

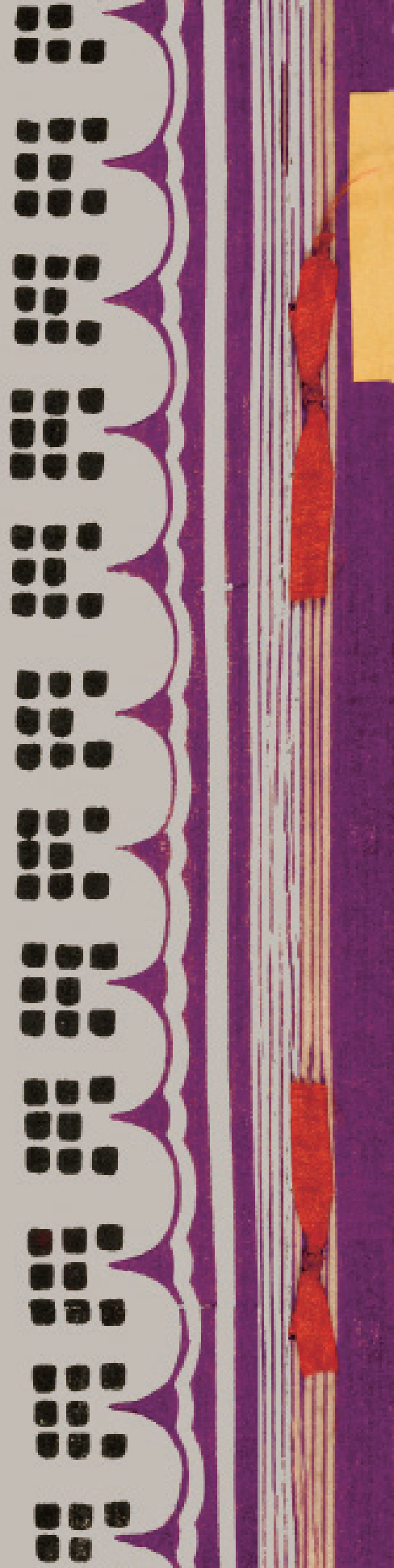
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Editorial Intent

Special Number: “Images of Japanese Culture”

Since the end of 2019, the global response to COVID-19 has drastically altered our daily lives. This situation led us to rethink cultural inheritance, culminating in our third issue in 2022, which focused on the transmission of Japanese culture.

Now, in 2024, as measures have eased and “post-corona” has entered common parlance, there is a noticeable shift back to pre-pandemic norms, albeit with differences. Despite COVID-19’s ongoing presence, its perception has evolved from a daunting unknown to a manageable everyday illness. This “post-corona” image transformation is, in turn, having real impacts on our daily lives.

With the influence of images on people’s actual lives in mind, this special feature, comprised of three articles, explores “Images of Japanese Culture.”

Kobayashi’s article considers the populace’s *goryōe* being adopted by the imperial court during the Jōgan years to discuss the establishment of the official image that spirits cast curses.

Fujisawa’s article contends that Katsushika Hokusai inherited both the Rinpa school’s distinctive visual images, such as compositions and distorted expressions, that had been carried on as painters modeled their styles on artists they admired, as well as the images that symbolized the school, such as the *mitate* technique and the theme of nature.

Omichi’s paper notes the recent surge in publications on Shinto and shrines within Japan’s spiritual marketplace, particularly following the power spot trend, and investigates the images of Shinto and shrines therein.

These three articles address various evolving images, and we hope they will serve as a starting point for reconsidering how images construct Japanese culture.

KJS Editorial Committee

Included Articles

- Kobayashi Norihiko 小林宣彦 (Associate Professor, Department of Shinto Culture, Faculty of Shinto Studies), “Nihon kodai ni okeru shisha no rei to tatari, saigai ni kansuru kōsatsu: Jōgan goryōe ni itaru haikai o chūshin ni” 日本古代における死者の霊と祟り・災害に関する考察—貞観御霊会に至る背景を中心に—, *Kokugakuin zasshi* 國學院雜誌 123:12 (2022), pp. 85-108.
- Fujisawa Murasaki 藤澤紫 (Professor, Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Letters), “Katsushika Hokusai ga ‘Fugaku sanjū rokkei’ ni miru Kōrin imēji: Ukiyoe to Rinpa” 葛飾北斎画「富嶽三十六景」にみる「光琳」イメージ: 浮世絵と琳派,” *Kokugakuin zasshi* 國學院雜誌 123:11 (2022), pp. 1–23.
- Omichi Haruka 大道晴香 (Assistant Professor, Department of Shinto Culture, Faculty of Shinto Studies), “Negai o kanaeru ni wa ‘doko no jinja ni iku beki ka’: Shintōkei supirichuariti ni okeru jinja erabi no kijun ni tsuite” 願いを叶えるには「どこの神社に行くべきか」: 神道系スピリチュアリティにおける神社選びの基準について, *Kokugakuin zasshi* 國學院雜誌 123, no. 12 (2022), pp. 127–147.

Spirits of the Dead and Curses/Disasters in Ancient Japan: The Background Leading to the Jōgan Goryōe¹

KOBAYASHI NORIHIKO

Keywords: ceremonies for resentful spirits (*goryōe* 御霊会), resentful spirit beliefs and practices (*goryō shinkō* 御霊信仰), deity beliefs and practices (*jingi shinkō* 神祇信仰), curses (*tatari* 祟り), disasters (*saigai* 災害), epidemics (*ekibyō* 疫病), deity possession (*kamigakari* 神憑り)

Author's Statement

In ancient Japan, the spirits of the dead who died with resentment, called *goryō* 御霊 or *onryō* 怨霊, were thought to cast curses. The purpose of this study was to examine and clarify the circumstances under which this idea originated and developed, based on historical sources.

Introduction

This paper seeks to elucidate the imperial court's perception of spirits of the deceased in ancient Japan, specifically aiming to uncover the background and development of the idea that such spirits are responsible for curses (*tatari* 祟り). In recent years, scholarship has focused on the belief that deities' curses cause disasters.² This paper, adopting the view that curses were equated with disasters, seeks to prove the hypothesis that the ancient court addressed the curses of spirits of the dead to prevent and mitigate disasters. It focuses on the background leading up to the Shinsen'en Goryōe 神泉苑御霊会 conducted in Jōgan 貞観 5 (863) (below, Jōgan Goryōe).

The *goryō* 御霊 targeted in the Jōgan Goryōe were spirits of people who died with resentment due to political downfall, among other reasons. Such beliefs became widespread after entering the Heian period (794–1185). As described by Kokushi daijiten

¹ This article is a translation of Kobayashi Norihiko 小林宣彦, "Nihon kodai ni okeru shisha no rei to tatari, saigai ni kansuru kōsatsu: Jōgan goryōe ni itaru haikai o chūshin ni" 日本古代における死者の霊と祟り・災害に関する考察—貞観御霊会に至る背景を中心に—, *Kokugakuin zasshi* 國學院雜誌 123:12 (2022), pp. 85–108. Translated by Dylan L. Toda.

² See Okada, *Kodai tennō to jingi no saishi taikai*; Kobayashi, *Ritsuryō kokka no saishi to saii*.

国史大辞典 (National history dictionary), *goryō* beliefs and practices (*goryō shinkō* 御霊信仰)

involve the fear of spirits of those who met untimely deaths and attempt to appease them to avoid curses and ensure peace. Initially, all spirits of the dead were objects of fear, and especially feared were the spirits of those who died harboring resentment and those whose descendants did not perform rites for them. These spirits were believed to cause curses, and when epidemics, famines, or other disasters occurred, they were often attributed to the curses of these resentful spirits or spirits for which rites were not being performed. . . . However, this form of belief became widespread mainly from the Heian period onward, with rites being widely performed for the spirits of certain individuals, often political failures.³

In ancient Japan, the *Jingiryō* 神祇令 (Regulations of [affairs related to] deities) was established under the influence of the Tang Dynasty's *Ciling* 祠令 (Regulations of worship),⁴ which included the worship of spirits of the dead as a part of rites.⁵ However, in Japan, while the worship of heavenly and earthly deities was specified in the *Jingiryō* and managed by the Jingikan 神祇官 (Department of deities), the worship of imperial mausoleum spirits was handled by the Shoryōryō 諸陵寮 (Bureau of imperial mausolea). The government's official prayers seeking certain outcomes primarily focused on deities, not spirits of the dead, and the worship of spirits of the dead was not adopted as a national prayer ritual method.

As time progressed into the Heian period, Kitanosha 北野社 was established to worship the spirit of Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真, and by the end of the tenth century, this spirit worship became part of official rites (*ōyake matsuri* 公祭) and included in the twenty-two top ranking imperial court-associated shrines (*nijūnisha* 二十二社). The elevation of spirits of the dead to the status of deity spirits and their incorporation into official prayers marked a significant turning point in Japan's ritual history. This shift appears to have been largely influenced by the belief that spirits of the dead could cast curses. Rituals to appease these spirits, including the *goryōe*, were developed in tandem.

To repeat, this paper aims to clarify how the ancient imperial court viewed dead spirit curses by examining the background of the Jōgan Goryōe becoming an official ritual.

³ Shibata Minoru 柴田実, "Goryō shinkō" "御霊信仰," *Kokushi daijiten*, vol. 6, pp. 58-59.

⁴ Kose, "Amagoi no gishiki ni tsuite."

⁵ 凡祭祀之名有四、一曰祀_二天神_一、二曰祭_二地祇_一、三曰享_二人鬼_一、四曰稊_二一奠于先聖・先師_一。

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1. Issues Surrounding the Jōgan Goryōe

First, I will go over the details about this *goryōe* based on records in the *Nihon sandai jitsuroku* 日本三代実録 (The true history of three reigns of Japan).⁶

Historical Source 1: *Nihon sandai jitsuroku*, twentieth day (*mizunoeuma* 壬午) of the fifth month of Jōgan 5 (863)

①於_レ神泉苑_ニ修_レ御靈會_ニ。②勅遣_下左近衛中将從四位下藤原朝臣基經。右近衛權中將從四位下兼行內藏頭藤原朝臣常行等_上。監_中會事_上。③王公卿士赴集共觀。④靈座六前設_レ一施几筵_ニ。盛_レ一陳花果_ニ。恭敬薰修。⑤延_レ律師慧達_ニ為_レ講師_ニ。演_レ一說金光明經一部。般若心經六卷_ニ。⑥命_レ雅樂寮伶人_ニ作_レ樂。⑦以_レ帝近侍兒童及良家稚子_ニ為_レ舞人_ニ。⑧大唐高麗更出而舞。⑨雜伎散樂競_レ其能_ニ。⑩此日宜旨。開_レ苑四門_ニ。聽_レ都邑人出入縱觀_ニ。⑪所謂御靈者。崇道天皇。伊予親王。藤原夫人。及觀察使。橘逸勢。文室宮田麻呂等是也。並坐_レ事被_レ誅。冤魂成_レ厲。⑫近代以來。疫病繁發。死亡甚衆。天下以為。此災。御靈之所_レ生也。始_レ自_レ京畿_ニ。爰及_レ外國_ニ。每_レ至_レ夏天秋節_ニ。修_レ御靈會_ニ。往々不_レ斷。或禮_レ仏說_レ經。或歌且舞。令_下童貫之子_ニ靚粧馳射。膂力之士袒裊相撲。騎射呈_レ芸。走馬爭_レ勝。倡優嫵戲。遙相誇競_上。聚而觀者莫_レ不_レ填咽_ニ。遐邇因循。漸成_レ風俗_ニ。⑬今茲春初咳逆成_レ疫。百姓多斃。朝廷為祈。至_レ是乃修_レ此會_ニ。以賽_レ宿禱_ニ也。

(Numbers added by the author.)

Summary

- (1) In Jōgan 5, a *goryōe* was held at Shinsen'en.
- (2) Fujiwara no Mototsune 藤原基經 and Fujiwara no Tokitsura 藤原常行 were dispatched to preside.
- (3) The princes, *kugyō* 公卿 (nobles of third rank or higher), and others gathered to watch.
- (4) Desks and mats were set up in front of the six spirits, and flowers and fruits were abundantly arranged.
- (5) Etatsu 慧達 served as the lecturer, expounding on the *Konkōmyōkyō* 金光明經 and *Hannya shingyō* 般若心經.

⁶ Regarding the *goryōe* and the Jōgan Goryōe, see Higo, “Heian jidai ni okeru onryō no shisō”; Chō, “Jōgan go-nen goryōe ni tsuite no ichi shiron”; Takatori, “Goryōe no seiritsu to shoki Heiankyō no jūmin”; Yasui, “Nagaokakyō no haite to Sawara Shinnō no onryō”; Kikuchi, “Goryō shinkō no seiritsu to tenkai”; Tachibana, “Waga kuni ni okeru onryō shinkō to Daihannya kyō no kankei ni tsuite”; Inoue, “Goryō shinkō no seiritsu to tenkai”; Imaichi, “Jōgan go-nen goryōe no seiritsu ni tsuite”; Miyazaki, “Jōgan go-nen goryōe no seijishiteki kōsatsu”; Yamada, “Goryōe seiritsu no zentei jōken”; Yamada, “Onryō e no taishō”; Yamada, “Onryō no shisō”; Iizumi, “Goryō shinkō no kenkyūshi”; Itō, “Goryōe ni kansuru ichi kōsatsu”; Ōe, “Nihon kodai no kami to rei”; Shibata, “Onryō shisō seiritsu no zentei”; Kobayashi, “Sawara Shinnō onryō gensetsu no hatsume”; Nakamoto, “Jōgan go-nen goryōe no seiritsu to sono igi”; Matsumoto, “Heian jidai no goryōe to toshi sairei”; Dong/Tō, “Kodai Nihon no ekibyō kanren shinkō ni okeru gairaiteki yōso ni tsuite.”

- (6) Musicians from the Gagakuryō 雅樂寮 (Music bureau) performed.
- (7) Children serving close to the emperor and those from good families were made dancers.
- (8) People from the Chinese mainland and the Korean peninsula also danced.
- (9) Competitions in skills, such as miscellaneous skills (*zatsugi* 雑伎) and *sangaku* 散楽 (miscellaneous entertainments), were held.
- (10) On this day, by imperial command, the four gates of Shinsen'en were opened, allowing residents of the capital to freely enter and watch.
- (11) The spirits were Emperor Sudō 崇道, Prince Iyo 伊予,⁷ Lady Fujiwara 藤原,⁸ an inspection official (*kansatsushi* 觀察使),⁹ Tachibana no Hayanari 橘逸勢,¹⁰ and Fun'ya no Miyatamaro 文室宮田麻呂.¹¹ All these people were involved in incidents and killed for their crimes. Their resentful souls became *rei* 厲 (malevolent spirits causing illness and disaster).
- (12) Recently, epidemics have been frequent, with many deaths. People, not only in Kyoto and the Kinai region but also other areas, believe these disasters are caused by the spirits. *Goryōe* ceremonies are held annually in summer and autumn, featuring sutra recitations, dances, children in makeup performing archery, strong men stripped to the waist engaging in sumo, horseback archery, horse races, and entertainers' various performances. The venues are packed with spectators. This custom gradually became a tradition, both near and far.
- (13) Now (in Jōgan 5), an epidemic causing coughing arose in spring, leading to many deaths. The imperial court conducted prayers, but at this time the *goryōe* will express gratitude for previous prayers being answered.

According to Historical Source 1, the *Goryōe* was conducted at Shinsen'en¹² in Jōgan 5. *Goryōe* are spirits that became resentful due to death after being implicated in incidents. The six that were the subjects of this *goryōe* were no exception. This belief, that spirits

⁷ Son of Emperor Kanmu 桓武. Accused of plotting against his older brother, Emperor Heizei 平城, he was confined to Kawaradera 川原寺 (Kōfukuji 弘福寺) and deprived of food and drink. He eventually took his own life by poison.

⁸ This appears to be Fujiwara no Yoshiko 藤原吉子, consort of Emperor Kanmu and mother of Prince Iyo. She, along with Prince Iyo, was accused of treachery and took her own life at Kawaradera.

⁹ Perhaps Fujiwara no Nakanari 藤原仲成, older brother of Fujiwara no Kusuko 藤原葉子. Captured in Kyoto immediately after the Kusuko Incident (*Kusuko no hen* 葉子の變), he was imprisoned at the military/guard office Uhyōefu 右兵衛府 and executed the next day as the main conspirator.

¹⁰ Seen as a conspirator in the Jōwa Incident (Jōwa no hen 承和の變), stripped of his original surname, deemed a *binin* 非人 (non-human) outcast, and exiled to Izu 伊豆 Province. However, he died in Tōtōumi 遠江 Province during transit.

¹¹ Exiled, in connection with the Jōwa Incident, to Izu Province, where is believed to have died. Details are unknown. Regarding his spirit, see Yamasaki, "Jōgan go-nen Shinsen'en goryōe no seijishiteki igi."

¹² Regarding Shinsen'en, see Ōta, "Shinsen'en no kenkyū"; Ono, "Heian jidai shoki ni okeru rikyū no teien."

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cause epidemics, spread from Kyoto and Kinai to other regions, leading to Buddhist rituals and various events to appease these vengeful souls. Attracting large crowds, this became a customary practice. Then, in response to a raging epidemic, the imperial court decided to hold a *goryōe*.

It appears that the *goryōe* originally was a ritual of the people that was then later hosted and conducted by the imperial court. This shift from the popular to official realm is notable. In ancient Japan, popular beliefs, practices, and rituals were often subject to prohibitions. Despite this, the *goryōe* was adopted by the imperial court.

To understand the background leading to the Jōgan Goryōe, I must examine why a popular ritual was able to be conducted as an imperial one. In the next section, I will explore the issues involved therein and how they were resolved.

2. The Imperial Court's Response to Popular Religious Beliefs, Practices, and Rituals

Here I will examine the imperial court's response to popular beliefs, practices, and rituals, based on the below set of historical sources.

Historical Source 2: *Shoku Nihongi* 続日本紀, the twenty-ninth day (*kanoetatsu* 庚辰) of the ninth month of Tenpyō 天平 2 (730)

詔曰。(略)又安芸周防国人等妄說禍福。多集人衆。妖祠一死魂。云有_レ所_レ祈。又近_レ京左側山原。聚_一集多人_一妖言惑_レ衆。多則万人。少乃数千。如_レ此徒深違_一憲法_一。若更因循為_レ害滋甚。自_レ今以後。勿_レ使_一更然_一。(略)

Summary

It is said that in Aki 安芸 Province, people gather in large numbers, worshipping and praying to the souls of the dead in a misguided manner, preaching nonsense about fortune and misfortune. Similarly, in mountainous areas near the capital, many people gather and are deceived by false words (*yōgen* 妖言). The gatherings number in the thousands, some even tens of thousands, deeply contravening the law. If not rectified, this could lead to significant harm. Such things should be prevented henceforth.

Historical Source 3 *Shoku Nihongi*, the seventeenth day (*kanoetora* 庚寅) of the eighth month of Tenpyō-Shōhō 天平勝宝 4 (752)

捉_一京師巫覡十七人_一。配_一于伊豆。隱伎。土左等遠国_一。

Summary

Seventeen shamans of the capital were captured and exiled to remote provinces like Izu 伊豆, Oki 隱岐, and Tosa 土佐.

Historical Source 4 *Shoku Nihongi*, the eighth day (*kinoetora* 甲寅) of the seventh month of Tenpyō-Hōji 天平宝字 1 (757)

勅曰。比者頑奴潛凶_レ反逆_レ。皇天不_レ遠。羅令_レ伏_レ誅。民間或有_レ假託_レ亡魂_レ。浮言紛紜。擾_レ一亂鄉邑_レ者_レ。不_レ論_レ輕重_レ。皆與同罪。普告_レ遐邇_レ宜_レ絶_レ妖源_レ。

Summary

Evil bastards (*gando* 頑奴) plotted insurrection but could not escape the laws of state and were all executed. Amongst the populace, some spread chaos in villages, falsely claiming to speak for souls of the dead (*bōkon* 亡魂) and spreading baseless rumors (*fugen* 浮言). Such actions are equally criminal. A nationwide announcement was made to eradicate these sources of falsity (*yōgen* 妖源).

Historical Source 5 *Shoku Nihongi*, the fourteenth day (*kinoetatsu* 甲辰) of the twelfth month of Hōki 宝龜 11 (780)

勅_レ左右京_レ。如聞。比來無知百姓。構_レ一合巫覡_レ。妄崇_レ淫祀_レ。芻狗之設。符書之類。百方作_レ恠。填_レ一溢街路_レ。託_レ事求_レ福。還涉_レ厭魅_レ。非_レ唯不_レ畏_レ朝憲_レ。誠亦長養_レ妖妄_レ。自_レ今以後。宜_レ嚴禁斷_レ。如有_レ違犯者_レ。五位已上錄_レ名奏聞。六位已下所司科決。但有_レ患禱祀者。非_レ在_レ京內_レ者。許_レ之。

Summary

Report received of “ignorant peasants interacting with shamans, engaging in false worship, and the streets being filled with straw dogs (*sūku* 芻狗) and talismans. They seek fortune but are dabbling in harmful magical practices.” This not only shows a lack of fear of the imperial court and the law but also encourages baseless things. Such practices are to be strictly forbidden henceforth. Offenders of fifth rank (*goi* 五位) and above are to be reported by name, while those of sixth rank (*rokui* 六位) and below are to be punished by their respective offices. However, prayers due to illness are permitted outside Kyoto.

