

Glossary of important Japanese terms

daihyōsha (代表者)

In general: representative of a social group or corporation. In the four hamlets of the village Ueda it designates the heads of the local young men's associations.

gohei (御幣)

Paper-sign. Cult object, offering and symbol of sacredness within official Shinto. It consists of white paper cut in a prescribed manner, sometimes it is also made of gold, silver or paper of five different colors. In its typical zigzag-form it hangs down, flat or as a kind of tassel, from a stick, from the top of a bamboo stalk or from a sakaki-twig, to which it is fastened. If set up or put on top of an object, the object thus prepared designates the abode of a deity. It can also serve in ceremonies for ritual purification (*ôharai* 大祓い) in which case it is swung several times to the right and left by a priest. It can also be used as an offering and is then set up in front of the sanctuary of a specific deity to which it is meant to be given. It may be noted that in the Ômihachiman-region on top of several cult-torches, instead of the usual gohei, a bundle of reed ears is found, obviously with the same meaning.

gōsha (郷社)

Specific rank of the old shrine rank system. Between village shrine (*sonsha* 村社) and province shrine (*fukensha* 府県社). In the region of Ômihachiman it generally means a shrine superior in rank to several local *ujigami*-shrines. Its position is either based on its significance as the original shrine (see *motomiya*) or it was designated to this status by decree during the Meiji-era. In regard to their relation to the *ujigumi*-shrines there are two types in the region. Either the subordinate *ujigami*-shrines are, as in Ueda, preserved as independent unities with their own festivals (see *uchi-matsuri*) or the subordinate shrines have been given up as independent unities. Their cult-objects (*goshintai* 御神体) are in this case transferred to the shrine of higher order. The *uchi-matsuri* are then no longer held; only the common *gōsha-matsuri* takes place. The difference of these systems is basically given by the so called *bunrei*-concept of the official Shinto (*bunrei* 分霊 partition of the holy spirit). This concept allows any number of branch-shrines to be derived from a given original shrine or various sanctuaries to be united into superior units.

gōsha-matsuri (郷社祭り)

In contrast to *uchi-matsuri* (see below) designation for a type of cult-festival at which several settlements' cult organizations unite in front of a superior shrine (*gōsha*).

haiden (拝殿)

Open hall for cult-related performances. Usually located in the frontal axis of the corresponding shrine (*honden*). At the time of the festival it is decorated with colored cloth. Its purpose is to serve for formal ceremonies generally related to official Shinto (see *kami-oroshi*).

hanabi (花火)

General meaning: fire-work. In the case of Ueda, a special ritual fire-work is meant. A high wall made of boards is erected on the right side facing the place in front of the *haiden*. It is furnished with large drawings of a theme changing yearly (e.g. the medieval castle of nearby Azuchi). The lines of the drawing consist of gun-powder. If lit at night the whole picture gleams brightly for a short time in front of the enthusiastic village population.

hairako no shinji (ハイラコの神事)

Hairako-ceremony. The meaning of hairako is not clear. The sakaki-twigs which are consecrated during the kami-oroshi-ceremony (see below) remain set up at the same location in the cult-hall during the two days of the festival. At the end of the fire-rituals six determined members of the zen'in-group clad in white carry these branches, dance and jump informally around the place in front of the *haiden* shouting continuously «*hairako*» and then bring the branches out to the symbolic gate of the shrine precinct (*torii* 鳥居) and back to the hall (*haiden*). The same pattern can be found throughout the region with movable cult-torches. Antithetic to the trusses fixed in the ground in front of the shrine or hall, such movable cult-torches are usually carried or pulled to the gate of the shrine precinct or through the gate towards the village and back. This suggests that the *hairako-ceremony* is the result of the application of locally traditional concepts to performances using cult-objects of official Shinto (*sakaki-twigs*) as sacred symbols (*yorishiro*). As described in the text of this study, a similar pattern (*taimatsu-watari*) exists within the festival which uses high columns.

honden (本殿)

