism, as its genetic underground, so to speak. Its traditional value and the general nature of the categories and their contradictions could be the impelling occasion for man’s comparing, analogizing and symbolizing search among the things of his world. Much that is nowadays simply labelled ‘symbolic’ could be basically re-interpreted, for instance, the territorial-semiotic meaning of many cult symbols and the fabulous (fable-like) formal plasticity of many symbolic figures that appear in the traditions of Japan (cf. Figs. 1 - 7).

For instance, it would be possible to understand why snake symbolism usually appears in connection with the tectonic - also in Japan. Many aspects of fire-and-light symbolism could be interpreted as the transfer of the symbolism of building structure to fire and light. How can one otherwise understand why the element fire is extinguished in so many Japanese religious festivals, only to be ‘renewed’? If tree worship or the tree-of-life complex were examined from the starting point of the synthetic prototype many ideas about the sacred tree would have to be fundamentally revised (see Egen 1980/13).