Historical Source 6 *Nihon kiriyaku* 日本紀略, the third day (*tsuchinotomi* 己巳) of the fifth month of Enryaku 延曆 14 (795)

右京人上毛野兄国女流_レ土左国_レ。以下自称_レ諸天_レ妖言惑_レ衆也。

Summary

An Ukyō 右京 person Kamitsukeno no Ekunime 上毛野兄国女 was exiled to Tosa Province for calling herself Shoten 諸天 and deceiving people with false words (*yōgen* 妖言).

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Historical Source 7 *Ruiju sandai kyaku* 類聚三代格, the twenty-eighth day of the ninth month of Daidō 大同 2 (807), official document (*kanpu* 官符)

太政官符

応_レ禁_一一斷兩京巫覡_一事

右被_一右大臣宣_一僞。奉_レ勅。巫覡之徒好託_一禍福_一。庶民之愚仰信_一妖言_一。淫祀斯繁。厭呪亦多。積習成_レ俗虧_一一損淳風_一。宜_一自今已後一切禁斷_一。若深崇_一此術_一猶不_一懲革_一。事覺之日移_一一配遠国_一。所司知_レ之不_レ亂。隣保匿而相容並准_レ法科_レ罪。

大同二年九月廿八日

Summary

Shamans discuss fortune and misfortune, and the foolish believe their false words (*yōgen*). False worship is frequent and spells prevalent. Having become customs, these are eroding the honest and unpretentious spirit of the people. All such practices are to be forbidden. Those who continue are to be exiled to remote provinces. Officials aware of the existence of such practices but not investigating are to be punished according to the law.

Historical Source 8 *Nihon kōki* 日本後紀, the twenty-sixth day (*kanotomi* 辛巳) of the ninth month of Kōnin 弘仁 3 (813)

勅。恠異之事。聖人不_レ語。妖言之罪。法制非_レ輕。而諸国信_一民狂言_一。言上寔繁。或言及_一国家_一。或妄陳_一禍福_一。敗_レ法乱_レ紀。莫_レ甚_一於斯_一。自今以後。有_下百姓輒稱_一託宣_一者_上。不_レ論_一男女_一。隨_レ事科決。但有_一神宣灼然。其驗尤著_一者。国司檢察。定_レ実言上。

Summary

Saints do not speak of the strange. False words (*yōgen*) are not a minor offense. Reports are frequent of people in various provinces believing in mad words (*kyōgen* 狂言). Some statements affect the state (*kokka* 国家), while others falsely explain fortune and misfortune. These seriously violate the law and disrupt order. Henceforth, any peasant speaking of divine revelation, regardless of gender, is to be punished. However, if the deity's revelation is genuine and the miraculous effects appear, the *kokushi* 国司 (provincial governors) shall inspect and report.

From Historical Source 2, one can infer that the imperial court restricted popular beliefs, practices, and rituals, specifically gathering in large numbers, worshipping and praying to the spirits of the dead misguidedly, preaching nonsense about fortune and misfortune, and deception by false words. It thus seems that aspects of the *goryōe*, such

as large crowds and performing rituals for the spirits of those executed for treason, were prohibited. Notably, though, the *goryōe*, a popular practice, was nevertheless adopted as an official event.

Historical Source 4 mentions chaos in villages due to the spreading of words attributed to the souls of the dead (*bōkon*) executed during the Tachibana no Naramaro Rebellion (*Tachibana no Naramaro no ran* 橘奈良麻呂の乱). The people falsely claiming to speak for them are identified as members of the populace, probably like those described as worshiping and praying to the spirits of the dead in a misguided manner in Historical Source 2. The “baseless rumors” (*fugen*) causing chaos in Historical Source 4 probably refer to the words spoken by those possessed by spirits of the executed. The imperial court saw the populace speaking for souls of the dead as mistaken and prohibited it.¹³

Divine revelation (*takusen* 託宣), a deity possessing a person to reveal its name and intentions, is prohibited amongst the populace in Historical Source 8, described as false words (*yōgen*) and mad words (*kyōgen*).¹⁴ Despite the criminalization of divine revelation amongst the populace, many people throughout the country are said to have believed in it. The purpose of divine revelation in the popular context was to explain fortune and misfortune, likely meaning to provide explanations for why disasters occur and how to bring about fortune. For instance, offering remedies for illnesses or ways to avoid potential disasters. The people believed in these revelations as divine words or teachings and tried to avert calamities, but the imperial court prohibited them as false and mad words. Historical Source 2 also holds that the people explaining fortune and misfortune is nonsense.

Divine revelation that affects the state is also prohibited.¹⁵ What the state (*kokka* 国家) refers to here is a complex issue,¹⁶ but according to the interpretation of the *Sōniryō*, it refers to the emperor.¹⁷ The same text’s commentary (*koki* 古記) also defines it as “all the provinces within the great eight islands.”¹⁸ Considering the tense relationship between retired Emperor Heizei 平城 and Emperor Saga 嵯峨 two years prior to Historical Source 8, it can be inferred that this statement was meant to prohibit rumors about the imperial succession.

The prohibition of “false words” (*yōgen*) is a common theme in both Historical Source 6 and Historical Source 7. In the former, Kamitsukeno no Ekunime was

¹³ We can tell that *kari* 仮 in the original means “false” because the *Sōniryō*’s 僧尼令 interpretation states the following: 非_レ真曰_レ仮也。

¹⁴ We can tell that *yōgen* in the original means “false words” because the *Sōniryō*’s interpretation states the following: 過誤為_レ妖言_一也。Regarding *yōgen*, see Kikuchi, “Hasseiki nihon ni okeru ‘yōgen’ no hōsei ni tsuite.”

¹⁵ It is subject to punishment in the *Sōniryō*: 上觀_レ玄象_一假說_レ災祥_一。語及_レ国家_一。妖_一惑百姓_一。

¹⁶ Satō, “Irei toshite no ‘chin’ no sōshutsu.”

¹⁷ 語及_レ国家_一。不_レ敢指_レ一斥尊号_一。故託曰_レ国家_一也。言假說之語。関_レ涉人主_一也。

¹⁸ 国家謂_レ大八洲之内諸国_一也。

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exiled to Tosa Province for calling herself Shoten and deceiving people with false words. She likely claimed to be possessed by Shoten and prophesized fortune and misfortune, which people believed to be the words of Shoten. Historical Source 7 holds that prophesies of fortune and misfortune by shamans, folk religious professionals, are *yōgen*, which, as we have seen, was used to describe divine revelation, suggesting that shamans were religious professionals who used revelation and other methods to address various calamities experienced by the populace. Historical Source 5 also reveals that people believed in the magical methods of shamans, which the imperial court prohibited as false worship (*insbi* 淫祠), mysteries (*kai* 恠), spells (*enmi* 厭魅),¹⁹ and baseless (*yōmō* 妖妄).

In Historical Source 3, seventeen shamans in Kyoto were exiled, probably because they claimed to be offering divine revelations of fortune and misfortune, and many people, believing this to be words of deities, came seeking fortune. It is possible that they were exiled because their divine revelations touched on the topic of imperial succession.

Historical Sources 2 through 8 lead to the conclusion that the state prohibited popular beliefs, practices, and rituals characterized by:

1. Claims of divine revelation and prophesies of fortune and misfortune.
2. Inclusion of matters related to the emperor or imperial succession in such prophesies.
3. Large crowds of people.

Although Historical Source 2 might seem to prohibit the worship of the spirits of the dead, it is more appropriate to interpret it as prohibiting rituals and magic based on spirits possessing individuals and speaking. In other words, misguided worship of souls of the dead. It is unthinkable that the likes of ancestor worship was prohibited. Additionally, in Yōrō 養老 2 (718), the obituary of Michi no Kimi Obitona 道君首名 mentions that when he governed Chikugo 筑後 and Higo 肥後 provinces in the late Wadō 和銅 (708–715) years, his achievements brought benefits to the people of both provinces, and, after his death, “peasants worshiped him.”²⁰ This was probably more akin to ancestral shrine worship and differs entirely from rituals in which spirits of the dead speak of fortune and misfortune. Thus, this case of Obitona would not have been prohibited.

Considering the above points, the act of carrying out rituals for spirits of the dead in the popular *goryōe* was not the issue. The problem was bringing in large crowds and the spread of a narrative which held that the *goryōe* resolves resentment-harboring, epidemic-

¹⁹ According to the section on spells (*enmi* 厭魅) in the *Zokutōritsu* 賊盜律 (Penal codes for robbery), curses by living people (*juso* 呪詛)/talismans and spells are used when intending to kill someone out of hatred.

²⁰ *Shoku Nihongi*, the *kinotoi* 乙亥 day of the fourth month of Yōrō 2.

causing spirits of people involved in national incidents.

On the other hand, it is also apparent that the complete elimination of divine revelation by shamans, especially those mentioning the emperor, was not achieved. The following is a summary of an entry from the Enryaku years (782–806):²¹

During the Enryaku years, weapons and armaments, treasures of the Isonokami Jingū 石上神宮, were transferred to the arsenal. Upon the illness of Emperor Kanmu 桓武, it came to be known through the divine revelation of Isonokami Jingū, by a female shaman, that the cause of the illness was the removal of these treasures. The female shaman conveyed the divine revelation while angry (i.e., the angered deity Isonokami possessed her). Eventually, the court returned Isonokami Jingū's treasures.

From the above, it is evident that shamans, popular religious practitioners, were conduits for divine revelation.²²

Moreover, in Historical Source 8, while the court strictly prohibited divine revelation in popular practices as false and mad words, it also said that if the deity's revelation is genuine and brings about miraculous effects, *kokushi* should inspect and report. This indicates an attitude of accepting effective divine revelation.

However, even after the Jōgan Goryōe was conducted, people gathering for *goryōe* continued to be prohibited.²³ This can be understood to mean that there was a consistent regulation against unauthorized large assemblies.

Above, I have pointed out several issues related to the acceptance of the popular *goryōe* as an official ritual and examined how it was institutionally permitted. In ancient times, the imperial court prohibited popular beliefs, practices, and rituals that were held to involve gathering in large numbers, worshiping and praying to the souls of the dead in a misguided manner, preaching nonsense regarding fortune, deception by false words, shamans, and content related to the state. The popular *goryōe* was characterized by large crowds and the belief that spirits of those involved in national incidents are resentful and cause epidemics. Comparing the court's prohibitions with the nature of the popular *goryōe*, I identified several issues that needed to be addressed for the *goryōe* to be accepted as an official ritual. Upon reviewing related historical sources, I found that the

²¹ *Nihon kōki*, the *kanoeinu* 庚戌 day of the second month of Enryaku 24.

²² This entry includes the phrase 令鎮御魂... In light of the context, “making the divine spirit possess” is the most appropriate interpretation. Emperor Kanmu returned the weapons to Isonokami Shrine after having the divine spirit possess a female shaman and finding out the words of the divine revelation. This indicates that the idea of divine spirit pacification had an element of spirit possession. The significance of divine spirit pacification rites should also be reconsidered in light of this. See Kobayashi, “Amanoiwaya denshō to kodai no saishi kōzō ni kansuru kōsatsu.”

²³ *Nihon sandai jitsuroku*, the fourteenth day (*mizunotoi* 癸亥) of the sixth month of Jōgan 7.

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imperial court prohibited prophesizing fortune and misfortune under the guise of divine revelation, touching on matters related to the emperor or imperial succession in these prophecies, and large gatherings of people. Additionally, I showed that while prohibiting these, the imperial court accepted divine revelation and rituals amongst the populace if confirmed to be effective. It was for this reason that the popular *goryōe* could, on an institutional level, be transformed into an official ritual.

The question then arises: what logic did the court use to determine that the *goryōe* was effective? In the next section, I will clarify how the logic that the spirits of the dead cause disasters and can be appeased by rituals arose and developed in ancient times.

3. The Emergence and Development of the Concept of Curses by the Spirits of the Dead

Historical Source 1 indicates that the purpose of the Jōgan Goryōe was disaster management: to stop an epidemic by performing sutra recitations, song and dance, and entertainments for the spirits causing the epidemic.

Now, I will examine how the idea that spirits of the dead cause disasters came about.

Historical Source 9 *Shoku Nihongi*, the second day (*mizunoeinu* 壬戌) of the tenth month of Hōki 6 (775)

前右大臣正二位勳二等吉備朝臣真備薨。(略)十一年。式部少輔從五位下藤原朝臣広嗣。与_二玄昉法師_一有_レ隙。出_レ為_二大宰少貳_一。到_レ任即起_レ兵反。以_レ討_二玄昉及真備_一為_レ名。雖_二兵敗伏_一誅。逆魂未_レ息。勝宝二年左_二筑前守_一。俄遷_二肥前守_一。(略)

Summary

Kibi no Makibi 吉備真備 passed away. In Tenpyō 11 (739), Fujiwara no Hirotsugu 藤原広嗣, due to a rift with Genbō 玄昉, was appointed as the *dazai no shōni* 大宰少貳 (deputy assistant governor of Dazaifu 太宰府) but soon initiated a rebellion, seeking vengeance on Genbō and Makibi. The rebellion failed, and Hirotsugu was executed, but his rebellious soul (*gyakkon* 逆魂) still did not rest. Makibi was demoted to *Chikuzen no kami* 筑前守 in Tenpyō-Shōhō 2(750) and immediately became *Hizen no kami* 肥前守.

Historical Source 9, the obituary of Kibi no Makibi, states that after Fujiwara no Hirotsugu was executed for rebellion, his soul was still rebellious. Makibi's demotion being subsequently mentioned suggests that it was seen as a result of Hirotsugu's rebellious soul. Also, when Genbō died in exile Tenpyō 18 (746), it was rumored to be

²⁴ 世相伝云。為_二藤原広嗣靈_一所_レ害。*Shoku Nihongi*, the *tsubinotoi* 己亥 day of the sixth month of Tenpyō 18.

due to harm caused by the spirit of Fujiwara no Hirotsugu.²⁴

As seen in the case of Fujiwara no Hirotsugu, the idea that spirits of the dead could cause harm existed in the eighth century, but how did such a belief arise in Japan during ancient times?

In the *Zuo zhuan* 左伝, there is a story where the spirit of Bo You 伯有, killed by political enemies in the 30th year of Duke Xiang 襄, causes calamities and terror in the 7th year of Duke Zhao 昭. Therein, Zichan 子産 expresses the following view:

When a person is born, first the *po* 魄 (corporeal soul) forms. After the *po*, the joining of *yang* 陽 energy to the body is called the *hun* 魂 (ethereal soul). When one nourishes the body with food, increasing vitality, the *hun* and *po* become strong, eventually attaining wisdom equal to that of deities. Therefore, if one dies an unusual death, one's *hun* and *po* can attach to others and cast a wicked curse.²⁵

As described above, in ancient China, there was the belief that the corporeal and ethereal souls of a person who died an unusual death could cause harm to others. The idea that Fujiwara no Hirotsugu became a rebellious soul and harmed Genbō was likely influenced by ancient Chinese thought rather than being an idea original to ancient Japan.

However, it is questionable whether the belief that the spirits of the dead cause disasters was well-established after Hirotsugu's death. So, when did this belief begin to develop significantly in Japan?

Table 1 shows the chronology of events leading to Prince Sawara 早良 being posthumously honored as Emperor Sudō.

Table 1. Timeline of Prince Sawara Becoming Emperor Sudō

Enryaku 4	785	Prince Sawara is deposed as crown prince.
Enryaku 9	790	A gravekeeper is appointed for Prince Sawara.
Enryaku 11	792	Divination is performed regarding the illness of Crown Prince Ate, confirming that there is a curse from the spirit of Prince Sawara (caused by the desecration of his tomb). The director of the Shoryōryō is dispatched to Awaji to express apologies.
Enryaku 19	800	Prince Sawara is posthumously honored as Emperor Sudō, and Princess Inoe is restored as empress. The tombs of Prince Sawara and Princess Inoe are officially recognized as imperial mausoleums. <i>Onmyōji</i> 陰陽師 and Buddhist priests perform pacification rituals at Emperor Sudō's mausoleum.
Enryaku 24	805	The spirit of Emperor Sudō is described in writing as a "resentful spirit."

²⁵ *Chūgoku koten bungaku taikei*, p. 357.

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Prince Sawara, a maternal half-brother of Emperor Kanmu, became crown prince upon Kanmu's ascension. After the assassination of Fujiwara no Tanetsugu 藤原種継, he was confined to Otokunidera 乙訓寺 on the grounds that there had been a plot, led by Ōtomo no Yakamochi 大伴家持 and others, to make him the ruler. After fasting for more than ten days while awaiting exile to Awaji 淡路, it is said he then died in transit. His remains were sent to Awaji for burial.²⁶

After Prince Sawara's death, the illness of Crown Prince Ate 安殿 was attributed to his curse, and a ritual of appeasement was performed. The cause of the curse was said to be the desecrated state of Prince Sawara's grave in Awaji Province. At this time, Prince Sawara had not yet been posthumously named Emperor Sudō, nor was his spirit considered resentful. The cause of the curse was solely attributed to the desecration of the grave. We should note, though, that people clearly thought that a spirit of the deceased had cast a curse.

In the eighth century, imperial tomb rituals usually involved, for example, offerings from other countries, and there were no instances of imperial tomb curses. Although in Tenpyō-Shōhō 7 (755) prayers were offered at the tombs of Tenji 天智, Tenmu 天武, Jitō 持統, Monmu 文武, Kusakabe 草壁, Genmei 元明, Genshō 元正, and Fujiwara no Fuhito 藤原不比等,²⁷ the imperial tomb rituals of the time, including the annual offerings in the twelfth month (*nosakihei* 荷前幣), appear to have not been heavily focused on prayers. The logic of prayers and curses was mainly used in deity worship, suggesting that the idea of praying to spirits of the dead and such spirits causing disasters was not yet established in the eighth century.

Considering that there had been hardly any earlier instances of curses cast by spirits of the dead, the spirit of Prince Sawara casting a curse, while attributed to the desecration of his tomb, was likely perceived as an exceptional case.

The background to Prince Sawara's spirit being officially seen as a curse-casting resentful spirit likely has much to do with Emperor Kanmu.²⁸ He was anxious (about the death and illness of close relatives, and his own sickness) and held the belief that Sawara's spirit harbored resentment. Then, perhaps learned individuals, citing various texts including the *Zuo zhuan*, explained the relationship between resentful spirits and curses, and Kanmu accepted this reasoning. Alternatively, given his background as the imperial court's head of education (a position entitled *daigaku no kami* 大学頭),²⁹ he himself might

²⁶ Nishimoto, *Sawara shinnō*.

²⁷ *Shoku Nihongi*, the *hinoeuma* 丙午 day of the tenth month of Tenpyō-Shōhō 7.

²⁸ Recent research on rites during the reign of Emperor Kanmu includes Kure, "Kanmu chō no saishi to rekishi"; Kure, "Kanmu Tennō chō no jingi seisaku"; Sano, "Kanmu Tennō to girei, saishi"

²⁹ *Shoku Nihongi*, the *hinotomi* 丁巳 day of the eighth month of Hōki 1.

have argued for the connection between resentful spirits and curses.

Furthermore, it is not difficult to imagine that various speculations circulated both in the court and among the public regarding the Prince Sawara incident even at the time. After Prince Sawara was deposed and Emperor Kanmu's son, Prince Ate, became crown prince, suspicions likely arose that Prince Sawara had died due to a wrongful accusation. Such suspicions would have made the explanation that Prince Sawara's resentful spirit is casting a curse on Prince Ate convincing to people. Additionally, the perception that Prince Sawara, implicated in an incident and killed for his alleged crime, cast a curse on Prince Ate and Emperor Kanmu due to resentment harbored in his soul probably spread among the court and the people, eventually leading to Prince Sawara becoming an object of *goryō* beliefs and practices.³⁰

Thus, during Emperor Kanmu's reign, the idea that resentful spirits could cast curses became officially acknowledged, leading to an increase in reported imperial tomb curses.

Historical Source 10 *Nihon kiriyaku*, the third day (*hinotobitsuji* 丁未) of the seventh month of Daidō 4 (809)

遣使於吉野山陵。掃一除陵内。并読経。以亢旱累旬。山陵為祟。

Summary

An envoy was sent to the tomb of Princess Inoe 井上 for cleaning and sutra recitation, as the prolonged severe drought was believed to be caused by the tomb's curse.

Historical Source 11 *Ruiju kokushi* 類聚国史, the eighteenth day (*hinoetatsu* 丙辰) of the seventh month of Kōnin 弘仁 1 (810)

遣右大弁從四位上藤原朝臣藤繼・陰陽頭從五位上安倍朝臣真勝等。鎮一祭高島陵。以聖体不予。山陵為祟也。

Summary

Fujiwara no Fujitsugu 藤原藤繼 and Abe no Makatsu 安倍真勝 were dispatched to perform a pacification ritual at the tomb of Fujiwara no Otomuro 藤原乙牟漏.

This was because Emperor Saga's illness is due to the curse of the tomb.