Literally: main hall, meaning main shrine and most important place of worship in a precinct. The designation «*hall*» gives a wrong idea. The Japanese shrine, in contrast to the open hall in front of it (see *haiden*), is usually a building noted rather for its quality as a landmark than for providing inside-space. This latter is only given in small dimensions. Its function is to house the cult-objects which represent the deities worshipped: a mirror or a small dressed figure (general term: *goshintai* 御神体) meaning «venerable sacred body»). Consequently the ritual performances are usually in front of, not within, the shrine. Typical of such ritual performances which may combine original as well as developed elements are the well known, more or less distinctly dynamic processions (*togyo* 渡御) with portable shrines (*omikoshi* 御神輿). The object which represents the deity worshipped is on this occasion taken from the shrine of definite location (*honden*) and temporarily placed in a movable shrine (*omikoshi*). Processions with this movable type of shrine then often merely move around within the shrine precinct (as a purely dynamic event) or go to temporary places of worship (*otabisho* 御旅所) outside the shrine-precinct. Thus this type of performance, which is widespread in Japan, can also be interpreted in terms of spatial organization.

honsai (本祭)

Main day of a ritual festival. Usually opens on the preceding evening (see *yomiya*). At many places in the region of Ōmihachiman celebrations are restricted to the eve of the day when the *taimatsu* are burnt. If there is a main day at other places it usually consists of secondary or developed ceremonies such as processions with drums (*taiko-watari* 太鼓渡り) or portable shrines (*omikoshi-togyo*). The paradox relation between term and content (that the so-called main day contains only ceremonies of secondary importance) can be explained if one assumes an earlier state of annually permanent structures as explained on page 21. According to this assumption the festivals must have undergone great changes when wood construction-methods were introduced for sanctuaries. With durable buildings

it became obsolete to designate the sacred place by a new symbolic structure every year. But the annual reconstruction of the new symbol and the destruction of the old one must have been the main content of the local tradition. If it was not given up it had to be transformed in order to preserve the ritual: it thus underwent temporal and spatial changes. Since the wooden shrine occupied the sacred place the action was moved in front of the original place. The sequence of destruction and construction were exchanged, the phases projected on to a single object which now appeared in temporary form only. With this change the constructive part lost its meaning as the periodic recreation of a formal organization symbolically representative for the perennial orderly existence of the settlement. The main day was deprived of its importance. This shifted to the more spectacular destructive part with its predominantly **emotional** aspects. The **fire** festival at night became the center of the cult. The original content of the **«main festival»** would accordingly have to be sought in the construction phase, the **real significance** of which no longer seems to be recognized today. This idea used for comparison with the *taimatsu* festivals is still found at another level of Shinto. Naoe Hiroji (1966) has pointed out the close relationship between *ujigami*-(deity protecting a settlement such as a village etc.) and *yashikigami*-(屋敷神 deity protecting yard and house) cult systems. In areas where, through the influence of **official** Shinto, the replacement of sanctuaries made with primitive techniques (so-called *waramiya* 藁宮) by wooden ones has not yet taken place, namely in southern and eastern marginal zones of Kyūshū, on the island Izu-Ōshima and in some regions of Tōhoku, this simple way of ritually renewing sacred structures built with primitive methods **is still preserved** traditionally: symbols made of straw or reed which mark places of worship are simply replaced by new ones after one year.

jinja (神社)

Term in **official** Shinto. In contrast to local designations (*omiya*) a place of worship where the ancestors of the imperial house, deities of mythical times or heroes with merits connected with the founding of the state are worshiped. In a wider sense the term includes the entire local cult-system of this type with **precinct**, buildings and office as well as **specific** social units related to it (priest, *ujiko* etc.). In the narrow sense it means the place of worship, that is to say, the shrine-building in which a certain deity is worshipped.

kokoi-taimatsu (かこい松明)

Mobile torches which are carried around in processions and serve to light the fixed torches. The meaning of *kokoi* (in Kitagawa's (1966) description of the festival rendered in *hiragana*) was not checked.

kami-oroshi (神降ろし)

Term in **official** Shinto, meaning welcoming the descent of a deity. Ceremonial consecration of a cult-object. The ceremony implies the originally Chinese concept of a spiritual being dwelling in heaven. In Ueda it is performed within the cult-hall (*haiden*) in front of the main shrine. The ceremony shows certain parallels with the *taimatsu*-festival insofar as here too temporary cult-symbols are erected axially in front of the corresponding shrine. These symbols consist of organic plant-material. In the cult-hall along the front facing the main hall (*honden*) a temporary altar is erected with six *sakaki*-branches mounted on stands (six «pillars», *hashira*, counter for cult-objects; 3 of these are related to the main shrine and three to the small shrines). The ceremonies show the following characteristic features:

- exactly organized regulation as to where members of the cult (**acc.** to social status and function) are seated in front of the altar. Four men of the *ujiko* or *zen'in*, each one representing a hamlet (see *ujiko-sōdai*), 3 members of the *zen'in* elected as priests of the small shrines (*kannushi* 神主 meaning

«owner of the deity»), the caretaker of the shrine precinct (*shamori* 社守 1) and his assistant take part in the ceremony.

