

Social Crises and Religious Change in Pre-medieval Japan

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Abstract

This thesis explores the dynamic interaction of social crises and early Japanese religion from the end of the Jomon period to the rise of Kamakura New Buddhism. It does this believing that no history of religion can be fully understood in isolation from the effects of social crises, and that existing studies have not thoroughly examined this mutual interaction.

Both natural and social scientists have demonstrated that complex systems are abundant in most social phenomena. The methodology adopted in my research draws on this insight. In order to explore the autocatalytic growth of Japanese religion in the wake of social crises, I apply such new perspectives as the complexity paradigm, the natural lifecycle model, the impact of climate, and the psychological theory of altered states of consciousness (ASCs).

In exploring these relationships, this thesis identifies four forms of religious system in the evolution of early Japanese religion. What I have called *prototypical Japanese religion* prepared the ground for the emergence of *archaic religion* in the Late Yayoi. *Archaic religion* continued to develop in the form of a politico-religious system, as the so-called *keyhole tomb system*, but from the end of the Kofun period another new religious system, *monastic religion*, began to emerge. *Monastic religion* became the most dominant mode of Japanese religion from the Nara period until it was superseded by a new religious system, which I call *confraternal religion*, from the late Heian period. The natural lifecycle of each religious system led to the development of the subsequent one.

Finally, this thesis presents a conceptual model called *passage of consciousness*. This suggests that *nonequilibrium states of consciousness* (NSCs), which are involuntary induced by social crises, created fluid states of consciousness and led not only to the evolution of religion, but also to the evolution of human thought.

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Prefatory Notes

Japanese, Chinese, and Korean personal names are given in the traditional order (family name first) except for those authors who published in English. Macrons in Japanese words have been omitted in the case of the well-known place names and terms, such as Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, Jomon, and Shinto, when they appear in the text in translations of Japanese titles and organisations or as places of publication.

For Japanese names and terms, the Hepburn transcription is used. Chinese names and terms are romanised according to the Wade-Giles transcription and Korean names in the McCune-Reischauer system. Characters are given in the text only when this is deemed necessary for the argument, or when characters are so obscure as to be difficult to find in reference works and dictionaries. Otherwise, characters are listed in glossary.

Dates are given according to the traditional lunar calendar. They have not been changed to corresponding solar dates. Therefore, 'the third month of 794' does not correspond to March 794 in the solar calendar. For the sake of brevity, dates have been given in numbers, e.g., 'Keiun 2/4/3.' This stands for 'the 2nd year of Keiun (705), 4th month, 3rd day.'

Finally, a note on periodisation. A number of conventional period names are used in the text, sometimes without dates. These periods with their dates are as follows:

Jomon period:	c.10,000BC — c.400BC
Early phase	c.5,000BC — c.3,500BC
Middle phase	c.3,500BC — c.2,000BC
Late phase	c.2,000BC - c.1,000 BC
Final phase	c.1,000BC - c.400BC
Yayoi period:	c.400BC - c.AD 250
Initial	c.400BC — c.300BC
Early	c.300BC — c. 100BC
Middle	c.100BC — c. AD100
Late	c.AD100 — c. AD250
Kofun period:	c.250—c.650
Nara period:	710—794
Heian period:	794 — 1185
Kamakura period:	1185 — 1333

INTRODUCTION

This thesis will explore the dynamic interaction of social crises and early Japanese religion from the end of the Jomon period to the rise of the so-called Kamakura New Buddhism. I begin at the end of the Jomon period, one of the most important times in the history of Japanese religion. In the Eurasian Continent, some of the major new World Religions such as Zoroastrianism, Jainism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism developed during this time. And Japan was no different: for the primitive folk beliefs that developed during the shift from the Jomon to Yayoi periods arguably became the prototype for all subsequent Japanese religion.

Most previous studies on the history of Japanese religion have tended to start from the official introduction of Buddhism to Japan in the 6th century. Japanese religions such as Buddhism and Shinto have thus been studied as if they developed all of a sudden at the beginning of this historic period, and a gap has emerged here with between studies of Japanese religion of the pre-historic and historic periods.

This discontinuity has mainly arisen because of the different sources utilised by archaeologists and historians. Archaeologists, studying pre-historic religion, have mostly based their research on material remains such as fossil relics, artefacts and monuments of past human life and activities. Historians, however, have mostly based their research on archives, and this difference has hindered a holistic understanding of Japanese religion in two main ways.

Firstly, there has been a tendency to assume that whereas archaeological materials are 'fragmentary', written documents are 'comprehensive'. Because of this, many historians have neglected discoveries in the field of archaeology. Yet historical archives, which have been transmitted to the present, are themselves no less fragmentary than archaeological evidence. We thus need to understand history more comprehensively by incorporating the findings of such different fields as archaeology, folklore, natural science, and Japanese literature.

Secondly, the tendency to explore only Japanese religion during the historic period has prevented us from being aware of the influence of prehistoric Japanese religion on the later, historic Japanese religion. By understanding the history of Japanese religion prior to the official adoption of Buddhism in Japan, we can achieve a better understanding of the evolution of Japanese religion as a whole.

In attempting to rectify these difficulties by exploring the links between pre-historic and historic Japanese religion, this study will emphasise not only inter-disciplinary approach but also the influence of social crises. By 'social crises' I mean phenomena such as natural and social disasters, epidemics, famines, and racial migration whether caused by climatic change, or by such human activities as political and economic systems, exchange of people and commodities, migration, or warfare. Given this, this study aims to investigate three main themes: firstly, how social crisis played a critical role in the dynamic change of pre-medieval Japanese religion; secondly, how crisis in each different transition period had different meaning, and how these different meanings generated different outcomes and led to ever-continuing change in religious systems;

and thirdly, how change in both physical and mental healing methods was related to the dynamic evolution of pre-medieval Japanese religion. Then, in the final chapter, I will put forward a general model for the evolution of Japanese religion in which these three investigations can be understood.

Existing studies of the history of Japanese religion, while analysing extensively the mutual influence amongst intellectuals and the influence of politics and economics on the development of religious systems, have not fully explored the effects of social crises at each transitional phase of Japanese religion. This study, however, emphasises these factors as having played a critical role in the evolution of religion. For example, when the anxiety and arousal generated by social crises reaches a certain threshold or a critical point at which extant religious systems and philosophy are no longer able to alleviate individuals' psychological distress, people seek alternative solutions, and may thereby stimulate dynamic transformations in religious systems and philosophy. In what follows, I will argue that this idea is particularly relevant when understanding the evolution of Japanese religion and that any history of religion cannot be understood effectively in isolation from the effects of social crises on individuals.

The methodology and conceptual framework adopted in this research are also different from traditional ones. In his classic 1962 book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Thomas Kuhn has revealed that scientists at any time appear to be emotionally committed to a shared set of ideas, and will not even consider discarding these ideas unless their 'maladjustment' to the nature they attempt to explain become noticeably and unbearably great. In other words, scientists are trained to learn a dominant paradigm

at that time, and a bundle of 'good ideas' of a paradigm give scientists the foundations of their conceptual framework. Consequently, scientists commit themselves to the certain paradigm with considerable eagerness, and they make the doing of science largely mechanical.¹ As Kuhn argues, it seems natural because not only scientists but also historians, without a paradigm, would drown in the bewildering sea of natural or historical phenomena, unable to tell which facts are important and which are not. Thus, it is important for any researcher to have a paradigm or conceptual framework, but more important on which paradigm we conduct our research.

Normal science what Kuhn calls is the activity that aims to elaborate the paradigm and to work out everything that its ideas imply. This kind of science, however, is very conservative, as it does not question the 'good ideas' of any paradigm, but take it on faith that the widely accepted view or methodology in the discipline holds the key to understanding almost everything. As Kuhn argues,

Normal science ... whether historically or in the contemporary laboratory ... seems an attempt to force nature into the performed and relatively inflexible box that the paradigm supplies. No part of the aim of normal science is to call forth new sort of phenomena; indeed those that will not fit the box are often not seen at all.²

He goes on to say,

Normal science repeatedly goes astray. And when it does – when, that is, the profession can no longer evade anomalies that subvert the exiting tradition of scientific practice – then begin the extraordinary investigations that lead the profession at least a new set of commitments, a new basis for the practice of science. The extraordinary episodes in which that shift of

¹ Kuhn 1962.

² Ibid:24.

professional commitments occurs are ... scientific revolutions. They are the tradition-shattering complements to the tradition-bound activity of normal science.³

In short, Kuhn argues that normal science fills in and expands the existing network of 'good ideas', and does not aim in any way to produce fundamental revisions in how scientists see the world. Ironically, however, this normal science itself inevitably turns up anomalies and inconsistencies, and leads to the growth of an internal stress within the existing fabric of ideas. And when this maladjustment reaches some threshold, the normal science breaks down. Scientists then find that they cannot further by accumulation and extension, but have to annul and reconstruct some portion of the existing network.

Michael Polyani came to the similar conclusion that scientists are not essentially so unbiased and sensible as they would have you believe. Instead, he found:

There must be at all times a predominant accepted scientific view of the nature of things ... A strong presumption ... must prevail ... that any evidence which contradicts this view is invalid. Such evidence has to be disregarded, even if it cannot be accounted for, in the hope that it will turn out to be false or irrelevant.⁴

I observe the same problems as Kuhn and Polyani in the current study of history. Many historians are also still based largely on a mechanical paradigm in which researchers have sought linear causal relationships as explanations. For example, in attempting to explain religious change, only the direct causes for the change, such as individuals' direct actions and the social and economic environment of the time are explored and

³ Ibid:6.

⁴ Polyani 1963:1012,

analysed. This, however, neglects the mutual interactions of these elements and other superficially unrelated elements of change. Needless to say, not all sophisticated history writing can be reduced to the tradition-bound activity of normal science or simple linear and reductionistic explanation, and I do not seek to deny the very real importance of studies of political and economic influence on the evolution of religion. Nonetheless, a mechanical paradigm that has long tradition since the time of Francis Bacon (1561-1626) and Rene Descartes (1596-1650) became the underlying principles not only for the construction of a modern civilisation but also for historical research, especially after the industrial revolution in the 18th century and the fast development of modern technologies. This paradigm treats the world as lifeless existence – a mere geometrical extension in which the whole can be decomposed, analysed linearly, or reduced to their independent component parts. As a result, modern research methodology developed with this paradigm, and many historians have been exploring mostly the linear or multi-linear causal relationships.

Humankind, though, is part of nature, and nature is essentially nonlinear. Scientists in many fields have discovered in the past several decades that nonlinearities are intrinsic to nature's coherence. The climatic system, for example, like most other natural and social systems, behaves in a nonlinear fashion: it does not necessarily change proportionally in response to a change in external forcing, or input is not proportional to output. In fact, the system is choked with feedbacks, both positive and negative, that ensure that this nonlinearity will prevail.

Nonlinear systems are characterised by a phenomenon known as sensitivity to initial

conditions, or as it is more popularly known the butterfly effect: in extremely unstable conditions, minor variations in initial conditions can lead to unpredictable results. In climate systems, for example, a butterfly stirring the air with the beating of its wings could, through a complex and long chain of unpredictable events, generate a storm⁵. Systems that exhibit such nonlinear behaviour are often referred as chaotic or complex systems, and it has been strongly asserted by both natural and social scientists that such nonlinearities are clearly abundant in most social phenomena⁶.

In a nonlinear paradigm, the whole cannot be reduced or analysed in terms of simple subunits acting together. For example, traditional Chinese historical approaches collectively recorded the various events that happened at certain times in chronological order: 'a new emperor acceded to the throne; triplets were born in a village; there was an epidemic of smallpox in some area; unseasonable flowers came into blossom', and so on. It was believed by Chinese that such incidents occurring simultaneously or synchronically were somehow related to one another. They were considered to be integrated and thus to represent some significant meaning as a whole.⁷ In other words, some transcendental power was understood to exist behind such incidents, and not just a superficial causal relationship.

Similarly, Aristotle believed that individual objects and systems subordinate their behaviour to an overall plan or destiny. Aristotelian teleology or finalism asserts that

⁵ Gleick 1988:8.

⁶ Elliott & Keil 1997:64-78.

⁷ Yuasa 1993:8-16.

living organisms behave as a coherent whole because there exists a full and perfect *idea* of the entire organism, even before it develops. The development and behaviour of living things is thus guided and controlled by the global plan in order that it should successfully approach its designated end. And Aristotle extended this animistic philosophy to the cosmos as a whole. He regarded the universe as a kind of gigantic organism, unfolding in a systematic supervised way towards its prescribed destiny.

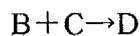
Along similar lines, the contemporary theoretical physicist David Bohm has asserted that there exists a basic reality that he calls the *holomovement*, and that all entities are relatively stable, independent and autonomous features of this *holomovement*. Bohm suggests, “the basic order of this movement is therefore enfoldment and unfoldment. So we’re looking at the universe in terms of a new order, which I’ll call the enfolded order, or the implicate order”⁸. In the *implicate order*, everything is woven together in invisible links and everything is folded into everything. The universe is one whole and is in some sense unbroken. The whole universe is enfolded into each part actively through the *holomovement*, which is an unbroken and undivided totality.⁹ Bohm states that, “both mind and matter are ultimately in implicate orders” and that “they both arise from some greater common ground, or perhaps they are not really different. Perhaps they interweave”¹⁰. In this conceptual framework then, just as in traditional Chinese historical approaches and Aristotelian teleology, cause and effect are inseparably intertwined.

⁸ Bohm 1985:12.

⁹ Bohm 1980:156-157, 178-9.

¹⁰ Ibid:19.

However, the perspective of the traditional Chinese historical approaches and the Aristotelian *idea* has been covertly discouraged in the discourse of current major studies. They survived somewhat longer in biological sciences, since living organisms distinctly display teleological behaviour. But most natural and social scientists (including historians) have become strongly mechanistic and reductionistic in their approach, as Darwin's theory of evolution and the rise of modern molecular biology have led to the definite rejection of all forms of animism or teleological worldview. And Cartesian analysis, in which all physical phenomena are reduced to the linear relationships or mechanical behaviour of their elementary constituents, has proved extremely successful, leading to many new and important discoveries. However, such dominant conceptual framework based on Cartesian analysis is now beginning to fall apart in some disciplines. In the field of molecular biology, for example, Stuart Kauffman made an intriguing discovery that some molecules act as catalysts – that is, they act to speed up the chemical interactions between others. And he found that there would inevitably arise in the network what he called an autocatalytic set: this presents a set of circumstances in which 'scaffolding' is almost inevitable, rather than being just a coincidence. Suppose we have a collection of molecules A, B, C and so on that catalyse each other in diverse ways. If we represent such catalytic reactions with arrows, $X \rightarrow Y$ means that X is a catalyst in a reaction that produces Y. Then several catalytic pathways might coexist, say



C+D→E

E→B

B+D→C

Ultimately, far down the line, Y and Z might catalyse A and B and complete the linking up, so that every molecule would be catalysed by some other one.¹¹ Kauffman's finding indicates that the existence of such loops was absolutely certain if the number of kinds of molecules in the chemistry of soup was large enough, but not necessary to be very large. Moreover, his astonishing discovery signifies that traditional causal relationships do not apply in an autocatalytic network. Cause and effects, as David Bohm has asserted, are inseparably intertwined here, because the rebuilding of one portion of the network necessitates changes in neighbouring regions. And these changes, in turn, require still further changes elsewhere. Thus, a change in a single element could trigger an avalanche of coevolution that could affect an entire system in our environment. On the basis of this insight and new various research methodologies which I discuss below, I aim to fathom what lies behind religious change in pre-medieval Japan and to see patterns at work where traditional historians have never seen before.

My propositions in this thesis may appear paradoxical to traditional historians, or some arguments may not reach a satisfactory 'level of proof' from their viewpoint. However, what sort of additional evidence would constitute 'proof' for the earliest periods of Japanese history. I think that speculation ground not only in theory but also in

¹¹ Kauffman, 1993.

inter-disciplinary perspectives is entirely appropriate. For to be inter-disciplinary is to recognise that there is more than one way of knowing about how the world works, problems can be addressed from multiple vantage points, and a range of possible solutions may be implemented.

Different level or quality of proof may also derive from a conceptual framework that I have adopted in this study. My research methodology is based on a perspective that a more appropriate framework for studying religious change might be the complexity theory and an evolutionary paradigm. In other words, somewhat different 'yardsticks' from those of traditional historians are employed in this study.

The new conceptual framework or different 'yardsticks' have been applied and shown to be very effective in the fields of economics, sociology, political science and psychology, but never in history. Nevertheless, a few historians are beginning to see that physics may indeed offer a new conceptual framework well suited to our task. For example, the Oxford historian, Niall Ferguson has recently noted that many philosophers of history who have argued in the 20th century about whether history was a 'science' seem not to have grasped that their notion of science was an out-of-dated relic of the 19th century. Ferguson also suggests chaos theory as an important conceptual tool for the historian, one that 'reconcile the notion of causality and contingency'.¹²

¹² Ferguson 1997:72.

The purpose of classical science was to formulate laws from which the behaviour of every aspect of nature could be deduced. In order to do this it was necessary to develop models that simplified reality. This simplification, however, discourages the full realisation of the extent of abstracting that has gone on. Consequently, conclusions are drawn about the real world by deduction from abstractions with little awareness of danger involved. Daly and Cobb regard this phenomenon as the fallacy of misplaced concreteness, which is the tendency for practitioners of reductionist disciplines to lose sight of the level of abstractness at which they operate and draw unwarranted conclusions about the real world.¹³ In short, we tend to fuse over details while ignoring the broader picture.

The new conceptual framework based on the complexity theory and an evolutionary paradigm, which may be termed *ecological history*, meets these concerns with traditional disciplinary history by encouraging the following features. First, it emphasises system science, as opposed to classical science, which views the world as a nonlinear, interactive whole with complex feedback mechanisms. Second, it argues that history is finite systems with a one-way (irreversible) rather than a circular flow of high quality resources (low entropy). Third, it emphasises sustainability, which suggests that any human activity should be compatible *with the long-term limits* of the biophysical world. Finally, ecological history is trans-disciplinary in nature in which it may include principles of many disciplines and combines input from various disciplines.¹⁴

¹³ Daly & Cobb 1994:35-36.

¹⁴ Cf. Goudy & O'Hara 1995; Costanza et.al 1997.

Therefore, even if we reach a different level or quality of proof from the viewpoints of traditional historians, it seems a worthwhile endeavour. Moreover, it is highly possible that the different conceptual framework would help put forward new hypotheses and stimulate further research and findings. I hope to demonstrate in this thesis that the incorporation of the new conceptual frameworks, such as a nonlinear dynamic perspective and an evolutionary paradigm, into historical research indeed provides better research techniques and understanding of not only religious change, but also of history in general.

By investigating the mutual interaction of elements and other superficially unrelated elements and also by synthesising across disciplinary boundary, this thesis is designed as a contribution to theory, rather than a record of newly discovered facts. Ultimately this thesis is not mere historical description of pre-medieval Japanese religious change in face of social crises. It is about ubiquitous patterns of change and organisation that run through pre-medieval Japanese religion, which enable us to conduct comparative study with other culture. We shall soon find that a self-destructive mechanism and the passage of consciousness are at work in all these settings, very possibly because a critical state derived from both externally and internally underlies their dynamics.

As the ultimate goal of this thesis is to explore the implicate order or the autocatalytic effects in the history of social crises and the evolution of Japanese religion, it needs to employ methodologies different to those of the tradition-bound historical approach. Therefore, several new methodologies based on a nonlinear conceptual framework for the study of history are applied to this research. Among these are the complexity

paradigm, the psychological theory of altered states of consciousness, the natural-cycle of population dynamics, and the impact of climatic influence. All these methodologies are in turn related to the new conceptual framework what I call the life-dynamic paradigm. It is based on holistic understanding and a life-dynamic worldview of any systems. In other words, it is a new conceptual framework that does not regard a research subject as inorganic machines but as living organisms or species; indeed, it maintains the strength of the mechanical paradigm without falling into a reductionistic approach of the mechanical paradigm. In short, the life-dynamic paradigm is a dialectical *aufheben* of the mechanical paradigm.

With respect to the study of pre-medieval Japanese religion, however, it is inevitable that the research is bounded by the court-centred approach of traditional historiography, since almost no evidence is available for the common people during this period. The records of common religious activities are still very fragmentary during the Nara period, and gradually increase from the late Heian period. Thus, we cannot reconstruct the religious change of the pre-medieval Japanese religion from broader perspective. This limitation, however, can be alleviated substantially by the adoption of the life-dynamic paradigm. A biologist Arthur Koestler, for example newly coined the terms, *holon*, which refers to the holistic aspect of an organism in which each part of the organism behaves as an independent and an autonomous whole for the lower parts of the given organism while each part functions harmoniously and is united as a whole for the higher organisation, such as molecules for a cell, cells for a tissue; tissues for an organ, organs for a given organism. This hierarchical system has been named *holarchy*, because the holistic aspect of the system is emphasised and the self-contained meaning of

dominance and superiority-inferiority in the word hierarchy is avoided¹⁵. I combine these concepts of *holon* and *holarchy* with the Gaia theory¹⁶, which regards the earth itself as a gigantic living being, capable of maintaining its homeostatic balance for life-support. It claims that life shapes the environment as much as the other way around.

If we take these perspectives, it becomes possible to regard a group, a society and the world itself as one kind of life forms capable of homeostatic function, that is, the inner balance that maintains an organism's internal environment despite external change for its life-support. Each human, as an organism, makes up the higher organisation of a family, a group, a society, and the world with his/her environment, and every human, family, group, society and the world behaves as an independent whole and simultaneously they exist as an integrated whole. In other words, the world itself can be regarded as one gigantic living organism; each country as a sub-organism that forms the holarchy of the world organism, each society as a sub-organism that forms the holarchy of the country organism, and each human as a sub-organism that forms the holarchy of the group or social organism. Consequently, despite the class difference, historical phenomena such as religious change may be considered both as a collective result of the harmonious and integrated behaviour of the entire population, which constitutes the evolution of the world system¹⁷.

¹⁵ Koestler 1972.

¹⁶ Lovelock 1979.

¹⁷ The view of the world as an ecological or physical whole is not new to geographers, but the notion of the world as a single social system is relatively recent and has developed largely on the foundational work of Immanuel Wallerstein (1979). He regards the world as a single world system that exists beyond the boundaries of individual nations, and that is

This research is also conducted under the hypothesis that when the growth of each organism reaches its maximum development within an old niche, or when the old niche undergoes some ecological change, people in a society as a whole expand the old niche or finds a new niche for their life-support and further growth. In other words, this behaviour signifies the natural process whereby each organism evolves into a new form of organism as a result of the disturbed balance of the existing habitat segregation by ever-growing organisms. Furthermore, since it is implicit in Bohm's holomovement and Koestler's holarchy, each organism is mutually connected at the bottom, at the deeper level of collective unconscious, and is in communication with others while behaving autonomously, and each sub-organism makes up a whole organism as in the Gaia theory. Thus, each organism strongly influence one another and each organism outgrows its former self and continues to exist as the holarchical structure of Gaia by means of imitation, trading, and migration, or sometimes by means of conflicts.

based largely on economic processes. He argues that the structure of individual societies must be viewed within the context of the larger system. He also argues that the modern world system began in Europe in the 16th century, and had encompass the whole world by the 19th century; however, others believe that it goes back much further. William McNeil (1983) and George Modelski (1991), for example, assert that it begins with Sung China around 1000, whereas Frank and Gills (1993) convincingly argues that the contemporary world system has a history of at least 5,000 years. I agree with Frank and Gills that the entire process of world system history needs to be considered as a whole, since it has exhibited significant uniformities ever since its inception in the Middle East some 5000 years ago. I also agree with them that, as opposed to Wallerstein's modern world system, they pose a more humancentric challenge to Eurocentrism. But it would also be wrong to dismiss the homeostatic function of a world system as well as the effects of environment on the system, for environment exerts significant influence on human mind and behaviour.

In this research, social crises, such as epidemics, famines, imbalanced population, climatic fluctuations, and natural disasters, are hypothesised as the principal motive for communication or mediums of collective unconscious among organisms. However, not only is the case that the social crises influence the worldviews and sociocultural systems, but also the worldviews and sociocultural systems themselves influence susceptibility to particular crises. In other words, as new sociocultural systems based on new worldviews are brought about by social crisis, new social crisis will be generated, and these reciprocal relationships constitutes a semi-circular loop of endless change. As a result, worldviews, sociocultural systems, and social crises coevolve in an expanding helical form (see Figure 1).

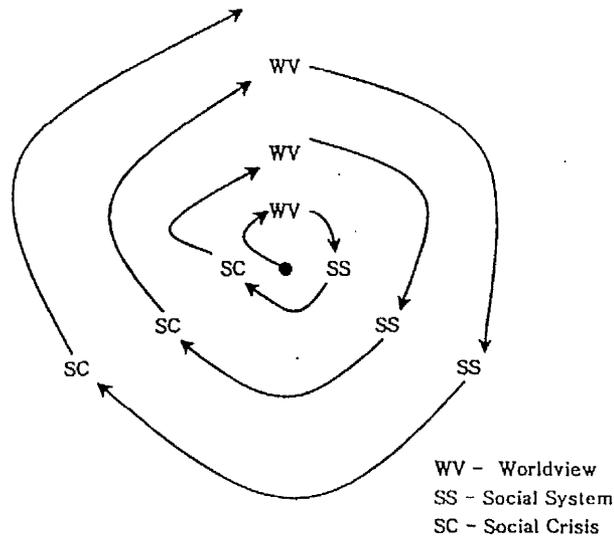


Figure 1 Helical Coevolution of Worldview, Social System, and Social Crisis

Before going any further, it is important first to define the various methodologies adopted in this thesis for the justification of my application of the life dynamic world paradigm.

1. Theories of Chaos and Complexity

In 1977, Ilya Prigogine received the Nobel Prize for Chemistry for the development of thermodynamic methods of understanding irreversible processes, known as the theory of dissipative structures. In brief, when a system is pushed away from thermodynamic equilibrium into a nonequilibrium, or what Prigogine calls far-from-equilibrium; systems develop a distinctive pattern of self-organised structure and order. This process is called *dissipative* because a distinctive structure is self-organised by the dissipation of energy in the system to outside. A familiar example is a whirlpool in a bathtub. Once it is formed, the nonequilibrium twirl can be steady for long periods if water is constantly added to the tub and the drain is kept open.

Since Ilya Prigogine's theory of dissipative structure, scientists have discovered more about the process of self-organisation. It has been found to be applicable not only to the natural sciences but also to social sciences such as sociology, economics, and psychology. A similar attempt has not yet been made in historical research, but Prigogine and Stengers described the phenomenon in anthropomorphic terms, which are quite enlightening for our purposes. For instance, they call the molecules they studied "hypnons" and "sleep-walkers". At equilibrium, these molecules behave as independent entities; they ignore one another. Nonequilibrium, however, wakes them up: when they sense chaos, they start communicating with one another to find a new order in co-operation¹⁸.

¹⁸ Prigogine & Stengers 1984:180-181.

Chaos is thus a dynamic aspect of all living systems. Organisms would stop progressing, or even cease to exist without chaos. Prigogine also suggests that if the universe consists of open systems that are capable of exchanging energy or matter with their environments, then the universe itself may be regarded as a gigantic dissipative structure that carries on self-organisation and evolution.

One of our tasks in this study is to examine whether the history of pre-medieval Japanese religion followed the same tenet postulated by Prigogine and complex theorists. The answer, I suggest, is to be found in both equilibrium and nonequilibrium settings. Since an existent historiography does not incorporate the theories of chaos and complexity, it lacks the clear distinction between equilibrium and nonequilibrium during which a certain historical change takes place. Thus, many historians have searched for gradual trends or cycles as a way of finding meaning and making sense of history. These notions, however, arise only in equilibrium setting. In his *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, for example, Paul Kennedy presented the idea that the natural build-up and release of stress in the global network of politics and economics determine the large-scale historical rhythm of our world. In essence, he argues that the economic power of a nation naturally waxes and wanes. For as time change, some nations are left clinging to power that their economic base can no longer support; other find new economic strength, and naturally seek greater influence. The stress usually finds its release through armed conflict, after which the influence of each nation is brought back into rough balance with its true economic strength. Kennedy also implies four very

general phases, but its periodicity is unspecified and there is no discussion of testing.¹⁹

I think his notion of history holds true in equilibrium setting, but not in nonequilibrium. In other words, it is only one side of a coin, and we cannot ignore the other side of the same coin. If Prigogine's proposition holds true with human beings, they behave as independent or opponent to one another at equilibrium, but once they sense chaos, they start cooperating to find a new order. At this nonequilibrium, truly dynamic change takes place. Thus, I suggest that appropriate tools to explore the other side of the same coin should be found in nonequilibrium physics, which is specifically tuned to understand the nature of self-organisation and emergent structure.

Self-Organisation and Emergent Structure

Self-organisation is one of the key concepts for understanding the emergence of any new system. Self-organisation may be defined as "the process by which microlevel units 'self-organise' into macrolevel structure...without external 'cause'. Thus, self-organisation produces emergent structure"²⁰. For example, if we let sand drip from a tube upon the ground for a few hours, we will see sand piling and occasional avalanches of sand grains. Even using the most sophisticated supercomputer, we cannot predict the path of a single grain of sand in such an avalanche because avalanches are not linear phenomena but a chaotic system. However, the shape of the sandpile itself is unchanged by the falling grain of sand, because the sand piling is a self-organising system²¹. In

¹⁹ Kennedy 1987.

²⁰ Mihata 1997:37.

²¹ Eve et al. 1997:xxxii.

other words, when components parts of a system cooperate and find order at nonequilibrium, the process is said to be self-organisation. Self-organisation is thus a system in which “groups of agents seeking mutual accommodation and self-consistency somehow manage to transcend themselves, acquiring collective properties such as life, thought, and purpose that they might never have possessed individually”²².

Chaos theory postulates that self-organisation takes place at a certain critical point (nonequilibrium) at which the system undergoes a transformation that results in the new order. Might religious change have been sandpile acting at another level? It is indeed both suggestive and interesting to compare the idea with the basic physics of the sandpile. There, an avalanche starts only when the slope at some point becomes so steep that next falling sand pushes it past a threshold, and sand begins sliding. It seems not wholly inconsequential to suppose that revolutions, war and other dramatic social upheavals like religious change may all echo the workings of an underlying historical process with the same susceptibility to upheaval. In fact, scientists have now discovered the mathematical fingerprints in the working of all the upheavals, as well as in the spreading of epidemics, the change in the transportation system, and in many other things. They have also discovered self-similarity in things ranging from the craters that scar the moon’s surface to the plankton floating in the oceans, even in the way the human heart beats. At the heart of our story, then, lies the discovery that networks of things of all kinds – atoms, molecules, species, people, and even idea – have a clear predisposition to organise themselves in the same way. Based on this new conceptual

²² Waldrop 1992:11.

framework, scientists are finally beginning to understand what lies behind tumultuous events of all kinds, and to discern patterns at work where they have never seen before.²³

In this thesis, I will argue that the same is true for religious change: change occurs at a certain critical point or threshold when something must happen to ensure adequate adaptation to a new environment, and at such a moment, change becomes an inevitable necessity and a new religious system is self-organised at nonequilibrium, fundamentally in the same way as a new sandpile after an avalanche of sand grains, but in rather complicated manners and in much longer time frames.

In the wake of social crisis, people communicate together to reach a new type of religion better suited to the demands of the new environment. For example, William McNeil has drawn attention to the synchronic rise of new religions in the Chinese and Roman Empires during a simultaneous occurrence of pandemics²⁴. Both Christianity and Buddhism had already been known to Rome and China respectively by the 1st century, but had not yet gained their full influence. In Rome, however, during the 2nd and 3rd centuries, terrible pestilence struck: the plague of Antoninus from 165-180AD and the plague of Cyprianus from 250-266AD together served to generate many terrified converts²⁵. The church was recognised by the Edict of Milan in 313AD, and by the end of the 4th century Christianity had become the official religion of the empire. Likewise, Buddhism was introduced into China as a system of precepts that taught the

²³ Buchanan 2000:13-14 & 45.

²⁴ McNeil 1976:148-150.

²⁵ Patrick 1967:238-246; see also Cartwright 1996:24-25.

worldly benefits of healing in the midst of the pandemics that raged during the early and late *Han* periods.²⁶ The Chinese were especially interested in finding out whether Buddhism could enhance their knowledge of elixirs and various ascetic practices that believed would help them attain immortality, levitation, and other superhuman powers. Translation of the major Buddhist scriptures took place by at least the middle of the 2nd century and by the time of Tao-an (312-385AD) and Kumārajīva (c.344-409 or 413AD), Buddhism was firmly established in China²⁷.

One of the causes of the rise of these two new religions was people's increased interest in diseases and death at the times of intense social crisis. Jesus Christ appeared as a healing god who saved people²⁸, and in Buddhist sutras there are many scriptures which refer to medical treatment. Both Christianity and Buddhism then, were believed to have some healing and psychic transformative power by people who sought support in these unconventional ordering systems.

Furthermore, since both Christianity and Buddhism were formed in the climate of high susceptibility to diseases, they excelled at dealing with the reality of sudden death²⁹. Both Christianity and Buddhism were able to provide useful explanations for misfortune and ease the anxiety of the people who sought a sense of order and meaning in the middle of chaos. From the examples of Christianity in Rome and Buddhism in China,

²⁶ Kanō 1987.

²⁷ de Bary 1960:273.

²⁸ Yamagata 1981.

²⁹ McNeil 1976:150.

then, it can be seen that if a new ideology can offer better healing power and/or better explanations for misfortunes to people in the middle of social crises, a new religious system may emerge or be adopted at the nonequilibrium of the society.