³⁰ The selection of six spirits for the Jōgan Goryōe raises the question of whether it was the court or the people who decided on them. For example, it is unclear why Fujiwara no Nakanari, believed to be the "inspection official," would be considered a spirit for this *goryōe* by the imperial court, as he wasn't a resentful soul wrongfully accused. Thus, it is plausible that the populace chose Nakanari, albeit the reasons unknown. However, given the often uncertain nature of popular rumors throughout history, this assumption seems reasonable. Also, in *Chōkō konkōmyōkyō eshiki* 長講金光明經會式 (A program for a long recitation of the Sutra of Golden Light) and *Chōkō ninnōhannyakyo eshiki* 長講仁王般若經會式 (A program for a long recitation of the Benevolent King Sutra), both by Saichō 最澄, Nakanari and Fujiwara no Kusuko are held to be spirits, so perhaps this logic spread among the people. Regardless, there is no clear reason why the court would have chosen Nakanari, and the fact that he is referred to as an inspection official, not by name, suggests that the court may not have decided upon him after deliberations but, rather, added someone who was already part of the populace's *goryōe*.

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Historical Source 12 *Ruiju kokushi*, the twenty-eighth day (*mizunoeinu*) of the sixth month of Kōnin 7 (816)

神祇官言。伐高阜山陵樹。崇見龜兆者。勅。朕情所敬。唯在山陵。而有司不勤督察。致斯咎徵。求之國典。其刑非輕。自今以後。嚴加禁斷。

Summary

Jingikan: “A curse from cutting down trees at the tomb of Fujiwara no Otomuro has appeared in tortoise shell divination.”

Imperial decree: “Such an inauspicious prognostication has appeared due to the tomb officials not supervising. Penalties for such negligence shall not be light. Henceforth, enforce strict prohibition against negligence in supervision.”

Historical Source 13 *Ruiju kokushi*, the ninth day (*kinoeinu* 甲戌) of the twelfth month of Tenchō 8 (831)

相樂山陵令掃清誦經。為崇也。

Summary

Cleaning and sutra recitation were performed at the tomb of Fujiwara no Momokawa 藤原百川 due to a curse.

Princess Inoe, who had been Emperor Kōnin’s empress, was deposed as such due to accusations of witchcraft (*fuko* 巫蠱) in Hōki 3 (772) and passed away in Hōki 6 (775).³¹ At this time, her child, Prince Osabe 他戸, was also removed from his position as crown prince. It is thought that the machinations surrounding the establishment of Prince Yamanobe 山部 (Emperor Kanmu) as emperor played a role in the mother and child’s downfall.³²

Since Princess Inoe’s honor was restored in the same year as Prince Sawara, she, too, was probably seen as a resentful spirit. Historical Source 10 likely indicates that the perception of a curse having been cast led to cleaning and sutra recitation at her tomb.³³

It is crucial to note that in Historical Source 10 the curse attributed to Princess Inoe’s resentful spirit was not confined to specific individuals or their associates but

³¹ *Shoku Nihongi*, the *mizunotobitsuji* 癸未 day of the third month of Hōki 3, the *kanototori* 辛酉 day of the tenth month of Hōki 4, the *tsuchinotoushi* 己丑 day of the fourth month of Hōki 6.

³² Murao, “Kanmu Tennō”; Inoue, “Kanmu Tennō.”

³³ In Kōnin 1 (810), Princess Inoe and Fujiwara no Yoshiko, along with Emperor Sudō, underwent ordination (*Ruiju kokushi*, the *kinotoushi* 乙丑 day of the seventh month of Kōnin 1). As mentioned in the obituary of Abe no Anio 安倍兄雄, during Emperor Heizei’s reign, Prince Iyo was already seen as having been unjustly deposed (伊予親王無罪而廢、当上盛怒、群臣莫敢諫者; *Nihon kōki*, the *hinotou* 丁卯 day of the tenth month of Daidō 3). Yoshiko was also posthumously conferred junior second rank (*junii* 從二位) in Jōwa 6 (839) because she had cast a curse (*Shoku Nihon kōki*, the *kinotou* 乙卯 day of the tenth month of Jōwa 6). It appears that both were seen as resentful spirits.

believed to impact a wide and unspecified range of people. This association of the curse with widespread disaster rather than specific individuals probably necessitated awareness of the curse even among those not directly involved, broadening the development of belief in and rituals for resentful spirits across the imperial court and the people.

Moreover, instances arose where non-resentful spirits of the dead were believed to cause curses. The spirits held responsible for casting curses in Historical Sources 11, 12, and 13 were those of Fujiwara no Otomuro and Fujiwara no Momokawa. Otomuro was Emperor Kanmu's empress and the mother of both Emperor Heizei and Emperor Saga.³⁴ Momokawa, said to be a highly loyal and trusted figure, played a crucial role in Emperor Kanmu's ascent to the throne.³⁵ Momokawa's daughter, Tabiko 旅子, was the mother of Emperor Junna 淳和.³⁶ Despite lacking elements typically associated with becoming resentful spirits, Otomuro and Momokawa were believed to have cast curses due to the desecration of their tombs.

As we have seen, the resentful spirits of Prince Sawara and Prince Inoe appear to have triggered the development of the idea that spirits of the dead produce curses. This idea was not based on Japan's traditional worldview, as the following historical document shows.

Historical Source 14 *Shoku Nihon kōki*, the fifth day (*kinototori* 乙酉) of the eighth month of Jōwa 11 (844)

文章博士從五位上春澄宿祢善繩。大內記從五位下菅原朝臣是善等。被大納言正三位藤原朝臣良房宣稱。①先帝遺誡曰。世間之事。每有物恠。寄崇先靈。是甚無謂也者。②今隨有物恠。令下所司卜筮。先靈之崇明于卦兆。③臣等擬信。則恠遺誡之旨。不用則忍當代之咎。進退惟谷。未可知何從。若遺誡後有可改。臣子商量。改之耶以否。由是略引古典証拋之文曰。昔周之王季。既葬後有求而成變。文王尋情奉之也。先靈之崇不可謂母。又有幽明異道。心事相違者。如北齊富豪梁氏是也。臨終遺言。以平生所愛奴為殉。家人從之。奴蘇言。忽至官府。見其亡主。々曰。我謂。亡人得使奴婢。故遺言喚汝。今不相關。當白官放汝。々謂家人。為我修福云々。又春秋左氏傳。魏武子有嬖妾。無子。武子疾。命其子顛曰。必嫁。病困則更曰。必以為殉。魏顛扞之。從其治也。謂病未至困也。遂得老夫結草之報。尚書曰。女則有大疑。謀及卿士。謀及卜筮。白虎通曰。定天下之吉凶。成天下之亶々。莫善於蓍龜。劉梁弁和同論曰。夫事有違而得道。有順而失道。是以君子之於事也。無適無莫。必考之以義。由此言之。

³⁴ *Shoku Nihongi*, the *kinoeuma* 甲午 day of the intercalary third month of Enryaku 9.

³⁵ *Shoku Nihongi*, the *hinoene* 丙子 day of the seventh month of Hōki 10.

³⁶ *Shoku Nihongi*, the *kanotoi* 辛亥 day of the fifth month of Enryaku 7.

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卜筮所告。不可不信。君父之命。量宜取捨。然則可改改之。復何疑也。朝議從之。

(Numbers added by author)

Summary

Fujiwara no Yoshifusa 藤原良房 consulted Harusumi no Yoshitada 春澄善繩 and Sugawara no Koreyoshi 菅原是善.

- (1) The former emperor (Emperor Saga) left teachings for posterity: “Whenever *mononoke* 物の怪 (enigmatic spiritual entities) are reported, people often hold that they are the curses of ancestral spirits, which is entirely baseless.”
- (2) Currently, there are *mononoke*, and I had the responsible officials (Jingikan and Onmyōryō 陰陽寮 [Bureau of divination]) perform divination, which has clearly indicated a curse from an ancestral spirit.
- (3) Believing the divination results would mean going against the former emperor’s teachings for posterity, and not believing them would mean enduring (curse-induced) calamities. Caught between a rock and a hard place, it is unclear which path to follow. After teachings for posterity, if there is something that should be changed, is it okay to do so?

Harusumi no Yoshitada and Sugawara no Koreyoshi’s Proposal

(Citing various classics) Ancestral spirits’ curses exist. You have to believe what the divination tells you. The words of a sovereign should be interpreted and weighed, and changes should be made if necessary.

The imperial court followed the suggestions of Harusumi no Yoshitada and Sugawara no Koreyoshi (i.e., followed the divination results rather than Emperor Saga’s views).

Historical Source 14 includes Fujiwara no Yoshifusa’s query whether to follow the former emperor’s instructions or the divination results and then Harusumi no Yoshitada and Sugawara no Koreyoshi’s response.

Emperor Saga had criticized as baseless the practice of attributing every *mononoke* to a curse by ancestral spirits.³⁷ However, the Jingikan and Onmyōryō still were performing divinations whenever there is a *mononoke* and report it as a forewarning of a curse from

³⁷ 世間之事。每有物怪。寄崇先靈。是甚無謂也者。

³⁸ (2) above: 今隨有物怪。令下所司卜筮。先靈之崇明于卦兆。

an ancestral spirit.³⁸

In essence, Emperor Saga had expressed skepticism toward the situation of his time in which the Jingikan and Onmyōryō report curses from spirits of the dead based on divinations. His will following his death in Jōwa 9 (843) states “do not believe divinations,”³⁹ reflecting a strong distrust in divination as a deviation from a traditional worldview.

On the other hand, Emperor Saga’s will also states that if his wishes were not followed, his soul (spirit) would grieve in the afterlife and become a vengeful soul for a long time.⁴⁰ This can be interpreted as Emperor Saga explaining the mechanism of becoming a resentful spirit in his own logic.

While affirming the existence of resentful spirits, Emperor Saga rejected that curses are cast by non-resentful ones.

Additionally, in this will, Emperor Saga expressed a desire for a simple funeral, a wish shared by Emperor Junna 淳和, who rejected the traditional burial with offerings⁴¹ and preferred scattering of ashes.⁴² At that time, Emperor Junna said that when a person dies, their spirit returns to heaven, leaving empty tombs that attract other spirits, who eventually cast curses. According to this view, a curse is not cast by the spirit of the dead person themselves but by spirits that come from elsewhere.⁴³

Emperor Saga explained the mechanism by which the deceased becomes a resentful soul, while Emperor Junna believed curses were caused by spirits from elsewhere, but both emperors shared the view that spirits of the dead do not cast curses.

Revisiting Historical Source 14, Fujiwara no Yoshifusa wondered whether to follow Emperor Saga’s view (that it is baseless to believe that ancestral spirits cause curses) or the divination results (indicating that *mononoke* are forewarnings of curses from ancestral spirits). Faced with this dilemma, Yoshifusa consulted Harusumi no Yoshitada and Sugawara no Koreyoshi. Citing various texts, they concluded that ancestral spirits’ curses exist⁴⁴ and that divination results must be believed.⁴⁵ The court adopted their recommendation.

It is notable that due to the learned individuals Harusumi no Yoshitada and Sugawara no Koreyoshi, the belief that spirits of the dead can cause curses was finally officially recognized. If curses caused by spirits of the dead had been part of Japan’s traditional

³⁹ *Shoku Nihon kōki*, the *hinotobitsuji* day of the seventh month of Jōwa 9.

⁴⁰ 後世之論者若不從此。是戮一屍地下。死而重傷。魂而有靈。則冤悲冥途。長為怨鬼。忠臣孝子。善述君父之志。不宜違我情而已。

⁴¹ 歲竟分綵帛。号曰荷前。論之幽明。有煩無益。並須停狀。

⁴² 人歿精魂歸天。而空存冢墓。鬼物憑焉。終乃為祟。長貽後累。今宜碎骨為粉。散之山中。

⁴³ *Shoku Nihon kōki*, the *kanotomi* day of the fifth month of Jōwa 7.

⁴⁴ 先靈之崇不可謂母。

⁴⁵ 卜筮所告。不可不信。

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worldview, Japanese historical texts would have been referenced in their argument, and there likely wouldn't have been a debate in the first place.⁴⁶

The recognition of Prince Sawara's resentful spirit during Emperor Kanmu's reign became a turning point, leading to the expansion of the idea that spirits of the dead cast widespread curses (cause disasters). However, this was not a traditional notion. The debate around Emperor Saga's views led to the official acknowledgment that curses from spirits of the dead can cause disasters. Consequently, rituals for resentful spirits became recognized as effective measures for addressing disasters, gaining wide acceptance across the court and the people.

Next, I will examine the relationship between resentful spirits' curses/disasters and the rituals, events, and rites that addressed them, as well as consider the intellectual background behind the acceptance of the populace's *goryōe* as the Jōgan Goryōe.

4. *The Relationship Between the Goryōe and Addressing Epidemics*

The *goryōe* ritual assumes that epidemics are caused by spirits and attempts to address the former with Buddhist rituals, singing, dancing, and other entertainments for the latter.

The practice of reciting sutras in the populace's *goryōe* likely draws inspiration from the measures taken for Emperor Sudō, such as "cursory sutra recitation (*tendoku* 転読) and repenting,"⁴⁷ "temple building,"⁴⁸ "sutra recitation,"⁴⁹ "sutra copying,"⁵⁰ and "ordination."⁵¹ The fact that Eitatsu expounded the *Konkōmyōkyō* and the *Hannya shingyō* during the Jōgan Goryōe can be seen as following the precedent of performing Buddhist rituals for resentful spirits.

The various activities in the populace's *goryōe*⁵² appear to have been aimed at entertaining the spirits. Thus, the popular *goryōe*, perceiving epidemics to be caused by the curses of spirits, aimed to appease the spirits through entertainment, hoping to mitigate curses and the resulting epidemics.

The imperial court's response to resentful spirits, apart from Buddhist rituals and

⁴⁶ Yamashita offers the following interpretation: Emperor Saga's criticism extended to not only imperial tomb curses but also deities' curses (Yamashita, "Saigai, kaii to tennō.") However, Emperor Saga was specifically rejecting the curses of "ancestral spirits" (*senrei* 先靈). He objected to divination results claiming that spirits of the dead cause curses, saying they were baseless. It appears that he did not deny the traditional system of divine curses.

⁴⁷ *Ruiju kokushi*, the *kinotomi* 乙巳 day of the fifth month of Enryaku 16.

⁴⁸ *Nihon kōki*, the *kinoesaru* 甲申 day of the first month of Enryaku 24.

⁴⁹ *Nihon kōki*, the *binoeuma* day of the second month of Enryaku 24, the *kanotomi* day of the third month of Daidō 1.

⁵⁰ *Nihon kōki*, the *kanoesaru* 庚申 day of the tenth month of Enryaku 24; *Ruiju kokushi*, the *hinotou* day of the seventh month of Kōnin 1.

⁵¹ *Ruiju kokushi*, the *kinotoushi* day of the seventh month of Kōnin 1.

⁵² 歌且舞。令下童貫之子觀粧馳射。膂力之士袒裊相撲。騎射呈芸。走馬爭勝。但優嫚戲。通相誇競上。

offerings (*hōhei* 奉幣), included conferring posthumous ranks and titles as well as restoring titles. This was to eliminate resentment and mitigate curses by removing the causes of resentment and anger through the restoration of honor.⁵³

A common theme in both the imperial court and the people's response to resentful spirits is the belief that the resentment and anger of spirits of the dead lead to curses (disasters) and that addressing this resentment and anger can also calm epidemics. Comparing the court's rituals with the popular *goryōe*, the court's approach is more fundamental, addressing the root causes of such emotions. On the other hand, the popular *goryōe*, aiming to entertain or appease, is a more temporary fix. Being responsible for the appearance of resentful spirits in the first place, the court could implement fundamental solutions like restoring honor. However, as the collateral victims of curses caused by spirits, the people could only adopt temporary measures. Also, the nature of the various *goryōe* events is further evidence of its status as a ritual that arose from the populace.

The imperial court appears to have then also adopted the approach of temporarily alleviating anger and decided to conduct the Jōgan Goryōe based on this reasoning.

Lastly, what led to the idea that spirits are responsible for curses and disasters and that addressing their anger can address these? This notion appears to be structured similarly to deity rites. The below figure on the structure of the *goryō* belief and practices and that of deity beliefs and practice shows common structural elements of both.⁵⁴ Both deities and spirits are perceived as causing curses and disasters, and deity rites and the *goryōe* have the common purpose of resolving or appeasing the anger or resentment causing the curses, thereby eliminating the curses and mitigating disasters.

Furthermore, from the late eighth century, the understanding emerged that leaving imperial tombs in a dirtied state can easily lead to curses from spirits of the dead. This concept is similar to the belief that desecrating Shinto shrines can lead to curses from deities.

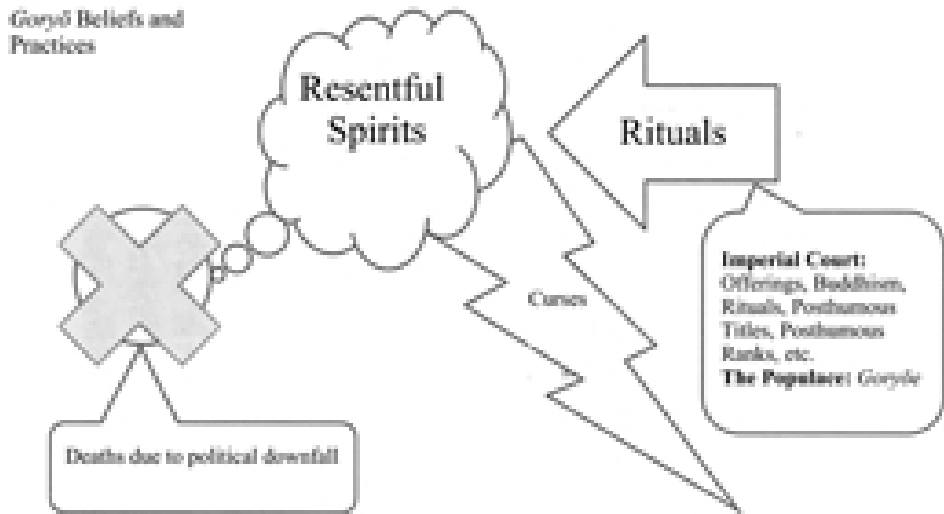
Thus, it can be said that *goryō* beliefs and practices were influenced by the structure of deity rites.⁵⁵

⁵³ Prince Iyo and Fujiwara no Yoshiko were restored to their original ranks in Kōnin 14 based on the Kōnin 10 (819) order of Emperor Saga (故三品中務卿伊予親王・故從三位夫人藤原朝臣吉子; *Nihon kiryaku*, the *tsuchinotoi* day of the third month of Kōnin 10, the *hinotoushi* 丁丑 day of the seventh month of Kōnin 14).

Tachibana no Hayanari, exiled during the Jōwa Incident, was posthumously conferred junior fifth rank lower grade (*shōgoinoge* 正五位下) in Kashō 嘉祥 3 (850) and allowed to be buried his hometown. In Ninju 仁寿 3 (853), he was further conferred junior fourth rank lower grade (*ju shi-i no ge* 從四位下 (*Nihon montoku tennō jitsuroku* 日本文德天皇實錄, the *mizunoetatsu* 壬辰 day of the fifth month of Kashō 3, the *kinoetora* day of the fifth month of Ninju 3).

⁵⁴ Kobayashi, *Ritsuryō kokka no saishi to saii*.

⁵⁵ Nishimoto suggests, "Since it was thought that resentful spirits cause disasters and epidemics because they are suffering, unable to escape karmic destiny, attempts were made to stop disasters and epidemics by bringing about their salvation: cursory recitation (*tendoku*) of the *Hannyakyo* and preaching the leaving behind of attachments



Addressing curse-induced disasters by eliminating or alleviating the grudges of resentful spirits.

Deity Beliefs and Practices



Addressing curse-induced disasters by eliminating the causes of curses (anger, demands) with rites for deities.

Figure. Beliefs and Practices for *Goryō* and Deities: Structures

Conclusion

This paper has examined the process and background by which the idea that spirits of the dead cast curses became established in the ancient imperial court, using the Jōgan Goryōe as a case study.

During the Jōgan years, the court adopted the *goryōe*, originally a popular event, and conducted the Shinsen'en Goryōe. Despite the court's policy of restricting popular beliefs, practices, and rituals since the eighth century, it accepted the *goryōe*. The background of this was fourfold:

1. The court was willing to accept popular beliefs, practices, and rituals if deemed effective.
2. The recognition of Emperor Sudō as a resentful spirit marked the beginning of rituals for resentful spirits being performed as a way to mitigate disasters. Initially, curses of resentful spirits during Emperor Kanmu's reign were directed toward specific targets or their associates. Later, instances where non-resentful spirits of the dead cast widespread curses became frequent. Although this was not a traditional way of seeing the world, the debate around the late Emperor Saga's views led to official acknowledgment that curses from spirits of the dead cause disasters, and then rituals to mitigate these curses further developed.
3. Both the court's rituals for resentful spirits and the popular *goryōe* shared the common belief that curses from resentful spirits cause disasters and that appeasing or resolving their resentment can mitigate the curses and thereby do the same for the associated disasters.
4. This (3) was an application of the ritual structure used in deity beliefs and practices, making it ideologically easier for the court to accept.

These above factors led the court to adopt the popular *goryōe* and decide to conduct the Shin'en Goryōe.

The idea of curses caused by resentful spirits, although introduced from the Chinese continent, only became established in ancient Japan with the resentful spirit of Prince Sawara during Emperor Kanmu's reign. Subsequently, following the discussion around Emperor Saga's views, rituals for resentful spirits evolved into a national ritual method for disaster management. Meanwhile, amongst the people, influenced by the concept of resentful spirits, the *goryōe* independently developed and expanded throughout Kyoto,

and attainment of buddhahood" (Nishimoto, "Shinsen'en goryōe to seitai goji"). This also aligns with the disaster countermeasure configuration of removing suffering to address suffering-induced curses/disasters.