– Performance of the ceremony by an official Shinto-priest (*shinshoku* 神職) clad in vestments in central position in front of the altar. Ceremonies are performed according to the official Shinto canon: ritual purification (*ôharai* 大祓い), reading prayers (*norito* 祝詞) etc.

Among the offerings (*gokû* 御供) set up in front of the altar, three objects are remarkable because they show a certain similarity with the tectonic formations, the cult-torches. They consist of three truncated cones of cooked rice of about 20 cm height which are girdled in the middle by a *shimenawa*.

kasa-taimatsu (傘松明)

Literally: «umbrella-torch». It is so-named after the umbrella-like part of the reed symbol which rests inverted on top of the pillar-shaft of the high columnar type. *kasa-taimatsu* are distinguished from the *ôtaimatsu* by their monumental size by the building method used to make them and by their mobility. Also the cult-group (*wakarenchû*) which handles them is different from that which makes the *ôtaimatsu*.

ken (間)

Old measure. 1,82 m.

kodomo-taimatsu (子供松明)

Children's torches. Small torches of about 1 m height, not fixed in the ground. They are small replicas of the symbolic reed part at the top of the *kasa-taimatsu*, consisting of a rape plant core surrounded by reeds. *Kodomo-taimatsu* are made by the *zen'in* (see below) individually for their sons of a certain age. For several days the *kodomo-taimatsu* are usually put up in front of the entrance door of the house. On the eve (*yomiya*) of the festival day they are carried to the shrine and are burnt together with the *kasa-taimatsu* of the corresponding hamlet. What the *kasa-taimatsu* thus are for the hamlet the *kodomo-taimatsu* seem to be for the individual house.

koshu (戸主)

Owner of a house. Principal of a household. According to the old law, representative of a house. The old house-owner law (*koshu-ken* 戸主権) gave him the control of the family but, on the other hand, made him responsible for its support. The house-owner law was abandoned in 1947 together with the old house system (*ie no seido* 家の制度). In the villages of the area researched it is in fact still in existence.

matsuri (祭り)

Cult-festival. Basic term in folk-Shinto; in contrast to *sairei* (祭礼) <<ceremony>>, a term used in official Shinto). It designates any kind of activity related to a sacred place not described in old texts or canons but performed according to traditions handed down locally from olden times. Yanagita Kunio (1963) has emphasized that religious performance in Shinto does not include standardized or canonized ceremonies or beliefs similar to the homogenous and widespread concepts of Buddhism but that it follows locally differentiated object- and behavior-traditions repeated periodically in the same way since olden times.

miyairi togyō (宮入り鼓舞)

Nightly **processions** of the local cult-groups from the hamlets to the shrine and back. Not only the individual **groups** internally but also the groups among them are organized according to a strict order based on **social** rank of persons and villages. These nightly processions with the burning torches and the restlessly [beaten drums are a very beautiful element of the festivals.

motomiya (本宮)

Original shrine among several ujigami-shrines in an association of settlements genetically related.

ôtaimatsu (大松明)

Fixed cult-torch built in situ around a framework anchored in the ground, its position usually being close to and axially in front of the main hall (*honden*) to which it is related. Its height is more or less given by the main material (*yoshi-reed*: 3-4 m, *sasa-bamboo*: 3-5 m). The *zen'in* cult-group is responsible for its **construction** and also burns it.

reisai (例祭)

Literally: regular festival. Yearly festival. **As a term in official Shinto** it designates the most important cult-festival **of the year** in contrast to secondary events of a certain shrine's festival-calendar. The *tai-matsu* festival is *reisai* of the four *ujigami*-shrines of Ueda.

sakaki (神)