2 The Natural cycle of population dynamics

Once a certain type of religious system emerges or is adopted at *nonequilibrium* setting, the lifespan of the system, at *equilibrium*, follows the law of natural growth in which, over a certain period of time, the system grows, before declining and eventually becoming lost. This is called a natural lifecycle. The pictorial symbol of a natural lifecycle is a bell-shaped distribution curve, also known as normal or Gaussian distribution (see Figure 2).

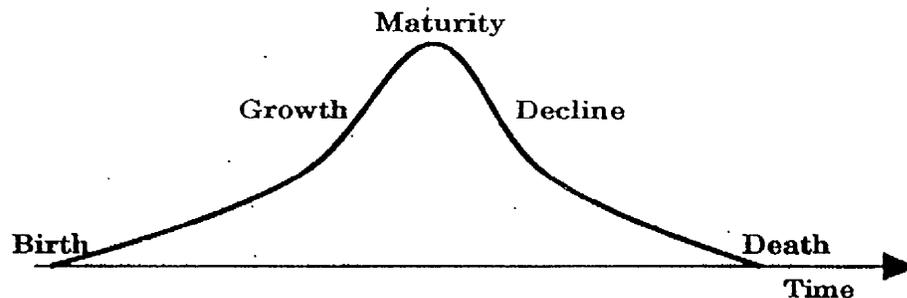


Figure 2 Bell-shaped distribution curve [Modis 1992: 33]

For example, the annual growth rate for a child's height reaches a maximum at a certain point, before declining until his/her height stops increasing. In the case of the 'lifecycle' of a pianist's career, expressed as the number of concerts given annually, an approximate time scale may indicate "Birth" at around 20 years old, "Growth" at 30, "Maturity" at 45, "Decline" at 60, and "Death" around 70. In all cases, the concept of a lifecycle represents the rate of growth, which is nought before the beginning and

becomes nought once again at the end. The bell-shaped distribution curve can thus serve as a visual symbol for natural growth of any system either qualitatively or quantitatively.³⁰ It should not be misunderstood, however, the 'natural' growth in a system does not mean that its rate does not respond specifically to specific stimuli. In fact, it could be significantly affected by the environment and the condition of the system itself. For example, the annual growth rate for a child's height could be less if the child becomes seriously ill or a food crisis strikes the child. Thus, the word 'natural' here connotes a system's dynamic reactions to its environment as well as spontaneous modification or control of a system by its effects.

Alternatively, the cumulative effect of a natural lifecycle is expressed by an S-shaped curve, also known as the logistic curve or function (see Figure 3).

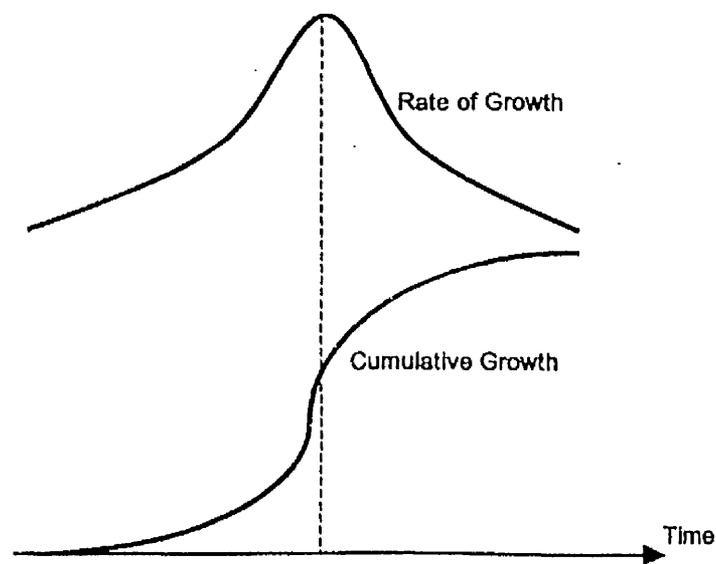


Figure 3 Natural Growth: While the rate of growth follows a bell-shaped curve at the top, cumulative growth traces an S-curve at the bottom [Modis 1992: 34].

³⁰ Modis 1992:32-33.

For example, while the rate of growth of a child's height follows the natural lifecycle of a bell-shaped distribution curve, a child's height *per se* generates an S-curve of cumulative growth going roughly from 2½ feet at birth, to 5 or 6 feet at the age of 18. Or, in the case of the example mentioned earlier, the rate at which a pianist gives concerts over the lifetime of his/her career follows a bell-shaped curve, but the cumulative number of concerts he/she has given up to a certain time produces an S-curve. According to the mathematical equation of growth function (logistic function), the growth rate is smallest at the beginning and at the end of the process, and greatest where both the growth accomplished and the growth remaining are sizable. Furthermore, growth remaining to be accomplished indicates a certain limit or saturation level³¹: in other words, all growth has a ceiling or maximum beyond which it cannot extend.

The recognition of cycle in historical developments is not novel to social scientists. Prior to Paul Kennedy, for example, Toynbee, Quigley, and Eisenstadt have conducted comparative studies of the lifecycles of individual civilisations before 1500³². Modelski and Goldstein found long cycles in political hegemony and war after 1000³³. Wallerstein and Frank identified long cycles in economic growth and technology after 1500³⁴. However, their studies were not supported by numerical data. Thus, their lifecycles of expansion and decay tended to be arbitrary. In contrast, an application of growth functions, such as bell-shaped curves and S-shaped curves, enable us to conduct

³¹ Ibid:33-35.

³² Toynbee 1934-1961; Quigley 1961; Eisenstadt 1963.

³³ Modelski 1978; Goldstein 1988.

³⁴ Wallerstein 1974; Frank 1978.

our study based on not only reasonably sufficient numerical data but also highly resourceful techniques for understanding the effects of sequences of historical development.

In Europe, for example, the construction of Gothic cathedrals began at the end of the 11th century. The rate of appearance of new Gothic cathedrals peaked during a period of 150 years and then declined. However, by 1400, no more Gothic cathedrals were being built as their number had reached a saturation level, much like a species that has filled up its ecological niche (see Figure 4).³⁵ Suffice to say at this moment that we will soon find out a similar pattern in the evolution of pre-medieval Japanese religious systems from the numerical data on the rise of keyhole tombs or shrines and temples, or other verifiable phenomena.

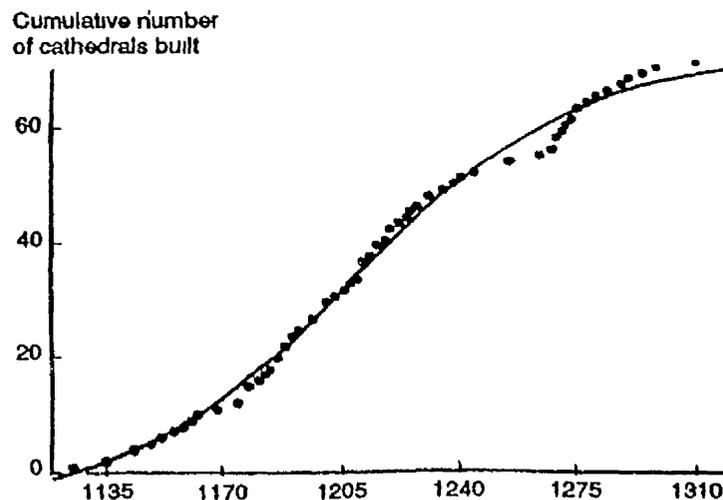


Figure 4 Gothic Cathedrals: The construction of Gothic cathedrals in Europe. The dates refer to the beginning of construction. The fitted curve describes the process fairly well.

[The Data come from L. Cloquet (1912) *Les cathédrales et basiliques latines, byzantines et romanes du monde catholique* (Roman and Byzantine Cathedrals and Basilicas of the Catholic World) Paris, Desclée, De Brouwer et Cie., cited by Modis 1992:243].

³⁵ *Ibid*:64.

The cause of saturation can be understood easily if we look at the exponential population growth of any species. In an ideal environment, one that has no limiting factors, populations grow at an exponential rate. But in real life, some limiting factors always exist, such as food availability (resources), competition for the resources, 'predators', disease, or some other ecological factor. When limited by such factors the exponential growth of the population begins to slow as the influence of these factors increases. The growth rate eventually slows to near zero as the population reaches the capacity for the environment.

In the fields of economics and psychology this phenomenon is known as the law of diminishing return. An example is when, under given conditions, an increase in the amount of labour and capital applied to a fixed amount of land results in a less than proportional increase in the output of food. Again, from our everyday experience, we are intuitively aware that speed and skill in the majority of learning tasks (e.g., how to play football) are typically acquired very rapidly during the early stages of practice, but that the average rate of gain drops off as the number of trials or training time increase. Thus, most learning curves obey a law of diminishing returns as high levels of skill are approached.

The law of natural growth or diminishing return explains why any systems eventually die out, but do not explain why a new system emerges or is adopted. This is because the law of natural growth works only at *equilibrium* setting whereas the emergence or adoption of a new system takes place at *nonequilibrium*. Therefore, in this research study I will be applying the law to the dynamics of religious change, in order to

understand better the natural cycle of pre-medieval Japanese religious systems at equilibrium setting. However, in order to understand the emergence of a new religious system at nonequilibrium, we need two more important conceptual frameworks other than chaos and complex theories. These are the concept of altered states of consciousness (ASCs) and the impact of climate.

3. ASCs and Passage of Consciousness

In order to make sense of the world, people construct and use ideas, images and beliefs about the environment they live in. These world images function as a kind of shock absorber to the world, as they enable us to form expectations of what society is like and facilitate us in acting appropriately. People continuously adjust these ideas, images, and beliefs, in order to adapt to the ever-changing nature of their environments. However, these worldviews nonetheless possess a static quality, in that they are like snap-shots – or cross-sections – of how we perceive the world at a particular moment in time. Maruyama Masao calls this “the inertia of images”³⁶. As milieus become more and more complex and changing, people’s images of the world become increasingly fixed relative to the fluidity of their environment. They thereby actually come to form a barrier between individuals and their milieus. In addition, as people’s prevalent collective images and beliefs of the world become increasingly disconnected from the reality of the changing environment, these images become in some sense more ‘real’ than reality, in that the people using them become disconnected from reality.

³⁶ Maruyama 1961:123-151.

This 'reverie' increases its perpetuity when a knot or an axis for these images exists. Based on the knot, each society at different times and places has established firmly an ordered world known as a cosmos. In spite of various social contradictions, then, the inertia of images can prevent societies from developing new modes of thinking and the creation of new worldviews. A psychologist, Seymour Epstein also notes that when emotionally significant experiences are inconsistent with a person's implicit theory of reality, they may be denied or distorted through the use of psychological defence mechanisms.³⁷ The inertia of the world image can thus be understood as a type of collective psychological defence mechanism, in that it seeks to prevent the uncertainty associated with change. In other words; people avoid entering into chaotic communication for fear of the change that has begun. Instead, they hold fast to the old order and do their utmost to avoid being forced to reappraise their situation. However, when a worldview becomes too disconnected from the actual social environment, unexpected incidents can generate a need for a new worldview.

The assertion made by Maruyama and Epstein is akin to Kuhn's paradigm theory in which the collection of all scientific paradigms forms a kind of network of 'good ideas' glued together and fixed in place by scientists' collective commitment to it until the scientists can no longer evade anomalies that subvert the existing tradition of scientific practice. Likewise, the American historian Conyers Read has laid out a similar view to Maruyama and Kuhn. Read suggested that one of the important lessons available from the study of history is that:

Unless we alert to the necessity of constant re-adjustment we create a

³⁷ Epstein 1983:219-47.

condition of maladjustment which is the inevitable forerunner of Revolution, whether that Revolution takes the Russian or Italian form ... I believe that the study of history has an important social function to perform just this sort.³⁸

Read highlights the significance of maladjustment as the unavoidable forerunner of revolution, namely a building up of some kind of internal stress heralds any episode of revolutionary upheaval. With regard to the origin of the French revolution, Thomas Carlyle also observed:

Hunger and nakedness of nightmare oppression lying heavy on twenty-five million hearts: this, not the wounded vanities or contradicted philosophies of philosophical advocates, rich shopkeepers, rural noblesse, was the prime mover in the French revolution; as the like will be in all such revolutions, in all countries.³⁹

Implicit in this observation is the recognition that maladjustment, and human distress goes with it, have to reach some kind of threshold or severity before the inertia of image will give way. The distress has to be great enough to overcome what another historian Peter Novick calls "that greatest of all social forces – inertia"⁴⁰.

In this thesis I argue that social crises initiated by epidemics, famine, and other natural disasters served to untie the "knots" of certain worldviews and their associated religious systems, and that out of these times of chaos new religious systems arose at nonequilibrium setting. This argument will be supported by psychophysiological evidence of the relationship between chaotic experience and ASCs, and I will propose a model called *passage of consciousness* that attempts to explain phases of consciousness. This model proposes that ASCs may have created fluid states of consciousness for both

³⁸ Read, quoted in Novick 1988:192.

³⁹ Carlyle, quoted in Carr (1990)

⁴⁰ Novick 1988:192.

religious leaders and followers, which enabled to shatter tradition and encouraged the evolution of Japanese religious systems.

What are ASCs?

ASCs are particular states of consciousness represented by a radical change of subjective experiences from ordinary states. They are characterised by changes in cognitive processes such as attention, perception, imagery, and memory; changes in behaviour such as speech; and changes in physiology such as levels of particular neurohormones, and brains waves⁴¹. To be more precise, ASCs are characterised by the following factors: a feeling of loss of control (“I no longer have a will of my own.”); intensive emotions (“I am afraid without being able to say exactly why”); an altered visual perception (“I see scenes rolling by like in a film with my eyes closed”); a changed body image (“I do not have a body anymore”); a changed time sense (“I experience past, present and future as a oneness); alterations of thinking (“My thoughts repeatedly became disconnected”); and a change of meaning of various percept (“Things around me had a new, strange meaning for me”).⁴² Thus, most previous researchers have defined ASCs as states of consciousness, which are qualitatively and quantitatively different from ordinary states, induced by unusual stimulation and experiences.⁴³

The significance of ASCs for our purpose is that they entail different modes of

⁴¹ Farthing 1992.

⁴² Glicksohn 1993:3-4.

⁴³ Tart 1986:159-170.

cognition⁴⁴ which would dissolve the “inertia of images” or “maladjustment”. The postulates constructed early in life or previous society are particularly important because they exert a formative influence in the development of later postulates. Unless a given experience is of unusual significance, it is not likely to affect a basic postulate. The basic postulates in people’s ‘reality’, however, are generalisations that were originally derived from emotionally significant events. Early formulations about one’s world and the effects of one’s behaviour upon it are only approximation, subject to various sorts of errors, such as inappropriate generalisations and mis-attributions. Nevertheless, when ASCs takes place in the mind of people at a critical state of society, or at nonequilibrium setting, even a single mode of new cognition experienced by some religious practitioner can trigger an avalanche of coevolution in the whole society in the same way as a new sandpile is formed after an avalanche of sand grains. Thus, ASCs is likely to unfold new postulates which are distinctively different from old ones.

ASCs may be induced by four means. Firstly, changes in external stimulation such as an abnormal increase or decrease in the amount of sensory input, a change in the variety of sensory input, or a change in the meaning of external stimulation [Type A]. Secondly, a change in physical activity such as an increased quantity of physical activity, or feedback in the form of internal and kinaesthetic stimulation (e.g., dancing) [Type B]. Thirdly, a change in physiological state through the use of psychoactive drugs such as marijuana, LSD, and alcohol, or through hypoxia (oxygen starvation), dehydration, starvation or fasting, and malnutrition [Type C]. Fourthly, a change in focus of attention

⁴⁴ Ibid.:5.

through means such as concentrative meditation or voluntary changes in thinking and attention [Type D].⁴⁵

The significance for religious change lies in the fact that ASCs are an innate disposition of every human brain. Thus, they can be induced in the mind of not only religious professionals but also of the larger population by means of social crises, as these would change the amount of sensory input and external stimulation (Type A) as well as physiological state (Type C). Moreover, in the face of social crises, the larger population often engaged enthusiastically in various religious activities, such as shamanic dancing, *tōka*, *goryō-e*, *nenbutsu* dancing, and *nenbutsu* chanting (Type B & C). Therefore, it is evident that not only religious professionals but also the larger population, in the wake of social crises, experienced ASCs, although we cannot neglect the fact that the quality and depth of ASCs by the larger population may be quite different from those of the religious professionals and some prominent figures.

Since the term ASCs in English has generally applied to individual psychology rather than a collective state of mind, it should be better termed nonequilibrium or non-structured states of consciousness (NSCs) to describe the collective state of mental uncertainty that makes change possible, and to distinguish this from the more dramatic experiences of religious leaders, who were perhaps able to respond most creatively to pressures for religious change precisely because they have gone further than the mass of the population in experiencing non-conventional mental states.

⁴⁵ Ibid: 212-214.

NSCs have played an important role for the mass of the population in changing and reconstructing worldviews. However, the significance of NSCs in relation to the evolution of human thought and social change has not been fully investigated, especially in historical analyses of Japanese religion. My contention is that a number of new belief systems emerged or were introduced at personal levels in the past, but only when their emergence or introduction coincided with the timing of the critical or nonequilibrium state of society, and only when they met the requirements of people (at first those of decision makers and later those of the larger population), they were able to grow into a principal religious system in the next generation.

In sum, there are three reasons why ASCs and NSCs are so significant for religious change. Firstly, they promote healing and psychological well-being by such means as shamanic trances, meditation, ascetic training, and *nenbutsu* chanting. Secondly, they function as avenues to new knowledge or experience and sources of creative inspiration especially for religious leaders. These may enable or encourage the development of new religious systems. And thirdly, they function socially within religious rituals and promote group cohesion, and thus, both religious leaders and religious followers promote the development of new religious system in unison.

4. The Impact of Climate

I need now like to turn to the significance of adverse climate on human affairs. The impact of climatic change has long been recognised as one of the factors that demands consideration, though there is and always has been dispute about just how much attention needs to be paid to this variable. For a long time, a small number of historians, and larger number of archaeologists and natural and environmental scientists, have been convinced of the importance of climate as a major independent variables affecting the development of human societies. The most extreme exponents, such as Huntington, Chappell, and Lamb, who may be labelled 'climatic determinists', has asserted that climatic history must be central to our understanding of human history⁴⁶. Although we should be more cautious, eschewing grand generalisations about the significance of climate in world history, we cannot neglect the significance of climatic factors.

In particular, I want to emphasise the effects of adverse climate on epidemics, famines, and racial migrations. Famines cause malnutrition, and studies of the relationship between infections and immunity suggest that the incidence of infectious diseases increases in proportion as people are undernourished. Once a vicious cycle of malnutrition, infections, and immuno-deficiency is established, minor change in one of these parameters can cause an existing infection to become much crueller and epidemics to spread very rapidly.

Famines also initiate racial migrations, and migrants can spread epidemics very rapidly

⁴⁶ Huntington 1915; Chappel 1970: 347-373; Lamb 1972, 1977, & 1995.

from one place to another. For example, famines during the 1st and 2nd cold peak of the Yayoi and Kofun Cold Stage initiated nomadic migration and invasions, which exerted extremely significant effects on the subsequent civilisation and economy of the entire Eurasian Continent. We cannot neglect the fact that, in this context, both Buddhism and Christianity became deeply rooted in the minds of the Chinese and the Roman peoples. Besides, major racial migrations took place in the past 2000 years, when climate turned into cold and dry (see Figure 5).

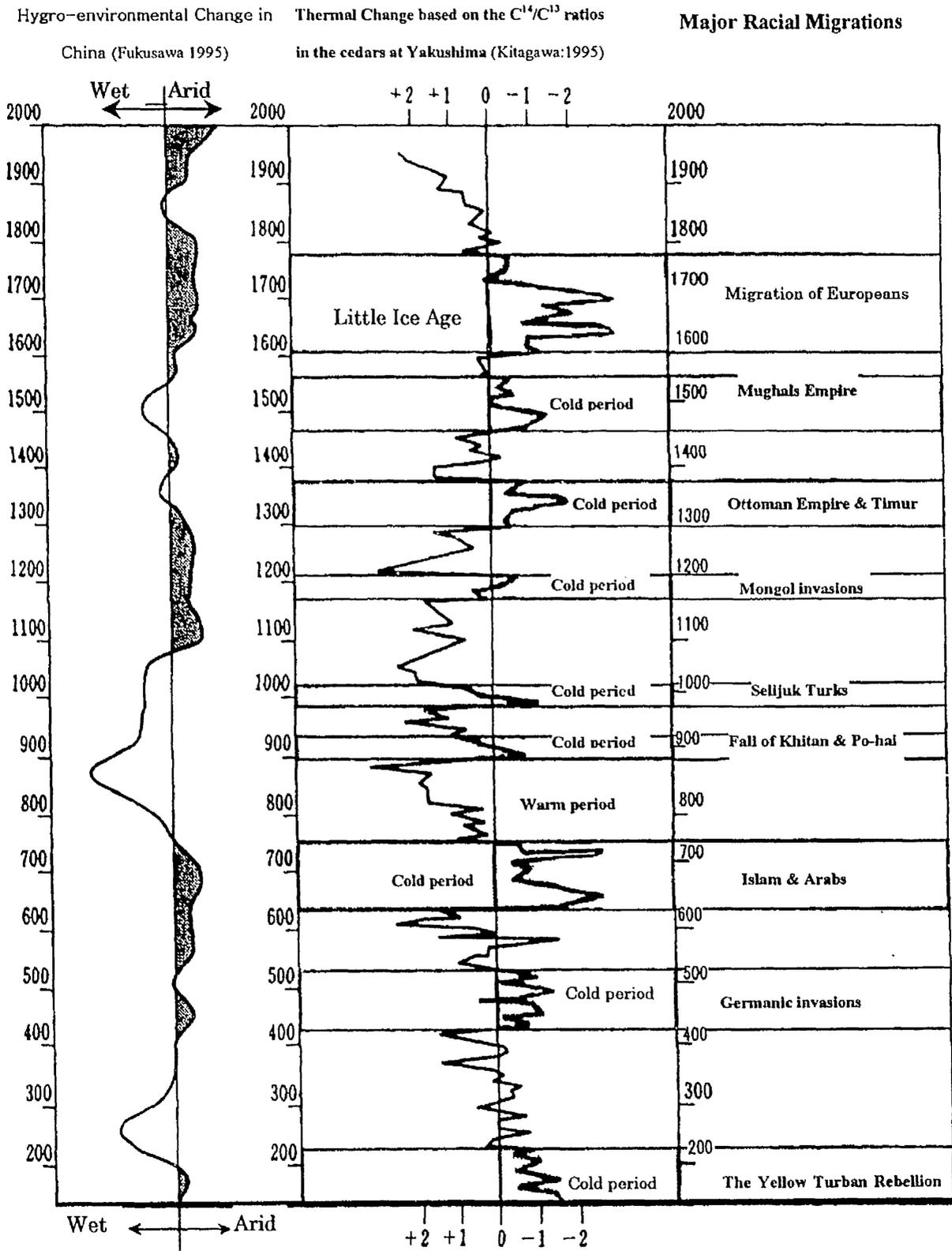
My contention is that, if we look at history from the standpoint of climatic change, we may be able to discern that some incidents, which appear unrelated to one another, are in fact organically linked by means of global climatic change. And societies subjected to climatic stress must not be regarded as passive victims of external forces, but rather that such stress is the nature of a challenge to which a variety of responses is possible, and facilitates the evolution of human society and thought.

We can explain the significance of climate by using the example of major turning points in human history. Itō Shuntarō, who specialises in the history of science and comparative civilisations, distinguishes five major turning points that determined the evolution of human societies. What he calls 'anthropic revolution' was the emergence of humankind about five million years ago. They continued the lives of hunting and gathering until the outbreak of 'agricultural revolution' that was started about 14,000 to 10,000 years ago.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ For climatic impact on the inception of agriculture, see Yasuda 1995a:116-126; Tsuneki 1995:127-142.

Figure 5 Climate and Racial Migrations

(Yasuda 1996:7)



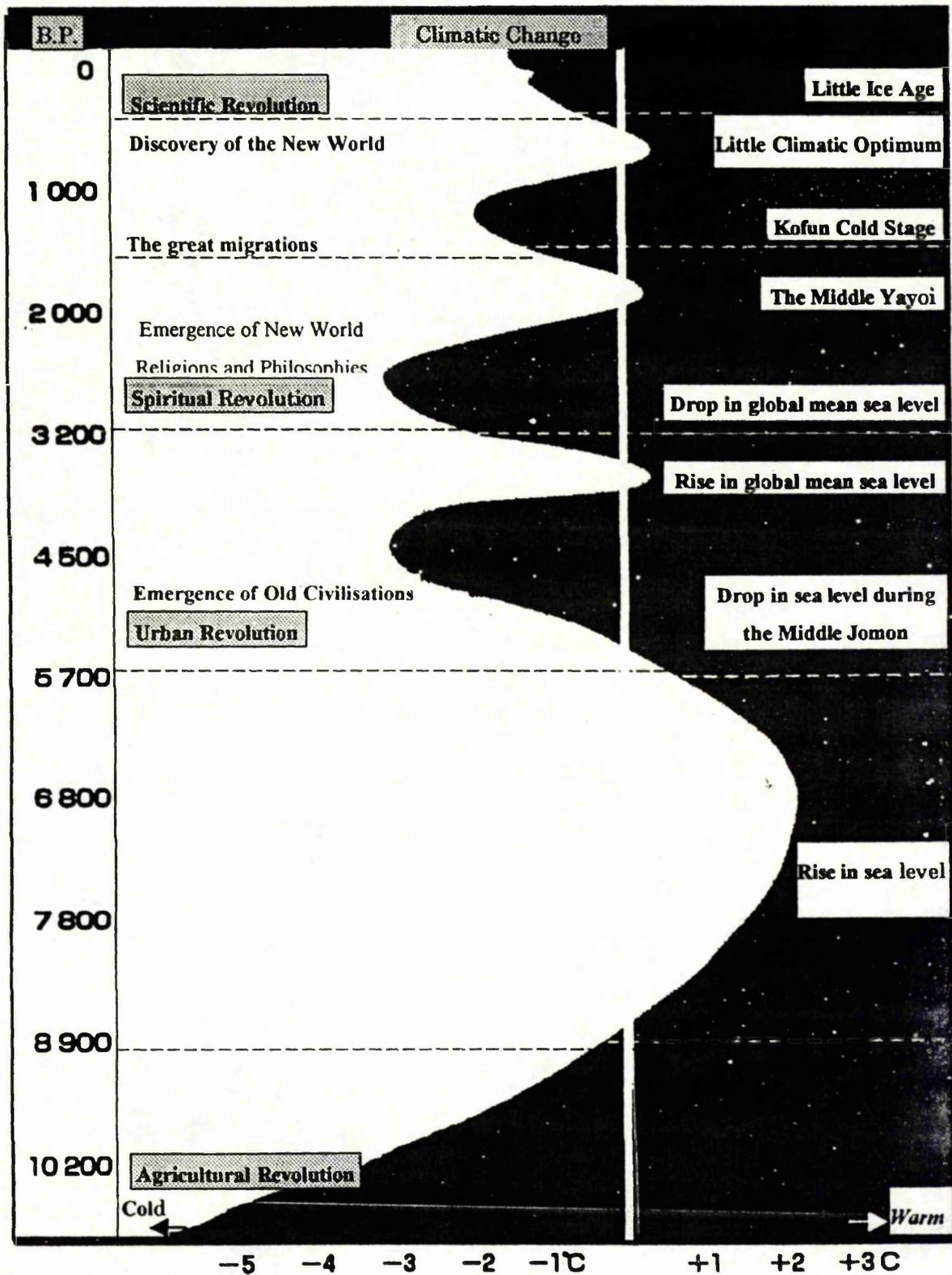


Figure 6 Climatic Change and Major Tuning points in Human History

(Yasuda 2002:85)

A third major turning point was what Itō calls urban revolution, which took place about 6000 to 4500 years ago. During this period, people started large-scale constructions and projects in pursuit of urban living convenience and man-made wealth. A fourth major turning point was what he calls 'spiritual revolution', which took place about 2700 to 2400 years ago. At this spiritual revolution, great philosophers and religionists began to appear in succession and established new world religions and philosophies. A final major turning point was the 'scientific revolution'. He maintains that it took place only in the Western Europe in the 17th century. Rene Descartes introduced the mechanistic view of the world, and Francis Bacon established the ideal of dominance over nature. These became the underlying principles of the worldview that nature is a machine to be used by humankind, and the purpose of humankind is to conquer and completely control nature. At this scientific revolution, the most ultimate form of what he calls 'linear civilisation' was developed, characterized by the pursuit of infinite progress and the linear advance of humankind. Itō contends that the system of nature that had been balanced on equilibrium is now collapsing like an avalanche.⁴⁸

Itō and the environmental archaeologist, Yasuda Yoshinori, rightly argue that global climatic change gave a great impetus to all of these turning points (see Figure 6). For example, the outbreak of urban revolution was initiated by an abrupt change in global climate that took place 5,700 years ago. Climate became warmer around 13,000BP (before the present, the reference year being AD1950). This warming culminated in a period lasting from about 7500 to 5700BP, known as the Hypsithermal Climatic Interval

⁴⁸ Itō 1990; Idem 1996:1-10.

(HCI), when mean annual temperatures were generally 2 to 3°C higher than at the present day. In tropical regions it is particularly notable because during the HCI there were lakes with high water levels across the areas of Africa, Arabia, and India that are now quite arid. This indicates a much wetter climate than that of today and a very different distribution of monsoonal rainfall during the Hypsithermal Climatic Interval.⁴⁹

Climate, however, became cold around 5,700BP.⁵⁰ Accordingly, the intertropical convergence zone⁵¹ (ITCZ) moved southward, and it decreased summer rainfall in such regions as the Mesopotamia lowlands, the Nile, the Yangtze, and the middle and lower reaches of the Indus. The decrease in precipitation, in turn, caused the desertification of these regions. People, thus, had to move to the banks of the great rivers, and it gave occasion for cultural intercourse between agricultural and nomadic peoples. Yasuda concludes that this intercourse prompted the emergence of urban civilisations.⁵² In short, the regions, which had been severely affected by desiccation but located near the

⁴⁹ Kadomura 2002:94-97.

⁵⁰ Yasuda:1995b; Idem 2002:82-89.

⁵¹ The line, or front, of low pressure at which hot and dry continental air meets moist oceanic air and produces heavy rainfall.

⁵² Yasuda: 1990a. The Indus Valley civilisation is generally believed to have flourished around 2500 BC. However, there were other highly developed cultures in the area. Some are thousands of years older. In fact, there was another large river, the ancient Ghaggra-Hakra River or Sarasvati of the Rig Veda, which ran parallel and west of the Indus in the 3rd and 4th millennium BC. Along its lost banks, a whole new set of ancient towns and cities has been discovered. Likewise, along the banks of the Yangtze, Yasuda and his group recently excavated the so-called Yangtze River Valley civilisation flourished from around 3700BC till the rise of the Yellow River Valley civilisation around 2500BC (Yasuda 2000:215-284).

great rivers, developed an urban civilisation. Although climatic change alone may not be attributed to the cause for urban revolution, it is evident that the social crisis induced by global climatic change and its consequent cultural intercourse worked as major catalysts for urban revolution.

It is noteworthy that significant change also took place in Japan during the urban revolution in the Eurasian Continent. The period of urban revolution corresponds to the Middle Jomon (c.3500-c.2000BC). During this period, settlements became concentrated on such regions as the Chūbu Highlands (foothills of Yatsugatake in the central main island), the western part of Kantō, the northern part of Tōhoku, and the southern part of Hokkaidō. The number of dwelling on the Chūbu Highlands, for instance, quadrupled and a new type of culture known as Idajiri Culture flourished. Also at the northern frontier of the main island, another type of culture represented by the Sannai Maruyama site arose concurrently. Most archaeologists consider these developments as the zenith of the Jomon culture.

According to Yasuda, the cause for the prosperity of the Middle Jomon culture can also be attributed to the global climatic change around 5,700 BP. The southward movement of ITCZ brought the Japanese Islands cold and wet climatic conditions. Sea level was lowered by the cooling climate, and coastlines retreated seaward 25 miles in the Kantō region. Wet climate caused the frequent floods, which in turn led to the landfill of coves. Consequently, the environment of the coves, which had supplied abundant marine resources to the Early Jomon people, deteriorated significantly, and the Middle Jomon people started to rely much more heavily on inland food resources, such as acorns and

chestnuts.⁵³

The Chūbu Highlands and the other parts of Japan rapidly populated were most suited places for the growth of these plants, and thus the Middle Jomon people migrated to these regions. Yasuda argues that the concentration of population in some regions caused the emergence of a new type of culture in Japan. For it increased the amounts of information exchanged and surplus labour, which have in turn brought about technical innovation and cultural prosperity.⁵⁴ Here, we can identify the similar type of autocatalytic reactions at work as in the case of the emergence of the Old Civilisations. Therefore, the development of the Middle Jomon culture and of Old Civilisations are organically linked through global climatic change around 5700 BP. These provide us with an initial example of not only the significance of climate on human affairs, but also the evolution of an organism into a new form generated by disturbed environment. As shall be seen in the next chapter, an organic linkage also existed between the spiritual revolution in the Eurasian Continent and the emergence of prototypical religion in Japanese Islands.