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the Kinai region, and various other provinces. While the populace's *goryōe* was subject to various restrictions by the imperial court, the court recognized its effectiveness and decided to conduct the Jōgan Goryōe.

It should be noted that the reason the Shin'en Goryōe was not continued perhaps can be inferred from Historical Source 1.⁵⁶ Likely, the epidemic it mentions had somewhat subsided by the time the court decided to conduct the Shin'en Goryōe, turning the event into more of a celebratory ceremony. The Shin'en Goryōe, being an exceptional and large-scale event that allowed the people of Kyoto to freely enter an imperial pleasure garden, was probably not continued as it was judged difficult to conduct promptly as a ritual for disaster management.⁵⁷

This paper did not fully discuss the development of rituals for non-resentful spirits' curses, and this topic will be addressed in a separate paper.

(Translated by Dylan L. Toda)

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⁵⁶ 今茲春初咳逆成_レ疫。百姓多斃。朝廷為祈。至_レ是乃修_レ此会_一。以賽_レ宿禱_一也。

⁵⁷ According to the shrine history of Gionsha 祇園社, in Jōgan 11 (869), sixty-six spears were made and a portable shrine sent to Shinsen'en. The development of the *goryōe* is a topic for future research.

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Korin's Images in Katsushika Hokusai's Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji: Ukiyo-e and the Rinpa School

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Keywords: ukiyo-e, Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎, *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji* (Fugaku sanjūrokkei 富嶽三十六景), Rinpa 琳派 school, Ogata Kōrin 尾形光琳, Sakai Hōitsu 酒井抱一

Author's Statement

Scholars have often noted the influence of foreign cultures on the colors and composition of *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji* (Fugaku sanjūrokkei 富嶽三十六景), the masterpiece of the Edo period ukiyo-e artist Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎 (1760–1849). In this paper, I delve into the themes and motifs of the series, arguing that Hokusai's creation was informed by his familiarity with *yamato-e* やまと絵 gained through his involvement with the Rinpa 琳派 school.

Introduction: Ukiyo-e's Quest for Tradition and Innovation

Ukiyo-e arose as a medium for the townspeople of the newly emerging city of Edo. The term first appears in writing in the Tenna 天和 years (1681–84). To promote the new custom of buying ukiyo-e prints among the city's commoners, the main source of demand, publishers and artists produced works incorporating various ideas. Also, this new school of ukiyo-e attempted to add a sense of tradition to its art by assimilating the subjects and techniques of, for example, the Tosa 土佐 and Sumiyoshi 住吉 *yamato-e* やまと絵 schools and the Kanō 狩野 school of *kanga* 漢画 (Chinese-style painting).

The *yamato-e* tradition and the transmission of its images were essential to the development of ukiyo-e. In the seventeenth century, Retired Emperor Go-Mizunoo 後水尾 (1596–1680) and others vigorously promoted the study of the classics, and a

¹ This article is a translation of “Katsushika Hokusai ga ‘Fugaku sanjū rokkei’ ni miru Kōrin imēji: Ukiyoe to Rinpa” 葛飾北斎画「富嶽三十六景」にみる「光琳」イメージ: 浮世絵と琳派,” *Kokugakuin zasshi* 國學院雜誌 123:11 (2022), pp. 1–23. Translated by Dylan L. Toda.

classical culture revival spread from the imperial court to the shogun family, daimyo, and, eventually, the common people as well. Paintings based on the classics were also favored, and the Tosa and Sumiyoshi schools of *yamato-e*, as well as the Kanō school of *kanga*, joined in producing them.

Against this backdrop, Hishikawa Moronobu 菱川師宣 (?–1694), the father of ukiyo-e, released a large number of ukiyo-e print books (*hanpon* 版本), which also served to provide model examples of *yamato-e* paintings for commoners, through Urokogataya Sanzaemon 鱗形屋三左衛門, a long-established publisher. One such book, *Yamato shinō ezukushi* 大和侍農絵づくし (pub. Enpō 延宝 8 [1680]; **Fig. 1**), is woodblock-printed picture-centered book (*ehon* 絵本) that covers the customs of people engaged in various occupations of the day. It is characterized by lively depictions of figures that are typical of ukiyo-e. The book is signed “*Yamato-e* painter Hishikawa Kishibei-no-jō 菱川吉兵衛尉.” By calling himself a *yamato-e* painter, Moronobu placed himself in this tradition and added value to his work.² Furthermore, according to the preface to *Yamato musha-e* 大和武者絵 (pub. Tenna 3 [1683]), Moronobu became a first-rate ukiyo-e artist by adding his



Fig. 1 Hishikawa, *Yamato shinō ezukushi*, frame 4.

² Abiko Rie 阿美古理恵 points out the influence of the Iwasa, Kanō, and Tosa schools on the design of Moronobu's picture books and concludes that what he referred to as *yamato-e* was that which stood in opposition to *koden* 古伝 (lit., “old tradition”; existing pictorial expressions), and that he added his own contemporary style to *yamato-e*, making it “the newest paintings in Yamato,” that is, Japan. See Abiko, *Hishikawa Moronobu*.

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own innovations to the styles of the Tosa, Kanō, and Hasegawa families when depicting customs in *yamato-e*.

According to a mid-Edo period (1603–1868) anecdote by the playwright Ōta Nanpo 大田南畝 (1749–1823), known as Chikura Sanjin 舩羅山人, Nanpō's close friend Suzuki Harunobu 鈴木春信 (1725?–70) also referred to himself as a “*yamato-e* painter.” Harunobu, who was involved in the creation of *nishiki-e* 錦絵 (colorful *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints) and helped to launch the golden age of *ukiyo-e*, interacted with dilettantes in Edo and took the world by storm with both his *mitate* 見立 technique of offering a contemporary take on classical subjects and his *yamato-e* tsukurie 作り絵-style renderings of physical appearances.

In his thirties, the painter Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎 (1760–1849), who is still well known in Japan and abroad today, also became committed to the *yamato-e* Rinpa school. Hokusai, who studied various schools of *kanga* and *yōfūga* 洋風画 (Western-style painting) throughout his ninety-year life, took the name Sōri 宗理, which had been used by the head of the Rinpa school, in Kansei 寛政 6 (1794). Works from his Sōri period are still highly regarded today, and his painting style was his own, not necessarily a simple imitation of the likes of Sōtatsu 宗達 and Kōrin 光琳. While in Kansei 10 (1798), Hokusai gave the name Sōri to his pupil and changed his own to Hokusai Tokimasa 北斎辰政, up through his later years, Hokusai's works still show the Rinpa school style in their subject matters and techniques.

While learning from the classics, he also developed a new approach different from existing painting schools. This was a strategy typical of emerging *ukiyo-e* artists. Particularly distinctive are his wide-ranging subject matters, mixing the refined and the popular, and his eclectic techniques that used a cross-section of styles from painting schools modeled on Japanese, Chinese, Western, and other styles. He depicted not only classical subjects but also hedonistic scenes of, for example, kabuki and brothels, regarded as the two major “places of evil” (*nidai akusho* 二大悪所), and gained a reputation for capturing the urban, pleasure-seeking worldview of the time. Taking spots like Nakanochō 仲之町 (the Yoshiwara 吉原 red-light district) as a theme was a novel endeavor. This can be seen in the poetry line “Nakanochō, not depicted in the Kanō family or Tosa” (Kanoke ni mo Tosa ni mo kakanu Nakanochō 狩野家にも土佐にも画ぬ仲の町) found in the mid-to-late Edo period *senryū* 川柳 poem collection *Haifū yanagi daru* 俳風柳多留 (51 volumes).³ In the realm of traditional *meishō-e* 名所絵 (paintings of famous places of interest), artists of the time gained the favor of commoners by following the standard style of drawing from *waka* poems and famous anecdotes to depict emotion-

³ See Screech/Sukurichi, “Fūzokuga,” p. 153.

filled scenes while incorporating the latest information useful for travel and daily life.

I hold that Hokusai's masterpiece *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji* (Fugaku sanjūrokkei 富嶽三十六景) is also an example of the *yamato-e* tradition being combined with the innovation of *ukiyo-e*. Its popularity—an unprecedented blockbuster hit—was also boosted by social conditions such as the popularity of travel and Mt. Fuji religious beliefs and practices. For Hokusai, it must have been a milestone in his artistic career as he entered his seventies.

As *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji* uses Prussian blue and perspective reminiscent of copperplate engraving, scholarship has mainly discussed the influence of painting styles of the west. However, it also bears the Rinpa school's influence, as I have discussed in previous articles.⁴ This paper focuses on the background to the production of the series's three most famous prints—"Fine Wind, Clear Morning" (Gaifū kaisei 凱風快晴; **Fig. 2**), "Thunderstorm Beneath the Summit" (Sanka hakuu 山下白雨), and "The Great Wave off Kanagawa" (Kanagawa oki nami-ura 神奈川沖浪裏)—and examines Hokusai's use of his beloved Rinpa school, especially the images by Kōrin that were popular the latter half of the Edo period. Having done so, I will then consider, using *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji*, both the traditional painting qualities that Hokusai sought out and the innovative nature of *ukiyo-e*.

1. Katsushika Hokusai's Artistic Career and the Edo Rinpa School

Katsushika Hokusai (**Fig. 5**) was born in Hōreki 宝暦 10 (1760) in Warigesui 割下水, located in the Honjo 本所 area of Edo (now Kamezawa 亀沢, Sumida-ku 墨田区, Tokyo). His family name was Nakajima 中島, his childhood name was Tokitarō 時太郎, his common name was Tetsuzō 鉄蔵, and he was also called Miuraya Hachiemon 三浦屋八右衛門. As described in his biography *Katsushika Hokusai den* 葛飾北斎伝 by Iijima Kyoshin 飯島虚心 (1893), Hokusai is said to have moved ninety-three times, changed his name more than thirty times, and used more than 120 artist names. During the Bunsei 文政 period (1818–30), the last years of his life, he was seen as someone always seeking change. He used the pen name Fusenkyo 不染居, meaning "not habituated to any abode."

His highly varied artistic style was another reflection of Hokusai's refusal to become stagnant. Research on him often discusses his taste for the foreign. In addition to the techniques of the Kanō school, Tsutsumi 堤 school, and other *kanga* schools, he was well-versed in the Western-style artistic expressions popular in the latter half of the eighteenth century. He was skilled in realistic works that used, for example, perspective and shadow techniques. On the other hand, there is little research on Hokusai's study of *yamato-e*,

⁴ See Fujisawa, "Katsushika Hokusai" and Fujisawa, "Ukiyo-e ni okeru yamato-e to Rinpa juyō."

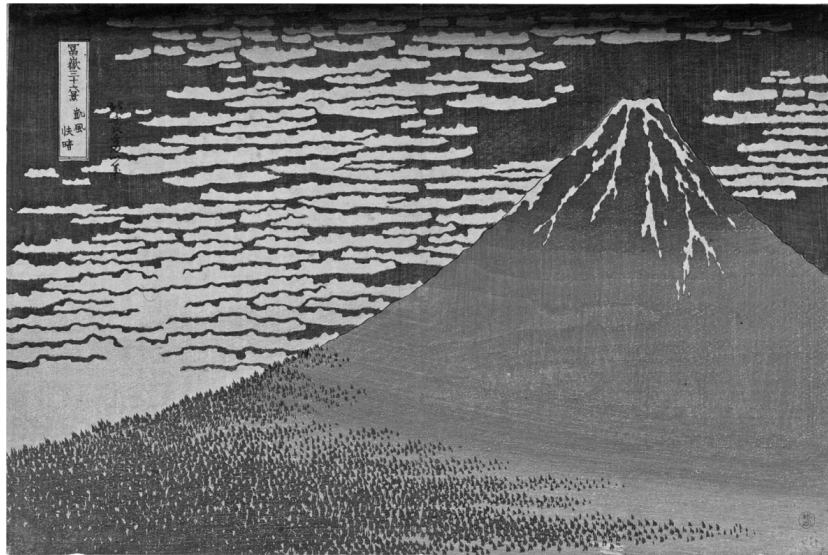


Fig. 2 Hokusai's "Fine Wind, Clear Morning" (Katsushika, "Fugaku sanjūrokkei: Gaifū kaisei").



Fig. 3 Hokusai's "Thunderstorm Beneath the Summit" (Katsushika, "Fugaku sanjūrokkei: Sanka hakuu"). Cropped by the author.

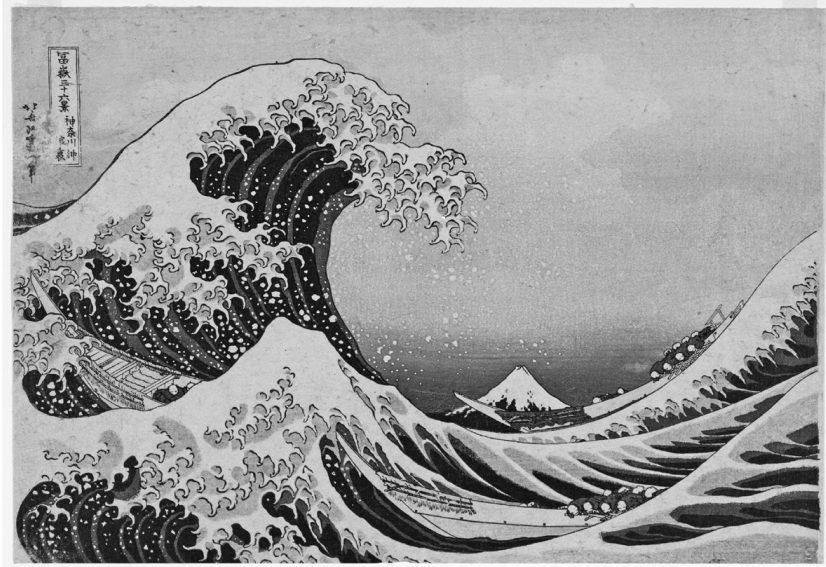


Fig. 4 Hokusai's "The Great Wave off Kanagawa" (Katsushika, "Fugaku sanjūrokkei: Kanagawa oki nami-ura"). Cropped by the author.



Fig. 5 Katsushika Hokusai (Iijima, *Katsushika Hokusai den*).

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and that which does exist tends to concentrate on the period from his mid-thirties, when he took the name Sōri. A closer look at the artist's career reveals that works from his fifties and later also reflect the motifs and stylized quality of the Rinpa school. Below, I will discuss in some detail the influence of *yamato-e* paintings, especially the Edo Rinpa school, on Hokusai's works during the second half of his life.

The Rinpa school, or Rinpa style of painting, began with Tawaraya Sōtatsu 俵屋宗達 (dates unknown) and Hon'ami Kōetsu 本阿弥光悦 (1558–1637), *yamato-e* style painters active in Kyoto at the beginning of the early modern period. Their aesthetic sense, characterized by simplified motifs and colorful renderings against the backdrop of Kyoto's elegant culture, was passed on indirectly, with painters, such as Ogata Kōrin 尾形光琳 (1658–1716), modeling their styles on Rinpa painters they admired. Kōrin, related to Kōetsu and born to one of Kyoto's leading kimono merchants, Kariganeya 雁金屋, had a particularly outstanding stylized aesthetic.

After going to Edo in Hōei 宝永 1 (1704) on the advice of Nakamura Kuranosuke 中村内蔵助, a Ginza official, Kōrin would often reside in Edo. Kyoto's cutting-edge art culture fascinated Edo's cultured people; his younger brother Kenzan 乾山, a potter, also moved his base of operations to Edo in his later years. Even after Kōrin's death in Shōtoku 正徳 6 (1716), his highly stylized approach (referred to as Kōrin *moyō* 光琳模様) spread, was incorporated into clothing and crafts, and came to be honored by painters in the early nineteenth century. The first of these was Sakai Hōitsu 酒井抱一 (1761–1829), who studied Kōrin while in Edo. Kōrin was closely connected to Hōitsu's birth family. Tadataka 忠挙 (1648–1720), the fifth generation of the Sakai family, the Maebashi 前橋 domain lords, was one of Kōrin's prominent patrons.

In recent years, the successors of the Rinpa school in Edo have been classified as the “Edo Rinpa” to distinguish them from those in Kyoto. Hōitsu is regarded as the founder of the Edo Rinpa school, and while he admired Kōrin, his style was more realistic and refined. Tamamushi Satoko 玉蟲敏子 notes that the information that did exist regarding Sōtatsu, Kōrin, and Kenzan in the mid-eighteenth century was fragmentary and connected to the Edo poet coterie (Edoza 江戸座), a group that was in turn linked to upper-class warrior society and brothels.⁵ Hōitsu was born in Edo as a son of the Sakai family, daimyo known for their sophistication. He skillfully combined the tastes of the feudal lords with the trends of the common people, as evidenced by the fact that he published comic tanka under the name Shiryake no Sarundo 尻焼猿人 (“Monkey-person with a burning butt”) and actively interacted with townspeople.

As a young man, Hōitsu is said to have been trained by Toyoharu 豊春 (1735–1814),

⁵ See Tamamushi, *Ikitsuzukeru Kōrin*, p. 25.

the founder of the Utagawa 歌川 school of ukiyo-e artists, and honed his skills by working on *bijinga* 美人画, or beautiful women paintings. In the Kansei period (1789–1801), however, Hōitsu, who, as mentioned above, came from a warrior-class family, withdrew from the “vulgar” culture of the common people, partly due to the influence of reforms by *rōjū* 老中 (shogunate elder) Matsudaira Sadanobu 松平定信, and turned his attention to the style of Kōrin, of which the Sakai family had been a patron. In Bunka 文化 10 (1813), Hōitsu created “Ogata-ryū ryaku inpu” 緒方流略印譜, a single sheet (*ichimai zuri* 一枚摺) bringing together the signatures, seals, and biographies of Sōtatsu, Kōrin, and others, and then in Bunka 12 (1815), the one-hundredth anniversary of Kōrin’s death, published a booklet version (using the Chinese characters 尾形 for Ogata), in which he refers to the line from Sōtatsu and Kōetsu to Kōrin, Kenzan, et al. as the “Ogata lineage.” He also held an exhibition to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of Kōrin’s death and was involved in its catalogue (*Kōrin hyakuzu* 光琳百図; Fig. 6.1), promoting research on Kōrin and positioning himself as the successor of this lineage.

On the other hand, Hokusai, who was of the same generation as Hōitsu (one year older), became a disciple of the ukiyo-e artist Katsukawa Shunshō 勝川春章 (1743?–92) around An’ei 安永 7 (1778), and took the name Shunrō 春朗. He created prints of actors (*yakusha-e* 役者絵) and the like but left this school after Shunshō’s death. In his mid-thirties, Hokusai used the name “Sōri” from Kansei 6 (1794) to the autumn of Kansei 10 (1798). This name came from Tawaraya Sōri 俵屋宗理 (dates unknown), a mid-Edo period *mach-eshi* 町絵師 (painters who did not work for the shogunate) who created

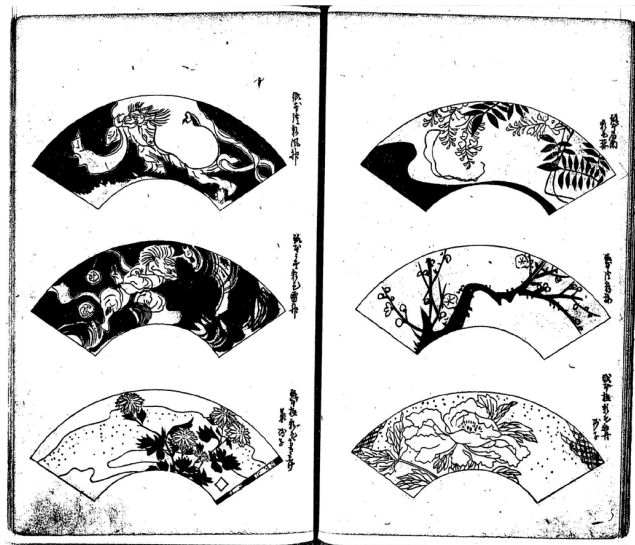


Fig. 6.1 Sakai, *Kōrin hyakuzu*, frame 24.

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Kōrin-style works. This basically coincides with the period when Hōitsu turned his attention to the style of Kōrin.

The *Ogata-ryū ryaku inpu* booklet compiled by Hōitsu describes Tawaraya Sōri as follows: “Took the name Tawaraya. At first a student of Sumiyoshi Hiromori 住吉広守, later painting in the style of Kōrin. A person of the Meiwa 明和 [1764–1772] and An'ei years [1772–1781].” This suggests a temporal gap existed between when Tawaraya Sōri was active and when Hokusai took the name Sōri. The nature of their relationship is still unclear. Sōri had close ties to *haikai* 俳諧 poetry, so it has been suggested that the *haikai* network connected them.⁶ In the section on Shunrō (Hokusai) in *Ukiyo-e ruikō* 浮世絵類考 (Ebian 曳尾庵 version, created between Bunsei 文政 2 [1819] and Bunsei 4 [1821], Shikitei Sanba 式亭三馬 writes, “. . . Changed his name from Katsukawa to Kusamura Shunrō 叢春朗, and thereafter followed in Tawaraya Sōri's footsteps to become the second generation Sōri. Later, for certain reasons, he returned the name to the family head and changed his to Hokusai Tokimasa . . .”