Cleyera ochracea; a **kind of tree which in official Shinto** is preferably used for ritual purposes. Its twigs or branches, with bows of hemp or paperstrips tied to it, are used as offerings (*tamagushi*) or designate sacred places (the abode of deities), if mounted on stands. Within areas under the influence of official Shinto, *sakaki*-branches are preferably used for the making of temporary cult-symbols. At many places **whole sakaki-trees are** cut in the woods, mounted on wooden frames and are then carried along in procession as temporary movable sacred objects (*yorishiro*). As such they often replace the costly movable shrines (*omikoshi*).

shimenawa (標縄・注連縄)

Cult-rope. Widespread cult-symbol of Japan. **It appears in numerous variations and relations.** General characteristic is that it is newly-made each year and that it is made of rice-straw. Its relation to tectonic or, more generally, to standing forms is very close. **It characterizes** stones set up vertically or trees around which it is laid as sacred spots. **It may also define** houses, groups of houses or groves and the **like**, around which it is stretched, as holy areas. Similarly it can mark as holy a rectangular surface within four bamboo poles between which it is put up. Hanging between a gate made of bamboo, wood or stone it marks the access to a sacred zone. Most frequently it is found at the gate (*torii* 鳥居) symbolically marking the **access to** a Japanese shrine precinct. Hanging above the path to a village it is sign of the border between the inside and the outside world. As a thick rope, it can be wound up in a spiral and then looks like a snake; in this case one end of the rope is usually formed **like** the head of a snake. With a white paper tassel (*gohei*) on a stick inserted on top it is then often found to mark a sacred place or it is thus carried around as a kind of movable sacred object. Its most

frequent use today as a kind of badge is probably a degeneration: For the New Years festivities a short piece of rope is fastened to the little shrine in the house or to the lintel of entrance doors and gates of house and yard all over Japan. It is the New Years symbol par excellence and, with the exception of some regions, where, together with several other old ropes it is left until it falls down, it is burnt after the New Year festivities are over. Doubtless in an original state it presents itself as shown in this study. Put around sacred symbols built with primitive methods it reveals its essential significance. Understood as part of such a structure or more precisely as a constructive means its symbolic meaning becomes obvious: in a practical sense, it thus appears as the *conditio sine qua non* of the whole symbol.

shinden (神田)

Sacred rice-field. As part of the shrine's plot, it is communal property and is therefore also cultivated communally. The rice it produces is used as offerings and for festive meals of the cult-groups,

shintake (心竹)

Core-bamboo; central bamboo. It is set up in the core of the symbols defining the vertical central axis of the symbol. In general covered in its lower part and therefore invisible it carries the shiny white paper tassel as sign of sacredness at its top.

taimatsú (松明)

General meaning: torch. The term thus also includes torches which actually serve for illumination. The word is used in a narrower sense here, meaning «cult-torches made with primitive building methods and organic plant material like reed, bamboo and the like». In contrast to the usual attempts to explain the origin of such cult-torches on the basis of questionable etymologies and as a development of functional torches, an explanation from the standpoint of the history of building is given here. The origins of these cult torches is thus not sought in terms of fire but within a symbolic building tradition with potentially prehistoric roots. Hence their origin is not to be seen in profane torches held in the hand which, when used to illuminate ritual performances, should have become formally refined, bigger and eventually stable. In contrast to this, if one takes the constructive aspects as primary it is easily conceivable that the fire component may well have come rather late in the development of these symbols in Japan. But this does not mean that the relationship between fire and similar cult-symbols could not have a very long history; on the contrary, this relation offers a new possibility to see the origin of the civilized use of fire not in the wilderness but in the centre of culture. If one took account of the possibility of self-ignition of such objects one could move very close to many myths and legends which tell us that the gods gave fire as a gift to man.

taimatsu-watari (松明渡り)

Literally: carrying around torches. Part of the *taimatsu*-festival during which the four high-column types of trusses (*kasa-taimatsu*) are carried around ecstatically within the shrine precinct by the young men's cult-groups (see *wakarenchū*).

tedake (手竹)

Literally: hand-bamboo, outer bamboo; also called *keshōdake* (化粧竹 decorative bamboo) in other villages of the region. The terms presumably indicate that this bamboo, in contrast to the internal *shintake* (see above) is fixed visibly at the outside of the objects and at the same time marks their front-side.

uchi-matsuri (内祭り)