Recent development in the reconstruction of paleoclimate recorded in varved lake sediments now enables us to detect abrupt climatic and environmental changes since the last glacial epoch with an error of only a few years.⁵⁵ Thus, we can now study the impact of climate on human affairs with much more precision than before. Nevertheless,

⁵³ Yasuda 2002:87. For the deluge during postglacial epoch, see Koizumi 1995:41-53.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Fukusawa & Yasuda 1995:28-46; Fukusawa 2000:11-30.



there are fundamental limitations of a climatic model, as it does not include many other variables which, apart from climate, affect the various types of human activity. In accounting for the occurrence of a phenomenon such as religious change, for example, many other factors apart from climate must be taken into consideration, as seeking simple correlation between climate and human affairs is of limited value; indeed, it may be very misleading. With this kept in mind, in the chapters that follow I will provide detailed analyses of the relationships of climatic fluctuation and religious change in pre-medieval Japan.

Based on the life-dynamic paradigm that I have described in this chapter, such as the natural lifecycle, complex system, the psychological theory of altered states of consciousness or nonequilibrium states of consciousness, and the impact of climatic and geoenvironmental change, I will explore the reciprocal interaction of religious systems, society, and social crises. In short, this thesis argues that social crises - epidemics, famines, and racial migration in particular - played a critical role in the evolution of pre-medieval Japanese religion.

I also argue that the evolution of pre-medieval Japanese religion involved four distinguishable stages: namely, which I have styled prototypical, archaic, monastic, and confraternal. Each of these systems had a lifecycle consisting of birth, growth, maturity, decline, and death. In the following chapters, I seek to demonstrate how new religious systems emerged out of the nonequilibrium state of society that was generated by both

external and internal crises, and also how these crises significantly affected the lifecycles of these pre-medieval religious systems. I argue that it was not the introduction of new religious systems that led to the dissolution of the old religious systems, but rather the decline and fall of the old that led to the evolution of the new. The fall of the religious systems was inevitable, since the law of natural growth significantly affected their lifespan at equilibrium. It will be shown that the underlying mechanism for its own demise was a biological time bomb contained within the structure of any system.

The scope of this thesis roughly coincides with the period from the spiritual revolution till the beginning of the Kamakura period. Some of the sources, such as the *Nihon Shoki* and *Kojiki*, are notoriously difficult to use with confidence for the early historical period. Ever since pointed out by Tsuda Sōkichi, they have been regarded as not objective descriptions of historical facts but fabrications made by court compilers to justify imperial rule. Because of the over-reactionary movement against the emperor-centred historiography (*kōkoku shikan*), the historicity of these chronicles has been undermined by the post-war scholars. However, many of Tsuda's conclusions have been questioned in recent decades⁵⁶. Inoue Mitsusada, for example, has rightly noted that the opening sentences of the *Nihon Shoki*, which are often cited as an imitation of the Chinese classics, were the indigenous concept to Japan. Inoue asserts that the author of the *Nihon Shoki* only borrowed the Chinese terminologies to describe the origin of the universe, but the separation myth of heaven and earth were distributed all over the

⁵⁶ For the latest criticism of Tsuda's studies on the 8th century chronicles, see Taki Shūzō 2002:166-195.

world.⁵⁷ Obviously, scholars have different views on the historicity of these materials. On behalf of the majority view, however, Kamada Motokazu states that we should accept the broad lines of the chronicles, even if we cannot be entirely sure about specifics, such as names and dates.⁵⁸ Joan Piggott also rightly argues that although the historicity of detailed incidents and personalities recorded in these texts cannot be relied upon without extreme cautiousness, “the mythological and early historical chapters of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* certainly inform our understanding of paradigmatic cultural schemes”⁵⁹. She goes on to say that our opportunity to advance understanding of the pre-historical periods would be greatly impoverished if we neglect these important texts. Moreover, many of recent archaeological excavations are now beginning to reveal that the contents of these chronicles are not as fallacious as previously considered after the World War II. Therefore, these texts maintain the value for the understanding of the mythology, traditions, and religious belief of Japan. We should re-examine these chronicles from more neutral perspectives while we keep in our mind the important arguments made by the post-war scholars.

For anyone using the *Nihon Shoki* and *Kojiki*, we must carefully study the relationship between these chronicles, relationships between these chronicles and other sources and archaeological evidence, and relationships between different chapters in the chronicles.⁶⁰ For these purposes, I have adopted a similar strategy what Ebersole calls

⁵⁷ Inoue 1973:2-109.

⁵⁸ Kamada 1986:68-9.

⁵⁹ Piggott. 1997:40.

⁶⁰ Ibid.289.

“triangulation” - a reading strategy employing each of the two chronicles and foreign mythology in turn to understand the others in a continual dialectic. And the validity of the analyses is further examined in the light of archaeological evidence.⁶¹ With cautious analysis of these chronicles, we should be able to outline the nature and evolution of early Japanese religions.

Lastly, it should be reminded readers that, despite the title of the thesis, the ultimate goal of this research is not the exploration of the impact of specific crises on specific Japanese religious development, but it aims at the discovery of ubiquitous dynamics and pattern for religious change based on the life-dynamic paradigm, a paradigm that a more appropriate framework for studying religious change or history in general is an evolutionary perspective and the complexity theory. Consequently, it is inevitable that the different paradigm has different logic and premises. One of the major premises in this thesis is the notion of self-organisation. It is a process whereby a system, such as a biological cell, a living organism, a society as a whole, produces its own configuration and constitutes itself in time and space. Its underlying logic is autocatalytic growth, which was first discovered in the field of biochemistry, but it has now been proven to hold true for other systems. The principle of autocatalytic growth states that stable configurations that facilitate the appearance of configurations similar to themselves will become more numerous. Such configurations have a high fitness and that gives them a selective advantage over configuration with a lower fitness. A network of such dynamic processes is conceptualised as a control system, which tries to achieve its goals by

⁶¹ Cf. Ebersole 1989:11.

initiating the right actions that compensate for the disturbances produced by the environment (e.g. natural disaster and social crisis).⁶²

The fact that growth requires resources, however, implies that the growth must eventually stop, and that two configurations using the same resources (e.g. support from the government and general public) will come in competitions for these resources. When the system fails to do so in the changing environment, a higher fitness takes over its niche and reiterates another autocatalytic growth. In the evolution of religion, this generates the recurrent formation of new religious systems. For this to happen in Japan, obviously the proximity of the continent, which could have provided new forms of religion, was one important factor that allowed for new forms of religion to be developed repeatedly. So, we are bounded by some limitations without paying much attention to the religious change in other country. Nevertheless, there are clear examples of continental forms of religion that were not adopted in Japan, or adopted only at a certain time (e.g. Pure Land Buddhism and Zen). Thus, the relative isolation of Japan also makes it an ideal field for the discovery of ubiquitous dynamics and pattern.

⁶² Kauffman 1992. Similar concepts can be traced back to Heinz von Foerster's cybernetics, Eigen's (1971) theory of self-producing hypercycles, Maturan's (1972) autopoiesis (self-production), Prigogine's self-organisation.

CHAPTER ONE

THE EMERGENCE OF PROTOTYPICAL RELIGION

The Yayoi period lasted more than 6 centuries, from about 400 BC to AD 250¹. Yayoi culture is usually distinguished from the earlier Jomon culture by new types of pottery design and various kinds of bronze ornaments and weaponry. This period also witnessed the introduction of the wet-rice cultivation that was to become a foundation of subsequent Japanese society and culture. Yayoi society also started initial intellectual communication with the Asian Continent, and thereafter had increasingly extensive cultural, commercial, and diplomatic contacts with the Chinese and Koreans. These interactions with the Asian Continent were to have a significant effect on the Yayoi people too, not least because they were to bring about the onset of epidemics.

During the Yayoi period, society underwent revolutionary transformations twice: firstly from Jomon society to the Yayoi and secondly, from the Yayoi to the Tumulus society. The transition from one period to the next was generally characterised by a unequilibrium structure or liminality in many aspects of society, culture, and mentality. At such times as these, phenomena can often play the part of both cause and effect within the autocatalytic networks involved in various sociocultural transformations. An example might be the introduction of wet-rice cultivation during the shift from Jomon to Yayoi. The first autocatalytic reaction was triggered by the introduction of rice cultivation due to environmental changes, such as migration, overpopulation, impaired

¹ Pearson 1992:17; Imamura 1996:133-134.

quality of life, and climatic change, which resulted in increased productivity, increased population, and a further need of new reclaimed land, which in turn again led to increased production. The same kind of autocatalytic reaction also existed in other aspects of Yayoi society. Examples might include the acquisition and manufacture of bronze and iron tools; active exchange, including migration, trade, and diplomatic communication with Korea and China; and the emergence of social stratification and political units/institutions. During this transitional period, then, a new mentality emerged out of a series of autocatalytic reactions of various sociocultural transformations.

The major aim of this chapter is to explore the emergence and the nature of this new mentality and understanding of the universe that emerged during the turning point from Jomon to Yayoi and continued thereafter to develop during the Yayoi period. This new mentality and understanding of the universe may be called Japan's prototypical religion. It is essential for us to carefully examine the nature of the prototypical religion. For we cannot dismiss the fact that the beginning forms have an important effect on the course of development, in that they help cumulate the results of earlier changes.

By prototypical religion, I mean the worship of '*kami*' that comprised a loosely structured system of practices, creeds, and attitudes rooted in local communities. It emerged out of the old system of beliefs and customs of the Jomon people, under the strong influence of the worldview of migrants from the Asian continent, in order to bring redemption and solution to the imbalanced ecological system. In other words, it was a new system of religion created by an adaptive coping strategy or by an attempt to

impose some order or meaning to counter the potential breakdown of the previous worldview. As a prototypical Japanese religion, it constituted a substratum of Japanese collective unconscious, and it assimilated, adapted or consumed new religious concepts or worldviews, such as religious Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, while developing and retaining its own nature. It also functioned as a mould for the evolution of later Japanese religions and worldviews, and it is therefore essential to understand the nature of this prototypical religion.

In this chapter, it will be argued that the emergence of the prototypical religion took place almost simultaneously with that of other new religions and philosophies across the world. I refer to Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Greek philosophy. In other words, the paradigm shift in mentality was not unique to Japan, but was a universal phenomenon rather of that time and in order to understand more fully the nature of the prototypical religion the reasons for this synchronic emergence of the new paradigm need to be analysed. To do this, I will employ not only archaeological/historical evidence with a global perspective, but also mythological analyses and complex theories. My analysis will also accommodate the co-evolutionary aspects of human and social crises, and their effects on the emergence of prototypical religion.

1. 1 The Synchronic Rise of New World Religions

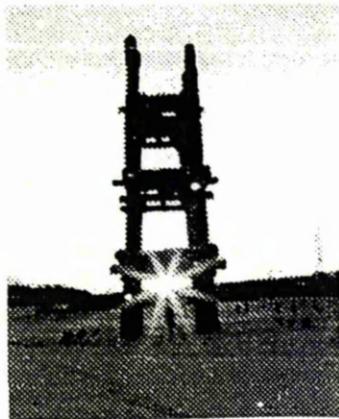
1.1.1 Sophistication of the Jomon Society

It might sound peculiar to assert that the ‘uncivilised’ Jomon people were able to concurrently develop a new type of religion that had some parallel with new world

religion. However, recent archaeological findings are now beginning to challenge the assumption that the Jomon people were uncivilised and barbaric, living in simple and small-scale societies with insufficient reserves and an unpredictable future due to their nomadic existence. The sophistication of the Jomon society is evidenced by the remains of the Sannai Maruyama site, flourished for 1500 years from about 3500BC to 2000BC at the northern tip of Honshu. DNA experiments on the remains of walnuts excavated from the site suggest that the cultivation and management of an orchard of walnut trees were conducted. The site also displays a well-planned community with more than 500 buildings of various sizes, a line of adult graves, a collection of child graves, a rubbish dump, storage holes, clay mining, and mounds where items such as earthenware utensils were collectively dumped. The layout of the settlement evinces the existence of town planning, since there seem to have been rules concerning the location of buildings, dumpsites, and graveyards. Moreover, the scale of some of the buildings, such as a 15-meter tall pillar-supported structure and a huge construction (32-meter long and 10-meter wide) probably used for gatherings, community workshops, and for housing; demonstrates the Jomon people's advanced civil engineering skills, as well as the existence of an efficient management of a strong and super-ordinate political power that was able to bring together the large number of people for constructing such large buildings.

One of the greatest puzzles shrouding the Sannai Maruyama site is the remains of the huge pillar-supported structure consisting of a total of six pillars, in two rows of three pillars each at intervals of 4.2 meters. These six pillars are thought to have supported a

huge rectangular raised-floor building.² We are not certain about the use of this construction, but it is thought to have formed either part of a religious structure, such as a ceremonial house or shrine, or a structure with a more practical use, such as a watch tower, lighthouse, fish-spotting platform, or astronomical observatory. Kobayashi Tatsuo conjectures that they were used as a sacred monument to project the Jomon people's prayers to the skies by worshipping the summer and winter solstitial sunset directly through the row of pillars (see Photo 1). Koyama Shūzō, on the other hand, conjectures that they were related to a ceremonial structure, with the extra function of being highly visible from the surrounding area. In either case, it is certain that such a large-scale pillar-supported structure located at the centre of the village promoted the sense of community, and that the people who lived there with the numerous ritual objects had already developed a considerable ceremonial and religious lifestyle, as well as careful urban planning that appears to have reflected the cosmological scheme of that time.³



Winter Solstitial Sunset at the Sannai Maruyama site in Aomori

² Six is still a sacred and auspicious number for the Ainu.

³ Cf. Okada 1996:16-25; Tsuji 1996:28-29.

The Sannai Maruyama site also revealed that the Jomon people had more advanced processing techniques than were previously believed, as evinced in the mass-production of pottery, lacquerware, jewellery, and stoneware. Their technological level, such as intricate processing techniques to make sewing needles from bone and precise drilling techniques in hard jade, are surprising even to modern man, and some techniques, such as the weaving technique for the production of the bag known as 'Jomon pochette', are still utilised today. Based on such latest results of excavations at the Sannai Maruyama site, an expert on comparative civilisation, Morimoto Tetsurō, has even suggested:

Discovery of the Sannai-Maruyama site creates the possibility that Japan could have been one of the origins of civilization. We might have to rethink our preconception that Japan imported most of its culture from the continent.⁴

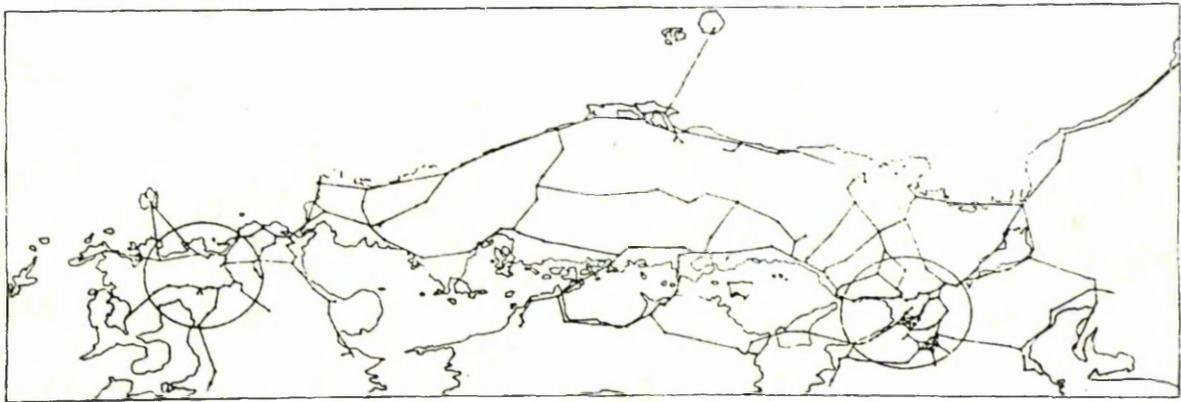
An extensive trade network, too, existed as far back as the Jomon period. The discovery of various items from the Sannai Maruyama site - jade from Niigata, amber from Iwate, Obsidian from Hokkaido, and asphalt from Akita - provided evidence that widespread trade existed between major cultural centres. The means for transportation is thought to have been the sea, and there was an arc-shaped paved road (12-meter wide and 420-meter long) running from the sea toward the centre of the village.⁵

Even after the downfall of the Sannai Maruyama probably caused by cooling climate toward Late Jomon, widespread trade activities continued developing even further. By

⁴ The Japan Times, 7 October 1997.

⁵ Koyama & Okada 2000.

the Middle Yayoi period, the southwestern part of Japan set up a highly sophisticated transportation network. The network consisted of a lattice-like pattern of highly developed sea routes along the coastal lines and main roads, stretching from the north of Kyushu in the west to the Tokai district and the Noto Peninsula in the east (see Figure 1-1). In the Kinai district, the distance from one port village to another was only a few kilometres.⁶ Immigrant communities, who were apparently in charge of transportation, imported great quantities of finished bronze ornaments, their raw material, and iron tools to Japan from the Korean Peninsula. Iron farming implements replaced most stone tools even in the Tohoku district by the Late Yayoi⁷.



Map 1-1 Transportation Network of the Middle Yayoi Period

[Sakai 1990: 246]

The Sannai Maruyama site thus can be regarded as a prototype of ancient metropolis that developed as a centre for religious, political, and economic activities. The social conditions such as a transportation network, metropolis, super-ordinate political power, and the development of commerce in particular, were indispensable to the emergence of

⁶ Sakai 1990: 240-270; Idem 1997:118-139. Both Sakai and Hirose (1997) attribute the emergence of stratifications in the Yayoi society to the information brought to Japan as a result of its intensive contact with the Continent.

⁷ Shiraishi 1993:163-190.

new world religions in the Eurasian continent. Since Jomon society comprised all these social conditions and had intimate relationships with the Asian continent both culturally and economically in particular from Final Jomon, it seems to be the inevitable current of history that a new type of religion was also to develop in Japan under the strong pressure of unhinged environmental conditions.

1.1.2 The Global Crisis of the Old Civilisations

The transitional period from Jomon to Yayoi coincided with the synchronic emergence and subsequent spread of several major new world religions and philosophies, such as Zoroastrianism, Jainism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Ionian philosophy, Pythagoreanism, the Hebrew prophets Ezekiel and the second Isaiah⁸. Karl Jaspers called this period an Axial Age of interconnection and transformation. He regarded the age as humanity's first attempt to make direct contact with the ultimate spiritual reality behind phenomena⁹. The notion of Axial Age corresponds to the spiritual revolution that was briefly discussed in the previous chapter.

This synchronic emergence and the following diffusion of new world religions took place when the Old World was experiencing both crisis and growth at a global level.¹⁰ In China, for example, the weakening of Chow hegemony gave way to the emergence of independent states from around 10th and 9th centuries BC. The year 771 BC marked a turning point when invading 'barbarians' killed Yu-wang. Thereafter, the imperial order

⁸ Teggart 1939.

⁹ Jaspers 1953.

¹⁰ For synchronic global crisis, see Frank & Gills 1993:143-199.

lost its prestige and influence and entered a new phase, the so-called Ch'un ch'iu ('Spring and Autumn') period (774-476BC), characterised by the disintegration of the feudal order. There was also a radical change in the religious system of the Chow Dynasty. According to Werner Eichhorn, the supreme deified ancestor, *shan-ti* was gradually displaced by the celestial deity, *t'ien*. A group of shamanlike practitioners, *wu*, lost their powerful social standing and became lower members of the society. As a result, the once well-ordered relationships between humans and the world of deities and spirits collapsed. From the fifth century, China witnessed the chaotic Warring States period during which the separation of humans and the world of deities and spirits was enhanced and the concept of demons, *kuei*, wielding a maleficent power over the human beings, became prominent¹¹. In addition, the 'hundred schools' of philosophers emerged, and the industrial concentration and the control of hydraulic engineering systems played a great part in the absorption of smaller states by larger ones¹². The unification of China by the Chin dynasty (221-206 B.C.) laid down the basis for all subsequent Chinese history by replacing feudalism with bureaucratism¹³. In China, therefore, the emergence of new world religions took place at a time of great social crisis and change.

Andre Frank and Barry Gills point out that the synchronic movement in the Eurasian Continent can be understood as an indication of the emergence of economic interlinkage and the realization of a new paradigm of economic integration¹⁴. From the

¹¹ Eichhorn 1976:34-35 cited from Unschuld 1985:35.

¹² Needham 1954:31-2.

¹³ Ibid:33.

¹⁴ Frank & Gills 1993:143-199.

politico-economic perspective, they argue that such synchronic change, the so-called world system, existed as early as 3,000 B.C. In order to explain the mechanisms of such an integrated world system, they emphasise the important role of 'barbarian' nomad-sedentary 'civilisation' relationships, which created a centre-periphery structure in the world system. The crucial roles that 'barbarian' nomads played in world history have been postulated by many other historians, such as Arnold Toynbee¹⁵, Owen Lattimore¹⁶, William McNeil¹⁷, Robert Gilpin¹⁸, Eric Wolf¹⁹, and Thomas Hall²⁰. Following Toynbee's "*system implosion*," Robert Gilpin suggested how an older centre can be eventually surrounded and submerged by new states on the periphery, which then burst into the centre. The emergence of the Chin dynasty at the end of the Warring States and the Macedonian empire at the end of classical Greece are good examples of this. As earlier instances of such 'barbarian' impact, Gills and Frank also list the active involvement of hinterland nomads in the political cycles of archaic Mesopotamia. Usurpations of the throne by the newly settled hinterland tribes were regular occurrences.

The principle of the 'barbarian' impact is applicable not only to Mesopotamia, but also to the rest of the world. For instance, both Eberhard²¹ and Gernet²² have investigated

¹⁵ Toynbee 1973.

¹⁶ Lattimore 1962.

¹⁷ McNeil 1964.

¹⁸ Gilpin 1981.

¹⁹ Wolf 1982.

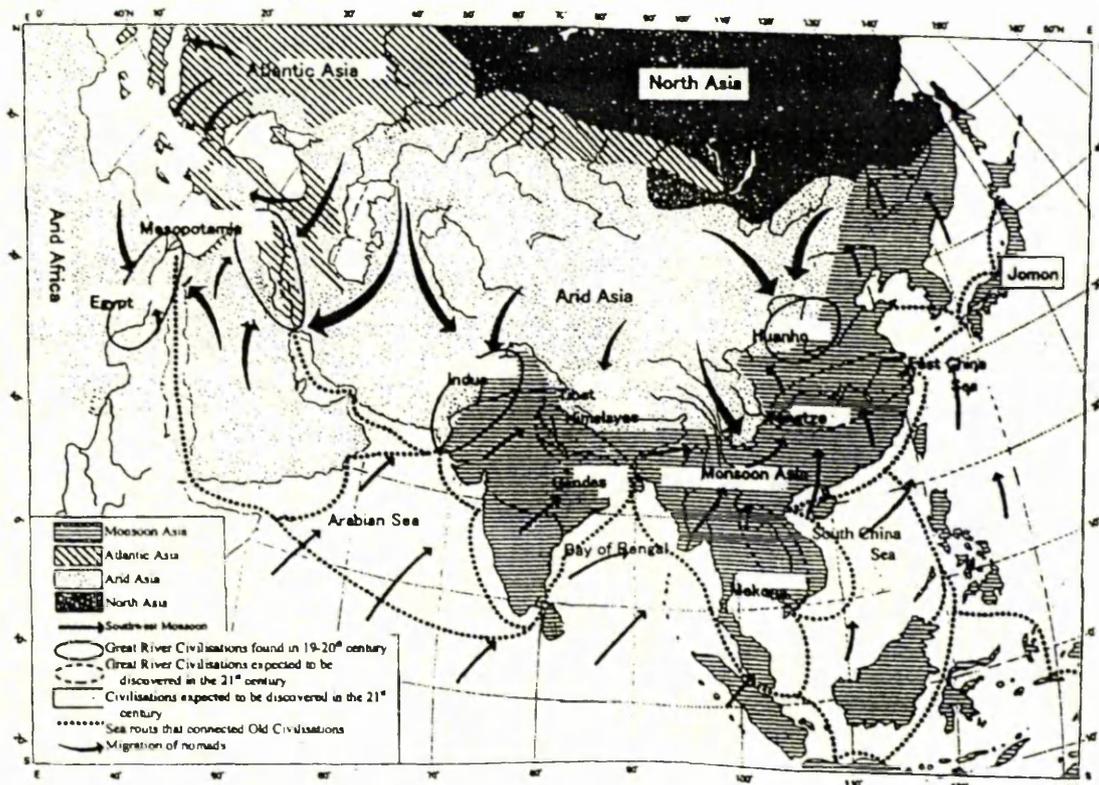
²⁰ Hall 1986:390-402.

²¹ Eberhard 1977.

²² Gernet 1985.

how 'barbarian' nomads repeatedly invaded China to confiscate its productive structure and economic surplus. The transition from the old form of civilisation to the new took place under the strong influence of these 'barbarian' invasions and migrations. Gills and Frank point out that Inner and Central Asia generated their own cycles of outward invasyory/migratory movements in all directions. They say:

These cycles lasted an average of approximately two centuries and occurred at roughly half-millennium intervals. For instance, there were waves of invasions in 1700-1500 BC, in 1200-1000 BC, around 500 BC, around 0, in AD 400-600 and AD 1000-1200/1300. Each inner wave pushed out outer waves, except the last one of Genghis Khan and his successors to Tamerlane, who overran all themselves²³.



Eurasian Continental Environment, Ancient Civilisations, and Folk Migration (Based on Yasuda 2000:36-7)

²³ Gills & Frank 1993:87.

1.1.3 Adverse climate and the emergence of a hyper-magico-religion in Japan

These cyclic waves of invasion or migration roughly coincided with a time of drastic changes in Japanese history. We are not certain what led to the sudden vanishment of the Sannai Maruyama civilisation in Late Jomon, but archaeological and demographic evidence suggest that the dissolution of the Jomon world occurred within a context of deteriorating climatic change and an increase in population pressure. As shown in the Figure 6 of the previous chapter, temperatures were gradually dropping about 4000 years ago, and the sea at the Sannai Maruyama was drawing further and further away from the village. This led to the probable cause of the downfall of the village, for the drop in sea level generated the progressive depletion of the food supplies that the society heavily relied on from the sea. Alternatively, could there have been some dispute in the oversized settlement, or were there some epidemic outbreaks that incapacitated the village. Whatsoever it may be, the demographic evidence indicates that the population of Japan drastically decreased from the Late Jomon phase (c.2000-c.1000BC), while new-Mongoloids migrated into Japan from the Final Jomon phase (c.1000-c.400BC)²⁴. Within the context of this considerable social upheaval, the rise of the hyper-magico-religion and the ensuing emergence of a new type religion took place.

Pollen analysis from the peat bed (i.e. Pinus 73) in Oze marshland indicates that the periods between 2400-2300 BC and between 866-398 BC were colder than that of earlier and later period Jomon. Indeed, Sakaguchi Yutaka considers the year 866 BC as

²⁴ For detail, see Koyama 1978; Idem 1984; Haniwara 1987:391-403; Idem 1993: 258-279; Sasaki 1991:262-296; Imamura 1996:93-96.

the most critical turning point of climatic change at any time in human history, not only for Japan but also for the rest of the world²⁵. Analyses of both pollen and grain size from lake terraces, such as Lake Yogo in Shiga, Lake Nojiri in Nagano, and Lake Tazawa in Akita, and the analysis of core samples obtained from the bottom of Lake Biwa, indicate that from 1000 BC to AD 500 the climate went through a series of repeated cool and wet/warm and dry stages²⁶. A period between 1000BC and 400BC coincides with the weakening of solar radiation. Mean annual temperatures were generally 2 to 3°C lower than at the present day.²⁷ These data indicate that during the Final Jomon phases the climate was not only cold but also fluctuated considerably making it more difficult for the Jomon people to adapt to. Given that they relied heavily on hunting, gathering, and fishing for their survival, this difficulty was an historical inevitability.

It seems not coincidental that rice-pollens as old as 1200 BC and rice fields as old as 1000 BC have been discovered at the Itazuke site in Fukuoka and Nabatake site in Saga, respectively²⁸. The detail analysis of fossil rice-pollen and spores preserved in the loam of the Nabatake site indicates that rice cultivators began to reside in the area 2700 years ago²⁹. This coincides not only with the fall of the Western Zhou Dynasty (771BC) but also with the rapid increase in population in Japan. All these signify that the adverse

²⁵ Sakaguchi 1984:18-36. For evidence of a global cooling, see Bell 1971:1-26; McGhee 1981:162-179; Bryson et al. 1974:46-50.

²⁶ Fukui 1977:271-304.

²⁷ Yasuda 2002:87-8.

²⁸ Nakajima & Tajima 1986; Tsukada 1986:48; Higuchi 1986:123.

²⁹ Yasuda 1990b.

climate that started about 3,000 years ago induced famine, racial migration, and social crisis at a global level, and that the Jomon culture collapsed within the context of the East Asian world where the Chinese continent itself was in the middle of radical social transformation.

The sudden growth of hyper-magico-religion during the Final Jomon may be understood as Jomon people's attempt to relieve their agony in the midst of social crisis. In contrast to a practical magico-religious concern with fertility upon which the livelihood of communities depended, the hyper-magico-religion was characterised by obsession with unproductive prayer and excessive magico-rituals. For example, in contrast to the Final Jomon people, the earlier Jomon people expressed an energy and vitality supported by an improvement in productivity. The emergence of the hyper-magico-religion is well represented by new variants of previous types of ritual objects which increased in kind and number, such as clay masks (which perhaps related to shamanistic ritual), stone rods (symbolising male genitals), clay and stone tablets, 'crown-shape' stone objects, and stone swords. The appearance of large buildings and wood circles from around 900 BC obviously built for ritual practices, and the increase in the size of stone circles (as large as 45 m in diameters) demonstrate that enthusiasm for ritual activities reached a climax at the Final Jomon³⁰.

³⁰ Imamura 1996:97. In fact, new dates for food residue scraped from 11 early Yayoi pottery pieces have recently touched off a storm of controversy in Japan's archaeological community that the Yayoi Pottery culture started at least 500 years earlier than traditionally believed (Asahi: 21 May, 2003), that is the Final Jomon.

The Final Jomon people also engaged in the extensive practice of tooth extraction. Although the custom was present in a simple form from the Early Jomon (5000-3500 BC) and became more prominent in the Tohoku district around 2,000 B.C., it developed into an elaborate ritual form and spread all over Japan around 1,000 B.C. Tooth extraction functioned as a rite of passage, as a means to identify firmly a participant as a constituent member of the village³¹. The practice rapidly declined, however, after the beginning of the Yayoi period (although it remained until the Middle Yayoi in some parts of Japan)³². For at times of crisis, technological, economic, and social solutions alone are insufficient and an increased awareness of group identity and new forms of symbolic activity are also required in order to overcome the problems of adaptation and survival. Fujimoto argues that the sudden growth in number and refinement of ritual objects at this time cannot be explained simply by the accumulation or development of spiritual practices, but due attention needs to be paid also to the normative social order becoming increasingly rigid as a result of the deteriorating natural environment³³. It is easily imagined that the Final Jomon people directed extraordinary religious powers to the construction of ritual objects and ceremonies, but the genuine formation of 'religion'³⁴ had to wait until the next generation of Yayoi people, who started full-blown agriculture.

³¹ Harunari 1979.

³² Uno et al. 1991:53.

³³ Fujimoto 1983.

³⁴ Doi Takashi [1900-1955] argues that the Jomon people perhaps did not have a 'genuine religion' because of the lack of standardisation in their grave system. Inconsistency in the grave styles implies that their sense of solidarity within the settlement did not expand beyond the framework of their community, and that an establishment of the grave systems with the community did not bind the lives of the Jomon people in general.

1.1.4 *The Effects of the Adoption of Wet-rice Cultivation on Mentality*

With the spread of wet-rice cultivation, however, many of the above features of the religious practise swiftly disappeared. The new agrarian society began to create a prototypical religion, and in this subsection, I will consider both the effect of the adoption of wet-rice cultivation on human mentality and how the prototypical religion emerged during the transitional period from Jomon to Yayoi.

Once rice cultivation was accepted in the archipelago of Japan, not only did a new economic system - different from the previous system of hunting, gathering and fishing - develop, but a new mentality, too³⁵. With respect to the development of new types of religion, there were several important changes in mentality and social organisation. Firstly, in agrarian societies the concept of planning emerges. People must plan various activities well in advance such as cultivation, seeding, harvest, and storing crops for consumption as well as saving the seeds for next year's planting, and consequently an awareness of seasons and time becomes more important. A systematic calendar fixing farm-work and yearly festivals became inevitable in order to ensure the smooth running of agriculture. An example of such a festival was the ritual use of bronze bells to enhance the power of the rice-spirits for good harvest³⁶.

³⁵ Large quantities of plant opal of *Echinochloa crus-galli* P. Beauv. of the rice family were also found at the site, suggesting that the plant was part of the diet of the village. However, there is no evidence of this plant having been cultivated. It will be interesting to see whether this discovery leads to a change in thinking as to the origin of rice production in Japan.

³⁶ Kuraku 1991:128; Sahara 1997. For the functional transformation of bronze bells, see Kuwabara 1999:111-142.

Secondly, a sense of individual ownership can develop with regard to produced crops, cultivated land, and so on. Concomitantly, compared to the previous Jomon period, there was a significant increase in the practice of burying a dead person's belongings with his/her corpse, such as bronze ornaments and jadeite accessories. This practice appears to reflect this development in a sense of individual ownership.