In this period, Hokusai, unlike other ukiyo-e artists, turned away from *nishiki-e* production and worked on comic tanka and *haikai*-related *surimono* 摺物 (privately-commissioned woodblock prints) and publications. He also mass-produced beautiful women paintings, such as “Sōri bijin” 宗理美人, which featured slender limbs, developing a different style of painting. In the private publications Hokusai made at the time, such as picture calendars (*e-goyomi* 絵暦) and comic tanka picture-centered books, he copied Rinpa school works while using two signature-seals: “Hokkyō 法橋 Sōtatsu's Image, Copied by Sawara Sōri” and “Hokkyō Kōrin's Image, Copied by Hokusai Sōri.” Some of his students, such as Rinsai Sōji 琳齋宗二 and Jutei Sōbyaku 寿亭宗百, created works in the style of the Rinpa school.⁷ In this way, from the second half of the eighteenth to the first half of the nineteenth century, when Hokusai was active, Rinpa school and ukiyo-e artists interacted with and strongly influenced each other in the Edo art world.⁸

2. Hokusai and Carrying on Korin's Images

It appears that there were at least two periods in Hokusai's life when he actively drew closer to the Rinpa school. The first was his three-year Sōri period beginning in Kansei 6 (1794), and the second was late in the Bunka years (1804–1818), when Hōitsu and others began to honor Kōrin. The exhibition of Kōrin's works at a temple in Negishi 根岸

⁶ See Nagata, “Hokusai no gagyō to kenkyū kadai.”

⁷ See Itō, *Hokusai to Sōri-ha*.

⁸ There is also a case of an Edo Rinpa and ukiyo-e painter being related: the daughter of Suzuki Kiitsu 鈴木其一 (1796-1858), a disciple of Hōitsu, and Kawanabe Kyōsai 河鍋暁斎 (1831-89), a member of the Utawaga school, were married.

in Bunka 12 (1815), the hundredth anniversary of his death, led to a renewed awareness of Kōrin in Edo. Hokusai probably also came into contact with and was strongly influenced by Kōrin's aesthetic sense during this time. The first volume of the exhibition catalogue *Kōrin hyakuzu* was published around Bunka 12 (1815), and the second in Bunsei 9 (1826). This book, which contains many of Kōrin's major works, became a textbook for studying the Rinpa school and has been used in various fields up to today.

On the other hand, the year before this exhibition, Hokusai published *Hokusai manga* 北斎漫画, the ukiyo-e print book that became the biggest hit of his life. Earlier, around Bunka 7 (1810), he began working on publishing the likes of modelbooks (*edehon* 絵手本) and woodblock printed novels (*yomihon* 読本) under the name Taito 載斗. *Zōho ukiyo-e ruikō* 増補浮世絵類考 (ed. by Saitō Gesshin 斎藤月岑, intro. written in Tenpō 天保 15 [1844]) highlights Hokusai's great influence on the publishing world: "His art style is not the ordinary, for example *nishiki-e* and *kusazōshi* 草双紙. He created and published many embroidered portraits and woodblock-printed novel illustrations. This person greatly opened up the genre of illustrated woodblock printed novels."

The first volume of *Hokusai manga* was compiled and published by Eirakuya Tōshirō 永楽屋東四郎, a publisher in Owari 尾張, based on preliminary sketches Hokusai made during a stay at the residence of his student and Owari domain retainer Maki Bokusen 牧墨僊宅. The series, which contains fifteen volumes with an enormous number of images, said to total about 39,000, continued to be published even after Hokusai's death. Even outside of Japan, it has earned high acclaim, for example being used as a design collection. The images range from familiar objects such as people, plants, animals, landscapes, and houses to supernatural, otherworldly beings. They are truly comprehensive. We could call it a data collection of Hokusai the painter. It also covers a wide range of subjects from various schools, including those of *yamato-e* and *kanga*.

Among the many motifs preferred by the Rinpa school, it is interesting that Hokusai favored that of the wind and thunder gods and included it in this book. The third volume of *Hokusai manga*, published around Bunka 12 (1815), includes two large spreads of the wind god and thunder god (**Fig. 7**). These two gods, represented heroically as attendants of the thousand-armed Kannon 観音, were a subject used by Kōrin and painters of the Edo Rinpa school ever since Tawaraya Sōtatsu. They have a reputation as a typical subject of the Rinpa school. Notably, in that year, the one-hundredth anniversary of Kōrin's death, Hokusai greatly focused on iconography symbolic of the Rinpa school. Miniatures of fans depicting these two gods can also be found in the second part of the first volume of *Kōrin hyakuzu*, published in the same year (**Fig. 6.2**). In the final illustration of the



Fig. 6.2 Miniatures of fans depicting the wind god and thunder god (Sakai, *Kōrin byakuzu*, frame 24). Cropped by the author.

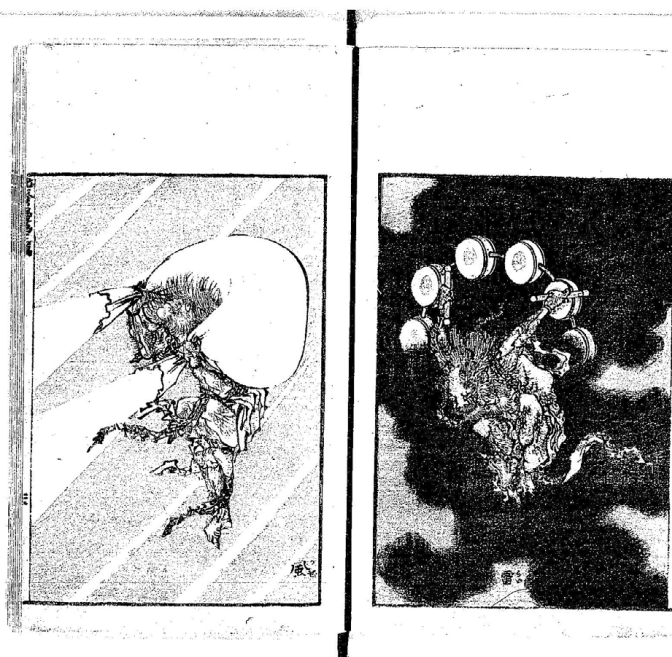


Fig. 7 Katsushika's "Wind God and Thunder God" (Katsushika, *Hokusai manga*, frame 27).

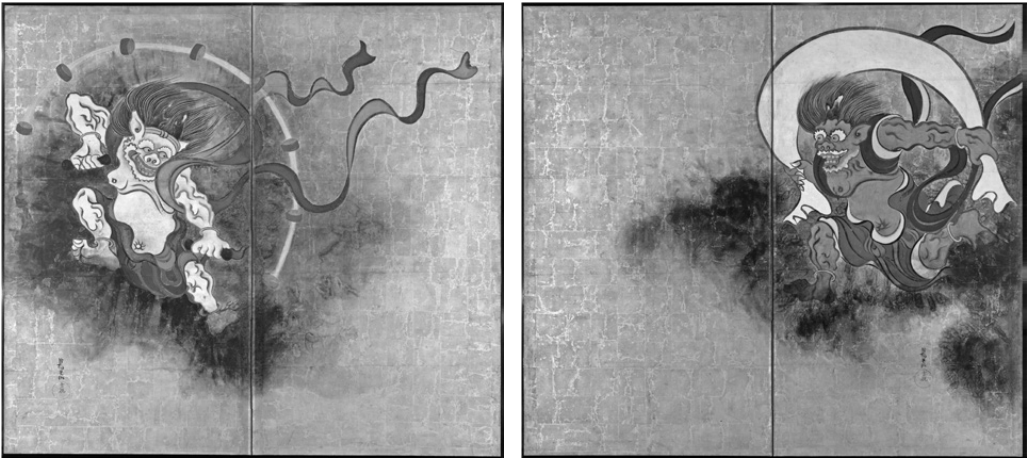


Fig. 8 Copy of Tawaraya Sōtatsu's wind and thunder gods folding screen (Ogata, "Fūjin rajjin zu byōbu"). Cropped by the author.



Fig. 9 Miniature of Fig. 8 (Sakai, *Kōrin hyakuzu*, frames 81–82).

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second part of the second volume of the same book, published eleven years later in Bunka 12 (1815), a miniature (**Fig. 9**) of a copy (**Fig. 8**) of Tawaraya Sōtatsu's wind and thunder gods folding screen that is held by Kenninji 建仁寺, appears. (Both the copy and original are titled "Fūjin rajin zu byōbu" 風神雷神図屏風 in Japanese). Hōitsu, who was involved in the compilation of *Kōrin hyakuzu*, must have also thought that this famous work was appropriate for its final image, a tribute to Kōrin's great achievements.

Incidentally, in 1915, another one hundred years later, the department store Mitsukoshi Gofukuten 三越呉服店 held an exhibition of Kōrin's works to mark the two hundredth anniversary of his death. Hōitsu's various activities honoring Kōrin left an indelible mark on representation culture in the late Edo period and connected this legacy to the reception of Kōrin in the modern era.

3. Korin's Images in Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji

In the early Tenpō years (1830–1844), when Hokusai had just entered his seventies, he began publishing *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji*, which would become his major work. Due to popular demand, he added ten more images, resulting in a grand series of forty-six. Hokusai offers richly varied depictions of Mt. Fuji, a sacred mountain that sits in the landscapes of provinces from Hitachi 常陸 (present-day Ibaraki) in the east to Owari (present-day Aichi) in the west.

Behind the series's success were various techniques to engage Edo's townspeople, its primary target. By including the names of places in subtitles, it functioned as a set of traditional "paintings of famous places of interest" (*meisho-e*) and also provided travel information sought by people living in urban areas. He chose a variety of compositions, trying to keep viewers interested. Therefore, there are almost none for which the place is unclear or that give a similar impression. The two exceptions are "Fine Wind, Clear Morning" (Fig. 2) and "Thunderstorm Beneath the Summit" (**Fig. 3**). In both cases, no place names in the subtitle or objects in the paintings make the location clear. There is no way to identify any specific area. Above all, their bold arrangement, with a large Mt. Fuji comprising two-thirds of the image (known as "Red Fuji" and "Black Fuji," respectively), gives a strong impression of the mountain's rocky surface and is distinctly different from that of other works in the series. For the below reasons, I presume these images, which have much in common, were created as a pair.

The subject of "Fine Wind, Clear Morning" is the gentle wind blowing from the south, and the contrast between the reddish mountain surface and the blue sky makes this clear-sky morning scene even more appealing. In contrast, "Thunderstorm Beneath the Summit" depicts Mt. Fuji receiving a heavy evening shower. The black foot of the mountain is lit by a stylized lightning flash, bringing sharp thunder to the viewer's mind. The combination of natural phenomena such as wind and lightning with the deified Mt.

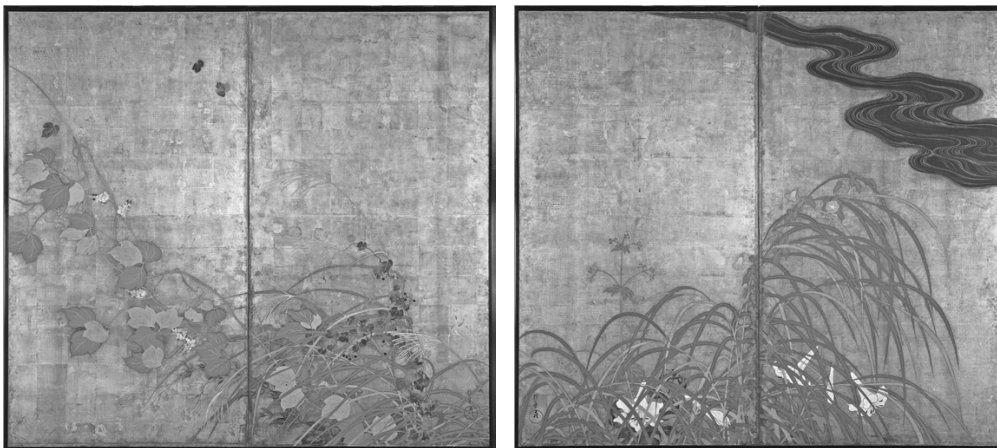


Fig. 10 Sakai, “Natsu aki kusa zubyōbu.” Cropped by the author.

Fuji aligns with the idea of the wind and thunder gods image.

Of note here is Hōitsu’s famous folding screen masterpiece, “Flowering Plants of Summer and Autumn” (Natsu aki kusa zubyōbu 夏秋草図屏風; Fig. 10). On the right screen are summer plants after rain, and on the left screen are autumn plants swaying in the wind. According to a piece of paper attached to its preliminary painting (*shita-e* 下絵), it was commissioned around Bunsei 4 (1821) by Hitotsubashi Harusada 一橋治濟, the father of the eleventh shogun Tokugawa Ienari 徳川家斉 and head of the Hitotsubashi family. While this piece was divided into two folding screens in 1974 for conservation reasons, originally it was found on the back side of Kōrin’s aforementioned “Wind God and Thunder God” (Fig. 9), with the autumn plants swaying in the wind behind the wind god, and the summer plants wet with rainwater behind the thunder god. These gods had been placed amidst a natural setting typical of Hōitsu. Replacing the gorgeous gold background favored by Sōtatsu and Kōrin with an austere silver ground and switching gods with familiar plants is exactly the *mitate* style found in the ukiyo-e and *haikai* that Hōitsu was familiar with.

Hokusai’s “Fine Wind, Clear Morning” and “Thunderstorm Beneath the Summit” are not as clear-cut a *mitate* as this Hōitsu masterpiece. I think that Hokusai adopted an Edo *haikai*-style approach that would be understood by those in the know. *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji* has several other playful features. For example, in “Reflection in Lake at Misaka in Kai Province” (Kōshū Misaka suimen 甲州三坂水面), which depicts the actual Mt. Fuji in the summer with a winter Mt. Fuji reflected upside-down on Lake Kawaguchi’s surface. It is like trick art. These touches attracted buyers of the series, preventing them from getting bored. Although there is a gap of about ten years between this work and the

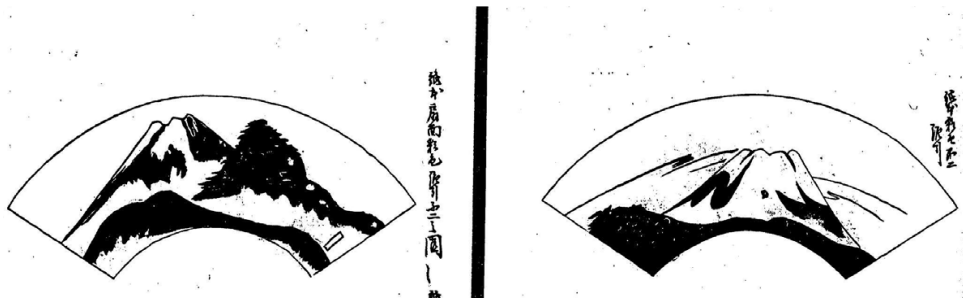


Fig. 11 Sakai, *Kōrin byakuzu*, frame 22. Cropped by the author.

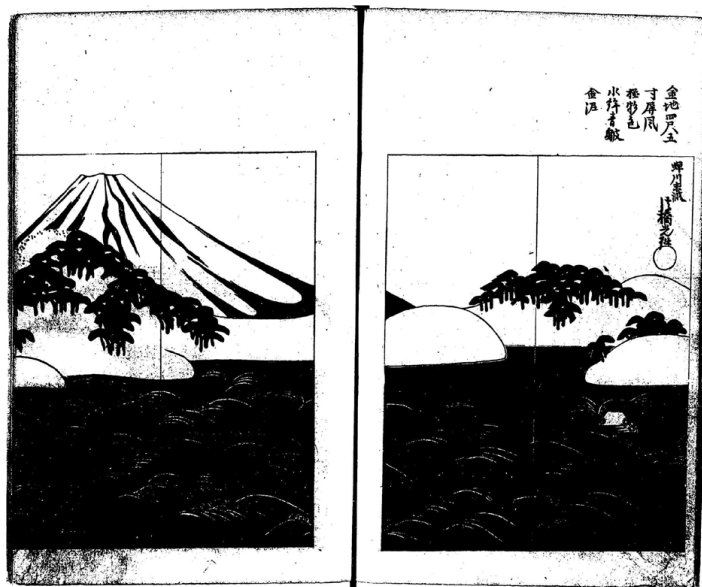


Fig. 12 Sakai, *Kōrin byakuzu*, frame 74.

completion of “Flowering Plants of Summer and Autumn,” interestingly Hōitsu, who was Kōrin’s greatest champion, and Hokusai, who was a great admirer of the Rinpa school, appear to have been working on their pieces at about the same time in Edo with similar ideas.

Incidentally, Mt. Fuji images are included in *Kōrin hyakuzu*. The second part of the first volume includes a pair of fans with large images of the mountain (**Fig. 11**). The similarly bold Mt. Fuji in an image in the second part of the second volume (**Fig. 12**) is also eye-catching, but this was originally a pair of six-panel screens, and, to fit the ukiyo-e print book format, only four panels from the right are shown, resulting in Mt. Fuji occupying a greater proportion of space than in the original. In addition, the existence of a pair of folding screens with an image similar to this one on the right screen and “Matsushima” (Matsushima zu byōbu 松島図屏風; **Fig. 15**; described below) on the left screen has been reported in recent years.⁹ Perhaps Kōrin-derived images were the source of the bold compositional ideas seen in *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*’s “Fine Wind, Clear Morning” and “Thunderstorm Beneath the Summit,” as well as the source of the stylized waves, discussed in the next section, found in “The Great Wave off Kanagawa.”

4. The Reception of the Japanese-Chinese-Western Mix Found in Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji

At the end of the *gōkanbon* 合巻本 *Shōhon jitate* 正本製 (pub. Tenpō 2 [1831]), there is an advertisement by Nishimura Eijudō 西村永寿堂, the publisher of *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*:

Thirty-six views of Mt. Fuji, by Iitsu 為一, formerly Hokusai. Single *aizuri* 藍摺 sheets. Each sheet features one view. To be released gradually. These pictures show that Fuji’s shape varies depending on where it is seen. For example, its shape as seen from the beach Shichirigahama 七里ヶ浜 and the view from the island Tsukudajima 佃島 show that all are not the same. This is useful for those studying landscapes. If he continues to carve such [prints], there will be even more than one hundred. Not limited to thirty-six.

Aizuri indicates that the images used Prussian Blue, the latest synthetic dye, at the time referred to as *Berurin burū* ベルリンブルー or, more commonly, *bero-ai* ベロ藍. The compositions also extensively use Western-style perspective, so they have usually been regarded as pronounced examples of Hokusai’s taste for the exotic. However, as I have

⁹ Kobayashi, *Kōrin, Fuji o egaku!*

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discussed, this series makes great use of *yamato-e*-like style and techniques.

For example, consider “The Great Wave off Kanagawa” (**Fig. 4**), one of the three major prints in the series. This piece has a calculated, multilayered structure, with medium-sized waves in the very near distance, behind them large waves and small express delivery boats called *oshiokuribune* 押送り舟 floating among the waves, and a small Mt. Fuji in the far distance. A similar composition can be seen in “Express Delivery Boats Rowing through Waves” (Oshi okuri hatōtsūsen no zu おしをくりはとうつうせん のづ) (**Fig. 13.1**), one of a series of works from the early Bunka years (1804–1818) during Hokusai's prime. The distinctive line drawings, which imitate Western copperplate print techniques, also feature alphabet-like characters in the upper right (**Fig. 13.2**), but if you change the angle, you can see that they are kana: “Oshi okuri hatōtsūsen no zu Hokusai Ekaku” (おしをくりはとうつうせん のづ ほくさいえかく). Hokusai's elegant attention to detail, despite his dynamic style, shows his skillful blending of Japanese and Western cultures.

On the other hand, the dynamic waves completely covering the picture follow the rich renderings of waves found, for example, in the bold compositions “Rough Waves” (Hatōzu byōbu 波濤図屏風; **Fig. 14**) and “Matsushima” (**Fig. 15**), which were published in the second volume of the follow-up installment (*zokuhen* 続編) of *Kōrin hyakuzu*, as well as in “The Immortal Qin Gao (Kinkō)” (*Kinkō sennin zu* 琴高仙人図). A fan painting that combines a boat and person in the waves (**Fig. 17**) overlaps with the concept of “The Great Wave off Kanagawa” (Fig. 4), which, as mentioned, also depicts people in the waves rowing *oshiokuribune*.

Hokusai's *Imayō sekkin hiinagata* 今様櫛さん雛形, published in Bunsei 文政 6 (1823), the year after the publication of the second part of *Kōrin hyakuzu*, contains both designs with connections to Kōrin's images as well as several works that foreshadow the appearance of *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji* during the early Tenpō years (1830–1844)¹⁰. This book is a collection of practical designs for everyday items such as combs and tobacco pipes. It is an outstanding example of Hokusai's excellent sense of design. The cleanly stylized renderings in the comb design “Large Waves, Small Waves” (Tōnami, sazanami とうなみ・さざなみ; **Fig. 18**) is reminiscent of Kōrin-style waves. The idea of “Summer Mt. Fuji, The Back of Mt. Fuji, Winter Mt. Fuji, Daybreak Mt. Fuji” (Natsu no Fuji, Ura Fuji, Fuyu no Fuji, Yoake no Fuji なつのふじ・うらふじ・ふゆのふじ・よあけのふじ; **Fig. 19**), which depicts the mountain at different times and from different places during the seasons, was a precursor to the composition of the *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji* series.