Cult-festival of an individual settlement such as a hamlet, a village etc. The *uchi-matsuri* shows the elementary structure of such building rituals. Every year a cult-group consisting of representatives of the old houses of families of the settlement builds one fixed cult-symbol, always of the same form, in front of their own *ujigami-shrine* and later at night destroys it with fire.

ujigami (氏神)

Village-deity. The *ujigami-cult* is certainly the most important cult-system in Japan. Nearly any settlement-unit, be it a hamlet (*aza*), a village (*mura*) or a part of a city (*machi*), worships its *ujigami* in its *ujigami-shrine*. Traditionally, all important aspects of community life, political as well as economical and moral, focussed on this village deity. As a singular sanctuary, a shrine always correlated with a singular settlement-unit, it has a distinct territorial character. As a cult supported by families settled since olden times in a given area, it is distinctly related to the history and foundation of this settlement.

ujiko (氏子)

Literally: «children of the clan». Supporters of the *ujigami-cult* (see *ujigami*). The term designates houses or families having been settlers within the defined area of a settlement since oldest times. The traditional right to dwell within a settlement entitled them to the status of *ujiko* and to participation in the cult. Newcomers were excluded from participation in the cult and thus, in regard to status, belonged to a lower social class. Official Shinto-priests were introduced with the *jinja*-system (see *jinja*) only after the Meiji-period. The *ujiko* (in connection with cult-performances this means only the men; see *koshu*) traditionally took care of the administration of the village, communally performed the rituals for the village deity and also gathered cooperatively for economic undertakings.

ujiko-sōdai (氏子総代)

Head of the *ujiko*. In each one of the four hamlets of Ueda one is elected every four years from among the *zen'in* (see below).

wakamiya (若宮)

Branch-shrine among various *ujigami*-shrines of a genetically related complex of settlements.

wakarenchū (若連中)

Cult-group of a hamlet consisting of young unmarried men of a certain age. This cult-group is very likely an institution set up later than the *zen'in* and meant as antithetic to the latter, more important group. Their functions in the rituals are characterized by a distinctly dynamic behaviour. They perform activities connecting symbolically the peripheral settlements with the central village-shrine (*gōsha*). Socially they are not representative in regard to essential institutions of the village or the hamlets.

yomiya (夜宮・宵宮)

Literally: Evening-shrine, meaning evening-festival, like *yoi-matsuri* (宵祭 !1, *eve*). In general, small festival which takes place on the eve of a more important festival on the following day (*saijitsu* 祭日). It is often used in contrast to *honsai* (本祭 essential festival, main festival). The relation between eve and main festival can be best explained by an idealized reconstruction: the periodic renewal of a sanctuary built with primitive building methods. This concept presupposes synthetic symbols made of organic material and of one year's duration. To preserve the artefact in time, the nature of the material requires that it be renewed periodically. On the occasion of ritually renewing the symbol which marks the place of worship, the old cult-object is removed in the dead of the night and its place stands vacant. In the settlement, now deprived of its symbol of social order, this is followed by a switch-over to chaos: ecstatic behaviour, processions, ritual drunkenness, the playing of noisy instruments, ritual nakedness as a token of the laying-aside of the marks of social hierarchy etc. run parallel to the dislocation and destruction of the old symbol. On the following day, the main festival, the new symbol is built at the same place in the same form. With its completion the symbol of the orderly local world and its social organization is established again. The village celebrates the creation of the new order and then returns to normal everyday life. With this simplified model of the periodic renewal of a sanctuary built with primitive methods, which is actually still practiced at the level of the *yashikigami* 毘古神 cult (see *honsai*) a great part of ritual behaviour in Shinto can be explained in a way that makes sense. Its most striking example is found in the periodic reconstruction of the national sanctuary of Japan, the shrines at Ise.

yoshi (葦・葎)

Perennial grass with new growth each year; belonging to the rice group. In Japan it is widespread near open waters (bank of rivers and lakes; river estuaries etc.). In spring the plant puts forth shoots which reach their full height by late summer. In autumn the large flowering heads appear at the top. In snowy regions of Japan *yoshi* are often worked up into windtight fences or temporary wall-coverings around farmhouses. In the warmer zones they are made up into shading articles (mats, blinds). This type of reed grows abundantly round the shores of Lake Biwa. It widely is part of the poetic character of the lake.

zen'in (全員)

Literally: all members. Cult-group of a hamlet, which consists of the representatives (see *koshu*) of all *ujiko*-houses of this hamlet.