Another possible indication of the development of individual ownership is the emergence of jar burials. Many prehistoric societies buried children in jars, so jar burial itself was not new. *Kamekan* was known from the Jomon period and was used mostly for children, who were buried under earthen floors. But during the Yayoi, *kamekan* began to be used for adults, who were buried in groups at one large site. Such burial practices increased dramatically and spread widely in Kyushu, while in Honshu, instead of the large burial jars (*kamekan*), the usage of smaller burial jars (*tsubokan*) with disarticulated secondary burials increased dramatically too. Japanese archaeologists have usually interpreted these practices as the re-introduction of the concept of secondary burial, but the 'one-corpse-to-one-jar' burial practise may well be a reflection of the development of a sense of individual ownership.

Thirdly, the prevailing zeitgeist in traditional agrarian societies, which are characterised by a constant level of production year in year out, is that wealth is gained at the expense of others. Mistrust - whether conscious or subconscious - is a ubiquitous manifestation in such societies. Rivalry is the underlying attitude of those who suspect that others have seized a larger share of accessible properties than is acceptable. For instance, lack of water for cultivation is a matter of life and death, and the construction of more rice

fields and irrigation canals is also inevitable, and was thus often followed by strife. Various types of archaeological evidence, such as skeletons of war victims³⁷, moated settlements and hilltop lookouts,³⁸ and the mass production of large arrowheads³⁹, indicate that there were, indeed, frequent armed conflicts between neighbouring settlements probably caused by a shortage of suitable land and available water sources.

The fourth change after the introduction of agriculture is that people became more occupied than hunter-gatherers with group alliances and rules of membership in a particular clan or kingship. In addition to the increased population and consequent need for more rice fields with the construction of irrigation canals, both strife between neighbouring settlements and the development of kinship generated stronger alliances between settlements and the emergence of political leaders. These are well documented in the development of larger burial types. *Hōkei shūkōbo* (the square moated burial precinct) appeared in the Kinki region from the Early Yayoi, and spread throughout Japan in the Middle Yayoi and lasted through the early part of the Kofun period. This burial type is considered to be a family tomb, with the various sizes indicating the emergence of social stratification⁴⁰. One tomb in the Asahi site in Aichi Prefecture has a size of 34 meters, compared to the ordinary 10 meters. In the northern Kyushu and Chugoku districts, another type of larger tomb, the so-called *funkyūbo*, was built. One mound burial in Kurashiki in Okayama has a size of 50 meters in diameter and 80

³⁷ Hashiguchi 1986:104-113.

³⁸ Morioka 1986:55-72.

³⁹ Kobayashi & Sahara 1964:131-140.

⁴⁰ Ishikawa 1990:67-126.

meters in length, and is decorated with ornaments in the continental style⁴¹. In addition, there is abundant evidence of social stratification among burials in northern Kyushu⁴². Compared to the Tumulus period, the Yayoi period is characterised by a wide variety of burial forms indicating that burial practices in the Yayoi still had local variations. This reflected the political make-up of Japan at that time, consisting as it did of hundreds of regional bonds. Yet eventually, by the 3rd century A.D., small-scale chiefdoms were overcome by larger and more centralised chiefdoms in the Kinai region.

A fifth change induced by the adoption of agriculture was an increased demand for human resources for the construction of irrigation canals and the development of new land for cultivation. Consequently, human beings became the most important resource in society, which induced motivation to control people and a higher fertility rate, and eventually the emergence of slavery and higher population growth. The *Chinese Official Chronicles of the Later Han (Hou Han shu)* records that in AD107 the state of *Na (Nu)* in *Wa (Japan)* sent one hundred sixty slaves (*seikō*⁴³) as tribute to the Later Han court with emissaries. By the time of Himiko's reign, she owned one thousand slaves and when she died more than one hundred slaves were immolated, indicating the importance of human resources at that time. According to the *Annals of the State of Wei (Wei Chih)*, the Yayoi people had already reached a fairly clear-cut division of rank, and people paid taxes.

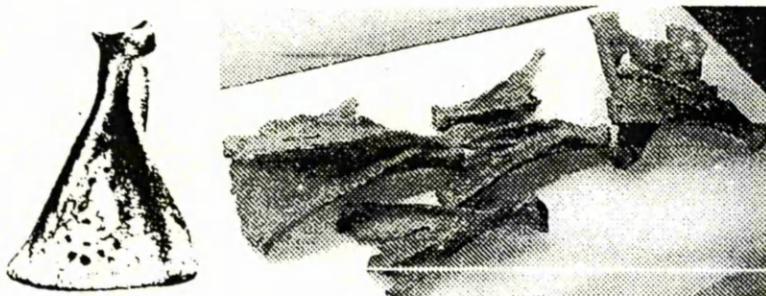
⁴¹ Ibid:118-119.

⁴² Imamura 1996:182-185.

⁴³ Inoue 1974:356. For the latest archeological evidence of immolation, see Hirabayashi 2000: 132-185.

A sixth change was that densely populated agrarian society, with domesticated animals and irrigation system, dramatically increased the number of 'mysterious' diseases. The emergence of new infectious disease into the ecosystem is usually characterised by very acute and severe symptoms. In addition, the cause of these diseases is not apparent to sufferers and families, and they can thus appear very mysterious. Because of this nature of infectious diseases, as distinct from old types of disease such as broken bones, parasitic worms, and starvation whose causes are obvious, they probably effected strong anxiety and fear.

A final consequence of the adoption of agriculture – and an important one for our purposes - was that due to the above noted changes, the need for control over production and wealth and the cognitive association between harvest and climate engendered a desire to forecast the future, and thereby induced a new concept of deities, different from the animistic worldview of the Jomon people. This can be inferred from the emergence of the pyro-scapulimancy (*kotsuboku*), a divination technique similar to Chinese techniques that involved heating the bones of wild animals and discerning the reply of the gods from the shapes and directions of the cracks.



Left: a fire-cracked shoulder blade excavated in China (from Mizuno 2001:117); Right: shoulder blades of deer and wild boar used for pyro-scapulimancy excavated from the Aoya Kamijichi site in Tottori.

The Neolithic inhabitants of North China appear to have been the first to practise pyro-scapulimancy: the earliest evidence is dated to the last half of the fourth

millennium BC. By the time scapulimancy was practised by the Lung-Shanoid people in central China around the end of the third millennium BC, specialised groups of diviners and a pyromantic theory associated with ancestor worship had appeared⁴⁴. In Japan, however, pyro-scapulimancy was not known until the latter half of the Yayoi period. After its introduction, probably from Manchuria or the Korean Peninsula, it spread throughout Japan, except for in Hokkaido and the northern Tohoku regions.⁴⁵ This ubiquitous presence of interpretive divination can be viewed as an indication of a strong anxiety and need to predict and control an uncertain future.

The divination materials used for pyro-scapulimancy vary. Neolithic diviners used various scapulas of bovids (cattle and water buffalo), pigs, sheep, and deer. In China, meanwhile, Shang diviners preferred bovid bones, and began to use turtle plastrons almost exclusively by the latter half of the second millennium BC (the An-yang phase).⁴⁶ In Japan, on the other hand, the materials used during the Yayoi period mainly consisted of bones of Japanese deer (species *Cervus nippon*) (75.86%), and only eight pieces of turtles' shells have been excavated from the ground of the Late Tumulus period.⁴⁷

The preference for deer bones has been interpreted as an indication that pyro-scapulimancy in Japan was particularly related to rituals for a good harvest of rice, and

⁴⁴ Itō 1962:225-270.

⁴⁵ Kanzawa 1990:67-107.

⁴⁶ Ibid:6.

⁴⁷ Ibid:85-87.

for settling strife over the land with neighbouring settlements. For instance, the *Nihon Shoki* and some regional gazetteers have suggested a close relationship between deer and rice cultivation. In the *Nihon shoki* and the *Owari no Kuni Fudoki Itsibun*, deer were regarded as a sacred land-spirit⁴⁸. According to the *Harima no Kuni Fudoki*, unhulled rice was first dipped into the blood of the living deer before being sown in the rice field⁴⁹. The *Bungo no Kuni Fudoki* records the case of a good harvest from a particular rice field in which the owner of the land released a deer which damaged his rice-seedlings. All these records suggest that deer were somehow related to the land and a good yield of rice. Harunari Hideji argues in support of this position that these beliefs and practices go back to Yayoi times. In addition, as many deer and cranes were decorated on the surface of bronze bells and ceramics, he argues that these animals were symbols of sacred land and rice, and that they were among the essential elements in farming rituals during the Yayoi period.⁵⁰ Therefore, the introduction of pyro-scapulimancy was inseparable from the diffusion of wet-rice cultivation in Japan.

In sum, seven major changes in the mentality of the Yayoi people took place with the diffusion of wet-rice cultivation: the concept of planning, a sense of individual ownership, mistrust and rivalry, the formation of political elites, an increased demand for manpower, fear of 'mysterious' disease, and a desire to forecast the future. I am not trying to argue that the adoption of wet-rice cultivation was solely responsible for all these changes, but these were also closely related to the intense migration from the

⁴⁸ Kobayashi 1959:5; Sahara 1973:46-47.

⁴⁹ Yokota 1951; Orikuchi 1955:487-488; Akimoto 1958:309.

⁵⁰ Harunari 1989:21-24; Idem 1991:442-481.

continent that was initiated by the social crisis at a global level. Together, these changes induced a momentum that generated prototypical religion of Japan. In the following section, the underlying causes for the emergence of the prototypical religion will be further explored, and its nature will be examined.

1.2 The Worldview and Mythology of Yayoi People

1.2.1 *Ancient Global Interlinkage and Epidemics*

If we look at the ancient global interlinkage, we find that there existed very active interactions among diverse regions. New historical evidence suggests that economic links through migration, trade, plunder, and military victory were much more common and much broader in extent than has been traditionally believed. For example, Mediterranean shells and metal ores and pigments were locally available at Anatolian Neolithic villages. Çatalhöyük is often cited as an example of a settlement with a long-distance trade between the mid-8th to the mid-7th millennium. Trade between Egypt and Mesopotamia (e.g., spices, timber, metals, oils, and certain luxury consumption goods) existed before 3,000 BC through Syria and the Levant that formed a connecting corridor between Egypt and Mesopotamia. Trade between Mesopotamia and Indus probably started from the Akkadian period at latest. Recent archaeological excavations in the Euphrates Valley suggest cloves were transported from India's Malabar coast by 3,000 BC.⁵¹ During the Akkadian period, Meluhhan (the Ancient Akkadian name for the Indus regions) vessels sailed directly to Mesopotamian ports. Barry Gills and Andre Frank argues that "It is clear that throughout a considerable historical period, even to the

⁵¹ Scarre 1988.

time of the Assyrian and then the Persian empires, Syria and the Levant played a crucial role as logistical interlinkage zones and entrepôts within the world system. They linked the Mesopotamia, Egypt and Indus zones in one world system".⁵²

Chinese civilisation did not develop in complete isolation either. The routes across land to the west were already opened by the end of 2nd millennium BC, in particular as migratory routes for peoples of Central and Inner Asia, and further historical integration of Chinese civilisation with the western civilisations started in the late Chou period. For example, both wheat and the horse chariot were not native to China before the Shang period. In addition, much archaeological evidence has shown that many characteristics of late Neolithic civilisation were widespread in East Asia, and it has been suggested that the development of some alphabets in Western Asia were significantly influenced by Shang script during the second millennium BC⁵³. Wolfram Eberhard has argued that the hegemony of the state of Chin and the creation of the first centralised empire in China owed much to China's geographical advantage and its strong relations with Central Asia⁵⁴. Given this, it would appear that opportunities for cultural transmission and diffusion in Asia were greater than has sometimes been believed⁵⁵.

⁵² Gills & Frank 1993:84.

⁵³ Pulleyblank 1975.

⁵⁴ Eberhard 1977:60.

⁵⁵ Extensive social networks as well as Palaeolithic society as a web of alliance throughout Europe were already established by the height of the last major Pleistocene glaciation (about 35,000 to 13,000). Not only material resources such as flint, fossil shell, marine molluscs, and food, but also information about remote environments were transmitted over long distances [Champion et al 1984:81-87, see also Koyama & Okada 2000]. Various archaeological findings evince that the inhabitants of the Japanese Islands also had ties to

The exchange of infectious diseases also confirms the ancient global interlinkage. Long before the beginning of the Yayoi period, according to Arno Karlen, principal sites of diseases developed in the Mediterranean, in Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, and in China. In each area, people adapted themselves to their own set of infections. However, by the time of the Athenian plague (430BC)⁵⁶, as documented by Thucydides, the foci of infections of each area had probably joined, and a group of infections common to Eurasia and North Africa emerged for the first time in world history.⁵⁷

During the transitional period from Jomon to Yayoi, ancient Japanese shared the same social crisis characterised by global cooling, migration pressure, and drastic decrease in population, with the rest of the Eurasian Continent. As the transitional society from Jomon to Yayoi had already developed extensive relations with the continent by means of trading and migration, there is no reason to believe that epidemics never touched Japan. In fact, paleopathological studies of Jomon people's bones and fossil faeces

the open sea for the transportation of goods and for fishing since the Late Palaeolithic period. For example, the obsidian mined at the Kōzu Island of the Izu Island chain were brought to the Kanto area 30,000 years ago (Oda 1997, cited by Senda 2002:36), and quite a few gaffs, fishhooks, and dugout canoes were excavated from various Jomon-period sites. A French archaeologist excavated 14 pieces of earthenware shreds closely resembling Jomon pottery in 1960s on the island of Efate in the Republic of Vanuatu - a land in the South Pacific 6,000 kilometres away from Japan. A close examination has revealed that the artefacts were in fact the Jomon pottery of the Sannai Maruyama site (Yomiuri Shinbun 14 Aug.1996).

⁵⁶ For the Great Plague of Athens, see Hare 1967:115-131; McNeil 1976:118-121; Longrigg 1980:209-225; Idem 1992; Langmuir and Ray 1985:1027-1030; Bollet 1987; Mack 1991; Karlen 1995:59-60.

⁵⁷ Karlen 1995:60.

evince that they were infected with polio and various parasites.⁵⁸ Another paleopathological data of Yayoi people's bones excavated at the Aoyakamijichi site in Tottori indicate that there were epidemic outbreaks of tuberculosis that were brought from the continent at least by the Late Yayoi period (2nd century)⁵⁹, and Suzuki Takeo had already speculated that direct descendants of Jomon people were almost eradicated by tuberculosis during the Yayoi and Kofun periods⁶⁰.



A backbone of a Yayoi man infected with tuberculosis
(excavated from the Aoyakamijichi site in Tottori)

Given this, it may be surmised that most of the Jomon population (probably 1/3 to 1/2) was devastated not only by food crisis, but also by various epidemics, such as polio, measles, and dysentery, which were introduced by migrants who had already developed an immune response (just as in the case of African islands and the New World during the European colonization in the 15th and 16th centuries⁶¹). And the people who came to Japan from across the sea (*toraikei* Yayoi) intermingled with the survivors of the Jomon

⁵⁸ Suzuki 1999:43-64/

⁵⁹ *Nihonkai Shinbun* 2000/09/13. Before this discovery, the oldest evidence for the outbreak of tuberculosis in Japan was traceable only up to the 6th century whereas the earliest evidence in Egypt and China can date back to the 11th and 2nd century BC, respectively.

⁶⁰ Suzuki 1999:43-64.

⁶¹ When Old World microbes and vectors entered the New World, the population of perhaps 100 millions was estimated be reduced by about 90% [Karlen 1996:105]. For details, see Crosby 1972.

people. The death rate probably eased the way for immigrants to impose their political power, religion, and language (there are some differences between southwestern and northwestern Japan in these aspects). This conjecture amply explains the drastic decrease of the population during the Late Jomon and the high population growth rate (0.43%)⁶² during the Yayoi period.

In addition to the aforementioned epidemic diseases, schistosomiasis is suspected of becoming one of the worst new pathogens due to the newly developed irrigation system for wet-rice cultivation. Furthermore, an increase in arthritis and in stress fractures of the lower spine and load-bearing joints probably became typical ailments of the agrarian Yayoi people as a result of rice-planting, harvesting, and threshing.⁶³ It would thus appear that the Yayoi people began to experience various kinds of new or 'mysterious' diseases and unpleasant conditions owing to the adoption of wet-rice cultivation. Indeed, agriculture had only one advantage over hunting and gathering: that of providing more calories per unit of land per unit of time and thus supporting denser population⁶⁴, and it would only be adopted in the society where greater productivity per unit of space was required⁶⁵. In such society, population density would become even higher because of the greater productivity and a need for greater manpower. Consequently, the society would

⁶² A natural growth rate for hunter-gatherers is usually 0.1-0.12% [Cohen 1989:17-18]. As for another factor for the increased population growth rate during the Yayoi period, we cannot dismiss the change in the mentality of the Yayoi people. As agriculturists, they developed the concept of man as resources and thus fertility increased or birth control was relaxed, helped by a higher carrying capacity of agriculture than hunting gathering.

⁶³ For details, see Suzuki 1999:46-56.

⁶⁴ Cohen 1977:15.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*:39.

become more prone to epidemics. In Japan, this kind of a newly established ecological system that was united with the world's garden of microbes expanded swiftly toward the northeast with the expansion of wet-rice cultivation. Therefore, we can assume that the new epidemics and diseases must have wreaked havoc on the transitional society of Japan almost at the same time as the Old Civilisations in the Eurasian Continent underwent various social crises.

This was probably the first pandemic in human history, and it appears to have been closely related to climatic changes of that time, which in turn induced migration and infection. One of the leading climatologists, H.H. Lamb, gives abundant evidence for climatic impact on human activities⁶⁶. A simple correlation between climate and historical events, needless to say, does not prove the impact of climatic change on human affairs, but much historical evidence points to drought and flood as reasons for the decline of ancient civilisation. Various peoples in many regions had similar legends of a Golden Age during prehistoric times, such as the Garden of Eden, Atlantis (a legendary island in the Atlantic Ocean), and the imaginary realm of Japanese mythology *Tokoyonokuni* (an oceanic paradise of immortality and fertility). Some of these myths may be a reflection of dim folk memories that man experienced during the dissolution of the Old Civilisations in prehistoric times. It may be conjectured that the ancient Japanese went through a similar paradigm shift with the Old Civilisations in the Eurasian Continent, and if this conjecture is correct, then we should be able to detect similarities in the mentality of the ancient Japanese, implying the outbreak of synchronic global

⁶⁶ For details, see Lamb 1995:125-155; McGhee 1981:162-179.

crises. Unfortunately, however, there are no extant documents that directly describe the outbreak of social crises in Japan and the mentality of the prehistoric Japanese, and we are thus forced to turn to their mythology. This does, admittedly, run the same risks of validity as all speculations, but one of the leading Japanese mythologists, Ōbayashi Taryō, has argued that it is nonetheless a worthwhile endeavour. For he argues that by creating an historical atlas of world mythology it is possible to uncover the origins and archetypes of the Japanese civilisations, and thereby enable us to look into our ancestors' collective unconscious and to construct a history of human mentality⁶⁷.

1.2.2 *The Grand Origin Myth*

DeSantillana and von Dechend have postulated a Grand Origin Myth, and have argued it was shared by nearly all of the Eurasian ancient civilisations in terms of structure⁶⁸. In this sub-section, I argue that prehistoric Japanese also shared the Grand Origin Myth due to global interlinkage and the shared global crisis with the Eurasian Continent.

The Grand Origin Myth essentially consists of four common features. First, humans and gods communicated without hindrance before heaven and earth were separated. For example, *ama no uki-hashī* ('the Heavenly Floating Bridge')⁶⁹ - a bridge over which divine beings travelled between heaven and earth - may symbolise this and shall be discussed in more detail later. Second, an *axis mundi* such as a mountain, tree, or an axle is associated with streams or whirlpools draining and recirculating water.

⁶⁷ Ōbayashi 1998. See also Campbell 1984.

⁶⁸ DeSantillana and Von Dechend 1969.

⁶⁹ 'Creating myth of lands by Izanagi & Izanami' in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon Shoki*.

According to the well-known literary critic, Katō Shūichi, the whirlpool design on the surface of the Jomon pottery symbolises a water stream⁷⁰, and thus can be interpreted as a manifestation of the concept of an *axis mundi*. The Izanagi-Izanami land-creation myth may also represent such an *axis mundi*. According to the *Kojiki*, Izanagi and Izanami were commanded by the heavenly deities to solidify the drifting land, and thus the two deities, standing on the Heavenly Floating Bridge, “stirred the brim with a churning-churning sound” with the jewelled spear, “and when they lifted up [the spear] again, the brine dripping down from the tip of the spear piled up and became an island”⁷¹. The action of stirring the water with the onomatopoeia churning-churning (*koworo koworo*) implies the image of a whirlpool. After the two deities descended to the island, “they erected a heavenly pillar⁷² (*ama-no-mihashira*) which symbolises the vital powers hidden in a tree⁷³”.



Ama no Hashidate at the Tango Peninsula in Kyoto: If you stand with your legs apart and look at the island upside-down through your thighs, the inverted image of the island does really look like a bridge in Heaven.

Ancient Japanese believed that *kami* dwelled not only in oceans, waterfalls, and the confluence of rivers, but also in giant trees, large or strangely shaped rocks, and mountains⁷⁴. In Shinto practice, the oldest form of sacred space is a rectangular area

⁷⁰ Kato et al. 1987:56-72.

⁷¹ Philippi 1969:49.

⁷² Ibid:50.

⁷³ For various interpretation of this pillar, see Ibid:398-399; Tsugita 1956:57, 65-66.

⁷⁴ Uehara 1989:6-7.

covered with pebbles, surrounded by stones, and marked off by a rope linking four corner pillars: in the middle of this area is a stone (*iwakura*), a pillar, or a tree (*himorogi*). In some cases a whole mountain itself has been regarded as a symbol of *kami* as with Ōmiwa Shrine in Nara, Suwa Shrine in Nagano, and Kanasaka shrine in Saitama, and thus, no main shrine (*honden*) was built at all. The worship of an *axis mundi* has been transmitted since the Jomon period to the present, and the traces of such worship are manifested in various seasonal festivals, such as *onbashira* in Nagano and *hashiramatsu* in Kyoto.

Third, there is an explanation of the destructive separation between heaven and earth, usually associated with severed communication between gods and humans, and expressed in an expulsion myth. The *Nihon Shoki* explicitly describes the separation of Heaven and Earth: “At this time Heaven and Earth were still not far separated, and therefore they sent her [the Sun-Goddess Amaterasu] up to Heaven by the ladder of Heaven”⁷⁵. Accounts of the destructive drawing apart of heaven and earth are also documented in regional gazetteers. According to the *Tango Fudoki*, the ladder of the Heavenly bridge, which was used by Izanagi to ascend to heaven and descend to earth, fell down while a god was asleep. Such separation also seems to be symbolised by the concept of *Yomi* (‘Hades’). The land of *Yomi* was often interpreted as symbolising subterranean stone chambers with a stone passageway, reflecting the burial customs of the late Tomb period⁷⁶. From the perspective of a Grand Origin Myth, however,

⁷⁵ Aston 1972:18.

⁷⁶ Gotō 1947:11-21.

Izanami's regrets of having "eaten at the hearth of *Yomi*"⁷⁷, before Izanagi came down to meet Izanami to the land of *Yomi*, can be understood as her lament for the separation of heaven and earth⁷⁸. According to Numazawa Ki'ichi, Izanagi represents the Father of Heaven and Izanami the Mother of Earth, and thus the death of Izanami implies the separation of Heaven and Earth⁷⁹.

Expulsion is well described in the myth of Susanō. According to the *Kojiki*, he did not govern the land entrusted to him by Izanagi, but instead wept and howled. His weeping caused the green mountains to wither and all the rivers and seas to dry up. Then, "malevolent deities were everywhere abundant like summer flies; and all sorts of calamities arose in all things"⁸⁰. Izanagi asked Susanō the reason for his cries and he replied: "I wish to go to the land of my mother, *Ne-no-kata-su-kuni*. That is why I weep"⁸¹. Izanagi was provoked to the fierce rage by Susanō's announcement and said: "In that case, you may not live in this land!"⁸². Susanō was thus expelled by Izanagi's divine order. The Susanō expulsion myth is one of the central motifs in both *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*. He was expelled from the society of the heavenly deities several times, and regarded as a transgressor and a wandering outcast because of his outrageous conduct. Together, these separation myths appear to imply unprecedented natural disasters, and this will become clearer as we turn to look at the final common feature of

⁷⁷ Philippi 1969:61.

⁷⁸ Matsumura 1946:393-407.

⁷⁹ Numazawa 1952:4-20.

⁸⁰ Philippi 1968:72.

⁸¹ *Ibid*:73.

⁸² *Ibid*.

the Grand Origin Myth.

The forth and final element shared by nearly all of the great ancient civilisations of Eurasia is that cosmic separation produces a catastrophic event, such as the world-engulfing flood or the emergence of devastating monsters, finally conquered by a hero who achieves renewed habitation and opens the era of human history. This implies the emergence of new technology or religious power after the hero has overcome natural disasters. The myth of a world-engulfing flood is widely distributed from southern China to Southeast Asia⁸³. The ethnologist Oka Masao maintains that the myth of the Izanagi and Izanami marriage is related to the myth of the world-engulfing flood⁸⁴. With respect to devastating monsters, Susanō appears in an entirely different role, as a national culture-hero, in the Izumo narrative of the *Kojiki*. Susanō's myth of saving Kushinada-hime from the eight-tailed dragon (*yamata no orochi*) is a clear representation of the suppression of a catastrophic event by a hero, and "a great sharp sword" (the celebrated *kusa-nagi no tsurugi*) which appeared from inside the dragon's middle tail symbolises the power of conquest and the emergence of a new craft.

The prosperity of Susanō's descendants after he married Kushinada-hime, the 'Queen of Mysterious Rice-fields' or 'Queen of Good Rice-fields named Kushi', implies the introduction of agriculture. Moreover, the name *kusanagi no tsurugi* (meaning 'grass-mower' or 'grass-pacifier') for his new sword also implies an iron tool for

⁸³ Ōbayashi 1973a:9.

⁸⁴ Oka 1953:10-11. See also Ōbayashi 1973b:303-419, 361-362; Tanigawa 1983:19-37.

agriculture⁸⁵. According to Ōbayashi Taryō, the myth of the eight-tailed dragon and other myths concerning iron and sacred swords were transmitted from West to Eastern Asia and Southeast Asia around 1,000 BC, and were later transmitted to Japan, not via the Korean Peninsula, but directly from the wet-rice cultivation cultural region in the central and southern parts of China. This myth has two meanings: The first is the protection of rice fields (i.e., Kushinada-hime) from flooding rivers; the second, a reference to Susanō's building of the palace of Suga after his marriage, signifying the formation of a new royal authority⁸⁶.

The story in which Ōgetsu-hime is killed by Susanō also suggests a close relationship between Susanō and agriculture. When Susanō asked for food, the Deity of Five Grains (a food-goddess) Ōgetsu-hime, "took various viands out of her nose, her mouth, and her rectum and prepared them in various ways, and presented them to him"⁸⁷. Watching her actions, he became enraged and killed her. Later various useful plants and insects grew in her corpse out of her head, eyes, ears, nose, genitals and rectum. This story was explicitly connected to a catastrophic event, finally conquered by a hero who taught

⁸⁵ Recent archaeological finding indicates that iron tools were introduced to Japan with wet-rice cultivation during the Final Jomon period. For example, a thighbone recently excavated from the Itoku site (BC800-BC500) in Tosa had the marks of puncture wounds that appear to have been caused by sharp Iron weaponry, (*Mainichi Shinbun* 19/3/02). An iron celt was also excavated from the Magarita site (Final Jomon) in Fukuoka. Since Japan went straight from the Stone Age to the Iron Age from the beginning of Yayoi, many Japanese archaeologists are now beginning to consider that the introduction of wet rice cultivation, which formed the basis of the Yayoi culture, went in hand in hand with the introduction of ironware.

⁸⁶ Ōbayashi 1993:1-23.Ibid:4.

⁸⁷ Philippi 1968:87.

humans a new way of habitation based on wet-rice cultivation and opened the era of human history. In short, these mythologies all suggest that there was an outbreak of social crisis possibly during the Final Jomon period, that it was overcome by the introduction of both agriculture and iron tools to society, and that the people who offered salvation were regarded as heroes or deities.

It is therefore obvious that all of the elements of the Grand Origin Myth described by DeSantillana and von Dechend are present in Japanese mythology. John Major has similarly demonstrated that all of the elements of the Grand Origin Myth are present in Chinese mythology, and he argues that “the ancient Chinese shared a coherent and well-articulated protoscientific worldview that was the common property of Late Neolithic and early Bronze Age peoples throughout the ancient civilized world”⁸⁸. Whether the Grand Myth Origin derives from cultural diffusion or it derives from a universal mental function of the human brain is uncertain. Whichever is the case (the answer probably being both), mythologists have pointed out that Japanese mythology shared many features in common with those found in other cultures⁸⁹. This implies frequent communication with rest of the world and a shared social crisis experienced by ancient peoples that helped to generate new world religions, which also shared similar characteristics.

⁸⁸ For detail, see Major 1978:8.

⁸⁹ For detail, see Ranke 1934, cited in Thompson 1977:53-64; Fontenrose 1980:262-273, 359-364, 504; Matsumoto 1946:41-100; Matsumura 1955(III): 679-699; Mishina 1970; Yoshida 1976; Itō 1979; Ōbayashi 1990; Idem 1991.

McNeill has argued that the synchronic evolution of some of the great religions and philosophies in the Eurasian Continent was a response to common needs for protection from exploitation by the propertied classes and the state elite⁹⁰. This may partially explain the mechanism, but the ultimate mechanism for this synchronic rise of new world religions is unlikely to be so. H. H. Lamb, for example, has demonstrated that some great folk migrations were related to climatic stresses around 1200-800 and 600-200 BC, and he argues that, "These movements and the resulting ferment probably affected all the people of Europe and Asia either directly or indirectly"⁹¹, and that the global climatic anomaly "may provide conditions favourable to the spread of a new religion, perhaps most of all through the breakdown of the old life and its ordered customs"⁹². In other words, new world religions have evolved out of the old system of beliefs and customs, and all went through the paradigm shift almost at the same time when the existing ecological system became unbalanced. They emerged at the time of global crisis in order to offer salvation and solutions to the universal problem of suffering of that time.

In Japan, there were also great migrations to Japan from China and the Korean Peninsula which brought a technology of agriculture and metal goods around 1,000-400 BC.⁹³ These new-Mongoloid people settled in Japan and became the so-called *toraikei Yayoi*. This was confirmed by the wide variety of geographical clines (graded series of

⁹⁰ McNeill 1964:338.

⁹¹ Lamb 1995:155.

⁹² Ibid:154.

⁹³ *Kagaku Asahi* 1995.

morphological characters) of finger print types, red blood cells possessing antigen A of ABO blood group, adult T-cell leukaemia (ATL) carriers, hepatitis B virus (HBV) carriers, Gm type, and so on⁹⁴. It appears that these people brought not only the technology of agriculture and metal goods, but also a new worldview from the Asian continent to Japan. Coupled with an ecological imbalance due to global adverse climate conditions, there is little doubt that these influences led the new Japanese (i.e., a synthesis of *toraikei* Yayoi and Jomon people) to develop a similar religion to that of the Eurasian Continent.

Needless to say, there *are* differences among the new world religions, but there are also a surprising number of similar traits. Indeed, given that all these religions evolved out of worldviews sharing the Grand Origin Myth, given the shared social crisis and the intermixture of people by means of great folk migrations, and given global economic interlinkage, it seems reasonable to assume that we should be able to infer the fundamental characteristics of the prototypical religion of Japan by an analysis of common features of the new world religions. This is quite an important proposition, since it allows us to conjecture about the nature of Japanese prototypical religion regardless of scarce hard evidence on the mentality of ancient Japanese people. In the following section, we will test this proposition by first exploring the common features of the new religions that emerged during the Axial Age, and then looking at the characteristics of the prototypical religion of Japan.

⁹⁴ Sasaki 1991:262-296.

1.3 Characteristics of Prototypical Religion

1.3.1 *The Nature of New World Religions and Philosophies*

(1) SHAMANISM

A first feature common to the new world religions and philosophies is their attempt to bridge the gap between heaven and humans by means of milder and quieter form practices that derived from shamanism. As Eliade observed, all new religions evolved in contexts closely related to shamanistic religions and still maintained a shamanic nature to a greater or lesser extent⁹⁵. Many founders of new world religions such as Ezekeil, Zoroaster, Pythagoras, Thales and Socrates did engage in symbolic actions, mystical visions, and even trances like those of shamans during their altered states of consciousness. While they attempted to reform previous religions on the basis of existing social and economic values, they retained the ancient cult of fire, Orphism, or water whose role was principally that of an intermediary between heaven and earth, between humans and gods⁹⁶.

Similarly, in China, both Confucianism and Taoism shared the same beliefs about man, society, and ruler, Heaven, and the universe. These beliefs were not created by either school but stemmed from a tradition preceding Confucius and Lao Tzu. Both Taoism and Confucianism had close connections with primitive religion and sorcery (i.e. shamanism) of the North Asian nomads, especially with the priestly spirit-possessed healer and magician⁹⁷. If the origin of Confucianism is retraced, it can be seen to have

⁹⁵ Eliade 1989.

⁹⁶ For detail, see Guthrie 1962:146-340; Klein 1988; Davis, 1989; Blenkinsopp 1990.

⁹⁷ For detail, see Needham 1956.

been connected with a group of shamans, the so-called 'archaic Confucians' 原儒.⁹⁸ Likewise, Taoists' ecstasies were closely related to the trances and spirit journeys of the early magicians and shamans - religious practitioners with healing and psychic transformation powers. Confucius also appeared to be closely related to the shamanic group, but his task was to reform the 'archaic Confucians' and to found Confucianism by adding a theoretical foundation⁹⁹. In other words, he attempted to synthesise mysticism with rationalism: the former was related to private mentalities and the latter to social norms.