¹⁰ See Fujisawa, “Hokusai o aruku.”

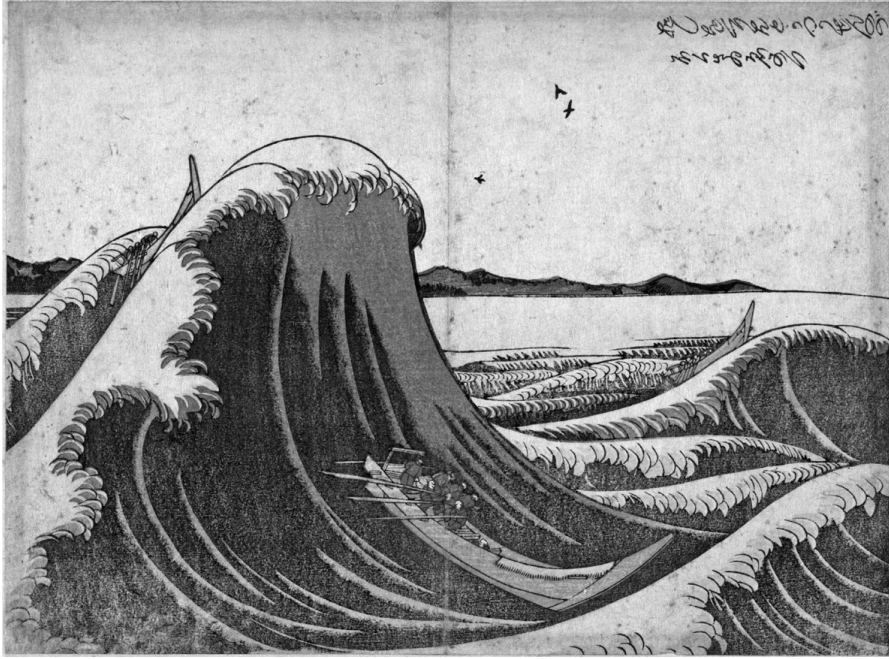


Fig. 13.1 Katsushika, "Oshi okuri hatôtsūsen no zu." Cropped by the author.

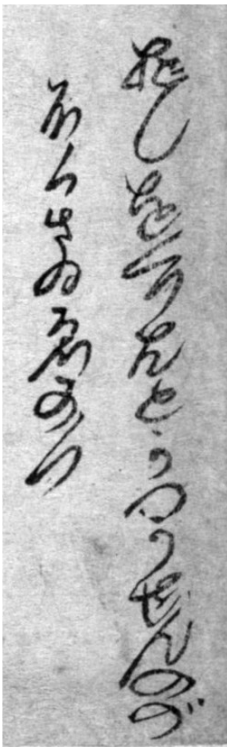


Fig. 13.2 Katsushika, "Oshi okuri hatôtsūsen no zu." Cropped by the author.

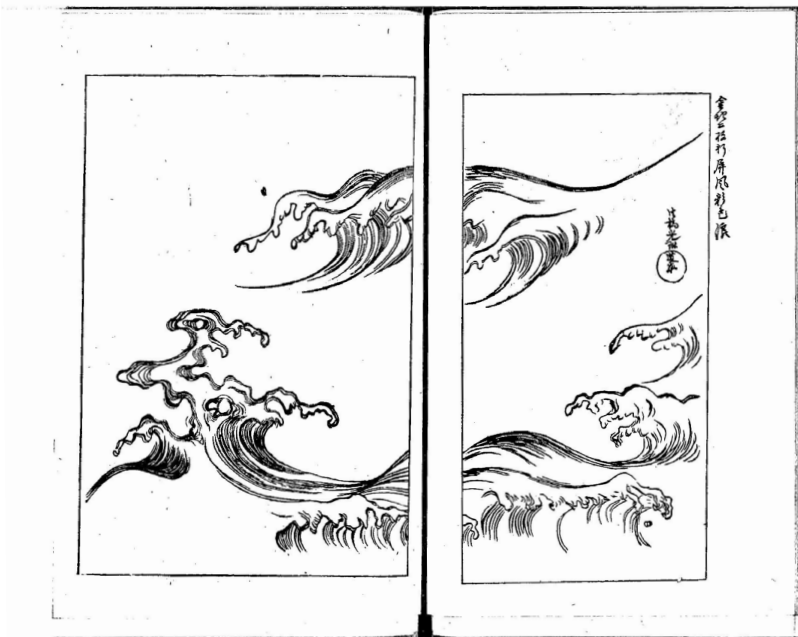


Fig. 14 Sakai, *Kōrin hyakuzu zenpen*, frame 28.



Fig. 15 Sakai, *Kōrin hyakuzu*, frame 73.



Fig. 16 Sakai, *Kōrin hyakuzu zenpen*, frame 11. Cropped by the author.

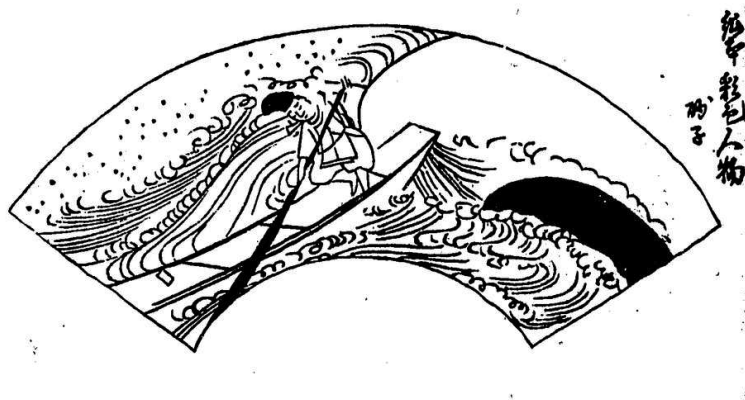


Fig. 17 Sakai, *Kōrin hyakuzu*, frame 26. Cropped by the author.

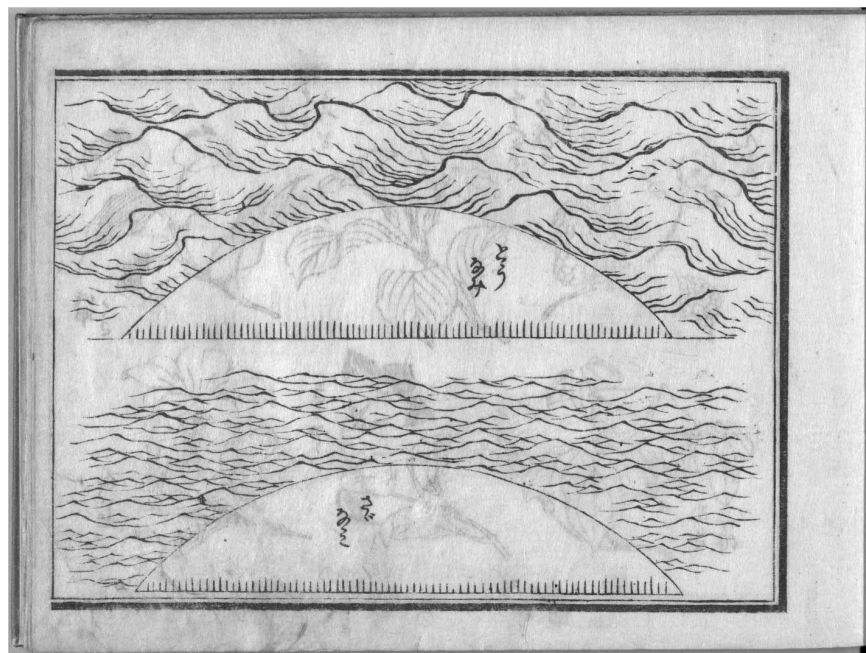


Fig. 18 Katsushika Hokusai Issei, *Imayō sekkin hiinagata*, frame 26. Cropped by the author.

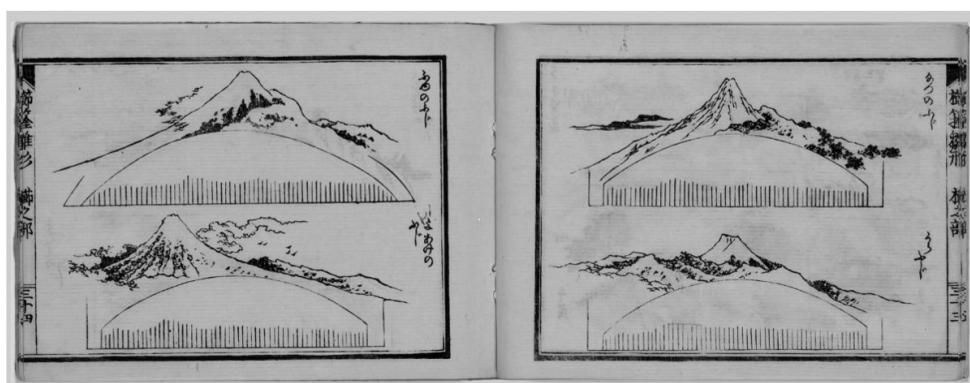


Fig. 19 Katsushika Hokusai, *Imayō sekkin hiinagata*.

Returning again to *Kōrin hyakuzu*, one notices that the bold composition of the pair of fans depicting Mt. Fuji (Fig. 11) and the delicate renderings of waves (Fig. 17) are similar to these comb designs by Hokusai. As a designer, Hokusai must have looked up to the style of Kōrin (also a talented crafts designer), particularly the examples he had set with his Mt. Fuji and wave motifs. The Rinpa school images inherited by Hokusai were transmitted through his works to many of his students and followers. Perhaps we could say that this was typical way to disseminate the Rinpa school—painters modeling their styles on the school’s artists they admired.

Conclusion

Below is the postscript to Hokusai’s Tenpō 5 (1834) *Fugaku hyakkei* 富嶽百景 (One hundred views of Mt. Fuji). This ukiyo-e print book was produced in response to the popularity of *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji*, and Hokusai included a reflection on his seventy-year career entitled “Seventy-five Years Old” (Shichi jū go sai 七十五齡):

From the age of six years old, I had the habit of sketching the shapes of things, and from around fifty years old, I made many pictures of things, but none of my depictions before seventy deserve attention. At the age of seventy-three, I awoke somewhat to the anatomy of birds, beasts, bugs, and fish, and the formation of plants. Therefore, at the age of eighty, I will progress more and more, and at the age of ninety, I will master the depths, and at the age of one hundred years, will I not have reached the divinely profound? Well into my hundreds, it will be as if each dot and line is alive. I hope the ruler of long life will see that my words are not deluded. Written by Gakyō Rōjin Manji 画狂老人記 [“The Old Man Mad for Pictures”]

Here, Hokusai states that the ages of six, fifty, and seventy have been turning points in his career and that works made before the age of seventy are insignificant. What is particularly noteworthy is his statement “At the age of seventy-three, I awoke somewhat to the anatomy of birds, beasts, bugs, and fish, and the formation of plants.” He was seventy-three years old (per the traditional East Asian age reckoning system; same below) in Tenpō 3 (1832), about the time when the publication of the *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji* was nearing its end. We can infer that for Hokusai, this series was the culmination of his career. Hokusai’s declaration that he will continue to devote himself to his art until he is over one hundred years old, even though he is seventy-five, shows that he still had an



Fig. 20 Shōtei, *Tōto shiba atagoyama enbō shinagawakai zu*.

insatiable drive to explore.

Iijima Kyoshin, in his aforementioned biography, depicts Hokusai on his deathbed as follows: “Facing death, the old man took a deep breath and said, ‘Heaven, if you extend my life by ten years . . .’ Pausing, he then said, ‘Heaven, if you ensure me five more years of life, I can become a true master of art.’ With those final words, he passed away.” At the age of ninety, Hokusai wished for another ten, or at least five, years, to become a true painter. In other words, he wanted to further improve his artistic skills. Hokusai always favored change and innovation, and, as mentioned earlier, it appears that at the root of his love of this was his “Fusenkyo” mindset—his dislike of being colored by one single hue. As discussed in this article, the core of Hokusai’s innovative activities was always traditional *yamato-e* techniques and style.

Looking again at the three major works in *Thirty-six Views of Mt. Fuji*, one notices that the clouds in each are distinctive. The ornate cirrocumulus clouds of “Fine Wind, Clear Morning” recall the horizontal bands of mist, referred to as *suyarigasumi* すやり霞, in picture scrolls and other works of *yamato-e*. The rounded nimbostratus clouds in “Thunderstorm Beneath the Summit” are often used in *kanga* dragon cloud and other paintings, and are rarely found in ukiyo-e. The billowing cumulonimbus clouds depicted in “The Great Wave off Kanagawa” are of the same shape as the Western-style *nishiki-e* (Fig. 20) created by Hokusai and his pupil Shōtei Hokuju 昇亭北寿 (1763–1824?) with copperplate engraving techniques in mind. Even just looking at a single part of these paintings, clouds, it can be seen that they are carefully depicted in different ways. Hokusai aimed to fuse the different qualities of Japanese, Chinese, and Western pictorial techniques. Hokusai’s use of the distorted images characteristic of Kōrin’s works and the unchanging theme of nature was an important element in achieving this goal. To avoid being colored by one hue, an unchanging core is necessary. Part of the reason why Hokusai is still so highly regarded in Japan and abroad today is probably due to his

careful study of the classics that supported his flexible thinking.

(Translated by Dylan L. Toda)

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Which Shrine Will Fulfil My Wishes? Selection Criteria in Shinto Spirituality¹

OMICHI HARUKA

Keywords: Shinto spirituality (*shintōkei supirichuariti* 神道系スピリチュアリティ), wish fulfillment (*ganbō jōju* 願望成就), benefits (*goriyaku* 御利益), power spot (*pawāsupotto* パワースポット), shrine selection criteria (*jinja no sentei kijun* 神社の選定基準)

Author's Statement

Spirituality is a worldwide religious phenomenon that has a deep relationship with Buddhism and other established religious traditions. This paper explores people's involvement with Shinto shrines as a form of spirituality in Japan.

Introduction

“Which shrine should I visit?” This is a pressing question for people with a wish they want fulfilled. Shinto shrine visit instructional books that focus on wish fulfillment are a staple of the Japanese spirituality market, consistently published every year. Yagi Ryūhei’s 八木龍平 2016 hit, *Seikō shiteiru hito wa naze jinja ni iku no ka?* 成功している人は、なぜ神社に行くのか? (Why do successful people go to shrines?) sold over 270,000 copies, becoming a bestseller. The much-anticipated 2018 sequel was *Seikō shiteiru hito wa doko no jinja ni iku no ka?* 成功している人は、どこの神社に行くのか? (To which shrines do successful people go?) This article explores current criteria for choosing a shrine for wish fulfillment.

Books on religion (broadly conceived) fall into two main categories: those that discuss religion as culture, such as educational and academic books, and practical guides for religious or spiritual purposes. Yagi’s books are all the latter. As seen by his bestseller during a publishing slump, books on spirituality are gaining momentum in the latter

¹ This article is a translation of Omichi Haruka 大道晴香, “Negai o kanaeru ni wa ‘doko no jinja ni iku beki ka’: Shintōkei supirichuariti ni okeru jinja erabi no kijun ni tsuite” 願いを叶えるには「どこの神社に行くべきか—神道系スピリチュアリティにおける神社選びの基準について—, *Kokugakuin zasshi* 國學院雑誌 123(12) (2022), pp. 127–147. Translated by Dylan L. Toda.

market. Arimoto Yumiko 有元裕美子 notes that the spirituality market's value exceeded one trillion yen in 2011. Spirituality books surfaced in the publishing industry to solve the slump that started in the late 1990s, she says, with *Kōun o hikiyoseru supirichuaru bukku* 幸運を引きよせるスピリチュアル・ブック by Ehara Hiroyuki 江原啓之, released in 2001, becoming a hit that sold 700,000 copies.²

Many elements of existing religious traditions have entered the spirituality market, and their recontextualization has given rise to new meanings and functions. Shrines are at the core of Shinto spirituality, as they are one of the major religious resources in Japan. In the context of such spirituality, then, what meanings do shrines take on?

Instructional books on wish fulfillment may shed some light on this question. This paper refers to them as “wish fulfillment books.” They occupy a segment of the spiritual publishing market, covering everything from shrine visits to ancestral Buddhist offerings and positive thinking. Shrines, known for providing worldly benefits (*gense riyaku* 現世利益), seem well-matched for this genre. In the case of wish fulfillment books that deal with shrines, most of the authors are not Shinto clergy but participants in shrine religious beliefs and practices with unusual titles such as “Shintoist” (*shintōka* 神道家) or “Researcher of [*kenkyūka* 研究家] XXXX.” They typically produce, for example, writings on spirituality and self-help. As both are global cultural phenomena, wish fulfillment books represent the intersection of Shinto and psycho-spiritual cultures from outside Japan.³

This paper focuses on wish fulfillment books about shrines and delves into shrines' significance in spirituality by identifying visitation criteria. Each shrine's benefits are a key criterion, reminiscent of traditional *gankake* 願掛け, or deity vows. Despite being the same “benefits” criterion, when set in a spirituality context, meanings different from *gankake* can emerge, even potentially forming a new value system from traditional elements.

1. Shrine-related Wish fulfillment Books: Publication Trends and Subjects of Analysis

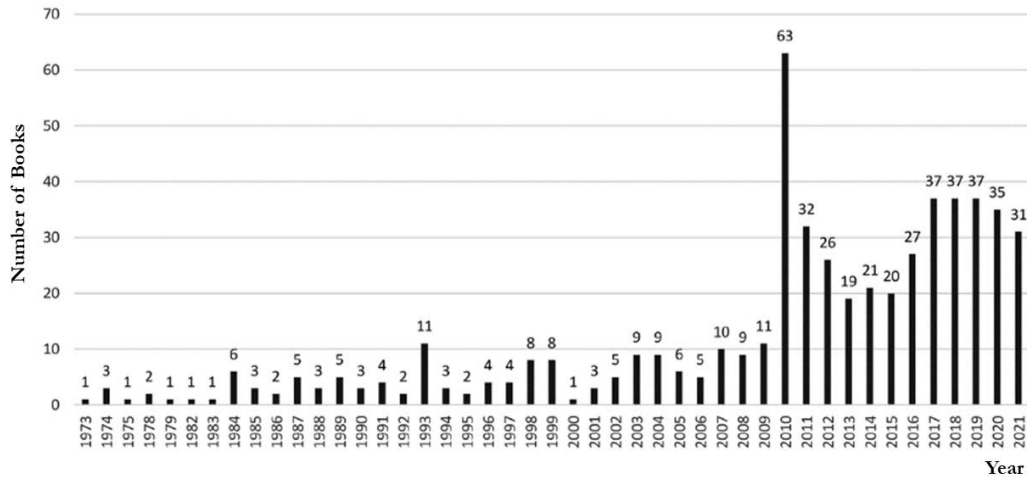
Before diving into the analysis, I want to first examine the historical publishing trends of wish fulfillment books. **Table 1** displays the yearly count of wish fulfillment books related to shrines, as held by the National Diet Library. I conducted a title search by searching for *goriyaku* 御利益/ご利益 (benefits) and *pawāsupotto* パワースポット (lit. “power spot”; a place of spiritual power), both words characteristic of wish fulfillment books, and also by searching for the words *kaiun* 開運 (good luck), *negai* 願い (wish), *ganbō* 願望 (wish), *kanau* 叶う (to fulfill), and *kanaeru* 叶える (to grant) each combined

² Arimoto, *Supirituaru shijō no kenkyū*, p.45, p.52.

³ Regarding the joining of New Thought and shrine Shinto through the law of attraction, see Omichi, “Ganbō jōju bon.”

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Table 1. Shrine Wish Fulfillment Books: Publication Figures



with *jinja* 神社 (shrine) and *kami sama* 神様/神さま (deity). Titles clearly not about spirituality practice were disregarded. The period covered is from 1945 to 2021. Changes in book counts here do not solely reflect wish fulfillment book trends—given the fluctuating market size—but do indicate shifts and general trends.

From 1973, when the first book appeared, there were slow years with a maximum of 3 books annually. Despite a small rise starting in the mid-1980s, the 1990s never saw more than 10 books a year, except for 1993. Around 2003, the book count consistently hit 5-10 annually, then soared to 63 in 2010. Book numbers dwindled before stabilizing near 20, then rebounded from 2016, staying in the high 30s since 2017. Could 2010 be considered a pivotal year, with a subsequent upsurge in book publishing or the establishment of a market?

The 2010 surge is clearly due to Japan’s “power spot” boom. The Japanese-English term “power spot,” used to describe a spiritual location, originated from the 1980s New Age movement, and gained popularity during the spirituality boom that began in the 2000s. Since around 2003, led by “Spiritual Sanctuary” (*Supirichuaru sankuchuari* スピリチュアル・サンクチュアリ) by Ehara Hiroyuki, a key figure in the spiritual boom, there has been a growing trend of interpreting existing sacred places, especially shrines, from a spirituality perspective and making pilgrimages to them. With this as a foundation, a 2009 TV program made Kiyomasa’s Well (Kiyomasa no ido 清正井) an overnight sensation as a power spot, sparking a nationwide trend of discovering such spots. They gained significance as tourist attractions, cementing themselves into popular culture.⁴

⁴ On the diachronic evolution of the power spot phenomenon, see the following: Suga, “Pawāsupotto to shite no jinja”; Okamoto, *Seichi junrei*; and Horie, *Poppu supirichuariti*.

Table 1's trends generally align with these developments. Power spots are not just shrines, but given the shrine and benefits focus of the power spot trend since the late 2000s,⁵ it is clear the subsequent boom in shrine wish fulfillment books since the 2010s is an extension of the power spot phenomenon.

Tracing these books' history up through the present based on power spot scholarship would be quite laborious. This paper focuses on a synchronic cross-section—the “present state” post-2017—to set the stage for exploring the past in future research.

Table 2 lists the books analyzed. Table 1 shows 177 shrine wish fulfillment books from 2017 to 2021. As this is simply a list of titles with specific keywords to grasp trends, I further refined it to 125 books focusing on practice and shrines. These 125 books can mainly be categorized into those emphasizing specific places like sacred site guides and those focusing on wish fulfillment techniques. As this study aims to uncover universal criteria for selecting shrines, I focused on thirty-one books that could shed light on this topic. Having connected with tourism culture due to its popularization, the power spot phenomenon is a cultural one with an extremely broad base covering consumers who value power spots along with other sites of tourist consumption and a core group that finds spiritual value in them. While location-focused books often target the former, books on wish fulfillment techniques, the subject of my analysis, are primarily aimed at the latter core audience.

Overall, the books in Table 2 indicate three criteria for shrine selection: (1) potential benefits, (2) compatibility, and (3) status as an *ujigami* 氏神 or *ubusuna* 産土 shrine. Following these, below I will go through the contours of the shrine landscape that appears in such books.

2. Shrine Visit Selection Criteria: (1) Potential Benefits

Choosing a shrine for wish fulfillment traditionally depends on the benefits of the enshrined deity. The remarkable power of deities, buddhas, and bodhisattvas, as detailed in guides like “Edo shinbutsu gankake chōhōki” 江戸神仏願懸重宝記; Guide to making vows to buddhas and kami in Edo) and histories of Japanese shrines and temples, has long captivated individuals, inspiring visits to particular sites for their specific benefits.

The same goes for interpretations of sacred sites (like power spots) in the context of spirituality. The benefits of the enshrined deity are a key when selecting a shrine. “Power spot” is a framework that focuses on functionality and is characterized by foregrounding the effects presumably derived from a visit.⁶ Therefore, when established shrines are brought up in the context of power spots, the characteristics of the deities and the

⁵ Horie, *Poppu supirichuariti*, pp. 177–178.

⁶ Omichi, “Pawāsūpotto no mentariti,” p. 5.

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Table 2. Shrine Wish Fulfillment Books Published Between 2017 and 2021 (Limited to Instructional Books on Techniques)

No.	Title	Author	Publisher	Month and Year of Publication
1	Jinja to otera: Kaiun: Shishisonson ni tsutaetai shiawase o te ni suru shaji kigan no kihon chishiki 神社とお寺：開運：子々孫々に伝えたい幸せを手にする社寺祈願の基本知識	Shigenobu Hidetoshi 重信秀年	Antorekkusu アントレックス	2017.03
2	Kaiun shitakereba kono jinja ni asa, hitori de omairi shinasai. 開運したければこの神社に朝、一人で参りしなさい。	Nagasaki Yōji 長崎洋二	Kawade Shobō Shinsha 河出書房新社	2017.04
3	Kami sama dōzo yoroshiku onegamōshiagemasu: Kaitei shinpan 神さまどうぞよろしくお願ひ申し上げます 改訂新版	Shibayama Hisako 柴山壽子	Goma Shobō Shinsha ごま書房新社	2017.04
4	Kami sama ni aisareru 'okiyome' gaido: Wa no kaiun BOOK 神様に愛される「お清め」ガイド：和の開運 BOOK	Nakai Yōka 中井耀香, superv.	Takarajimasha 宝島社	2017.04
5	Okane to kōun ga dondon maikomu! Kami sama ni negai o kanaete morau hōhō お金と幸運がどンドン舞い込む！神様に願いを叶えてもらう方法	Sugoi! Kamisama Kenkyūkai すごい！神様研究会	Takarajimasha 宝島社	2017.08
6	'Jinja bukkaku' de kaiun suru hōhō: Okane ga maikomu! Negai ga kanau! 「神社仏閣」で開運する方法：お金が舞い込む！願ひが叶う！	Sugoi! Kamisama Kenkyūkai すごい！神様研究会	Takarajimasha 宝島社	2017.12
7	Kami sama to tsunagaru: Hyaku no kaiun kami sama meguri 神さまとつながる：100の開運神様めぐり	Shiratori Utako 白鳥詩子	Mikasa Shobō 三笠書房	2017.12
8	Kami sama ni mikata sarete seikō suru! Jinja de kaiun BOOK 神様に味方されて成功する！神社で開運 BOOK		Takarajimasha 宝島社	2018.01
9	Mijikana jinja ga jitsu wa sugoi! Negai ga kanau kami sama mairi 身近な神社が実はすごい！願ひが叶う神様参り	Masayo まさよ	Nagaoka Shoten 永岡書店	2018.01
10	Chōkaiun! Kami sama ga anata no seikō o atoshi shite kureru jinja sanpaihō 超開運！神さまがあなたの成功を後押ししてくれる神社参拝法	Yamada Masaharu 山田雅晴	Bungeisha 文芸社	2018.10
11	Kami sama ga oshiete kureta kin'un no hanashi: Chokusetsu kiite wakatta kaiun arekore 神様が教えてくれた金運のはなし：直接きいてわかった開運あれこれ	Sakurai Shikiko 桜井識子	Gentōsha 幻冬舎	2018.02
12	Okane to kōun ni michiafureru! Kami sama ga daishikyū negai o kanaete kureru hōhō お金と幸運に満ちあふれる！神様が大変急願いを叶えてくれる方法	Sugoi! Kamisama Kenkyūkai すごい！神様研究会	Takarajimasha 宝島社	2018.08
13	Kami sama to yaru sugoi untore: Sanjūkyū no kaiun torēningu de jinsei ga kawaru! 神様とやるすごい運トレ：39の開運トレーニングで人生が変わる！	Aishinkakura Yūhan 愛新覚羅ゆうはん	Nihon Bungeisha 日本文芸社	2018.08
14	Anata no negai ga kanarazu kanau 'Kami sama musubi' no tsukurikata: 'Nenki mairi' de kyōun o hikiyoseru! あなたの願ひが必ず叶う「神さま結び」の作り方：「年季参り」で強運を引き寄せる！	Masayo まさよ	Takarajimasha 宝島社	2018.11
15	Jinja de kaiun taishitsu ni naru! Kami sama ga negai o kanaetakunaru 'kami musubi' no hōhō: Goshinki o toriire tara, tsugi tsugi to ikoto ga okoridasu! 神社で開運体質になる！神さまが願いを叶えたくなる「神結び」の方法：ご神氣を取り入れたら、次々といいいことが起こります！	Shiratori Utako 白鳥詩子	Gakken Purasu 学研プラス	2018.11
16	Inori kata ga kyūwari: Negai ga kanau jinja-mairi nyūmon 祈り方が9割：願ひが叶う神社参り入門	Kitagawa Tatsuya 北川達也	COBOL	2018.12
17	Kami sama ni aisareru hontō ni negai ga kanau omairi 神さまに愛される本当に願ひが叶うお参り	Hashimoto Kyōmei 橋本京明	Tatsumi Shuppan 辰巳出版	2018.12
18	Kami sama ga yorokobu omairi no shikata: Supirichuaru tenjōin ga oshieru kaiun, enmusubi, kin'un appu no hōsoku 神様がよろこぶお参りの仕方：スピリチュアル添乗員が教える開運・縁結び・金運アップの法則	Gotō Miko 五斗美湖	Kosumikku Shuppan コスミック出版	2018.12
19	Kojiki kaiunhō: Nihon saiko no sho kara no shin no messēji o shireba, kami-sama wa anata o tasukerareru! 古事記開運法：日本最古の書からの真のメッセージを知れば、神様はあなたを助けられる！	Tachibana Daikai 立花大敬	KADOKAWA	2019.01
20	Negatibu demo kaiun suru jinja sanpai: Kami sama pawā no itadakkikata ネガティブでも開運する神社参拝：神様パワーのいただき方	MACO and Yagi Ryūhei 八木龍平	Nihon Bungeisha 日本文芸社	2019.11
21	Kami sama ni aisarete chōkaiun suru: Kando no jinja mairi 神さまに愛されて超開運する 感動の神社参り	Hazuki Kōei はづき虹映	Kōbunsha 光文社	2019.12
22	"Izumo no Kami sama" Hiden kaifu: Izumo zoku to yamato zoku no in'nen o toki hanatsu!: Tamafuri de kaiun kakusei no ishiki jigen ni tsunagaru <出雲の神様> 秘伝開封：イズモ族とヤマト族の因縁を解き放つ！：魂振りて開運覚醒の意識次元に繋がる	Haga Hikaru 羽賀ヒカル	Hikaru Rando ヒカルランド	2020.01
23	Teituka, kami sama tte nani?! Yabai hodo negai ga kanaidasu!! ていうか、神さまってなに？：やばいほど願ひが叶います！！	Arakawa Yūji 荒川祐二	KADOKAWA	2020.02
24	Hitsuki shinji to pawā supotto 日月神示とパワースポット	Nakaya Shin'ichi 中矢伸一	Seirindō 青林堂	2020.02
25	Kaiun ni musubitsuku kami sama no ofuda: Jinja betsu ofuda no goriyaku 開運に結びつく神様のおふだ：神社別おふだのごりやく	Sakurai Shikiko 桜井識子	Hāto Shuppan ハート出版	2020.08
26	Kaiun to pawāsupotto no otoku waza besuto serekushon: Kamisama ni sukareru kotsu kara, osusume no pawāsupo made zenbu iri! 開運とパワースポットのお得技ベストセレクション：神さまに好かれるコツから、オススメのパワスポまで全部入り！	Shin'yūsha 晋遊舎	Shin'yūsha 晋遊舎	2020.09
27	Kami-sama to tsunagaru shiawase wākubukku: Kanzukai-san ga oshieru 'negai' no kanaekata 神さまとつながる幸せワークブック：神使いさんが教える「願ひ」の叶え方	Masayo まさよ	Makino Shuppan マキノ出版	2020.11
28	Jūnikagetsu no kaiun jinja karendā: 12ヶ月の開運神社カレンダー	Shiratori Utako 白鳥詩子	Nihon Bungeisha 日本文芸社	2020.12
29	Ryūjin-sama kara aisareru hōhō: Un ga hirakeru! Negai ga kanau! 龍神さまから愛される方法：運がひらける！願ひが叶う！	Shōryū 昇龍	Rongu Serāzu ロングセラーズ	2021.04
30	Jinja bukkaku pawāsupotto de kami sama to kontakuto shitekimashita: Shinsōban 神社仏閣パワースポットで神さまとコンタクトしてきました 新装版	Sakurai Shikiko 桜井識子	Hāto Shuppan ハート出版	2021.11
31	Anata no kami sama to tsunagaru gojūroku-nichi kaiunchō あなたの神様とつながる56日開運帖	Hashimoto Kyōmei 橋本京明	Daiwa Shobō 大和書房	2021.11

benefits associated with those deities are important, although in some cases, such as Kiyomasa's Well in the Meiji Jingū Gyoen 明治神宮御苑, the constructed sacredness and effects are different than those assumed by the people running the site. "Wishes in line with the deity's specialty have a higher chance of success"⁷ {No. 3 in Table 2} (hereinafter, all numbers in {} indicate book numbers in Table 2), "Each deity has their own specialty"⁸ {8}, "The enshrined deities also have their specialties and non-specialties," "Knowing the deity's specialty before visiting will increase the effectiveness"⁹ {26}—the standard phrase "the deity's specialty" (*tokui bun'ya* 得意分野) that appears frequently in wish fulfillment books is based on the benefits that serve as a shrine selection criterion.

Power spot visits and *gankake* are similar; they both focus on gaining divine blessings. However, how the deities' benefits are perceived is qualitatively different. First, the effects-focused power spot framework highlights efficiency and loss avoidance. I have previously pointed this out,¹⁰ and a similar trend can be seen in the subjects of this analysis.

For example, consider *Kaiun to pawāsupotto no otoku waza besuto serekushon* 開運とパワースポットのお得技ベストセレクション (Good luck and power spots: Beneficial techniques best selection) {26}, 177th in the "Otoku waza besuto serekushon" お得技ベストセレクション (Beneficial techniques best selection) mook series published by Shin'yūsha 晋遊舎. The series introduces techniques and tips beneficial in daily life. Other mooks in the series cover retirement and storage, for example. In other words, therein shrine wish fulfillment techniques coexist with non-religious beneficial ones. *Kaiun to pawāsupotto no otoku waza besuto serekushon* states, "Choose a deity that suits your purpose" and "The ironclad rule is to choose a shrine that enshrines a deity suitable for the fulfillment of your wish."¹¹ This reflects a savvy consumer approach, striving to choose widely among abundant products/information to avoid loss. Highlighting "benefit" (*toku* 得), this mook is the most obvious example, but expressions emphasizing the certainty and efficiency of benefit acquisition—"You can expect great cost-effectiveness"¹² {2}, "You can definitely obtain benefits and do so much faster"¹³ {3}, "If you simply visit the shrine, the effect will certainly be small . . . what a waste"¹⁴ {15}—can be found throughout the wish fulfillment books.

⁷ Shibayama, *Kami sama dōzo*, p. 66.

⁸ Takarajimasha, *Kami sama ni mikata*, p. 42. (Ancient Shinto numerologist Nakai Yōka 中井耀香 is the supervisor for that page.)

⁹ Shin'yūsha, *Kaiun to pawāsupotto*, p. 10. (Researcher of Shinto Akatsuki Reika 暁玲華 was the supervisor for that page.)

¹⁰ Omichi, "Pawāsupotto no mentariti."

¹¹ Shin'yūsha, *Kaiun to pawāsupotto*, p. 10.

¹² Nagasaki, *Kaiun shitakereba*, p. 34.

¹³ Shibayama, *Kami sama dōzo*, p. 57.

¹⁴ Shiratori, *Jinja de kaiun*, p. 5.

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Market-driven religious representations are governed by consumer demand and thought patterns, with unsupported forms of expressions facing extinction. Therefore, staple expressions in commodified religious representations are cognitive frameworks that fit popular religious sensibilities, naturally reflecting societal norms. When an enshrined deity's benefits are addressed in the context of spirituality, which is inseparable from the market economy, it is not an indication of simply their re-presentation with a new label. Rather, it means these benefits are being embedded in the logic of contemporary religiosity that is undergirded by today's societal system: the efficient maximization of gains and the minimization of loss as well as individuals' product choices and the self-responsibility accompanying the results of such selection. In this respect, even though shrine visits are primarily for obtaining benefits, a divide exists between *gankake* and power spots.

However, it is premature to dismiss shrine visits discussed in wish fulfillment books as a self-centered utilitarian practice; while there is certainly an orientation toward pursuing benefits, wish fulfillment books emphasize not the benefits themselves, but rather the nature of the communication between the deity and the shrine visitor that is connected by the latter's choosing certain benefits. The texts reviewed here emphasize the importance of understanding a deity's historically associated benefits as a foundation for fostering a positive relationship with them. The below passages from *Kami sama to tsunagaru hyaku no kaiun jinja meguri* 神さまとつながる100の開運神社めぐり (Tour of 100 good luck shrines that connect you with deities) {7} by "shrine luck consultant" (*jinja kaiun konsarutanto* 神社開運コンサルタント) Shiratori Utako 白鳥詩子 and Arakawa Yūji's 荒川祐二 *Teiuka, kami sama tte nani? Yabai hodo negai ga kanaidasu!!* ていうか、神さまってなに?—やばいほど願いが叶い出す!! (I mean, what's a deity, anyway? Wishes start coming true like crazy!) {23}, a novelized version of experiences interacting with deities, exemplify this.

We bring our heart-mind to the life the deity has lived, reflect on the history of the deity and the shrine, including how they came to be enshrined there. Then try saying, "It was hard in those days, wasn't it? But because of that, now, today, I am able to receive your benefits. Thank you so much."

I feel like this is the moment when the deity decides, "Okay, let's bestow benefits on this child!"¹⁵

¹⁵ Shiratori, *Kami-sama to tsunagaru*, p. 29.

Japan is home to countless deities, each offering different benefits. So, knowing what kind of deities there are in Japan and where they are enshrined, you visit them according to their benefits. That alone will drastically change the prayer energy you all give off.

This is because you don't pray blindly, knowing nothing about the deity, but you pray with all your heart to the deity you love. We deities are happy with that sentiment and return great energy to you.¹⁶

Even {26}, which recommends researching “the deity’s specialty” to “increase the effectiveness,” highlights the importance of having reverence on top of this foundation: “It is desirable not only to know the deity well, but also to be able to have respect for them.”¹⁷

Wish fulfillment can seem selfish, being desire-driven. Yet, books promoting shrine visits for this purpose usually highlight reverence and thankfulness towards deities. Moreover, selfish, unchecked desire is often frowned upon, with many viewing a shift from self-interest to altruism as the key to wish fulfillment.¹⁸

For example, Kitagawa Tatsuya 北川達也, in *Inorikata ga kyūwari: Negai ga kanau jinja mairi nyūmon* 祈り方が9割—願いが叶う神社参り入門 (Prayer is 90%: An introduction to shrine visits that make wishes come true) {16} divides wishes into two categories. He proposes that the essence of prayer converts *impure wishes* for oneself into *pure wishes* for everyone that reach the divine: “When I want to make my wish come true, I pray not for me but for everyone.”¹⁹ There are standard reframing techniques in wish fulfillment books’ discursive space. For instance, rather than selfishly wishing “I want to get into this university,” instead impart “I and my family will be happy if I get into this university,” thereby pleasing the deity²⁰ {9}. And in the case of Yagi Ryūhei, he shifts the fulfillment of one’s own desire into altruism (fulfilling the deity’s desire) by understanding the enshrined deity’s benefits as its “mission”²¹ {20}.

Note that by being embedded in the context of spirituality, the enshrined deity’s established benefits acquire two different meanings: pursuing self-interest and venerating an other being, the deity. Desires are distinguished as good or bad based on self-centeredness, then the self’s desires are validated by making them “wishes for the people around oneself and the enshrined deity” or “gratitude and respect for the deity.” The

¹⁶ Arakawa, *Tēiuka*, p. 170.

¹⁷ Shin’yūsha, *Kaiun to pawāsupotto*, p. 10.

¹⁸ Omichi, “Pawāsupotto no mentariti,” pp. 78–81.

¹⁹ Kitagawa, *Inorikata ga kyūwari*, pp. 262–278.

²⁰ Masayo, *Mijikana jinja*, p. 49.

²¹ MACO & Yagi, *Negatibu demo kaiun suru*, pp. 43–44.

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justification of one's own desires through the existence of others is a typical logic in wish fulfillment books.²² This notion of “others for oneself” is partly reflected in the benefits-related discourse.

3. Shrine Visit Selection Criteria: (2) Compatibility

Shrine selection greatly depends on benefits, but not any shrine will suffice. Spirituality, rooted in the individual, requires personal compatibility with the shrine, which takes precedence over benefits. In essence, the more compatible the shrine, the more likely wish fulfillment. Here, the motivation—seeking efficiency and certainty—mirrors that for benefits. How is this compatibility determined? The most popular way is the “feeling” (*kankaku* 感覚) one gets when visiting.

Creating a universal standard seems challenging due to this guidepost's highly personal and vague nature, but standard patterns do appear in the feelings discussed by authors of wish fulfillment books based on their experiences.

First, the psychological feeling. If a shrine and its deity resonate with someone, a positive emotional reaction occurs. Most authors referencing compatibility mention this. The following passage by Shibayama Hisako 柴山壽子 {3}, a direction-based fortune telling (*hōigaku* 方位学) expert, provides a straightforward example.

In fact, it is often much faster and more reliable to ask for benefits at a shrine that is on your wavelength and compatible with you, even if it is a lesser-known one. . . .

So, how can you find a shrine that is compatible with you?

The answer is simple.

If you visit a shrine a few times and somehow feel that you like it or would like to come back, it means the shrine is on the same wavelength as you.

The important thing at this time is to as much as possible “feel” by relying on your feeling and intuition, not thinking with your head or logic.²³

Unlike Shibayama, who values each individual's feeling, *Kaiun shitakereba kono jinja ni asa, hitori de omairishinasai*. 開運したければこの神社に朝、一人でお参り下さい。(If you want good luck, visit this shrine alone in the morning.) {2} by Nagasaki Yōji 長崎洋二 somewhat universalizes the author's own feelings as a guide. Tourism and hospitality

²² Regarding this point, see also Omichi, “Ganbō jōju bon.”

²³ Shibayama, *Kami sama dōzo*, p. 57.

management researcher Nagasaki, who touts spirituality's integration with reproducible academic research, lists three guideposts, including psychological feeling.

So, how to determine which shrine precincts (*shin'iki* 神域) are compatible with oneself? Bringing together my feelings and multiple information sources, I recommend the following three decision-making patterns.