Likewise in Japan, popular Jomon artefacts of clay figurines (*dogū*) and clay masks (*dosei kamen*) were closely related to shamanism¹⁰⁰, but after the rise of the Yayoi culture these commodities were replaced by pyro-scapulimancy and bronze ornaments such as weaponry and bells. However, it is evident from the Chinese chronicles that Japan retained a type of shamanistic tradition. According to the *History of the Later Han Dynasty*, for example, Queen Himiko of Yamatai "occupied herself with magic and sorcery and bewitched the populace"¹⁰¹, and thus she ruled over a confederation of more than 30 states largely because of her religious power, the so-called *kidō* ('the way of the demons'). Unlike previous shamans, she had dual status as both a ruler and a kind of high priestess. Nevertheless, her religious power must have been a form of shamanism. With respect to another shamanlike figure among her contemporaries, the 'mourning

⁹⁸ For detail, see Kaji 1984.

⁹⁹ Kaji 1985.

¹⁰⁰ Yamakami 1980:12-14. Essential instruments such as drums have also been excavated with *dogū* and masks.

¹⁰¹ Tsunoda et al. 1958:7.

keeper' (*jisai*, recorded in the *Wei shih* dealing with the Wa people, as a man who was always taken when the Yayoi people went on voyages across the sea to visit China), Yamakami Izumo conjectures that he was a kind of 'weatherman', as forecasting was a chief concern not only for agriculture but also for seamen. The 'mourning keeper' was killed in the event that there was disease or calamity during the voyage, and Yamakami considers that such practices probably derived from the Jomon practice of intentional destruction of *dogū*¹⁰². Thus, the *jisai* may be understood as a tradition inherited from the Jomon period but in a different form¹⁰³. In this way, there existed both continuity and change in the shamanistic nature of Japanese religion from the Jomon to the Yayoi periods.

It can be concluded, then, that the histories of most of the new religions and philosophies shared a shamanic or shamanlike ancestor, and that as they evolved they

¹⁰² Yamakami 1980:14-16. It is very rare to find a *dogū* with a perfect shape, since some body parts always seem to have been intentionally destroyed. It is speculated that they were destroyed in substitutionary ritual for the wounded or the sick [Sakai 1982:22].

¹⁰³ A similar practice is still observed in the present folk custom of a paper doll hung out from the eaves with a wish for good weather (*teruteru bōzu*). If the wish for good weather comes true, facial features are often drawn on the doll; otherwise its neck is cut off. According to Ōbayashi Taryō (1977), quite a similar folkway to the *jisai* is still observed in the mountainous island of Seram in Indonesia. The safety of the ship on a voyage is attributed to the girl who is put under strict taboos during the voyage, and the looks of the girl are believed to reflect the proceedings of the ship. In short, the girl who stays in the land is identified with the ship on a voyage. Since the culture of the Wa people strongly coloured by that of south oceanic people such as tattoos and poncho-type garments (*kantō*). Ōbayashi conjectures that the folkway of the *jisai* was connected with the maritime culture of the Southeast Asia. I will come to the discussion about the influence of the south maritime culture on Japan later.

developed new and different functions for and methods of inducing ASCs. All of them sought shamanlike states of consciousness by means of milder and quieter form of practices such as meditation and logos, and they attempted to bridge the gap between the worlds of myth and reality.

(2) CONCERN WITH THE ORIGIN AND STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSE

A second feature common to the new world religions and philosophies is that they all developed a keen concern with the origin and structure of the universe, reinterpreting ancient mythological cosmological-cosmogonic explanations. This interest emerged in an attempt to offer solutions to the universal problem of human suffering; that is, the separation of heaven and earth and the separation of humans and gods. They sought an explanation for this separation through reason rather than mythology. One of the key concepts in many religions, sin (*tsumi*), though it had different meanings in different religions and in times¹⁰⁴, seems to have emerged during social crises when ancient people attributed punishment by supernatural powers such as god or heaven to the destructive separation of heaven and earth and the detached communication between gods and humans. As a result, all the religions and philosophies developed a metaphysics involving a complementary dualistic worldview in order to reconcile the separation, and sought to reunite the separations by reason. Zoroastrianism, Jainism, and pre-Socratic philosophers such as Heraclitus, Pythagoras, Empedocles, all developed an

¹⁰⁴ In Japan, *tsumi* referred to offences, pollution, and hindrance of the life-force, and it was understood in relation to the notion of *kegare* (ritual impurity or defilement) originating from people's fear of cosmic and social disorder.

essentially dualist outlook¹⁰⁵.

A well-documented example can be found in the Han iconography, in which a pair of cosmic symbols flanked by opposite pairs (e.g., dragons, male and female, and circles), pass through each other, representing the unity of yin and yang¹⁰⁶. In one iconography, for instance, a pair of gods Fu Hsi (representing *yin*, square, and earth) and Nü Kua (representing *yang*, round, and heaven) are pictured as serpent-bodied figures with human torsos and heads, their serpent tails linked together, representing the unity of heaven and earth. We will come back to the dualistic outlook of Japanese prototypical religion later.

(3) OTHER SIMILARITIES OF NEW WORLD RELIGIONS

Other pervasive similarities existed among the World Religions and philosophies. The main similarities included the emergence of the concept of transmigration of soul; a cyclic view of time; a humoral understanding of cosmology¹⁰⁷; the concept of the universe as a gigantic organism whose every part could affect the whole and every other part (the doctrine of macrocosm and microcosm); and an emphasis on social harmony. Less significant similarities included number speculation for the establishment of Pythagoreanism in Greek and *I-Ching* in China; the development of ultimate principles

¹⁰⁵ Bianchi 1978.

¹⁰⁶ Finsterbusch 1979:231-244.

¹⁰⁷ This concept probably derived from the mythological archetype associated with streams or a whirlpool draining and recirculating the water, which later combined with the four elements or the five phases, and developed into hydromechanical or aeromechanical theories in medicine in Greece and China.

such as Heraclitus's Logos, Lao Tzu's Tao, Buddha's Dharma, and later Plato's Idea or Aristotle's Ousia; Anaximander's concept of *apeiron* ('the unlimited' or something indeterminate as the first principle of the universe) and the Chinese concept of chaos; as well as the Greek concept of *pneuma* ('breath', or 'vital spirit'), the Chinese concept of *ch'i* (vital energy or material force), and the Indian concept of *prāna* ('breath', the body's vital 'air' or energy).

We have seen, then, that the new world religions evolved out of the Old Civilisations, and that their development was grounded in the same mythology and shared the same mental structures and functions of the ancient world's more extensively interconnected network. In addition, the new paradigms were not entirely rational (from the modern perspective); their ideas were still on the boarder of rationality and of animistic, mythological, or magical worldviews. Thus their mental process could be called *mytho-rationalism*.¹⁰⁸ In this sense, most of the worldviews of the new world religions changed but some were unchanged in their cognitive processes. In other words, they all attempted to explain cosmogony as different from their mythology, but dealt with the same concerns of the origin and function of the universe. They all derived from the Grand Origin Myth, whose cosmic paradigms were abstracted into a rather philosophical principle.

¹⁰⁸ Whether reason is rational or non-rational is not absolute, but relative, depending on different perspectives, circumstances, or social situations. Thus, 'rationality' here should be regarded as the degree to which cognitive processes leading to conclusions are based more on reason than on intuition or sensory experience.

Base on the proposition I made in the previous section, we may be able to suppose that Japanese prototypical religion also shared similar worldviews described above. Needless to say, I am not trying to argue that the Japanese prototypical religion reached the same level of sophistication as those of the new world religions. There are, indeed, some minor and major differences in each concept due to various factors, such as the diversity in culture, economics, and social organisation. I argue, however, that the essence and nature of the prototypical religion must have been the same as those of the new world religions. In the following subsections, I will support this argument by analysing the mythologies of Japanese chronicles and the possible assimilation of Chinese thought during the transitional period from Jomon to Yayoi.

1.3.2 *The Emergence of Dialectic Thought in the Prototypical Religion*

My focus here is the concept of fundamental elements and dialectic thought that were common to all new world religions. It will be argued that these concepts had already grown during the phase transition from the Jomon to the Yayoi period.

According to Mishina Shōei who has produced excellent studies placing historical incidents in the *Nihon Shoki* and *Kojiki* within the broader context of East Asian history¹⁰⁹, the development of Japanese mythology can be divided into three stages: 'primitive mythology', 'ritualistic mythology', and 'political-mythology' (the compilation of the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon Shoki*). The first stage of 'primitive mythology' started around the Palaeolithic era or the Jomon period, developing extensively at the beginning of the Yayoi period. During this stage, people believed in innumerable spiritual beings, *tama*, which were concerned with human affairs and capable of intervening in them. The influence here from the southern oceanic cultural area was more prominent, such as the Izanagi-Izanami land-creation myth, the myth of Ōgetsu-hime's transformation, and Umisachihiko's travelling to the Palace of the Sea-deity myth (Watatsukami no Kami).

The second stage of 'ritualistic mythology' corresponds to the time between the Middle Yayoi and the Early-Middle Kofun periods. During this stage, large-scale religious rituals concerning rice cultivation were developed, a practice enhanced by the adoption of a northern type of shamanism. It was during this stage that the myth of Amaterasu's

¹⁰⁹ Mishina 1973-74.

concealing herself into the heavenly rock-cave was formed. The main myths formulated during this stage were all related to agriculture, in particular rice cultivation.

The final stage of 'political mythology' began from the Late Kofun period (AD 500-650) and ended by the compilation of the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon Shoki* in the early 8th century. During this stage, myths lost much of their religious character as they were altered politically to the advantage of the ruling house. They aimed to justify the political supremacy of the ruling families and the absolute religious power of the Heavenly Sovereign.¹¹⁰

To put it differently, the myths developed during the first and second stages fairly escaped the political alteration by court compilers. Thus, we can infer the worldview of the Final Jomon and Early Yayoi people by analysing the myths developed during the first stage. The tale of Umi-sachi-hiko and Yama-sachi-hiko documented in the *Kojiki* is such a good example. The archetype of this myth is found in the Indonesian islands, and it was brought to Japan during the Jomon period¹¹¹. In this myth, the word *sachi* means 'hunting implements', as well as a divine blessing or a magic power ('luck'). According to Matsumura, the lost fish-hook symbolises a lucky implement of magic power and the stubborn refusal of the elder brother to accept any but the original hook was not necessarily perverse behaviour, as his success was contingent on his magic hook and the

¹¹⁰ Mishina 1970:67-70, 114-5, 187-200. Cf. Matsumae 1993:317-358. Matsumae posits an alternative chronology for the development of Japanese myth, but he does not specify which myth was created in his chronology.

¹¹¹ Matsumura 1955 (III):676-681.

loss of the hook might signify a complete loss of luck and economic corruption¹¹². This myth then seems to imply the fall of old 'magic' (i.e., hunting and gathering) and the rise of the new (i.e., rice-cultivation), as well as the economic crisis of the transitional period from Jomon to Yayoi when the Jomon economic system was beginning to fall apart. More importantly, this myth implies the emergence of dialectic concepts similar to the Chinese *yin-yang*, represented by pairs of opposing words: for example, a paddy on elevated ground and a paddy on low ground; and "the tide-raising jewel" and "the tide-ebbing jewel".

When Yamasachi was about to go back to the upper land from the Palace of the Sea-deity, the Sea-deity returned the lost lucky hook and instructed him, saying:

When you give this hook to your elder brother, you must say this: This hook is a gloomy hook, an uneasy hook, a poor hook, a dull hook, [Thus] saying, give [it to him] from behind your back (or back-handed). Then, if your elder brother makes a high rice paddy, make a low paddy. If your brother makes a low rice paddy, make a high paddy. Thus, since I control the water, within three years your elder brother will be poverty-stricken. If he becomes bitter and angry and attacks you, take the tide-raising jewel and cause him to drown. If he pleads [with you] in anguish, take the tide-ebbing jewel and cause him to live: doing this, cause him anguish and suffering.¹¹³

We can notice in this myth that it consists of a series of binary oppositions: mountain/sea, hunting implement/fishing implement, lucky hook/unlucky hook, a high rice paddy/low paddy, and the tide-raising jewel/the tide-ebbing jewel. However, the

¹¹² Ibid:714-23. In this tale, Umi-sachi symbolises the fishing implements as well as the luck of the sea, whereas Yama-sachi symbolises the hunting implements and the luck of the mountains.

¹¹³ Philippi 1969:154.

binary oppositions so clear in the myth of Umisachi-Yamasachi cannot be found in Indonesian myths, which are thought to be the model for this story. They thus appear to have been inserted into the Japanese myth sometime after the archetype of the myth of Umisachi-Yamasachi was transmitted to Japan from the Indonesian islands.¹¹⁴ This implies that the dialectic outlook on the world emerged almost at the same time as in other Old Civilisations, that is, during the transitional period from the Jomon to Yayoi.

The above hypothesis that the principle of binary oppositions and dialectic emerged in Japan almost at the same time as in the Old Civilisations can be confirmed by the Izanagi-Izanami land-creation myth. According to Mishina's three-stage theory, this myth also belongs to the first stage, and it had its basis in popular tradition, whereas the previous mythologies concerning the evolution of the universe were compiled for political purposes under strong Chinese influence¹¹⁵. In the *Kojiki*, after Izanagi and Izanami have given birth to the land, they start to generate a series of deities that represent various natural phenomena and physical features of the land, before lastly bearing the fire deity Kagutsuchi (or the fire deity Homusubi), who fatally burned the genitals of Izanami¹¹⁶. A succession of these diverse deities based on sexual reproduction implies the ancient belief that a balanced union of opposing characteristics (i.e., male and female) would create the generation of myriad things, whereas an

¹¹⁴ For the variation of the Umisachi-Yamasachi type of myths found in the Indonesian islands, see Matsumura 1955 (III):676-681.

¹¹⁵ Philippi 1969:397; Aston 1972:2; Mishina 1970:150-161.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Aston 1972:18.

unbalanced union would lead to the separation of Heaven and Earth (i.e., the death of Izanami).

After the separation of Heaven and Earth¹¹⁷, each deity became responsible for the creation of different worlds, so that when the Earth deity Izanami lay down sick, her excretions were transformed into the deities of Metal, Earth, and Water - the fundamental materials of Nature - as well as a Generation-deity (Waku-musubi), who represented the mysterious vital force of production. On the other hand, when the Heaven deity Izanagi returned from the land of *yomi* and purified himself from the miasma, his purification resulted in the creation of the materials which constituted the 'above' - the sun, the moon, and the atmosphere¹¹⁸. These were symbolised by the deities, Amaterasu, Tsukuyomi and Susanō, who were entrusted with the 'Plain of High Heaven', the dominion of night, and the sea, respectively by Izanagi. Thus, after the separation of Heaven and Earth (i.e., the death of Izanami), Izanagi and Izanami created the building blocks for universe.

Ōbayashi Taryō argues that the incident in which the Fire deity is born at the liminality of Izanami's ordinary and sickened states illustrates the transforming power and the catalytic role of the Fire-Element. In addition, all other elements (i.e., Metal, Earth, and Water), which were created after the Fire-Deity, were able to be transformed by fire into

¹¹⁷ Izanami and Izanami symbolises the Heavenly Father and Earthly Mother respectively, so that the death of Izanami symbolises the separation of Heaven and Earth [Numazawa 1952].

¹¹⁸ Ōbayashi Taryō identify the Storm-deity Susanō as symbolising the deity of the atmosphere [Ōbayashi 1973a:27]

useful materials such as metal goods, pottery, and hot water. In other words, these elements were all major prerequisites for the development of a new civilisation.¹¹⁹ This implies that those who made this mythology conceived of a material cause to the evolution of the universe, according to a view in which nature comprised antagonistic forces (i.e., male and female), and the four “embodiments” of Izanami: Metal, Earth, Water, and Fire.

The process described above indicates that the synthesis emerges from the dialectic when Heaven Deity Izanagi and the Earth Deity Izanami incorporate the most vital elements of the opposing systems, and that such incorporation of the opposing elements (i.e. *in* and *yō*) yields a more inclusive and coherent new system (i.e. the elements of Metal, Earth, Water, and Fire).

However, there are four questions that must be answered before we can surely assert that the concept of fundamental elements, similar to those of China, India, and Greece, had already developed as a result of the emergence of dialectic thought in Japan.

First, is there any archaeological evidence? Since the principle of binary oppositions and dialectic is highly conceptual and metaphysical, it was difficult to locate definite archaeological evidence. Recently, however, Japanese musical instruments known as *kotoita* (Japanese zithers) were excavated from the Middle Yayoi site of Aoyakamijichi in Tottori and the Late Yayoi site of Himebaranishi at Izumo. These Japanese zithers

¹¹⁹ Ibid:31.

have the designs of the sun- and crescent-shaped holes gouged out on their surfaces, and the same type of zither is still used at Kamosu Shrine at Izumo for inviting deities for oracles. Thus, Katsube Shō opines that the theory of *yin-yang* must have been already transmitted to the San'in region during the Yayoi period¹²⁰. His conjecture cannot be simply rejected if we take account of abundant archaeological evidence, which indicates an active interchange of people and artefacts between the San'in region and the Continent during the Final Jomon and Yayoi periods¹²¹. Without written records, it may be impossible to recover the exact timing and sophistication of the *yin-yang* concept. Nevertheless, the archaeological evidence suggests that the Yayoi people had already known the idea similar to the Chinese *yin-yang*.

Second, when was the myth of Izanagi-Izanami made? The section of the Izanagi-Izanami myth in which the four deity-elements of Fire, Metal, Earth, and Water are created is generally supposed to belong to the earliest of stage of primitive mythology, and while the specific period has not yet been determined, it can be inferred from a comparison of the *Kojiki* with the *Nihon Shoki*. In the *Nihon Shoki*, the sun, the moon, and the atmosphere of the three universal dominions are described as having been born by the sexual union of Izanagi and Izanami. When Izanami died because of the birth of Fire, only the two deity-elements (i.e., Earth and Water) were transformed from her excreta. Thus, in this myth, three deity-elements (i.e., Fire, Earth, and Water) were generated in total, comprising the three elements of the world. Lacking the element Metal, this version seems to be older than that of the *Kojiki*, probably dating

¹²⁰ Katsube 2002:42-3.

¹²¹ See Ibid:93-96, Naitō 1993, and Kataoka 1999.

back to at least before the advent of Metal into Japan. Both bronze and iron were introduced together with rice cultivation at the beginning of the Yayoi period. Therefore, it may be surmised that the element Metal was probably added to the section of the myth of Izanagi-Izanami's creation of building blocks of the world in the Early Yayoi period, as Metal exerted a significant impact on life at this time.

The third question to be answered is whether the emergence of this new worldview was made by a direct transmission from China or by a synchronic change in the ecological web of the Eurasian Continent. It could be suggested that the latter is more plausible since, if the concept of elements had been transmitted from China, the total number of elements should have been five (i.e. Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water) instead of four (i.e. Metal, Earth, Water, and Fire). In addition, in the myth of Izanagi-Izanami's creation of building blocks, Fire played a central role, but in the Chinese five-element theory fully developed by Tsou Yen (c.350-270BC) around 4th century BC, it was Earth that could transform the other four elements and was thus considered central. In fact, the role of Fire in this myth is more akin to that of Zoroastrianism and Heraclitus' cosmology, in which Fire formed the basic material and principle of an orderly universe. Matsumura and others have associated the violent death of the earth-goddess figure Izanami with the phenomenon of volcanic eruption¹²². Thus, the idea of Fire as a central element may have been indigenous to Japan since the island experienced volcanic eruptions, and it probably dates back to at least the Middle Jomon period. Jomon people's devotion to fire can be inferred from the frequent occurrence of flame-style

¹²² Matsumura 1955 (II):354-370.

vessels. Yamakami Izumo surmises that the Jomon people perceived mysterious power (*kami*) in fire due both to their fear of volcanoes and lightning, and to its benefit in cooking and warmth for survival¹²³.

Likewise, the element of Water was probably derived from a deity for fishing, while the element of Earth probably derived from the material used for making flame-style vessels. Yamakami conjectures that spontaneous generation of religious belief based on these three elements (i.e., fire, water, and earth) already existed during the Jomon period. He assumes that this belief was extended to newly imported objects such as artefacts of bronze and rice during the Yayoi period, and thereby formed a religious and ritual system based on the elements of Fire, Water, Earth, Metal, and grains.¹²⁴ In other words, the prototypical religion of Japan emerged as a result of the synthesis of Jomon beliefs and foreign elements during the transitional phase from Jomon to Yayoi, that is, around 5th century BC.

We can therefore assume with fairly strong possibility that the concepts of the basic materials of the universe, of motion and change, and of binary opposites were already developed in early Japanese mythology at the turning point from Jomon to Yayoi. The archetypes of a materialistic and dialectic way of thinking are clearly visible, if yet unsophisticated. Japan had a worldview based on the concept of dialectic thought as well as the doctrine of microcosm and macrocosm that was shared by all the new world

¹²³ Yamakami 1980:4.

¹²⁴ Ibid:5.

religions. The prototypical religion of Japan emerged out of these ways of understanding the universe.

1.3.3 The Cultural Influences from the South

I have argued in the previous subsection that the development of the Japanese four-element theory, one of the major characteristics of the Japanese prototypical religion, was a synchronic event rather than a direct transmission from China. Nevertheless, given that there were great migrations to Japan from the Asian continent and sudden appearance and popularity of bronze swords and mirrors, it seems wrong to conclude that the prototypical religion was developed without any influence from overseas. In fact, the prototype of the Izanagi-Izanami land-creation myth is widely distributed in southern China and Southeast Asian countries¹²⁵. Thus, the fourth and final question that must be considered here is which part of foreign influences was exerted most for the formation of the Japanese prototypical religion. Although the evidence available to us is of necessity fragmentary and somewhat inconclusive, this is a significant enquiry to understand better the origin and nature of Japanese prototypical religion.

In 1960s, Oka Masao has already pointed out that the strong influence of southern China around 5th-4th century BC initiated Yayoi culture. During the last quarter of the 5th century BC, the state of Yüeh became a powerful kingdom after its conquest of the state of Wu in 473 BC. (Yüeh was, in turn, conquered by the kingdom of Ch'u in 334 BC.) It

¹²⁵ Tsugita 1984:195.

- 2) The left side is regarded as superior to the right side in the ship culture, but the reverse is true in the horse culture.
- 3) Odd numbers are given more significant meaning in the ship culture, as in the case of 'Seven-Five-Three' festival of Japanese folk tradition.
- 4) The horse culture sets a high value on a linear or direct way of living whereas the ship culture on a curvilinear or indirect way of living.
- 5) The ship culture stresses the importance of suppleness and flexibility whereas the horse culture accentuates undaunted courage and resoluteness.
- 6) Although the horse culture averts foolishness, the ship culture does not cut away foolishness as opposed to wisdom.
- 7) Artefact and feausance are considered fundamental in the horse culture, whereas 'no actions' in the ship culture.
- 8) The ship culture is based on matrilineal society, whereas the horse culture on patrilineal society.
- 9) The worlds before birth and after death are believed to exist horizontally in the ship culture, whereas they exist vertically in the horse culture.
- 10) Genuine or phoney is important in the ship culture, while right or wrong is significant in the horse culture.
- 11) A standard of value is based on weather it is clean or unclean in the ship culture, whereas good or evil in the horse culture.
- 12) The way of life forms is regarded as chaos in the ship culture whereas cosmos in the horse culture.
- 13) To live in accordance with the law of nature is valued in the ship culture, whereas the control of nature is more important in the horse culture.¹²⁸

If we look at Chinese culture from the above perspectives, it is evident that Japanese culture has been under the strong influence of the ship culture of southern China, which is in short characterised by the value system of Taoism. By contrast, the influence of the horse culture or the value system of Confucianism was dominant only in principle during the Nara and Tokugawa periods.

¹²⁸ Fukunaga 1996:66-85.

The stronger cultural influence of southern China can also be evinced by the fact that there are astonishing similarities between the Yayoi culture and the ship culture of southern China. These include farming tools, housing design, accessories, lacquer wares, tripod earthenware, boats, and ores¹²⁹. For example, it had been commonly accepted that lattice windows often used in Japanese temples and shrines were introduced to Japan with Buddhist architecture in the late 6th century, but recent excavation at the Aoyakamijichi site in Tottori shows that they had already been introduced at least by the 3rd century BC from southern China.¹³⁰ The prototype of hilltop lookouts known as *kōchisei shūraku* constructed throughout the Yayoi period can also be found in Chekiang of southern China (first built just before the beginning of the Early Yayoi period in Japan)¹³¹. More than ten Chinese bronze mirrors inscribed with the era name of the Wu dynasty were excavated in Japan¹³². The Chinese chronicles also record that, when the Wa people visited China, they claimed themselves the descendants of T'ai-pai, the virtuous founder of the Wu dynasty in south China. They also maintained the custom of wearing a topknot (hair gathered into a small knot on the top of the shaved head) and tattoos¹³³ in imitation of T'ai-pai who shaved his head and tattooed his skin in order to proclaim the disqualification as the emperor of Chou Dynasty and have his youngest brother be an emperor instead¹³⁴.

¹²⁹ An 1990:61-80.

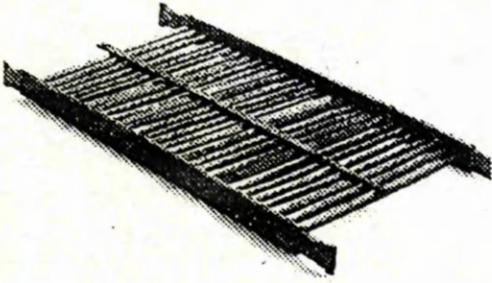
¹³⁰ *Nihonkai Shinbun* 2000/06/09; 2000/10/02; 2001/01/22.

¹³¹ Mori & Amino 1999:95.

¹³² Fukunaga 1987:50.

¹³³ *Chin-shu & Liang-shu*, in Inoue 1974:306 & 315.

¹³⁴ *Shih-chi* (the Hereditary Houses of Wu T'ai-pai).



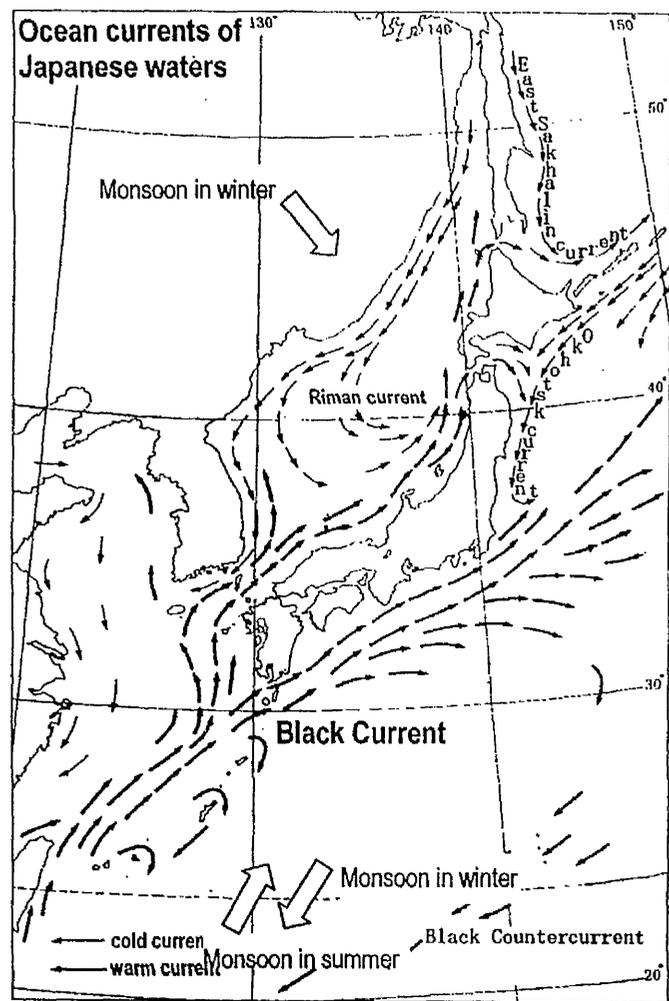
Left: the Oldest Lattice Window excavated at the Aoyakamijichi site in Tottori;

Right: Lattice windows still being used at Hinomisaki Shrine in Izumo

Another record in *the Annals of the state of Wei dealing with the Wa people* also indicates that ancient northern Chinese people thought that Japan was located near south China, to the east of southeastern coast of Fukien, someplace around Taiwan or the Okinawa islands. This misunderstanding persisted until the compilation of the History of Chin Dynasty (*Chin-shu*, c. AD648). The History of Sui Dynasty (*Sui-shu*) was the first chronicle that indicated some doubt about the location of Japan, but the accurate location was not recorded until the compilation of the *Old and New History of T'ang Dynasty* (compiled in AD945 and AD1060 respectively). This persistent mistake was probably caused not only by their close resemblance in culture, but also by a short travel time from southern China to Japan by sea.

As shown in the map below, there is a strong oceanic current flowing from southern China to Japan at the high speed of 55km/h to 93km/h with the width of over 100 kilometres. It is named Kuroshio (Black Current) because it appears a deeper blue than does the sea through which it flows. Moreover, Japan is located in the monsoon zone of East Asian. The monsoons of this region are seasonal winds that flow northward from the South Pacific in summer, and eastward off the Continent and southward from the

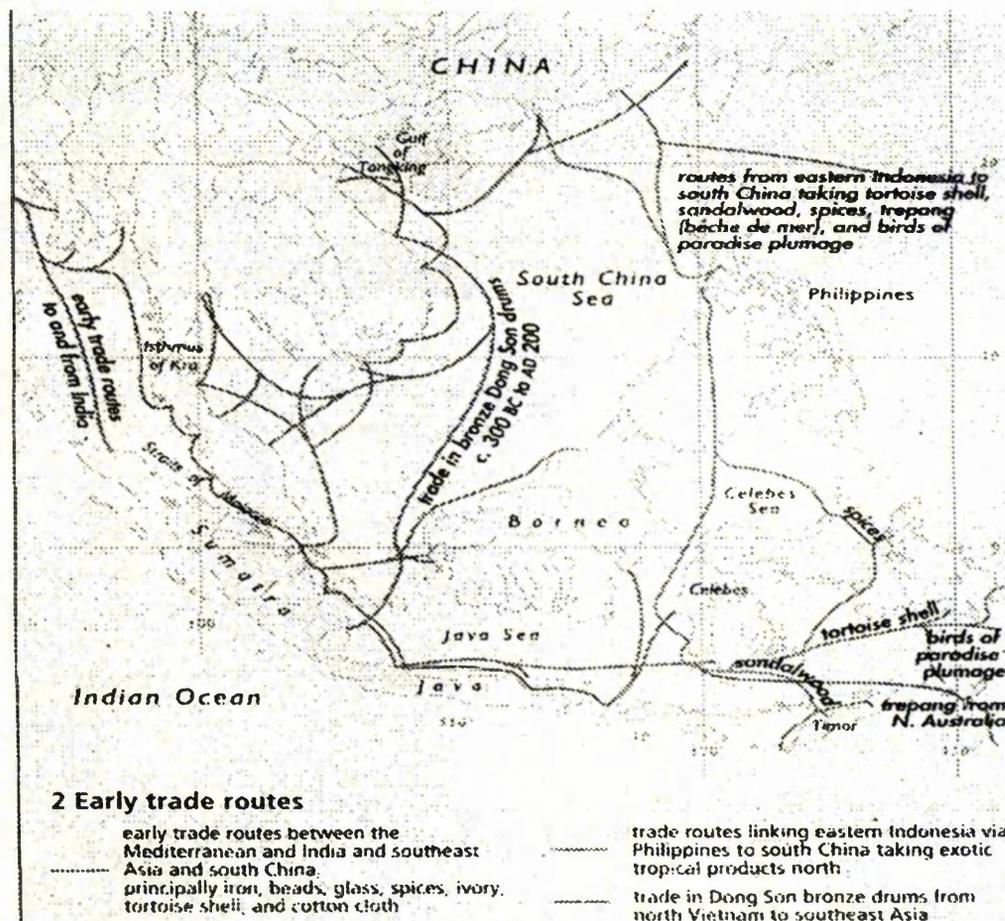
North Pacific in winter. We cannot disregard an importance of the Kuroshio and the monsoons in the development of close relationships between Japan and southern China. In 1944, for example, one junk sailed from the port of Ningpo in Chekinag was able to reach Karatsu city in Saga in less than one day owing to the swift Black Current and a favourable wind¹³⁵. Thus, it seems not coincidental that the location of Japan believed by the ancient northern Chinese people overlaps with the route of the current that flows between Taiwan and the Okinawa islands.



Based on Mozai 1992: 84

¹³⁵ An 1990:74.

Another Chinese document also indicates the close relationship between Japan and the south. According to the *Lun-hêng (Balance of Discourses)*, compiled by Wang Ch'ung in AD90, the Wa people paid a tribute of turmeric 薑草 during the Chou dynasty, an essential ingredient for sacred millet liquor 鬯酒. However, the record makes us wonder how the ancient 'Japanese' was able to obtain the spice only available at that time in the south India and the Indonesia Islands. If we ought to believe the record, this riddle can only be solved by taking into consideration the effect of the Kuroshio and the monsoon¹³⁶. These also explain why quite a few Indonesian myths were transmitted to Japan in the Neolithic era.

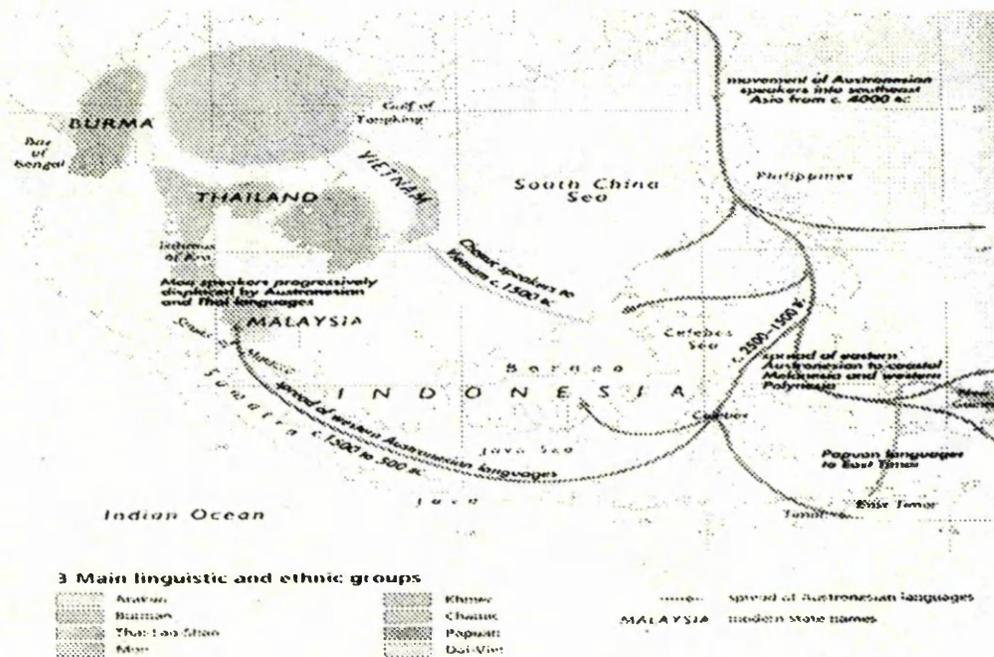


Early Trade Routes in South-East Asia

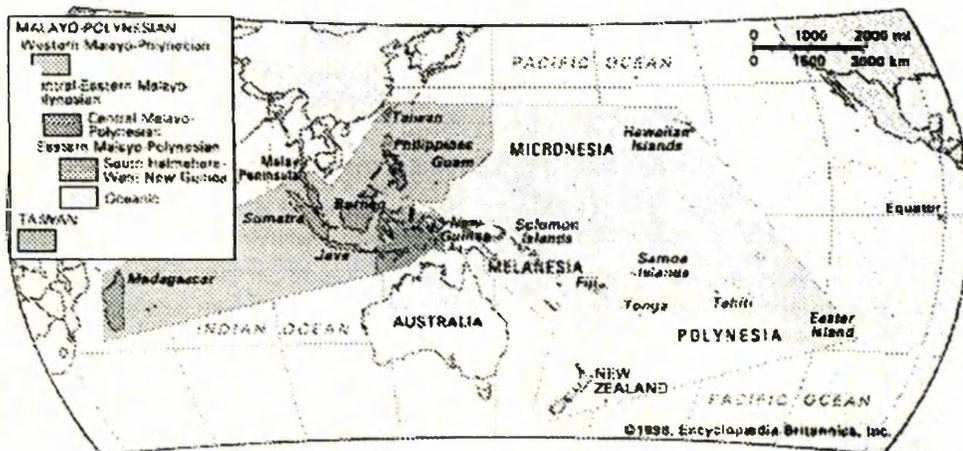
(The map from the Times History of the World 1993:46)

¹³⁶ Cf. Fukunaga 1996:33-4.

Moreover, the existence of an ancient substratum of the Austro-Asiatic languages gives us increasingly strong indication of the great antiquity of links between Japan and the southern oceanic cultural area. Thus, there is no doubt that the Kuroshio with a favourable wind formed a 'superhighway' on the ocean that connected Japan with the ship culture of not only southern China but also the southern seas since the Neolithic period.



Spread of Austronesian languages (from the Times History of World 1993:46);



Major divisions of the Austronesian languages (from the Encyclopaedia Britannica 1998).

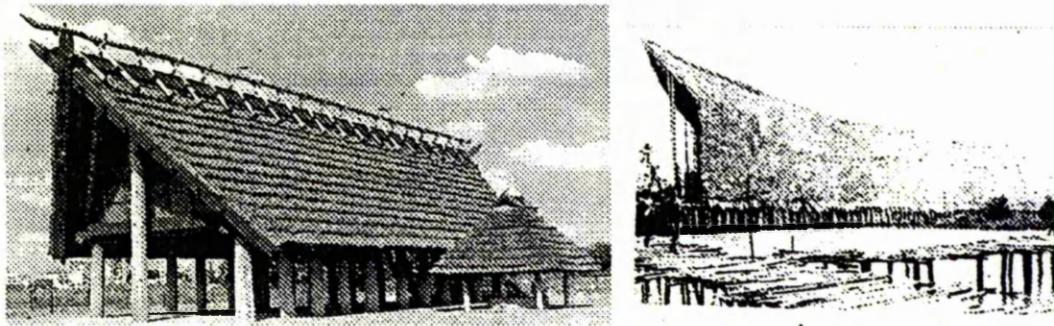
It is also unmistakable that there had been the intentional or accidental migration of quite a few boat people who were the bearers of Austronesian languages and cultures into Japan along this superhighway. We may assume that the number of such boat people suddenly increased in the wake of the social turmoil in China from the 5th-4th century BC. The strong influence of the ship culture of southern China and of the southern seas has a clue to understand the nature of Japanese prototypical religion which laid the foundation for the latter evolution of Japanese religions.

The above assumptions can be partly supported by the variance between the Japanese 'four-element theory' and the Chinese theory of five phases developed by Tsou Yen in northeastern China (the Province of Shantung) around the 4th century BC. Secondly, they are also supported by the sudden spread of shell bracelets (*kaiwa*) as a religious implement from the Final Jomon and Early Yayoi periods, which were made of perforated shells such as heavy frog conch, cone shell, and *Patella optima* available only in the southern seas. According to Kinoshita Naoko, shell bracelets made of the Southern Seas shells first appeared during the transitional phase from Jomon to Yayoi and came into fashion as a magical accessory among the elite from the beginning of the Yayoi period. However, they gradually declined during Final Yayoi and eventually replaced by the stone bracelets made of jaspers (*ishi-kushiro*) from the beginning of the Kofun period.¹³⁷ The sudden emergence of shell bracelets made of the Southern Seas shell must have had something to do with the global turmoil during the 5th-4th century

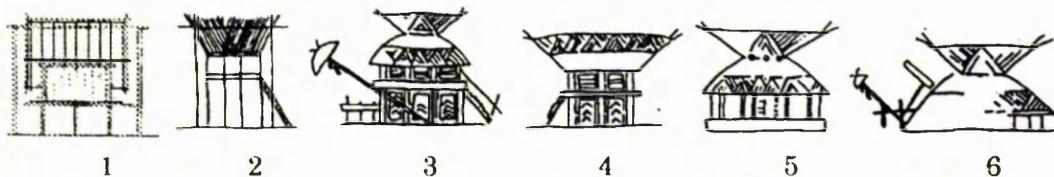
¹³⁷ Kinoshita 1996. Shell bracelets were not new to the Jomon people, but the materials used for making the bracelets were banal shells found locally in the archipelago, such as clamshells and *glycymeris albolineata* (*benkeigai*).

BC, whereas the lifecycle of the shell bracelets indicates the change in the relationships between the Yayoi people and the oceanic cultural people.

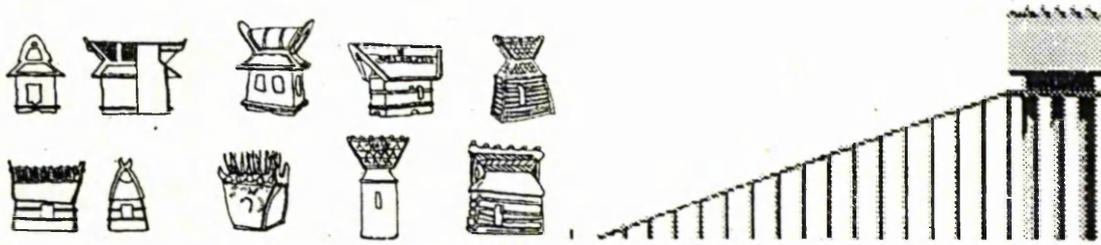
Finally, sudden development of a new architectural structure from the Yayoi period, which is quite similar to that of South-East Asia, also affirms the strong influence of the ship culture of southern China and of the southern seas. Indeed, the striking similarity of architectural structures gives us an insight into the origin of Japanese prototypical religion. So we shall now look at some of shared architectural styles in detail.



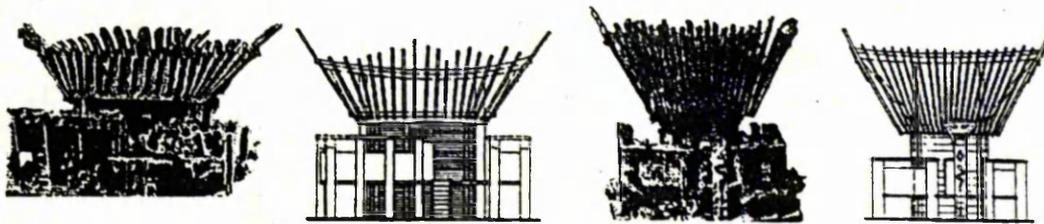
Left: a restored large-scale stilt shrine at the Ikegami-Sone site of the Yayoi period in Osaka; **Right:** Men's ceremonial house (*ravi*) from Kamari in the Purari delta area of Papua New Guinea (Haddon Collection, Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology).



1: A lateral view of the Akka tribe granary in Northern Thailand, present (Torigoe 2000:238) & Pictures of houses incised on objects of bronze; 2: from Kagawa prefecture, 1st–2nd centuries AD; 3-6: from the back of bronze mirrors excavated at the Samidatarazuka Kofun in Nara, 4th century AD. (Domenig 1980:65, reprinted from Waterson 1990:16). It should be noted that a large roof is supported by two columns at the ends of a ridgepole both in 1 and 2.



Left: *Haniwa* houses and barns found in Japanese tombs of the Kofun period (Domenig 1980:64, reprinted from Waterson 1990:17); Right: 48-meter tall ancient Izumo Shrine during the Heian period. (Ōbayashigumi: 1989)

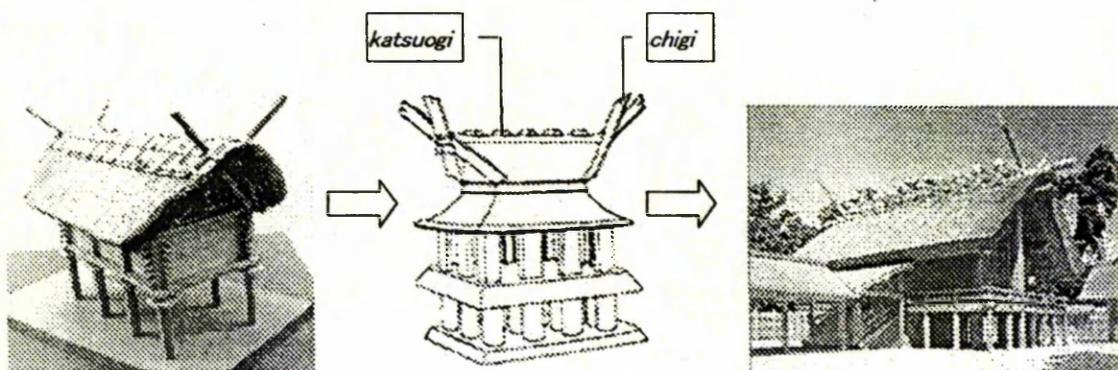


Bronze models of saddle-roofed houses or granaries found from the tomb nos. 3 & 6 at Shih-Chai-Shan in Yunnan, 2nd – 1st century BC (Yunnan Museum) and their illustrations (From Torigoe 2000:190 & 193)

The range of architectural styles shown above quickly reveals some striking similarities, which are strongly suggestive of a perhaps distant, but common, origin. The most obvious of them is the use of pile foundations that served to protect people and crops from humid climate, flooding, and wild animals. The elevated floor became a fundamental element of the Japanese house and has remained unchanged apart from some refinement. Although this fact in itself would hardly be sufficient to claim its common origin, other repeatedly recurring features lend credit to it.

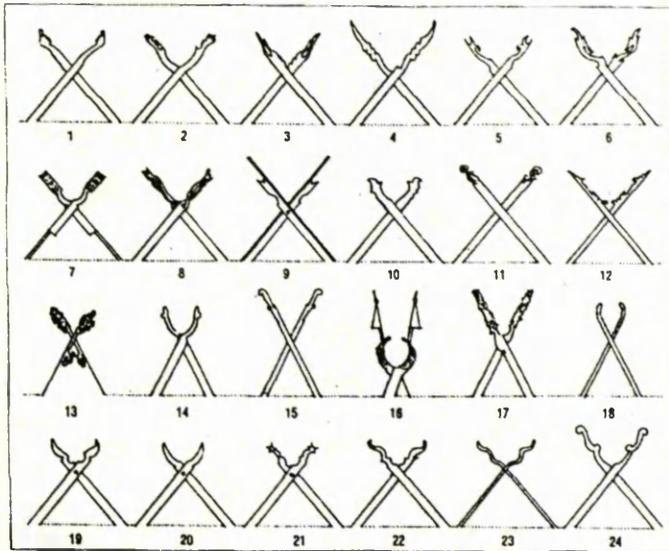
In addition to the pile foundations, we find more striking similarity. In South-East Asia, the gable-ends are often decorated with gable-finials in the form of crossed horns. These finials are often elaborately carved in the similitude of birds or *naga* (the mythical water serpent in South-East Asian cosmologies). In other instances, they are likened to ‘open

scissors' or to the prow and stern of boats.¹³⁸ We should notice that the gable finials in the shape of open scissors are very much alike the *chigi* (the ornamental crossbeams on the gable-end) found in the Yayoi granaries and shrines, *haniwa* houses of the Kofun period, and the present Shinto shrines of Ise and Izumo. The gable horns became associated with imperial status and were reserved only for imperial architecture and Shinto shrines in Japan.

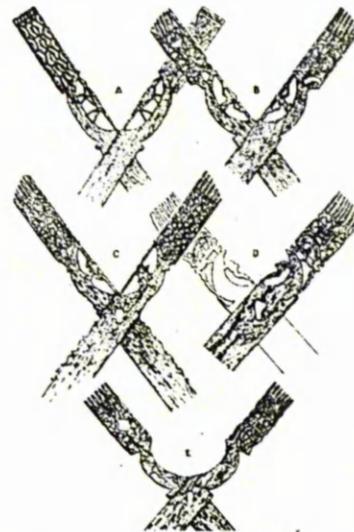


Left: a model of a restored stilt granary at Toro site in Shizuoka (Yayoi period); Centre: *haniwa* house of a raised structure with gabled roof found at Imashirozuka Kofun (5th or 6th century) in Osaka, believed to be the tomb of the Great King Keitai; Right: Ise Inner Shrine (present). The *katsuogi* (short logs that lie horizontally across the ridge) are generally thought to have derived from a building component for fixing rooftrees. However, close resemblance in the shapes of the gondola-type ships and the roof suggests that they were modelled on the rowlocks.

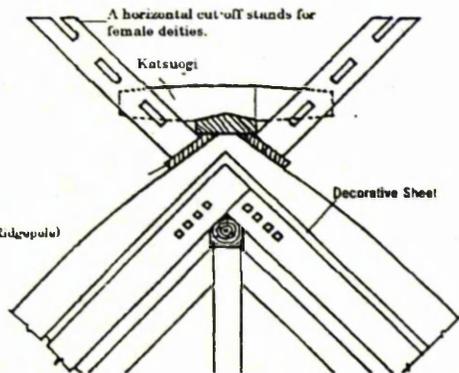
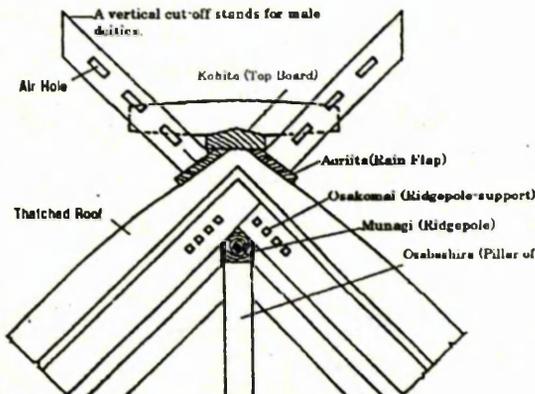
¹³⁸ Waterson 1990:3-7.



South-East Asian gable horns. 1-6: Kalimantan; 7-10: Sulawesi; 11: Flores; 12: Singapore; 13: Riau; 14: West Sumatra; 15: West Java; 16: Tanimbar; 17-18: Roti; 19-22: Laos (Yuan); 23: Thailand; 24: Kampuchea. (Domenig 1980: 20, reprinted from Waterson 1990:11)



Gable ornaments of 'shinas' (*lobo*) in South-east Central Sulawesi (Kaudern 1944: 28, reprinted from Waterson 1990:12)



Comparison of Naigū and Gekū Chigi. The end of Outer Shrine's *chigi* is cut off in a vertical line to symbolise male deities (left), whereas the end of Inner Shrine's *chigi* in a horizontal line to symbolise female (right). This contrast suggests that the two shrines together form a symbolic representation of the two complementary forces which as in the Chinese *yin-yang* systems interact to produce universal harmony (Reprinted from Uzura 1993:79)

Domenig has postulated that both pile construction and the saddle- or ship-roof developed in southern China during the Neolithic period, and that it was transmitted not only to the subsequent Bronze Age culture of Dong Son in South-East Asia, (fl. between

some time 600 BC and the 1st century AD), but also to Japan¹³⁹. As Domenig and other scholars argue, it is obvious that the raised floor structure with extended gable horns of Japanese shrines is clearly related to South-East Asian styles. These close resemblances in the architectural style of the roofs and plentiful archaeological and folkloric evidence suggest that the people living in the South-East Asia had already shared the ship culture of southern China with Japan since remote antiquity.¹⁴⁰

A sphere of southern Chinese bronze culture extended over a wide region from the Yangtze Valley to the rest of South-East Asia. In the *History of the Former Han Dynasty* (c. 100AD)¹⁴¹, the bearers of this culture were generically referred to as the ‘Hundred Yüeh’ tribes who fought against the Han Chinese as the latter expanded towards southern China. Their original homeland was in Fukien or possibly as far north as the Yangtze River delta. Before the advent of the Han Chinese in this region, they had already developed the advanced technologies in the production of bronze ware, ironware, earthenware, silk fabrics, and lacquerware, and they carried out rice growing and fishing along the rivers. In fact, the Shanghai region of south central China was most progressive in the Late Neolithic¹⁴². Boats were indispensable to their daily lives, and they engaged themselves in maritime trade in the area of sea around China. Through trade contacts and movements of people, the influence of their culture appeared to have stretched not only to the coasts of the Yellow Sea and the East China

¹³⁹ Domenig 1980:78, cited by Waterson 1990:15.

¹⁴⁰ For archaeological and folkloric evidence, see *Nisseyū Bunka Kenkyū* vols.2, 3, 5,6,9 & extra vols. 1,2;; Furuta et al 1996; Torigoe 2000; Senda 2002.

¹⁴¹ vol.28-8 [卷二十八下地理志第八下(抄) 自吳至黃支].

¹⁴² Personal contact with Professor Gina Barns

Sea, but also to Japan and the southern coast of Korea, and as far north as the coast of the Po Hai Bay¹⁴³.

Despite the hundreds and perhaps thousands of years of separation between the Yüeh people in South-East Asia and the Wa people in Japan, and despite the high degree of sinification of the Yüeh tribes in South-East Asia and of the Wa tribes in Japan, we can still find more unmistakable traces showing the linkage between the two groups.

¹⁴³ The northerly direction of the Black Current suggests stronger influence of the southern oceanic cultural area even on the south coastal regions of the Korean Peninsula. Some aboriginal tribes of the south coast in the Peninsula also had the custom of tattooing their skins, which is thought to be a vestige of maritime cultural traditions. The study of ancient place names in these regions also suggests that the indigenous inhabitants were not the tribes migrated from the Continent, but from the South India and Polynesian islands. Furthermore, tradition has it that the legendary founders of the Peninsula and the Cheju Island were hatched from an egg. Since the myth of oviparous-generation is widely spread in the South Asia and the South Pacific islands, these legends are thought to have also transmitted from the south (Gyo 1981:73). There is also a strong suggestion that religious folkways still observed both in southern Korea and Japan have roots in South-East Asia. These include the decoration of sacred straw rope (*shimenawa*) across the sacred areas, purification ceremony with water performed by the worshipers of deities (*misogi*), strips of white paper hung from a sacred tree at a mountain pass (*gohei*), sacred music and dancing performed by a maiden in the service of the deities and its musical instruments such as bells and drums, and offerings such as rice plants, rice, glutinous rice jelly, and rice wine (Doi 1959:19). All these evidence shows that the close resemblance in the cultures of Japan and southern Korea has been generated under the strong influence of South-East Asia since the Neolithic era.



1: Markings incised on the faces of *dogū* and earthenware (Jomon & Yayoi periods). The markings focus around the eyes, foreheads, cheeks, and lips. Although no clear evidence points to these markings as tattoos, their comparison with facial tattoos in Pacific Rim cultures such as Taiwan, Southeast Asia, and Polynesian triangles indicates that these markings were in fact representations of tattoo (Takayama 1969). **2: Tattoos in the Yap Islands;** **3: Facial tattoo of the Taiwanese hilltribe woman;** **4: Facial tattoo of the Tu-lung tribe (独龙族) women in Szechwan.** [1 & 2 from Senda 2002:75 & 89, 3 & 4 from Torigoe 2000:282]

The several Chinese classics inform us that the Hundred Yüeh tribes, like the Wa people, wore a topknot and had dragons tattooed on their skins in order to keep away scaly dragons that were believed by them to inhabit in water¹⁴⁴. The earliest evidence of tattooing in Japan comes from *dogū* dating to 3000 years ago (see above). Tattoos had their place in the Yayoi society as well – to help ward off evil spirits and to delineate status. Due to the influence of the Han Chinese ideologies during the Kofun period, however, tattoos were beginning to assume a negative connotation, marks of barbarism or criminal.¹⁴⁵ In the *Kojiki*, a princess was surprised by the tattoos on one of Sovereign Jinmu's attendants named Ōkume no Mikoto who was a man of very high status¹⁴⁶, but

¹⁴⁴ *Chuang Tzu, Han Fei Tzu (The Book of Master Han Fei), Huai Nan Tzu, Shih Chi, Chhien Han Shu.*

¹⁴⁵ McCallum 1988:116. Tattooing was one of the 'five punishments' of the Han Chinese.

¹⁴⁶ Philippi 1969:181. According to Mishina, the Kume clan originally came from the Hayato, a maritime tribal people who lived in southern Kyushu in ancient times, mainly on the Ōsumi and Satsuma peninsulas (cited from Tsugita 1980:43).

three later accounts are clearly associated with crime. In one, for example, a tattooed man steals provisions and is executed¹⁴⁷. In the *Nihon Shoki*, tattooed tribes in Eastern Japan were called the barbarians known as *Emishi* during the early Kofun period¹⁴⁸. Two other references in the chronicle also reveal increasingly negative attitude towards tattoos. In the first, a man plotting rebellion was spared death, but tattooed near the eye¹⁴⁹. In the second, a man whose dog had killed one of the Great King's birds was tattooed and forced to become a bird-keeper¹⁵⁰. Thus, tattooing turned into a mark of punishment sometime during the Kofun period, presumably because of stronger influence of the horse culture of northern China. The *History of the Later Han Dynasty* also records that the Wa people attended the market in Hui-chi, the capital of the Yüeh Kingdom during the Yayoi period. Given this, we may conjecture that the northern Han Chinese ideologies were not fully permeated into the Japanese society till the Kofun period, but the cultural influences of southern China or Hundred Yüeh tribes were more dominant in the Jomon and Yayoi societies.

Furthermore, not only the folkways but also the objects of worship were the same: snakes, birds, and the sun played important roles in their worship for both the Neolithic Yayoi people and the Yüeh tribes, as shown below¹⁵¹.

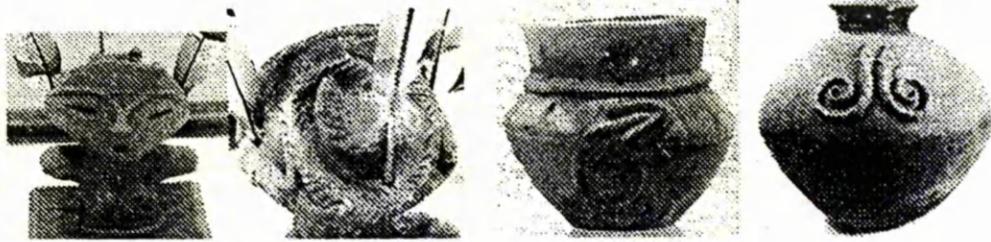
¹⁴⁷ Ibid:348.

¹⁴⁸ Aston 1972:I-200.

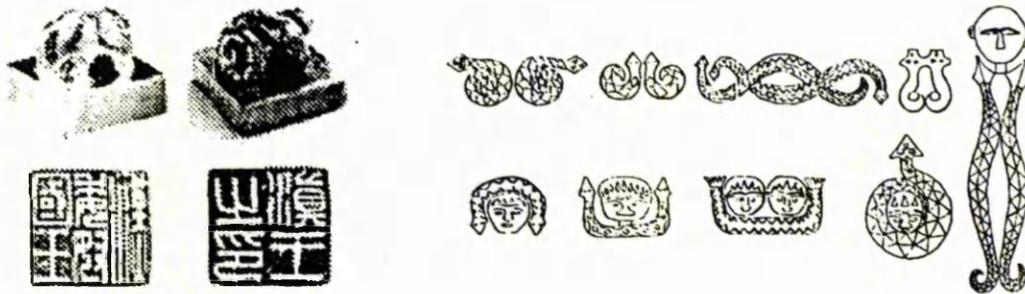
¹⁴⁹ Ibid:I-305.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid:I-359.

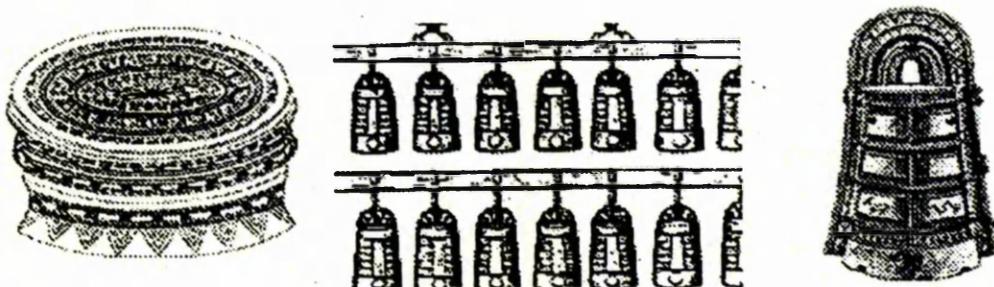
¹⁵¹ See, for example, Kokubu 1980; Ishizawa et al.:1991; Ōbayashi 1991; Ō 1992; Jo:1998; Torigoe 2000.



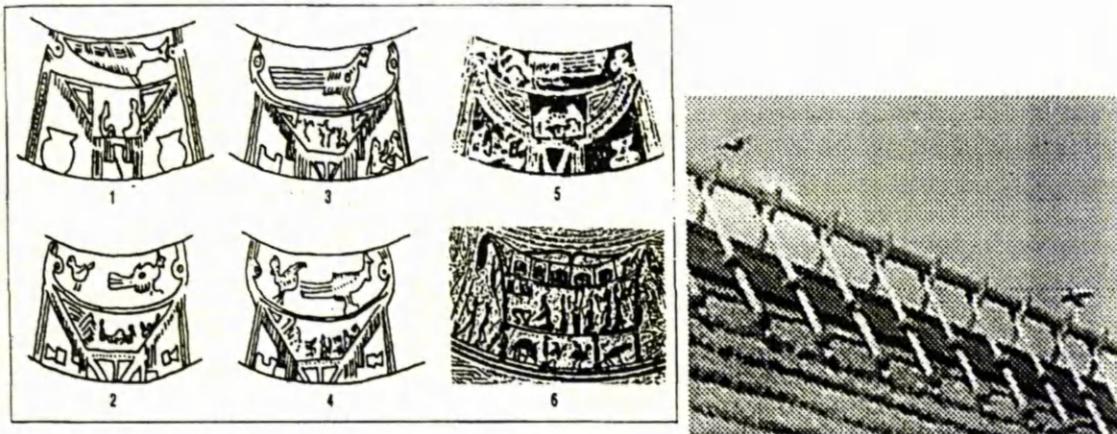
Left & Centre: dogū shaman wearing a snake on her head and a jar engraved with a snake on its surface, found at the Middle Jomon Tōnai site in Nagano (Idojiri Museum in Nagano); **Right:** Paiwan hilltribe's jar engraved with a pair of hundred-pacer snakes in Taiwan (from Kokubu1980:204)



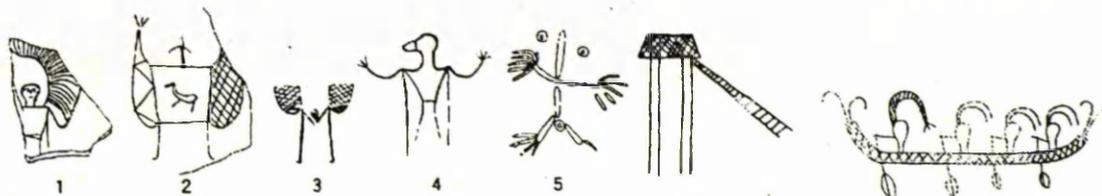
Left: Gold seals with a finger grip of snake curving, bestowed on the king of Na in Kyushu (left, early 1st century AD) and the king of Yunnan (right, late 2nd century BC) by Han emperors; **Right:** Snake patterns carved on the wood sculptures by the Taiwanese hilltribes.



Bronze Musical Instruments. **Left:** Dong Son bronze drums from north Vietnam; **Centre:** Yunnan chimes (*pien chung*) consisting of 16 tuned bronze bells placed in two rows of eight in a rectangular framework and played by priests using mallets (dates to at least 2000 BC); **Right:** Japanese bronze bell. The decorations and designs on Japanese bronze bells have more familiarity with the bronze musical instruments in southern China and South-East Asia than with those of northern China (illustrations from *Shogakukan Kokugo Daijiten* 1988).



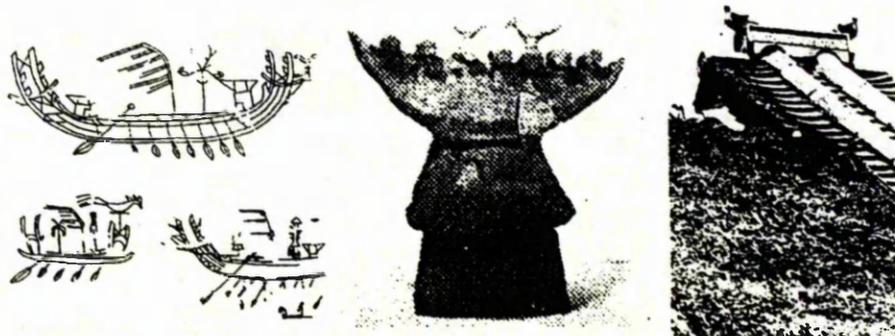
Left: Birds on a boat or house represented on Dong Son drums. 1-4: from North Vietnam; 5: from the Moulie drum, North Vietnam; 6: from the Sangeang drum, eastern Indonesia. (Domenig 1980:33, reprinted by Waterson 1990:19); Right: ceremonial woodcarving of birds on the roof of a restored large-scale stilt shrine at the Ikegami-Sone site (Yayoi). Ceremonial woodcarving of a birds were excavated throughout the country.



Drawings of the disguised shamans as a bird on bronze bells or earthenware (Yayoi period): 1-Tsuboi site in Nara; 2 Shimizukaze site in Nara; 3 Karako-kagi sites in Nara; 4 Shinjōgami site in Okayama 5 Kariya site in Osaka; Far Right - rowing 'bird shamans' and a laddered highset shrine right on the waterfront, incised on the Yayoi jar found at Inayoshi-Sumida site in Tottori, near Izumo. (reprinted from Nakamura 1999:95 & 101)

Birds were universally regarded as symbols of the soul, or the links between Heaven and Earth. In Greek, they were forewarning and a message from Heaven. In China, they carried the same gist, while the immortals took on the forms of birds to denote their 'lightness' and their freedom from terrestrial 'heaviness'. Shamans who offered sacrifice, or performed ritual dance, are often considered as birds flying skywards, for the birds represented the souls escaping from the body. The birds stood in opposition to

the serpent as symbol of Heaven as opposed to Earth.¹⁵² In southern Chinese tradition, boat-shaped coffins with the bow made in the similitude of a bird were used for burial. In Japan, a ship was used as a coffin, and birds were illustrated on the line drawing of the ships carved into the Yayoi and Kofun earthenware excavated at the Karako-Kagi sites and the Higashi Tonozuka Kofun in Nara.¹⁵³ The ship called *Ame no torifune* ('Heavenly bird-ship') in the *Kojiki* is depicted as being able to travel freely between heaven and earth. In Indonesia, boats are regarded as the vessel in which the shaman travels through the air in search of the patient's soul as well as the vessel of spirits that carries the souls of the dead to the beyond¹⁵⁴. Birds were the important navigators that let seamen know that the land is nearby when neither compasses nor sea charts were available to them. Thus, these examples seem to indicate that boats are the symbols and the means of reaching the other world, whereas birds are the guides that navigate the souls of the dead to the other world.