- Wanting to stay there forever (feels like a good fit)
- Experiencing a strange calm when taking a deep breath (repose of the soul/refreshing)
- Encounters with various living things (butterflies, birds, dogs, cats, etc.) (agreement with nature)²⁴

In addition, although not universalized, Nagasaki also includes examples of incompatibility. He says he visited a certain shrine after hearing from three different acquaintances that “the energy there is amazing!” but “all three times I went I was attacked by a migraine,” and came to the conclusion that “the energy itself is amazing, but this was a pattern of” the shrine “not suiting me at that time.”²⁵ He also uses physical feelings, like migraines, as indicators to determine compatibility {9}.

Perhaps authors of wish fulfillment books, regularly interacting with deities, can judge compatibility. However, for an average reader, this is challenging due to the subjective nature of feelings. Therefore, an objective indicator, such as observing specific phenomena in the shrine precincts, is needed, as detailed in {8} below.

Observe the events encountered while visiting the shrine to find a compatible shrine. You feel calm and relaxed when you go to a certain shrine and are blessed with clear skies. You encounter phenomena that seem to be good, such as the smell of nice flowers or chickens in the shrine precincts aligned in a row for some reason. This is because the shrine and you are compatible.²⁶

Although each phenomenon is trivial and could easily be overlooked, the author understands them as good omens; they “seem to be good.” There are typical good omens in wish fulfillment books: not only pleasant weather {21}, fragrant scents {9, 14}, and

²⁴ Nagasaki, *Kaiun shitakereba*, pp. 27–28.

²⁵ Nagasaki, *Kaiun shitakereba*, p. 27.

²⁶ Takarajimasha, *Kami-sama ni mikata sarete*, p. 47.

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animal encounters {2, 26}, but also tree leaves rustling {9, 21, 26} and wind {18, 21, 26}. These are “signs of welcome” from deities, helping determine a shrine’s compatibility.

Moreover, being able to visit a shrine on a particular day signals a welcome from the deity enshrined there {8, 26}. Meaning is created based on the idea that it is unusual to be able to visit a shrine. For example: “‘Right when I visit a shrine, it ended up raining heavily’ ‘The taxi lost its way, and I couldn’t make it to the shrine in time’—In such cases of bad phenomena, perhaps the stars aren’t aligned yet. But there’s always a chance things might get better in the future. Right now, it’s just not meant to be”²⁷ {8}. On the other hand, being able to visit a shrine is often interpreted as being “called” by the enshrined deity: “Common sayings are, ‘Where you feel like going, there is a connection.’ Or, ‘I am being called.’ I think that going to a place where you feel like going is a sign that the shrine and you are in love, or that your energies match”²⁸ {20}.

There is, though, a method to mechanically calculate compatibility, disregarding one’s own physicality. While my analysis omits *Kaiun! Sā, michibikareyō! Kami sama techō* 開運！さあ導かれよう！ 神さま手帖 (Good luck! Let’s be guided! Deities handbook) due to its location focus, it serves as an illustration. According to the author, a healer known as “yuji,” the most frequent questions during individual client sessions are “related to shrines and power spots that are compatible with oneself.”²⁹ He devised the book for finding out compatible shrines without attending such sessions. It has twelve sections of questions to diagnose one’s “soul type.” The section with the most applicable items indicates the suitable shrine. Although there are other similar examples, this type of manualized diagnostic method that excludes individual physicality is not very popular in wish fulfillment books. Considering that spirituality values the individual’s heart-mind and feeling, it is natural that a guidepost mediated by the self and based on visiting a shrine’s grounds is preferred over a mechanical indicator set by others.

A similar tendency emerges in the relationship between wish fulfillment book authors and readers. Most books of this genre discussing shrine visits include shrine recommendations from the author, whose experience as an influencer serves as a guide for locating a compatible shrine. However, these are mere suggestions, with the caveat that they are compatible with *the author*.

For example, in *Negai ga kanau: Kami sama mairi* (Wishes come true: Visiting deities) {9}, self-identified “soul counselor” Masayo まさよ introduces shrines in various places by describing her own experiences in the chapter “Full of Shrines’ Mysteriousness! A Nohohon Shrine Travelogue,” and details her reverence for Ayashi’s Suwa Jinja 諏訪神社

²⁷ Takarajimasha, *Kami-sama ni mikata sarete*, p. 47.

²⁸ MACO & Yagi, *Negatibu demo kaiun*, p. 33.

²⁹ yuji, *Kaiun!*, p. 4.

(Sendai City, Miyagi Prefecture) in “Miracles Happen! Visiting Suwa Jinja in Ayashi.” She deeply reveres this shrine and often mentions it as a special place. Also, this book includes stories of people who have actually visited the shrine and had their wishes fulfilled, and it carries out a shrine visit for the reader through photographs.

Clearly, Masayo is actively sharing with readers her perception that Ayashi’s Suwa Jinja is a special shrine where wishes come true. However, that is not to say that she absolutely views it as such. She offers the following observations about shrine compatibility.

I believe there is no right or wrong when it comes to feelings about the good or bad vibes of a shrine.

Therefore, stop looking for the right answer in someone’s words—“that shrine has good vibrations” or “that shrine has bad vibrations.” Rather, you should rely on your own feeling when you are at that shrine to make a decision. . . .

Just because you don’t want to go to a shrine that others have praised as very nice doesn’t mean that you will be punished, that your feeling is not right, or that the deities will not protect you. So don’t worry.³⁰

Hence, the perception of Ayashi’s Suwa Jinja as a wish-granting entity is presented to the readers essentially as an extension of the author’s perspective, not transcending the realm of a “personally compatible shrine.” The testimonies of those whose wishes were fulfilled do not serve as a guarantee of wish fulfillment but are positioned as individual experiences. The author’s approach of relativizing her own experiences hints at a value system that affirms the pursuit of individuality.

The Kiyomasa Well, catalyst of the power spot boom, became a sacred pilgrimage overnight after its introduction on TV by palmist entertainer Shimada Shūhei 島田秀平.³¹ Its popularity through mass media became a point of reference for people when selecting wish-fulfilling shrines. However, while the general public equates spirituality with other consumer values, core followers prioritize personal affinity, cautioning against over-glorifying media-promoted famous shrines {2, 3, 8, 9, 21}. Yet, this core also relies on media and shares influencer-recommended shrines. Thus, contradictorily, power spots embody both mass consumption and the pursuit of individuality.

³⁰ Masayo, *Mijikana jinja*, p. 29.

³¹ Yamato, “Zasshi kiji.”

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4. Shrine Visit Selection Criteria (3): Status as an Ujigami or Ubusuna Shrine

The pursuit of individuality when choosing a shrine goes beyond compatibility; it includes a unique category: “shrines special to me.” These are *ujigami* or *ubusuna* shrines connected to one’s birthplace or residence. They’re often cited in wish-granting books as places for wish fulfillment {3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 15, 23, 26}.

Shrines typically fall into two categories: those associated with family or local ties (*ujigami* or *ubusuna* shrines), and those personally revered (*sūkei jinja* 崇敬神社). Wish fulfillment-focused spirituality also tends to see these as distinct. A good example is the classification by the ancient Shinto numerologist Nakai Yōka 中井耀香. She proposes visiting three kinds of shrines for good fortune: “(1) the *ujigami* shrine of the area in which your family is located,” (2) “my own shrine,” and “(3) a famous shrine that you would like to visit”³² {6}. “(2) My own shrine” is a “shrine compatible with you,” so she is ultimately presenting two types of shrines: (1) *ujigami* shrines and (2) (3) revered shrines.

Nakai’s {8} also discusses a similar division, mentioning the *ubusunagami* 産土神 of one’s birthplace and “my own shrine,” a wish-fulfilling shrine special for oneself. She explains that both are shrines connected to the visitor: “Regardless of a shrine’s fame, visiting holds little significance without personal connection.”

Connections vary in their formation. An automatic bond exists when born or living in an *ujigami* or *ubusunagami* shrine’s area—a passive, inherent link. Conversely, a bond with a personally revered shrine is cultivated through the visitor’s efforts—an active, acquired link. The first type of shrine is a familiar, close presence, while the second involves more distance. Nakai asserts that individuals inherit the divided spirit (*wakemitama* 分け御霊) of their *ubusunagami* at birth, which returns to the shrine upon death.³³ Hence, the *ubusunagami* is an “ally since birth,” and visiting its shrine can fulfill wishes due to an inherent bond. The phrase “since birth” illustrates this innate relationship. The power of *ujigami* and *ubusuna* shrines to grant wishes is unique and distinct from revered shrines due to the nature of the worshipper’s relationship with the shrine and deity.

When highlighting *ujigami* or *ubusuna* shrines for wish fulfillment, the focus lies on the innate connection with the deity from birth or arrival, unlike revered shrines. Intriguingly, the relationship’s passive protection and closeness/familiarity also are held to facilitate wish fulfillment. The phrases “Even if you guys don’t say anything . . . they have been protecting you” in {23} and “they always know you well” in {3} illustrate these two characteristics:

³² Sugoi! Kamisama Kenkyūkai, ‘*Jinja bukkaku*,’ p. 8.

³³ Takarajimasha, *Kami-sama ni mikata*, p. 46.

If you cannot find a “my own deity,” please cherish the deity of your local shrine, the so-called *ujigami*, and the deity of the shrine of the land where you were born and raised, the *ubusunagami*.

Even if you guys don’t say anything, they have been protecting the area where you live and your family for a long time. If you ever find yourself lost or in doubt, you can rely on your *ujigami* and *ubusunagami*.³⁴

It is said that, especially in the case of *ujigami* and *ubusunagami*, if you bring your hands together to pay your respects on a daily basis, benefits will appear within the same day at the earliest, or within three months at the latest. This means that deities can take immediate action because they always know you well.³⁵

In this way, in the context of spirituality as well, *ujigami* and *ubusunagami* are viewed as the closest, both emotionally and physically. The existence of close, familiar shrines, in turn, brings to the fore the existence of shrines that are not. Notably, in spirituality, *ujigami* and *ubusuna* shrines link the shrine visitor with other shrines throughout Japan. For example, the first step in {26}'s shrine/temple visit instructions (that will “set oneself apart from others”) is to go to the “*ujigami* shrine of where you live” because “if you visit other shrines after visiting your *ujigami*, the *ujigami* will say in advance, “My parishioner is coming, so take care of them!” thereby making it “easier to receive blessings.”³⁶ The idea is that there is a network of shrines across the country, with *ujigami* and *ubusuna* shrines serving as nodes.

This is easy to understand from a passage by Hazuki Kōei はづき虹映, a writer on spiritual matters, in *Kami sama ni aisarete chōkaiun suru: Kandō no jinja mairi* 神さまに愛されて超開運する 感動の神社参り (Be loved by the deities for super-good luck: Moving visits to shrines) {21}. In Chapter 1, Section 4, “All Shrines are Connected by a Network,” he first says, “I cannot recommend rushing to the super major shrines like Ise Jingū 伊勢神宮 if you really want good fortune. It’s like going to see the president of Toyota without an appointment,”³⁷ and then explains the shrine network as follows:

The first step is to visit the *chinju* 鎮守 (tutelary) shrine of the area where you now live. This is an outpost shrine that registers your residence

³⁴ Arakawa, *Teiuka*, p. 196.

³⁵ Shibayama, *Kami sama dōzo*, p. 92.

³⁶ Shin'yūsha, *Kaiun to pawāsupotto*, p. 21.

³⁷ Hazuki, *Kami sama ni aisarete*, pp. 35–36.

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certificate (*jūminhyō* 住民票) in the shrine network. In the Toyota example mentioned earlier, it would be a nearby dealer or sales office. First, you must become friendly with the deity of that shrine. If you do not start by becoming acquainted with the deity of the *chinju* shrine, you will never be able to meet the deities of the major shrines.

Unless the deity recognizes you and gives you special treatment, saying, “I hear you. Welcome. Please come this way . . . ,” there’s no way you’ll be able to connect with the deity and get your wish heard at a popular shrine that attracts millions of visitors a year.”³⁸

The definitions of *ujigami* and *ubusuna* shrines differ among authors. Hazuki identifies a shrine that enshrines the local deity as a *chinju* shrine, while a shrine that honors the deity of one’s birthplace an *ubusuna* shrine. He says that by connecting to the shrine network through these, one will be welcomed at any shrine in the country. The network’s structure is hierarchical and vertically divided, evident in the corporate model metaphor with the president at the top. Hierarchical distinctions stem from shrines’ perceived scopes of responsibility. *Ujigami* and *ubusunagami* shrines form the base, covering smaller groups and areas, topped by “super major shrines like Ise Jingū” that cover wider areas and ranges of people. This universal structure organically connects individual shrines, integrating *ujigami* and *ubusuna* shrines with deterritorialized “revered shrines.” At the same time, it is reminiscent of the old shrine ranking (*shakaku* 社格) system.

A network concept that incorporates the old shrine ranks is found in *Chōkaiun! Kami sama ga anata no seikō o atooshi shite kureru jinja sanpaihō* 超開運！ 神さまがあなたの成功を後押ししてくれる神社参拝法 (Super good luck! How to visit shrines to have the deities boost your success”) {10}, a book by Yamada Masaharu 山田雅晴, an ancient Shintoist and Shinto teacher. The “*ubusuna* good luck method” advocated therein is a method of shrine worship based on the *ubusunagami* of one’s birthplace. It gives preference to visiting the shrines of that deity and the *chinjugami* 鎮守神 of one’s residence. Yamada enthusiastically recommends visiting shrines while “expanding the number of shrines with which you are connected” out from one’s *ubusuna* and *chinju* shrines. After stating, “The *sōchinju* 総鎮守 (supreme tutelary shrines) and old provinces’ *ichinomiya* 一の宮 oversee the *ubusuna* and *chinju* shrines,”³⁹ he notes that the respected *ichinomiya* (“the highest ranked shrines in the old provinces”), serve as a “backup,” making it “easier for the *ubusuna* and *chinju* deities to do their work.”⁴⁰

³⁸ Hazuki, *Kami sama ni aisarete*, pp. 37–38.

³⁹ Yamada, *Chōkaiun!*, p. 29.

⁴⁰ Yamada, *Chōkaiun!*, p. 59.

Shiratori Utako also stresses the importance of *ichinomiya* shrines, encouraging visits to them along with *ujigami* and *ubusuna* ones. She notes that although shrine rankings are obsolete, forming geographical ties is best achieved by “greeting the deity of the *ichinomiya* shrine of the area that will take care (is taking care) of you”⁴¹ {7, 12}. She also highlights the links between shrines and their head shrine, or *sōhonsba* 総本社, from where deities are invited to the former.

Shiratori’s “deity network” expands out based on three foundational shrines: those of one’s *ujigami* (ancestral deity), *ubusuna jinja* (birthplace deity), and *tochigami* 土地神 (residence deity). This aids in gaining protection from numerous deities and fulfilling wishes.⁴² Upon visiting the three shrines, a visit to their deities’ head shrines and the *ichinomiya* of one’s area is in order.

Like her *ichinomiya* explanation, Shiratori doesn’t speculate why a head shrine visit may facilitate wish fulfillment. She just states, “As they [the deities] are typically split from the spirit of the head shrine, [the head shrine] seems to possess unique powers.”⁴³ Despite head shrines’ supreme unifying role as sources of divided spirits (*bunrei* 分霊) in the country, instead of a vertical structure, Shiratori’s focus on divided spirits suggests a horizontally-connected structure.

My ancestral deity is Susanoo-no-mikoto-sama 須佐之男命様. This deity, Susanoo, is enshrined at Yasaka Jinja 八坂神社 in Kyoto, and at about 2,300 shrines across Japan as well. I feel that this means that if I cherish and visit Susanoo-sama on a regular basis, my prayers are shared with other Susanoo-sama shrines throughout Japan. For example, when I wanted to hold a seminar in Nagoya, but didn’t know anyone in the area, I was able to connect with a parishioner of the Susanoo shrine located there and hold it. This was a benefit of the deity network.⁴⁴

The importance placed on *ujigami* and *ubusuna* shrines in the wish fulfillment books mentioned above, as well as the conception, relying on the old shrine ranking and deity invitation systems, of a network that branches off of these shrines, are all examples of the use of existing religious tradition resources and the creation of meaning when constructing a new shrine landscape in the context of spirituality. In evaluating this phenomenon, we should take into account the point made by Horie Norichika 堀江宗

⁴¹ Shiratori, *Jinja de kaiun*, pp. 92–93.

⁴² Shiratori, “Shiratori Utako-san,” pp. 40–41.

⁴³ Shiratori, *Jinja de kaiun*, p. 91.

⁴⁴ Shiratori, “Shiratori Utako-san,” pp. 40–41.

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正, who explores the power spot phenomenon through research on shrine visitors. Noting that those “who are aware of ‘power spots’ are more likely to say that ‘gratitude to the deities is more important than benefits’ or that ‘the atmosphere is just wonderful,’” he points out that previous studies criticizing consumer culture magazines’ “deviations from original (authentic) deity religious beliefs and practices (*jingi shinkō* 神祇信仰)” fail to take into account the reality of visitors who are sincere about Shinto, which is close to the form of reverence considered authentic by the Shinto shrines themselves.⁴⁵ Relatedly, Horie writes,

Ehara [Hiroyuki] and Shimada [Shūhei] suggest readers visit their area’s *ujigami* or *ubusunagami* shrine before going to a power spot. It is unclear if readers heed the advice, but labeling these suggested power spot visits as deviant, overlooking their effort to stay within a Shinto framework, is one-sided.⁴⁶

The website of the Association of Shinto Shrines (Jinja Honchō 神社本庁) states that shrines throughout Japan “can be divided into two major groups, *ujigami* shrines and revered shrines, with Ise Jingū, which enshrines Amaterasu Ōmikami 天照大御神, the imperial ancestor, as an entity in its own class.”⁴⁷ It then goes on to say, “*Ujigami* are the most close and familiar deities. When visiting shrines, we should first visit the *ujigami*.”⁴⁸ The distinction between *ujigami* shrines and revered shrines and the characterization of the *ujigami* as the most familiar and first deity to be visited correspond to the pattern in the wish fulfillment books. The creation of an order that uses the old shrine ranking system and head shrines/branch shrines can also be seen as an “effort to stay within a Shinto framework.”

Regardless of whether importance is attached to *ujigami* shrines and *ubusuna* shrines, or gratitude and respect for enshrined deities, shrines are arranged with an eye to wish fulfillment, and behind this is a mindset seeking efficient, surefire benefits. Hence, the significance of this shrine landscape differs from what the Association of Shinto Shrines or the shrines may conceive. However, this suggests that when wish fulfillment and benefits are less prioritized, the shrine landscape shared with people who run shrines might come to the foreground. I said that wish fulfillment books generally focus more on the worshiper-deity interaction sparked by benefits, not on what those benefits are.

⁴⁵ Horie, *Poppu supirichuariti*, pp. 182–183.

⁴⁶ Horie, *Poppu supirichuariti*, p. 183.

⁴⁷ “Ujigami to sūkei jinja ni tsuite.” https://www.jinjahoncho.or.jp/omairi/jinja_no_namae/ujigami

⁴⁸ “Kakuchi no jinja.” <https://www.jinjahoncho.or.jp/shinto/eachjinja>

Visitors “who are aware of ‘power spots’” being “more likely to say that ‘gratitude to the deities is more important than benefits’” can perhaps be seen as wish fulfillment taking a back seat as spirituality deepens.

Conclusion

This study elucidated the selection criteria for shrines in wish fulfillment books to understand their significance in spirituality. I identified three criteria for selecting a shrine to visit: (1) potential benefits, (2) compatibility, and (3) status as an *ujigami* or *ubusuna* shrine. As I have run out of space, I will conclude by highlighting issues to be addressed.

First, compatibility and status as an *ujigami* or *ubusuna* shrine were already presented in the 2000s by Ehara Hiroyuki, the driving force behind the power spot and spirituality trends. At the very least, in *Ima, iku beki supirichuaru sankuchuari* 今、いくべき聖地 (Spiritual sanctuaries you should go to now), published at the end of 2007 when the trend, led by Ehara’s “Deity Travelogue (*Kami kikō* 神紀行) series, of visiting sacred places was showing signs of catching on, we find a discourse that is familiar to today’s wish fulfillment books: He writes, “What’s your first impression like? Do you feel comfortable in the precincts of that shrine? Would you like to come back? . . . If you can find a shrine you like”⁴⁹ and “If you want to find ‘your spiritual grounds’ in the true sense of the phrase, there are places you should visit first. Your *ubusunagami* and *ujigami*.”⁵⁰ The connection between Ehara’s ideas as an influencer and the contemporary spiritual marketplace awaits further study.

With that said, Ehara’s ideas did not appear from nowhere; they were shaped by previous domestic and international discourses. Fukami Tōshū 深見東州, founder of the Shinto new religion World Mate and wish fulfillment book author since the 1980s, promotes acquiring good luck via a shrine network centered on one’s *ubusuna* shrine. His model likens the shrines throughout Japan to a corporation; Ise Jingū is the “president,” *ichinomiya* shrines are “section chiefs and general managers,” and *ubusuna* shrines are “contact persons.” This anticipates the shrine network idea.⁵¹

In this paper, I identified how shrines are arranged while engaging in a synchronic cross-section analysis that captures current Shinto spirituality. Using this as a starting point, it is now necessary to trace into the past the genealogy of shrine interpretations in the context of spirituality.

(Translated by Dylan L. Toda)

⁴⁹ Ehara, *Ima, iku beki*, p. 75.

⁵⁰ Ehara, *Ima, iku beki*, p. 72.

⁵¹ Fukami, *Shunji ni*, p. 40.

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