Left: birds and boats incised on the Yayoi earthenware found at the Higashi Tonozuka Kofun in Nara (Mizuno 1999:251); Centre: *haniwa* house with the roof cresting of birds; Right: The roof cresting of birds in Nara (present) (centre & right photos from Torigoe 2000:247)

¹⁵² Chevalier & Gheerbrant 1996:86-87.

¹⁵³ Senda 2002:41.

¹⁵⁴ Eliade 1961:356.



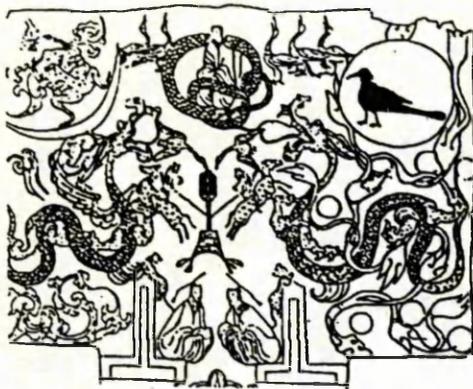
From left to right: gateway of the Akka tribe who migrated from Yunnan to Burma and northern Thailand and its close-up, decorated with wooden birds and suppression bamboo ropes; Japanese *torii* having the sculpture of birds at the edges and its close-up, Nunakuma Shrine in Hiroshima; Korean red-painted gateways (*honsamulun* 紅箭門) erected at four cardinal points of the national altars in Seoul, built in 1395; Korean *sodo*, a bird image is attached atop the pole and the pole is erected at the centre of the sacred area surrounded by a 'suppression rope' (*kunchuru*).

Moreover, the Yüeh tribes believed that the birds were the vehicles for the deities that would descend from Heaven to protect the houses or villages, and thus they set bird images on the roof of houses or on the top of village gates as guardian deities. They also hang a sacred rope (*patatâ chibi-dayâ*) with bamboo-wares known as the 'eyes of ogre' (*retabe*), across the gateway (see above). They also believe that both *patatâ chibi-dayâ* and *retabe*, which remind us of a Japanese *shimenawa* (sacred rope of twisted rice straw) and *kadomatsu* ('gate pine'), have the power to ward off evil and sickness. The tradition of hanging the sacred rope with the bamboo-wares across the doorway on special occasions is still widely distributed in Yunnan and Indochina, but it cannot be found across the north latitude of the 38th parallel in the Korean Peninsula.¹⁵⁵ In southern Korea, birds are sometimes carved on the top of the red-painted gateways (*honsamulun*), which are erected at four cardinal points of the national altars to mark a sacred place of gods of the soil and grain. In Japan, a *shimenawa* with zigzag paper streamers (*shide*) is hung over the *torii* to demarcate the abode of the deities and to

¹⁵⁵ Torigoe 2000:223-230 & 244-252.

prevent malevolent spirits from entering. Given this, it seems not coincidental that a symbolic gateway marking the entrance to the sacred precincts of a Shinto shrine is named *torii*, literally means perch. It is almost certain that Japanese *torii*, the Akka tribe gateways, and Korean red-painted gateways have the same root, but they evolved into more elaborate styles.

Birds were also closely associated with the sun. Ravens in particular were solar birds both in China and Ancient Greece. A Han dynasty silk banner excavated at Ma-wang-tui tomb in southern China shows a golden raven in the centre of the sun at the left (*yang*) side. Likewise, a three-legged golden raven is embroidered on the left corner of a Japanese emperor's ceremonial dress. According to the *Nihon Shoki*, the three-legged raven also showed the first legendary sovereign Jinmu the way from Kumano to Yamato, and it has been the emblem of Kumano Shrines in Wakayama, which has close linkage with sun worship since time immemorial¹⁵⁶.



Left: Upper part of a silk banner put on the coffin, found in the Ma-wang-tui tomb in southern China (2nd century BC). While the lower part (not shown here) depicts the noblewomen on her journey to heaven, this upper part shows celestial abodes: a Chinese deity, half-man and half-snake is illustrated at upper middle, flanked by the golden raven 金鳥 in the centre of the sun at the right side, a toad 玉蟾 and a white hare 玉兔 on a crescent at the left side. A pair of flying dragons, a bronze bell, sacred birds and beasts, and two gatekeepers of the celestial abodes are illustrated underneath. **Right:** a ceremonial garment of a Japanese emperor (8th century). Note that the motifs are quite similar to the southern Chinese silk banner. (reprinted from Hagiwara 1999:15 & 18)



From Left to Right: a three-legged raven painted on the 7th-century votive miniature shrine, Tamamushi no Zushi in Hōryūji's museum; the emblem of the Kumano Hongū Taisha ; the emblem of the Kumano Hayatama Shrine; the emblem of the Kumano Nachi Taisha in Nachi Katsuura; the emblem of the Kamo Shrine in Kyoto; the emblem of the Kumano Shrine in Kita-Kyushu. The bumer of the Mononobe Clan was also a three-legged raven.

We are not certain why birds, ravens in particular, have a close association with the sun, but Minakata Kumagusu has postulated that the association derived from their close resemblance to the shape of sunspots and their habit of announcing the dawn. The raven has three feet, presumably because three is a sacred *yang* number in Taoism.¹⁵⁷ Thus, the influence of southern Chinese Taoism was so conspicuous that it would seem to have passed into the archaic religion of Japan in later centuries.

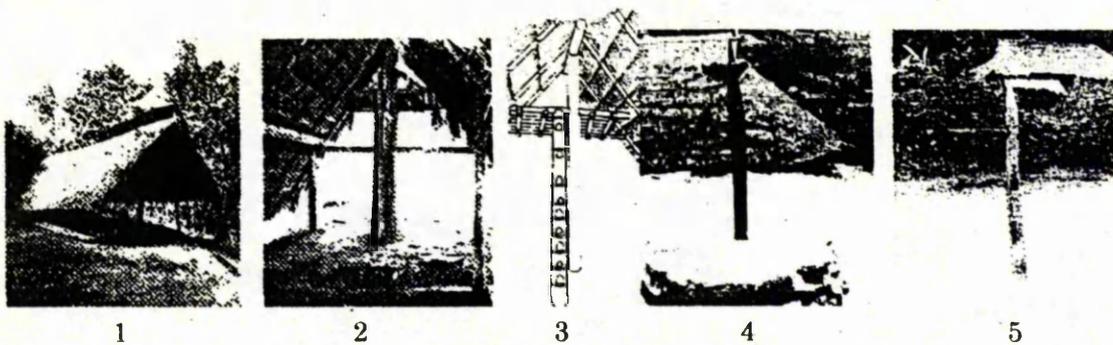
This can be further supported by the resemblance of sacred central post known as the *shin-no-mihashira* in Shinto architecture. At Ise Shrine, a new shrine has been erected over and around this post. The post is about 7 feet high and the holiest and most mysterious object in the shrine. It remains hidden at all times. It is generally thought to be a phallic symbol derived from the island-creation myth involving Izanagi and Izanami in the *Kojiki*. As shown below, we find a similar object in Yunnan, which seems to have become the model of the *shin-no-mihashira* in Japan. The pillar is a

¹⁵⁷ Minakata 1972. Cocks are also universally associated with the sun, as they crow at the dawn.

symbol or temporary abode employed to pray deities to descend, and a wooden plate or crossbar is attached onto its top for the placement of offerings.



Left: A small wooden enclosure protecting the *shin-no-mihashira*, 'heart pillar'; Centre: the close-up of the hut with the Inner Shrine behind the fence; Right: a map illustrating the location of the *shin-no-mihashira* by a dot.



1: a straw hat protecting the wooden sacred central post at Mang-hui village 芒回村 in Yunnan; 2: its close-up; 3: its illustration; 4: another sacred central post in Mang-hui village in Yunnan; 5: a sacred central post of the Lafu tribe in Yunnan. (Torigoe:2000:214)

In sum, the close resemblance in the architectural styles, folkways, and objects of worship evince that the Jomon and Early Yayoi peoples received the strongest influence from the southern Chinese. Nevertheless, when dealing with pre-history, we often have to rely on hypotheses that may or may not be correct, since they are hard to verify or falsify. However, since there are a reasonable number of genuinely independent hypotheses pointing in the same direction, there is a good chance that a particular general argument is correct. Therefore, not all the individual hypotheses advanced in this section may necessarily prove correct in themselves, and with due caution we can

talk that the nature of prototypical Japanese religion was moulded under the strong influence of the ship culture of southern China.

By contrast, we do not find much influence of the horse culture of northern China on Japan until the construction of Great Wall of China in the 3rd century BC and the expansion of the Han Chinese as represented by the establishment of four Han commanderies in eastern Manchuria and the northwestern Korean Peninsula in the 2nd century BC. The former set a constant eastward migration along the wall from northern China to Japan¹⁵⁸, while the latter, in particular the commandery in Lo-lang near Pyongyang, promoted the spread of smelting and advanced technologies of pottery making in Japan¹⁵⁹, as well as a drastic change in the connection of a chieftainship network induced by Japanese people's active contact with Lo-lang.¹⁶⁰ Thereafter, especially from the Kofun period, the influence of the horse culture began to exert a great impact on Japan and generated the cultural complex by mingling with the foundation stone of the ship culture.¹⁶¹

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of this chapter, we may be able to conclude that the prototypical religion of Japan was both generated by a combined effect of changing environment - climate, food shortage, epidemics, and social crises - and the consequent human

¹⁵⁸ Tsunoda et al. 1964:2.

¹⁵⁹ Kaji 1985:3.

¹⁶⁰ Hirose 1997:223-226.

¹⁶¹ For the influence of the horse culture after the Kofun period, see Fukunaga 1996:21-5.

responses - migration, the adoption of wet-rice cultivation, and the introduction of new worldview of Asian continent, in particular the ship culture of southern China and the south - to this changing environment. The disturbance and confusion both in the Eurasian Continent and in Japan generated the intensive migration of groups with advanced technology and worldview of the Yüeh tribes in southern China to Japan especially during the Final Jomon period, directly along the Black Current and indirectly along the Korean Peninsula. This in turn generated the emergence in Japan at the same time of a new paradigm of mentality, such as dialectical dualism and the macrocosm-microcosm concept, out of the Jomon tradition and of newly introduced wet-rice cultivation, metal artefacts, and migrants.

Here we can see the significance of the transitional period from Jomon to Yayoi - in constructing the foundation of early Japanese religion and culture. It was a time of a nonequilibrium state or an altered structure to society that was subject to tremendous fluctuations - which engendered fluid states of consciousness - that led to the emergence of a new type of religion and culture in Japan. In other words, a self-organisational process of the autocatalytic complex system was at work, prompted by a global ecological imbalance when the new ideas and commodities from the incoming Asian Continent were assimilated into the lives and minds of the Final Jomon people who were engulfed by the critical state of global crisis and poised on the very edge of sudden and radical change. The altered structure of the society created a new paradigm of mentality, which in turn generated the emergence of Japanese prototypical religion that shared many fundamental characteristics with new world religions. In a nutshell, the prototypical religion was an emergent property that was self-organised as a

result of a synthesis of the old Jomon traditions and the new Asian Continental elements, in particular the ship culture of southern China, at the nonequilibrium setting of the global crisis.

This prototypical religion played a vital role in the further evolution of Japanese religion. It became a leitmotiv or guiding principle for the emergence of new religions at crucial moments, its influence extending into the early 20th century somewhat. The prototypical religion transformed itself with the emergence of each new religion, but also significantly affected how new thoughts, such as Buddhism, Shinto, Taoism, and Confucianism, would be assimilated and nativised. This nativisation of foreign religions and worldviews was a central feature of the subsequent history of Japanese religion. I refer here to the emergence of archaic religion from the mid 2nd century; the emergence of monastic religion in response to the influxes of Buddhism and a Chinese-style legal system from the late 6th century; and finally the emergence of confraternal religion from the turn of the 9th century. Our task in subsequent chapters will be to explore each of these in turn.

CHAPTER TWO

THE AGE OF ARCHAIC RELIGION

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the autocatalytic growth of the Japanese religion during the Kofun period (c.250-c.650) with the application of the natural growth model to religious phenomena. This model can be validated by good quantitative data for the Kofun and later periods, and the behaviour of the model can also be read against other reliable objective evidence such as climate change data which is entirely scientific. Nevertheless, filling in the details of religious change, in the pre-historic period at least, is inevitably much more speculative. This, however, does not invalidate this research, but rather gives a good estimation of what it is possible and impossible to achieve through this approach. It gives us a new way to look at such data as we currently possess – some of it good and objective, much of it considerably less certain. For this purpose, this chapter is divided into three sections. In the first I will explore a drastic change in the religious system of the Yayoi people during the reign of Himiko. Then I will move on to demonstrate how archaic religion fostered the construction of keyhole-shaped tombs and established a new politico-religious system during the reign of Sujin. Finally, I will examine the fundamental causes for the official introduction of Buddhism and a Chinese-style legal system, in relation to the dissolution of the keyhole tomb system.

ARCHAIC RELIGION

From the end of the Yayoi to the Early-Kofun period, what had previously been an implicitly conceptualised system of prototypical religion became much more explicitly

defined and organised as a religion based on new religious ornaments and construction of tumuli. It was at this point, that the foundations for the ancient Japanese religious system, which we shall call archaic religion, evolved out of the prototypical religion. It evolved this time under the stronger influence from the north than the south, in particular north China and the Korean Peninsula, during the 2nd and 3rd century social chaos in the whole of East Asia. The chaos was itself triggered by worldwide cold climate and consequent great migrations of the time.

By archaic religion I mean that it was the earliest religious system comprising a true cult headed by a charismatic ruler with complex gods, aided by priests and priestess who performed acts of worship and sacrifice in ritual architectures of certain spatial and seasonal configurations. In all respects it was clearly defined much more than prototypical religion. The authority and legitimacy of the charismatic ruler rested upon his/her gift of spiritual inspiration who actively entered ASCs during rituals in order to interact with supernatural beings. They thereby sought to control the natural human world that was merged in a natural-divine cosmos. The archaic religion subsequently developed into what we now call Shinto.

KEYHOLE TOMBS

The general consensus is that keyhole tombs were political monuments for the display of kingly authority¹. Based on this assumption, one of the most influential archaeologists, Tsude Hiroshi, has advocated that during the Kofun period all regions of Japan participated in the same political framework with keyhole tombs at its centre.

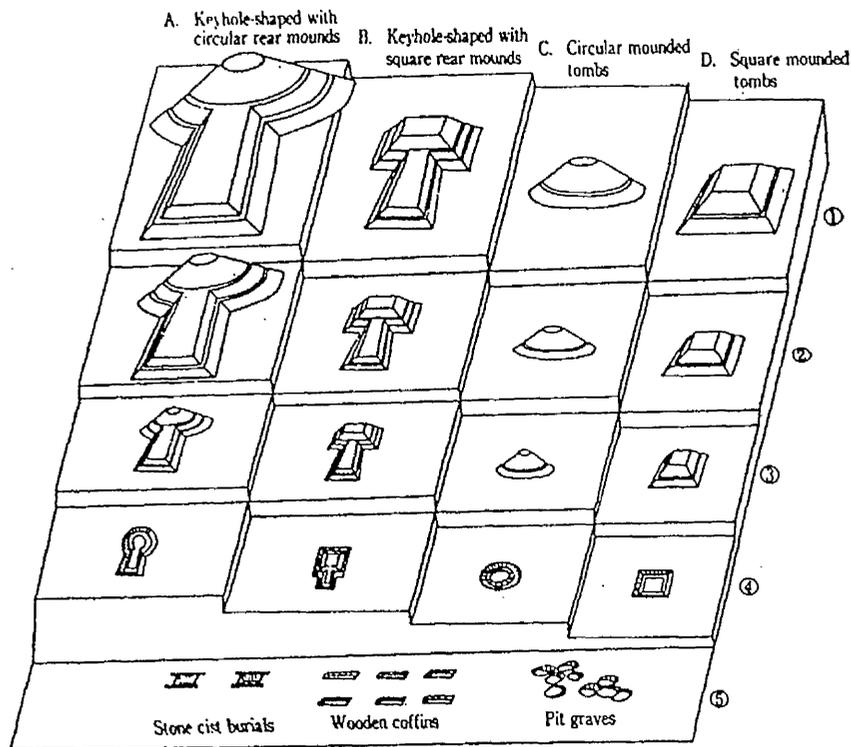
¹ Nishijima 1961.

This system was based on a very finely divided scale of rank ranging from great kings with keyhole-shaped tombs to the ordinary populace whose graves had no mounds. Tsude has named the system the keyhole tomb system (see a diagram below).²

The Keyhole Tomb System

Ranking System of Burial Mound Shape

(H. Tsude, "The Kofun Period and State Formation", in *ACTA ASIATICA* 63 (1992) p.74)



Similarly, scholars such as Kitō Kiyooki³ and Harunari Hideji⁴ have accounted for the function of tombs in terms of a potlatch type of social ritual, which demonstrates the hosts' wealth and affirms their social status. While these archaeologists emphasise the

² Tsude 1987:55-71; Idem 1991:7-14; Idem 1992:64-86.

³ Kitō 1982.

⁴ Harunari 1984.

political dimensions of keyhole tombs, other scholars, such as Mori Kōichi⁵, Ishino Hironobu⁶, and Mizuno Masayoshi⁷, have attached greater importance to the religious dimensions of keyhole tombs. My own opinion is that the keyhole tombs were the manifestation of a worldview that was based on the natural-divine cosmos of the archaic religion.

The construction of the keyhole tombs suddenly ceased in all parts of the country from Tohoku to southern Kyushu by 600 AD. Buddhism and Confucianism had already been officially introduced in the first half of the 6th century and they gained popularity very rapidly. As we shall see in this chapter, the politico-religious system based on keyhole tomb construction had almost collapsed before the official introduction of Buddhism, and both domestic and international factors then delivered a final blow to the keyhole tomb system.

2.1 The Emergence of Archaic Religion in Japan

2.1.1 The Impact of China's Social Unrest and of Cold Climate

During the synchronic rise of Buddhism and Taoism in China and Christianity in Rome, archaic religion as well as early political federations known as Yamatai came into being in Japan. These dynamic changes in the 2nd and 3rd centuries were closely associated with turbulent social conditions in the Eurasian Continent, which were themselves initiated by worldwide climatic chaos and the great migrations of the time.

⁵ Mori 1990.

⁶ Ishino 1991.

According to the section in the *Hou han shu* dealing with the people of Wa, the country had a king, but the war known as the Disturbance of Wa erupted during the reigns of two Chinese emperors, Huai-ti and Ling-ti (AD146-189). The war continued until the people of Wa eventually agreed upon a woman named Himiko as their ruler.⁸ The decline of the Later Han Dynasty and the outbreak of the Wa Disturbance were synchronic. Thus, Nishijima Sadao has attributed the Wa Disturbance to the fall of the Later Han dynasty (AD220), arguing that the Disturbance originated in the collapse of the political balance in East Asia, known as the 'investiture by the Chinese monarch' (*sakuhō* system)⁹.

Based on Nishijima's work, it has been hypothesised that the Wa Disturbance was caused by competition between the two cultural spheres of Western Seto and Eastern Seto, over access to iron in the southern Korean peninsula after the collapse of the Chinese tributary system. The political power of Yamatai in Kinai was eventually victorious and gained privileged access to the iron.¹⁰ Although this hypothesis has been most influential, it fails to distinguish between the causes and effects of the Wa Disturbance. For the latest archaeological records indicate that the establishment of the iron distribution system was not the cause, but the consequence of the Disturbance. Evidence shows that even after the Disturbance, the centre of iron remained in Northern Kyushu and political power in the Kinai did not succeed in monopolising the

⁷ Mizuno 1990.

⁸ *Hou han shu*:285- 289.

⁹ Nishijima 1979:363-383.

¹⁰ Barnes 1993:191; Yamao 1986; Tsude 1991; Yamao 1998:246-272.

distribution of iron.¹¹ Thus, we still have to look for an alternative cause for the outbreak of political imbalance in East Asia and the Wa Disturbance, which became the catalysts for the development of early political federations and archaic religion in Japan.

The study of Tada Kensuke on the Yellow Turban Rebellion (AD184-c.204) suggests one possibility. He indicates that the Rebellion was initiated by famines and migrations that took place in the wake of the cold climate. Small revolts started in the north during the early 1st century and expanded gradually to the south of the River Yangtze in South China by the late 2nd century.¹² By the reign of the emperor Huai-ti (AD146-167), poverty and misery has become endemic in the Chinese peasantry, and many of them became refugees. During the next reign of the emperor Ling-ti (AD167-189), epidemics broke out frequently and took the lives of many people in the cold climate¹³. Chinese chronicles such as the *Wei chih* and the *Hou han shu* record that in AD193 a severe famine broke out due to the cold climate (and also probably due partly to the Yellow Turban Rebellion), and people had to eat human flesh¹⁴. In the face of widespread social crisis the administration became corrupt and ineffective. Taking advantage of the resulting discontent, a great numbers of rebellions broke out in various regions, including those led by Taoist-inspired religious groups known as the Way of the Celestial Masters (*T'ien-shih Tao*) and the Way of the Five Pecks of Rice (*Wu-tou-mi*

¹¹ Murakami 1998, cited by Yoshimura 1999:71.

¹² Tada 1967:160-183. Yamamoto Takeo also attributes the cause of migration to the south led by Chu-ko Liang (181-234) and the establishment of the Shu-Han dynasty in the present-day province of Szechwan to the cold climate of that time[Yamamoto 1980: 43].

¹³ Yasuda 1996b: 9.

¹⁴ Yamamoto 1980:39.

Tao).¹⁵ Even though their attempts eventually failed, their movement, combined with the invasion by northern nomads, contributed to the fall of the Later Han dynasty.¹⁶ Suzuki Hideo has named this period 'the great racial migration during the cold period'; for the barbarian invasions during this period were initiated by the deteriorating climate in the whole of the Eurasian Continent¹⁷.

The *History of Three Kingdom (Samguk sagi)*¹⁸ also records crop damage by frost and hailstorms in the 7th month of AD170 in the Korean Peninsula, and the walled-town state of Silla was raided by another walled-town state Paekche. In the following years, Silla suffered a famine in 171 and a great epidemic in 172. In the 2nd month of AD174, wells and springs dried up. Then in 192, it is recorded that there was a snowfall nearly one metre deep in the capital of Silla and there were more than ten landslips caused by

¹⁵ The founders of both groups were faith healers, and they gained numerous adherents during the widespread pestilence. Their activities seem to have involved the cure of disease by prescribed ritual methods. They attributed disease to a punishment for evil deeds, whether committed by the sufferer himself or by an ancestor, and their aims were to establish an independent theocratic state.

¹⁶ Kubo 1985:113-127.

¹⁷ Suzuki 1978:3-69; Idem 1990:132.

¹⁸ Although the *Samguk Sagi* was compiled in the 12th century, this oldest extant history of the Korean Three Kingdoms period incorporated in large part the contents of a variety of much older compilation that do not survive now, such as the *Yugi* (*Extant Records* compiled in early Koguryo period (c.BC37-668), reworked into a five-volume *Sinip* (*New Compilation* in AD600 by Yi-Mun-jin)), the *Sogi* (*Documentary Records* compiled by Kohung in the 4th century), and the *Kuksa* (*National History* by Koch'ilbu in 545). Thus, the contents of the *Samguk Sagi* are thought to be relatively reliable, and it is widely used by historians. Moreover, the climatic conditions of that time also coincide with the records of natural disaster in China documented in the *History of Later Han Dynasty Chinese* that was compiled in the 4th century AD. Joan Piggott (1997:293) also asserts that the text is quite reliable when it is checked against historical records in Chinese and Japanese archives.

floods in the 6th month. In the following year - the same year that a severe famine broke out in China due to cold climate - more than one thousand Wa people migrated to Silla because of a great famine in the Japanese Archipelago.¹⁹ This suggests that the social situations in Japan were similar to those of China and Korea. Then, we can assume from the historical records that deteriorating climatic conditions generated the turbulent times in the whole of East Asia.

The above assumption can be further supported by both pollen and paleobotanical analyses. Evidence shows that the climate in China shifted from warm to cold after the 2nd century, and this cold weather continued to advance thereafter.²⁰ Japan's climate, like other Eurasian countries, became colder from the middle of the Yayoi period until the early 8th century. Sakaguchi Yutaka names this cold period 'the Kofun cold stage'. Since the climate in China was also deteriorating, he speculates that the pressure for racial migration extended to Japan via the Korean Peninsula during the Kofun cold stage.²¹ The climate was especially cold between the latter half of the 2nd century and the 3rd century, creating what was one of the severest little ice ages in the Common Era²². The cold climate of this period was not only characterised by heavy rains with deluges but also by occasionally severe winter droughts. Agricultural production in East Asia was severely damaged by the cold climate, which, in turn, caused severe famines, epidemics, and migrations.²³ The outbreak of great famines, epidemics, and migrations in the 2nd century, which were themselves triggered by worldwide climatic chaos,

¹⁹ Ibid:35- 58.

²⁰ Yoshino 1982:11-15; Yasuda 1990:274.

²¹ Sakaguchi 1984:18-36; Idem 1989:229; Idem 1995:1-12.

²² Yamamoto 1979:155-175; Idem 1982:375-391; Yasuda 1994:282-325.

greatly contributed to the collapse of the Middle Kingdom's tributary system, as well as to the social turmoil in all East Asian countries,

It seems fair to conclude from the above that the ultimate cause for the synchronic social chaos in the whole of East Asia was the abnormal climate of the 2nd and first half of the 3rd centuries. The Wa Disturbance was thus almost certainly not caused by competition over access to iron in the southern Korean Peninsula, but originated in the cold climate and consequent social unrest in East Asia. More importantly, this social crisis initiated autocatalytic reactions for the synchronic rise of Buddhism and Taoism in China and a new politico-religious system in Japan.

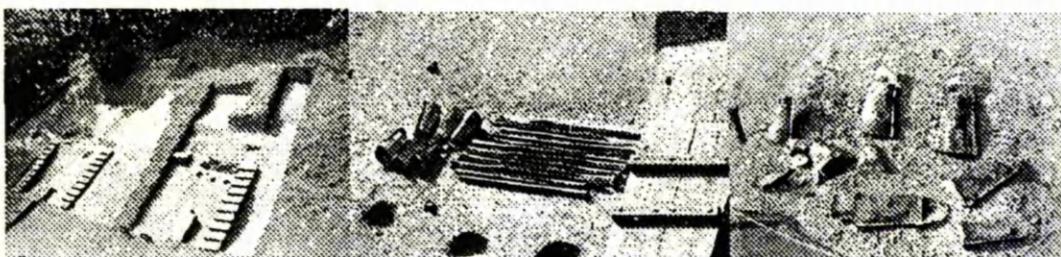
2.1.2 Politico-Religious Revolution under the Shaman-Queen, Himiko

As a result of the social turmoil in East Asia, various drastic changes took place from the end of the 2nd century. The dissolution of the Chinese Empire, for example, allowed the rise of the relative power of neighbouring tribes such as the Wa, the Puyō, the Koguryō, and the Han, as well as local Chinese officials such as the Kung-sun house (190-238) in China's easternmost regions, Liao-tung. According to the parts of the *Wei shih* which deal with the Han people, both Han and Wa came under the control of the Kung-sun house.

In Japan, an unmarried Queen called Himiko was eventually raised as a sovereign by the chieftains of the various political entities, and she ruled an area referred to as Yamatai from around 190 until her death in 247. The name of Queen Himiko first

²³ Yamamoto 1980:40,50.

appears in the Korean chronicles, the *Samguk sagi*, when she sent an emissary to Silla in AD 173²⁴. Her name did not appear again in any records for 66 years until 239 when her emissary to China was mentioned in the *Wei shih*. The timing of Himiko's sending an embassy to China is notable: it was only a year after the Wei dynasty (220-264) subjugated the Kung-sun house and gained control over such places as Lo-lang and Tai-fang in northern Korea by AD 238. This quick action taken by Himiko suggests Yamatai had close relationships with the Korean Peninsula and received up-to-date information from the mainland. However, official records tend to be deficient when society is in chaos or in transition from one state to another because of the absence of a reliable and powerful political authority. As a result, the Wa people slipped from the minds of the Chinese chroniclers for more than a hundred years after the last envoy was dispatched to the Later Han dynasty in 107. But it was during this documentary black hole that the socio-political grounds for religious revolution were fermented as the chiefs of the tribal alliance in the late 3rd century chose Himiko as the ruler of Yamatai.



Abandoned bronze bells and weaponry which were abandoned in pits on the hillslopes of Araya-Kōjindani & Kamo-Iwakura sites in Izumo

²⁴ *Samguk sagi*, (新羅本紀第二). This record suggests that Himiko became a shamanic queen when she was very young, as her niece Iyo succeeded Himiko at the age of 13. However, the *Wei shih* describes that she had already been very old (年已長大) when she became a ruler. This contradiction suggests Himiko was at first the local shamanic queen of Yamatai, and later she was raised as a sovereign of the Yamatai federation in the late 2nd century.

For example, Yayoi religious ornaments such as bronze bells and weaponry were abandoned in pits on hillslopes away from the settlements in various regions of the archipelago such as Izumo, Tsukushi, Kibi, and Yamato (see photos above). Alternatively, bronze mirrors, iron swords, and curved jewels became sacred objects from the turn of the 3rd century. Moreover, the construction of large round mounds (*enpun*) and the earliest group of Makimuku keyhole-shaped tombs²⁵, located close to Mt. Miwa in the northern Nara, began in the times of Himiko²⁶. Keyhole-shaped tombs began to be constructed all over the country from the 4th century onwards. These changes evince not only the existence of a supra-regional alliance of regional confederacies in the archipelago, but also the spread of new religious beliefs and technologies that emerged during the social turmoil in the late 2nd century.

These two changes described above took place during the time of Himiko. Mishina Shōei argues that what he calls ‘Earthly ritual’ (*chiteki shūgi* or *dōtaku saishi*), which was heavily based on the use of bronze bells (although we do not know the exact usage of the bronze bells), was replaced by what he calls ‘Heavenly ritual’ (*tenteki shūgi* or *kagami saishi*) or the worship of Heavens (Takamagahara). Mishina maintains that bronze bells were used to worship the spirit of land whereas mirrors were employed to worship heavenly deities²⁷. If we take into account the stronger political and cultural influence of the northern China and the Korean Peninsula at that time, it is highly plausible that the worship of the heavens began to take on more weight than in previous

²⁵ The archaeological investigation of Makimuku Ishizuka in 1997 has revealed that it is the oldest keyhole tomb raised in the early 3rd century [Sakurai Shiritsu Maizō Bunkazai Centre 1998].

²⁶ Morioka 1998:111-140; Tsude 1998a:8-50; Sugaya 2000:36-56.

times. Ishino Hironobu has rightly noted that since there was a tradition of killing the king among the Han people in the southern Korean Peninsula, if the king was unable to stop frequent calamities in his community, the Wa people, given their close lineage to the Han people, killed their kings until they eventually raised Himiko as the Queen of Wa, who was able to stop the calamities. He also argues that Himiko had to offer the people alternative deities and rituals to bronze bells, and thus she imported a great amount of bronze mirrors as symbols of a new cult²⁸. In other words, new types of rituals, bronze mirrors, and the emergence of keyhole-shaped tombs were synchronized by Himiko to establish what I call the archaic religion of Japan.

2.1.3 *The Nature of Archaic Religion*

According to the *Wei chih*, Himiko's charisma as a psychic medium and her mastering of the 'way of the ghosts/demons' (*kuei-tao*, *kidō*) attracted many followers. The Chinese word *kuei* (ghosts/demons) give us an impression that Himiko's cult was horrifying. One of the most authoritative Taoist texts, the *Canon of Great Peace* (*T'ai-p'ing tao*), for example, denotes *kuei-tao* as the way of death, while the way of gods (*shên-tao*) stands for the way of eternal youth²⁹. Thus, we are tempted to understand Himiko's *kuei-tao* or *kidō* as a cult related to some sort of black magic. However, the *Hou han shu* uses the word the 'way of ghosts and spirits' (*kuei-shên-tao*, *kijindō*) instead of *kuei-tao* to describe Himiko's cult. Prior to the establishment of Taoism as a religious order in China in the first half of the 2nd century, the divinities

²⁷ Mishina 1972.

²⁸ Ishino 1991:3-26. Ishino's conjecture may be supported by the example of the 'mourning keepers' (*jisa*) killed in the event of disease or calamity during the voyage.

kuei-shên ('ghosts/demons and spirits') were considered the noblest deities, and the ritual of *kuei-shên* was deeply involved with the worship of the Polaris (*t'aii-hsing*) and its surrounding stars such as the Plough, the Great Bear and the Archer. The Heavenly Deity was believed to reside in the Polaris and control people's fate, natural disaster, and warfare³⁰. This belief has its origin in the theory of unity of Heaven and Earth.

Although the early transmission of this theory, based on historical records, cannot go back to earlier than early Asuka, Yoshino Hiroko conjectures that the shape of bronze bells and keyhole tombs originates from the idea of unity between Heaven and Earth. According to the *Huai-nan-tzu* (*Book of the Prince of Huai-nan*, c. 120 BC), the form of Heaven is modelled on a circle whereas the form of Earth is modelled on a square. Both bronze bells and keyhole tombs (*zenpō-kōen-fun* – 'front-square and rear-circle tumulus') are made up of the shapes of circles and squares. Yoshino thus argues that the unity of Heaven (circle) and Earth (square) manifests itself in the shapes of bronze bells and keyhole tombs³¹. Kaji Yoshinobu supports Yoshino's argument. He argues that the keyhole shaped tumuli are a reflection of Confucian thought in which a circle represents Heaven and a square represents Earth³². If this is the case, then the theory of the unity of Heaven and Earth must have been introduced to Japan as early as the Yayoi period.

The Eastern Barbarians section of the *San-kuo chih Wei chih*, which describes the *kuei-tao* practiced by the Han people of the southern Korean Peninsula, may offer some

²⁹ Fukunaga 1985.

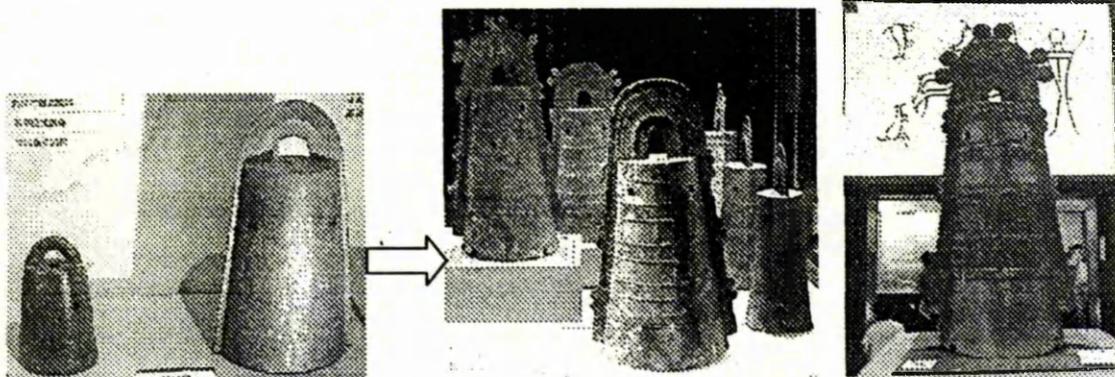
³⁰ *Shih-chi* (*t'ien-kuan-shu* & *feng-ch'an-shu*).

³¹ Yoshino 1978:202-207.

³² Kaji 1985:10.

image of the nature of Himiko's way of ghosts and spirits. It records:

In the fifth month when the sowing has been finished, they always sacrifice to their ghosts and spirits. Coming together in groups they sing and dance; they drink wine day and night without ceasing. In their dancing, several tens of men get up together and form a line; looking upward and downward as they stomp the ground, they move hands and feet in concert with a rhythm that is similar to our bell-clapper dance. When the farmwork is finished in the tenth month, they do the same sort of thing again. *They have faith in ghosts and spirits. In each town one man is appointed master of ceremonies for worship of the spirit of heaven, whom they call Load of Heaven [ch'ongun].* Moreover each commune has a separate town, which they call *sodo* ['sacred area']. *Here they set up a great tree, from which they hang bells and drums for serving the ghosts and spirits* ³³



Left: *dōtaku* as a musical instrument (Yayoi Bunka Museum in Osaka); Centre & Left: *dōtaku* as a ceremonial implement for display (Dōtaku Museum in Shiga & Yayoi Bunka Museum). Although the *miru dōtaku* increased their volume more than 100 times than the *kiku dōtaku*, their hook became noticeably thin. For they were eliminated the need to be hung as musical instruments. Some *miru dōtaku* were made to be larger than a child.

The Wa people used bronze bells in a similar manner to serve ghosts and spirits until the use of Japanese bronze bells were transformed from musical instruments, known as *kiku dōtaku*, to ceremonial implements for display, called *miru dōtaku*, during the Late

³³ Lee et al. 1997:13. Emphases added.

Yayoi period³⁴ (see photos above). Thus, the Han people's *kuei-tao* was probably more similar to the old Yayoi rituals than to Himiko's *kidō*. Himiko's *kidō* was probably not like the one depicted in the *Canon of Great Peace*, but related instead to the worship of the Heavenly Deity/the Load of Heaven, involving prayer for good harvest.

The *Samguk sagi* provides us information on an advanced type of *kuei-tao*, which probably resembled more closely to Himiko's unifying cult: It describes the *kuei-tao* as:

rites propitiating heaven and earth – specifically referred to are rites directed to the sun, moon, and stars; the cardinal directions; mountains and rivers; and heroes of the past. There were also rituals to drive out evil spirits, cure sicknesses, and lift curses. Women often led such rites and served as oracles. There was a planting festival in the 5th month to petition ancestral spirits for aid during the growing season, and a harvest festival honouring heaven in the tenth month.³⁵

As there was intensive migration and interaction between the Korean Peninsula and Japan, Himiko's *kidō* probably bore a closer resemblance to an advanced type of *kuei-tao* described in the *Samguk sagi*, while still maintaining some of the older practices and belief system of the Han rituals as depicted in the *Wei chih*, such as singing and dancing.

In Japan the Polaris and the Pleiades (*Subaru*) had been important means of determining directions and seed planting time. Furthermore, some keyhole tombs and ritual sites, such as Hashihaka Kofun of Momosohime (or probably of Himiko as some scholars conjecture), Andonyama Kofun of Sujin, and the shrine gate of Ōmiwa Shrine were

³⁴ According to Tanaka Migaku, while early bells had clappers (*zetsu*), later bells did and increased in size. These changes suggest that the nature of the bells evolved from a functional item into a ceremonial display [cited by Mizuno 1990:121-122].

constructed in accordance with the movement of the sun, such as the summer and winter solstices and the spring equinox. (see Figure 2-1)³⁶. These constructions appear to have functioned as a ‘giant clock’ to report seasonal changes and the place for sun worship.

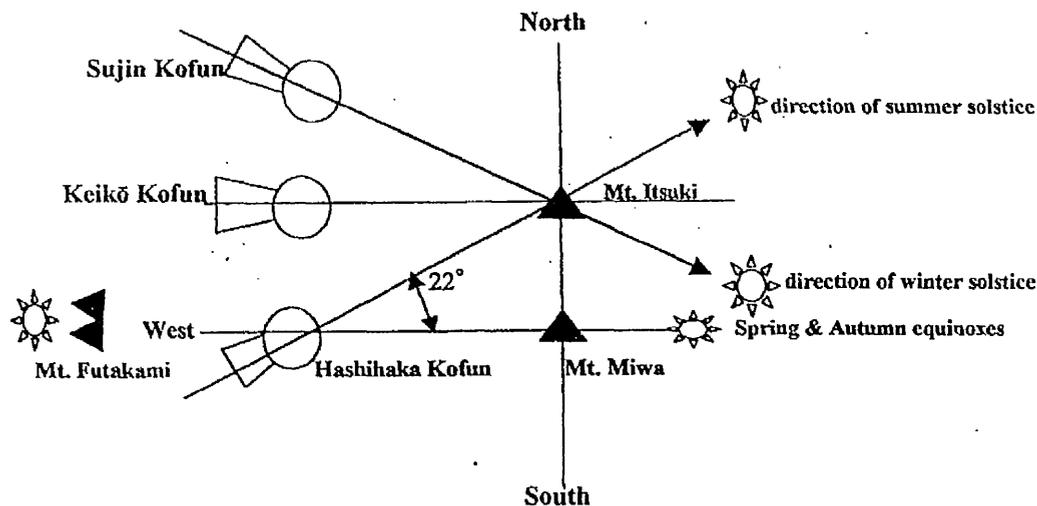


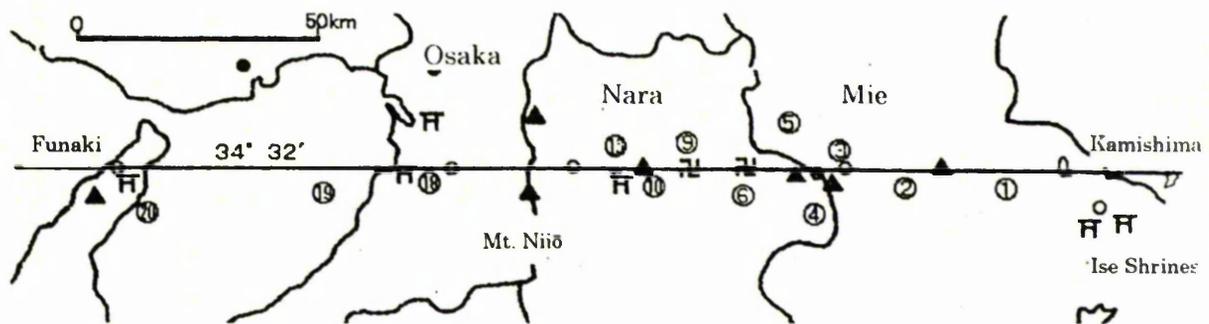
Figure 2-1 Japanese ray-line
[Ogawa 1980 & Yamada 1986]

Moreover, the Hashihaka Tumulus and the Daisen Tumulus are situated in a latitude 34 degrees 32 minutes north with a ± 10 seconds (about 600m) margin of error. This latitude is known as the Japanese ray-line or *Taiyō no michi*, as we can find many prehistoric archaeological sites related to sun worship along this latitude, such as stone circles and *iwakura*. The ray-line extends about 200km from the eastern end of Kamishima Island (‘Gods Island’) in the Ise Bay to the western end of Funaki in Awaji. Along this ray-line, there is abundant archaeological evidence for sun worship at such places as the ruins of Ise Saigū, Mt. Horisaka, Mt. Mitsubo, Mt. Yoki, Mt. Miwa, Mt. Futakami (Nijōsan), and Moto-Ise.³⁷ Hiki-shō hamlet located just on the ray-line confirms that the concentration of the sun worship sites along this line is not

³⁵ Piggott 1997:26.

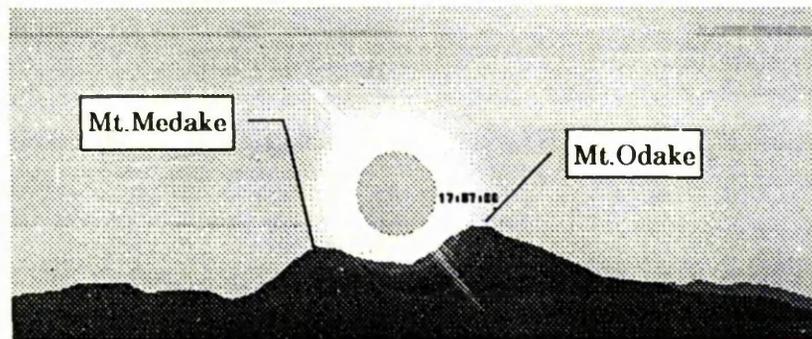
³⁶ Ogawa 1973; Yamada:1986.

coincidental. For it is evident that the village name was derived from the ancient technostructure Hiki (日置, literary meaning 'to place the sun') who was engaged in the land survey using the sun and tax collection. The clan is thought to have also involved in the formation of Japanese mythology and of the Yamato Kingship, as well as the construction of tombs, shrines and temples (see Map2-1)³⁸.



Map 2-1 Archaeological sites of sun worship along the Japanese ray-line

- ①The ruins of Ise Saigū ②Mt.Horisaka ③Mt. Mitsubo ④Zaō-dō ⑤Mt.Kuroso ⑥Murōji ⑨Hasedera
- ⑩Mt.Miwa ⑬Hashihaka Kofun ⑰Hiki-shō ⑱Ōtori Shrine ⑳Izanagi Shrine



Computer simulation of the sun setting at Mt. Futakami, seen from the summit of Mt. Miwa on the spring equinox in AD190 [Kashmir3D & Stella Navigator]

Grave orientation also indicates that the Wa people had a keen sense of direction. The bodies buried in the pit-style stone chambers of the Early Kofun period were

³⁷ Ogawa1973:64-83.

³⁸ Inoue 1997.

predominantly arranged with their heads facing east in the southwestern regions such as Kyūshū and Shikoku Islands. In the regions centring on the Kinai and Kibi and extending to Izumo and the north coast of the Inland Sea, however, bodies were predominantly arranged with their heads facing north. Tsude Hiroshi conjectures that this northerly orientation was influenced by an old Confucian text known as the *I-li*, which stated that “the living face south while the dead face north”³⁹. If the north orientation is due to the influence of Confucian thought, this signifies that the Wa people also had strong belief in the Polaris.

Based on the above archeological evidence, we cannot regard Himiko’s religion only as shamanism, as it involved the worship of stars including the sun, a wide variety of rituals involving prayers for good harvests, other rituals for driving out evil spirits, curing sickness, and placing curses on enemies, as depicted in the *Samguk sagi*. In the following section, the further development of archaic religion will be investigated in relation to the foremost-distinguished characteristic of archaic religion during the Kofun period, the keyhole tomb system.

³⁹ Tsude 1992:68,72.

2.2 The Birth of the Keyhole Tomb System

The construction of keyhole tombs had already been started since the time of Himiko, but we have to await full-fledged construction until the turn of the 4th century. The purpose of this section is to explore an autocatalytic reaction for the emergence of the keyhole tomb system, in relation to the social crisis that occurred during the Kofun period.

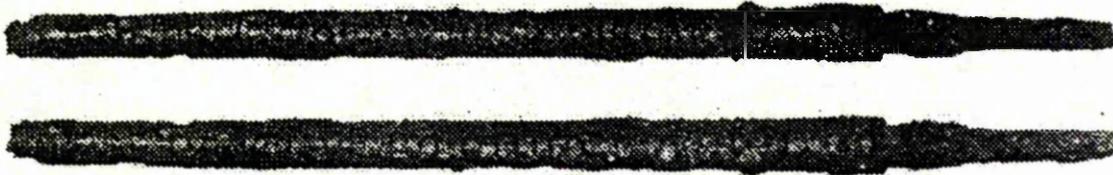
Both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon Shoki* record that there were not only outbreaks of calamities but also drastic changes in the ritual system to overcome the calamities during Sujin's reign (d.318).⁴⁰ He is also known by the laudatory name Hatsukunishirasu Sumeramikoto (the first ruler of Yamato Kingship)⁴¹ who expanded his territory much further by dispatching four commanders after he established the new ritual system. Needless to say, these chronicles were politically aimed at legitimising the imperial and aristocratic families by recounting their genealogies and their ancestors' roles in the development of the Yamato state. However, the inscription on an iron sword excavated from the Inariyama Kofun in Saitama evinces that one of the four commanders (Ohohiko) actually existed, probably during the latter half of the 3rd century⁴². The flourishing period of Ohohiko and Sujin also coincides with the beginning of stylised giant keyhole tomb construction on a nationwide scale. Thus, we can assume that the historicity of this section in the chronicles is relatively reliable. Moreover, an

⁴⁰ For the dating of Sujin's death, see Ōmi 1992:36-37 & Yoshimura 1999:108-110.

⁴¹ The same laudatory name is also ascribed to the putative first sovereign, Jinmu, but the historicity of Jinmu is highly questionable. The chronicles' accounts of Jinmu are considered to be projections of Sujin who actually existed. See Ōmi 1992:11-42.

⁴² Tsukaguchi 1993:86-96.

analysis of the autocatalytic network enfolded into the early Japanese chronicles and other historical and archaeological records can reveal the birth pangs of a new politico-religious system of Yamato Kingship based on the keyhole tomb system. To help us understand this, we must look more closely at the politico-religious change that took place after the collapse of the Yamatai federation during the time of Sujin.



The front and back of the iron sword excavated at the Inariyama Kofun, which denotes the name of one of four commanders as the founder of the regional chieftain buried in the tomb in late 5th century or early 6th century.

2.2.1 The Outbreak of Epidemics and their Consequences

During the reign of Sujin, the *Kojiki* informs us that, “many epidemics occurred, and so many people died that the whole population seemed to be on the verge of extinction”⁴³. The *Nihon Shoki* confirms this: “There was much pestilence throughout the country, and more than one half of the people died”, and in the following year “The people took to vagabondage, and there was rebellion, the violence of which was such that by worth alone it could not be assuaged”⁴⁴. The well-known Japanese historian of epidemics and disease Tatsukawa Shōji has speculated that the epidemics were caused by climatic irregularities during this period. Supporting this idea, the *Nihon Shoki* states that, “there has been disaccord in the action of the male and female principles of nature, heat and cold have mixed their due order, epidemic disease has been rife, and calamities have

⁴³ Philippi 1969:201.

⁴⁴ Aston 1972:151.

befallen the people”⁴⁵. And according to another passage in the *Nihon Shoki*, a princess named Nunaki-iri-bime no Mikoto at the court had fallen ill at that time, and she “was bald and lean”⁴⁶. As her symptoms suggest high fever and dehydration, Tatsukawa conjectures that these epidemics were famine-related dysenteries generated by the adverse effects of climatic changes on crops, exacerbated by poor sanitation and a lack of hygiene⁴⁷.

As a result of these epidemics and the accompanying social chaos, Sujin visited the plain of Kamu-asaji in order to enquire of the deities the cause of the calamity. The *Nihon Shoki* indicates that Sujin had to visit a special place to receive an oracle. We should remember here the account of the *Wei dynasty*, which records that very few persons were allowed to see Himiko. From this, we can speculate that the special place Sujin had to visit was the palace of Yamato-toto-hi-Momoso-Hime where only Sujin (just like Himiko’s younger brother) was able to enter, and a shaman then acted as a medium of communication with the deities. The ancient Japanese word “*asashi*” embodied such meanings as ‘familiar with something’ and ‘close to something’. Consequently, the plain of Kamu-asaji can be interpreted as a place located very close to deities or the residence of a shaman who was in the service of deities. This record thus seems to confirm the strong dual-gender relationship between the male sovereign

⁴⁵ Ibid:160.

⁴⁶ Ibid:152.

⁴⁷ Tatsukawa 1993:373-375.

and shamaness, and it confirms, too, that the shaman still played an essential role in delivering an oracle from the deities even after the time of Himiko⁴⁸.

However, a slight change took place. Sujin assembled the myriads of deities and carried out the divination himself, although the divination still had to be interpreted by the shaman. Yamato-toto-hi-Momoso-Hime (probably identical to Toyo) was possessed by Ōmononushi, telling Sujin that the calamity would be pacified of itself if reverent worship were performed for Ōmononushi. Sujin worshiped as the shamaness told him, but the calamity did not cease. Next, he offered prayers after purifying himself so that he might be further instructed in a dream. That night Ōmononushi appeared in a dream and told him, "If thou wilt cause me to be worshiped by my child, Ō-tata-neko, then will there be peace at once. Moreover the lands beyond the sea will of their own accord render submission."⁴⁹ As three other people had the same dream, Sujin looked for Ō-tata-neko in other districts and found him in the village of Sue in the district of Chinu no agata (old name of Izumi). Ō-tata-neko was the son of the deity of Mt. Miwa and Ikutama-Yori-Hime, daughter of Suetsu-mimi. Sujin appointed Ō-tata-neko and Nagaochi as High Priests and they enshrined Ōmononushi and many other deities of Yamato. He also built shrines for the deities of *Amatsu-Kami*⁵⁰ and the deities of

⁴⁸ Based on the works of Takamura Itsue and Hora Tomio, Joan Piggott points out that there were abundant cases of contrapuntal arrangement between male and female rulers (*hime-hiko-sei* in Takamura's term) in the legends and tales of the *Kojiki*, *Nihon Shoki*, and regional gazetteers. She calls such contrapuntal arrangements dual-gender pairs of rulership. According to Hora Tomio, the dual-gender pair of co-rulers represents the embodiment of an ideal balance (i.e., gender complementarity), like the Chinese male and female principles Yin and Yang (Piggott 1997:37-40).

⁴⁹ Aston 1972:153.

⁵⁰ The deities of Heavenly deities and their descendent deities.

*Kunitsu-Kami*⁵¹ in Yamato. Only then did Yamato regain its tranquillity as the epidemics ended at last, and the country became peaceful with abundant crops⁵².

The above story indicates that politico-religious changes took place after the widespread epidemics. We will now briefly look at each of these changes in turn.

(A) MANAGEMENT OF RELIGIOUS RITES

Firstly, during the reign of Sujin there was a transformation in the management of the religious rites from female shamans to male. For example, after Yamato-toto-hi-Momoso-Hime's oracle was discredited by the continuation of the calamity, Sujin received a direct oracle from Ōmononushi rather than through the shaman. As the priests who worshiped the deities were all male except for one female who worshiped the Sun Goddess, the incident of Yamato-toto-hi-Momoso-Hime committing suicide appears to symbolise not only the disqualification of shamanesses but also the emergence of an organised male priesthood in Yamato.⁵³ Although shamaness personalities continued playing an important role, their religious status started to decline after the incident of the calamity and they began to hold subordinate positions to male priests.

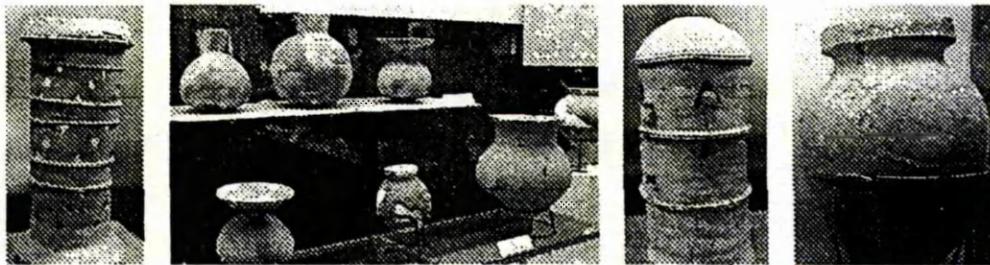
⁵¹ The guarding deities of earth who have already resided on the land prior to *Tenson Kōrin* [Ninigi no Mikoto was ordered by his grandmother, Amaterasu to descend from the heaven (i.e., Takamagahara) to the earth (i.e., a peak of Mt. Takachiho in Tsukushi) in order to govern Ashihara no Nakatsukuni, and their descendent deities.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ellwood 1990:199-217.

(B) ALLIED RELIGIOUS AND TECHNOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

Secondly, an allied religious and technological system emerged among Yamato, Izumo, and Kibi in the Early Kofun period. New ritual objects such as heavenly flat vessels (*yasobiraka*), shields, spears, and other ceremonial offerings (*mitigura*) were utilised in order to pacify the wrath of the deity when manifested in the form of epidemics and famines⁵⁴. Along with these ritual objects, large earthenware stands for ritual vessels (*tokushu-kidai*) made in the Kibi regions and earthenware jars (*tsubogata-doki*) made in the Seto coastal region have been excavated from the Hashihaka Keyhole Tomb constructed during the time of Sujin⁵⁵. In fact, more than 3000 pieces of Kibi ritual ware and unglazed earthenware cylinders were recently excavated during the restoration of the Hashihaka Tomb⁵⁶.



From left to right: *Tokushu-kidai* (Tomiyama site in Okayama, Okayama Prefectural Museum); potteries placed on a *tokushu-kidai* (Bōsō Fukoki no Oka Museum); Cylindrical *haniwa* decorated around a tomb (Tukuriyama Kofun No.1 in Kyoto, Kayamachi Board of Education); Large-size jar (Bōso Fudoki no Oka Museum)

Sujin had another posthumous name, Mimaki-iri-Hiko-no-Mikoto. The names of his children and his grandchildren also share the same words: *iri* (to enter) – *iri-Hiko* for princes and *iri-Hime* for princesses. This suggests that he came over to Miwa and

⁵⁴ Philippi 1969:202.

⁵⁵ Taketani 1992:43-75; Yamauchi 1992:76-99. A *tokushu-kidai* was made in the Kibi region during the Late Yayoi period, and it is said to be the prototype of a cylindrical *haniwa*.

⁵⁶ *Sankei Shinbun*, 18 May 2000.

established his own dynasty, known variously as the Sujin dynasty⁵⁷, the Miwa dynasty⁵⁸, and the Iri dynasty⁵⁹. It has been suggested by some scholars that Sujin had no lineal relationship with his supposed father, Kaika, and that he marched into the base of Mt. Miwa and expelled Kaika before finally establishing the Miwa dynasty⁶⁰. Although the idea of the successive replacement of dynasties is still controversial, it is evident that a more sophisticated religious organisational system was established as a result of an alliance between Miwa and other regions, in particular Izumo and Kibi.

(C) MERGING OF LOCAL DEITIES

The third change was the merging of the local deities of Yamato and Izumo. Ōmononushi and Ōkuninushi (or Ōnamochi), for example, were originally different deities, Ōmononushi being the local deity of Yamato, and Ōkuninushi being the local deity of Izumo. However, as Ōmononushi was worshiped by Ō-tata-neko, from the Izumo lineage whose guardian deity was Ōkuninushi, the merging of the two local deities took place after the epidemics. The transformation in the name of deities should be noted. Ōmononushi was originally called Ōmiwa no Ōkami (the deity of Ōmiwa) in the *Kojiki*, and Miwa no Ōmononushi (the deity of Miwa) in the *Nihon Shoki*. In other words, the modifiers “Ōmiwa no” and “Miwa no” that delimited the area were added to the name of Ōmononushi. However, when the worship of the deity was entrusted to Ō-tata-neko, the replacement of the local deity of Miwa with the local deity of Izumo

⁵⁷ Mizuno 1952.

⁵⁸ Ueda 1967.

⁵⁹ Ōmi 1992.

⁶⁰ Katō 1989:347-385. Cf. Ueda 1973:56-87.

took place, and the deity was called Ōmononushi without any modifiers. This indicates Ōmononushi was converted from the local deity of Miwa to a more universal deity.

This was an epoch-making incident in the history of Japanese religion. Prior to this transformation, each province worshiped its own local deities (*Kunitsu-Kami*), but after the local deity of Yamato was merged with the local deity of Izumo, Ōmononushi became a universal deity of the country ranked above the local deities. Because of this, Sujin was entitled to reign over not only Yamato but also the rest of the country. Therefore, after Sujin established a new religious group to worship Ōmononushi and other deities in Yamato, he proclaimed to the company of Ministers:

For the guidance of the people, the chief thing is education. Now that I have performed due rites to the various deities, all calamity has become spent. The distant savages, however, do not receive our calendar because they are yet unaccustomed to the civilizing influence of our rule. We will, therefore, select some of our company of Ministers and dispatch them to the four quarters, so that they may cause our Will to be known.⁶¹

The elevation of the local deity Miwa no Ōmononushi to the general deity Ōmononushi gave Sujin ideological justification to subdue the four quarters. This was made possible by the introduction of new ritual objects. Sujin united the advanced technologies of other regions such as Izumi, Izumo and Kibi in order to end the havoc caused by the wrath of Ōmononushi. For example, Sujin appointed the ancestor of Mononobe, Ikaga Shiko'o to the role *Kami-no-mono-akatsu-hito* whose purpose was to distribute offering to deities, and had him make many ritual platters (*hiraka*) for their worship⁶². Abe Shinji conjectures that the name of Mononobe derived from the word *mono* ('fierce

⁶¹ Aston 1972:155.

spirit') of the deity *Ō-mono-nushi*, and that the name Mononobe signified *Mono-no-be* - a specialised worker community (*be*) that provided services to the deity *Ōmononushi*. Moreover, he argues that the ritual platters were receptacles to contain the fierce spirit in them and control the divine nature of the serpent deity.⁶³

One type of earthenware known as *chūkō-doki* (spouted vessel) was an important implement for brewing herbs. According to Makabe Yoshiko, more apothecary vessels have been excavated from the archaeological sites in Izumo than in any other region. She also points out the number of herbs recorded in the *Izumo Fudoki* surpasses that of other provincial gazetteers. Thus, she conjectures that the Izumo people had more advance medical knowledge than other Japanese people from the Yayoi period⁶⁴. The *Izumo Fudoki* records *Ōkuninushi* not only as the guardian deity of that province but also as a purveyor of civilization. He is reputed to have taught the people medicine, pest control, farming, irrigation, and so on. The *Nihon Shoki* also records *Ōkuninushi* as the founder of Japanese medicine along with *Sukunabikona no Mikoto*. *Ōkuninushi* possessed the elements of a shaman-healer, as shown by his sympathetic advice to the suffering white hare of Inaba who was stripped of his fur by a crocodile⁶⁵. He instructed the hare of Inaba to use the pollen of the *gama* grass (cattails) to heal his skin⁶⁶. It is known that the pollen of cattails has haemostatic and antiphlogistic effects, and it was considered as one of the elixirs of life in Chinese medicine⁶⁷. So it would appear that

⁶² Ibid:153-154.

⁶³ Abe 1981:192-196.

⁶⁴ Makabe 1999. See also Itō1975:43-66.

⁶⁵ Moriya 1988.

⁶⁶ Philippi 1969:93-5.

⁶⁷ Akamatsu 1970.

these remedies were not based solely on magico-religious healing, but also involved empirico-rational ideas.



From left to right: **Hakuto ('White Hare') Shrine** located at the primeval forest in Tottori; **Wild cattails** which grow within the precinct; **Mitarashi Pond** in the precinct- it is said to have been used by the hare to cleanse its plucked skin; **Hakuto Beach** in front of the shrine. The hare is said to have landed to this beach from the Oki Island. The main shrine is built on six cornerstones, which have the emblems of the imperial family.

The rise of the empirico-rational dimension of early Japanese medicine is attributed to the work of Ōkuninushi. This may partly be the reason why he was enshrined as a god of medicine in ancient Japan, and also regarded as a contributor to the formulation of the arts of medicine with his medical knowledge. Therefore, it seems not coincidental that Ōkuninushi was incorporated as the deity of Yamato after the devastating epidemics during the time of Sujin. We can conjecture that the advanced medical lore of Izumo greatly contributed to the alleviation of the epidemic outbreak⁶⁸. By uniting the advanced technologies of Izumo and other regions, Sujin thus converted the adversity of social crisis into an opportunity to establish the foundation of the Yamato Kingship.

(D) ANTHROPOMORPHISED DEITY

The forth change that took place during the time of Sujin was the emergence of an anthropomorphised deity. The development of the concept of *kami* ('spirits') in ancient

⁶⁸ For the close relationships between the Izumo deities and the medical tradition at Ōmiwa Shrine, see Nemoto 1990b:110-125.

Japan can be roughly divided into three stages. In the first stage, the *kami* or the spirits were believed to be natural objects such as trees, rocks, mountains, rivers, animals, and the sun, or natural phenomena such as thunder, volcanic eruption, and earthquakes, or even the universe itself that was capable of exercising an influence on human beings. In the second stage, the *kami* were believed to descend to such sacred places such as stone (*kotai 'ishi*), rocks (*iwakura*), evergreen trees (*himorogi*), and pillars (*shin no mihashira*) during religious ceremonies, and appear before people in the form of animals such as snakes, deers, and birds. In the final stage, the *kami* take the form of human figures to have intercourse with maidens, as happened in the case of Ōmononushi. Such anthropomorphised deities can also vent great wrath on the people if not worshiped appropriately. Okada Seishi conjectures that the formation of these deities in Japan derived from people witnessing shamans possessed by divine spirits⁶⁹. Once the imperceptible or natural existence of *kami* became anthropomorphised, the shamans and masters of rituals easily became associated with anthropomorphised deities, and people were inclined to deify the shamaness and masters of ritual after their death.

(E) PERMANENT AND GIGANTIC RELIGIOUS MONUMENTS

Last, but definitely not least, of the changes now taking place was the development of permanent and gigantic religious monuments - the keyhole tombs - made possible by the emergence of anthropomorphised deities and the unification of manpower and the ritual traditions of various regions. The deification of kings or men of influence as well as the formation of kingdoms were indispensable for the emergence of mausolea⁷⁰. As

⁶⁹ Okada 1992a:125-142.

⁷⁰ Onoyama 1966:241-258. He emphasises that the deification of kings became the momentum for the construction of giant mausolea in every civilisations.

postulated by many archaeologists, keyhole tombs were constructed not only as mausolea for the dead, but also as ritual grounds for festivals for coming generations, the succession of the throne, and the divine spirits to descend to the mound from Heaven⁷¹. According to Tanaka Migaku, a square front mound of a keyhole tomb was used as burial ground, while a round rear mound was used as the setting for ritual services. However, when the rituals on the tombs became only a formality and succession to the throne became hereditary in later centuries, the main function of keyhole tombs changed. Once the setting for the succession of theurgic power and authority of the deceased, they became symbols of secular power or political monuments for the display of kingly authority⁷². I will return to this point later in relation to the dissolution of the Keyhole Tombs System.

The beginning of the earnest construction of keyhole tombs started after the outbreak of epidemics and famines during the time of Sujin. As I noted earlier, this period was cold and wet. Yasuda and Tsude suggest that one of the main purposes of constructing such large mounds was to intimidate the foreign embassies, in the middle of the international tension caused by racial migration and the deteriorating climate⁷³. In ancient times calamities such as epidemics and adverse climate were attributed to divine wrath. Thus, we may conjecture that one of the main reasons for tomb construction was to worship anthropomorphised deities or deified chieftains, for the purposes of invoking good fortune for the community and avoiding the deified chieftains' wrath. In the minds of

⁷¹ Kondō 1983; Harunari 1983, Mizuno Masayoshi 1990:188-196, Tsude 1991; Moricka 1992.

⁷² Tanaka 1993a.

⁷³ Yasuda 1996b:10; Tsude 2000:70-1.

the Kofun people, there was probably no distinction between *kami* and deified people. Both belonged to the realms beyond, and both could bring about good fortune or calamity. This may explain why the Kofun people devoted so much effort to the construction of the tombs during the Kofun period, as they were the resting place of deified people.

2.2.2 The Functions of Early Keyhole Tombs

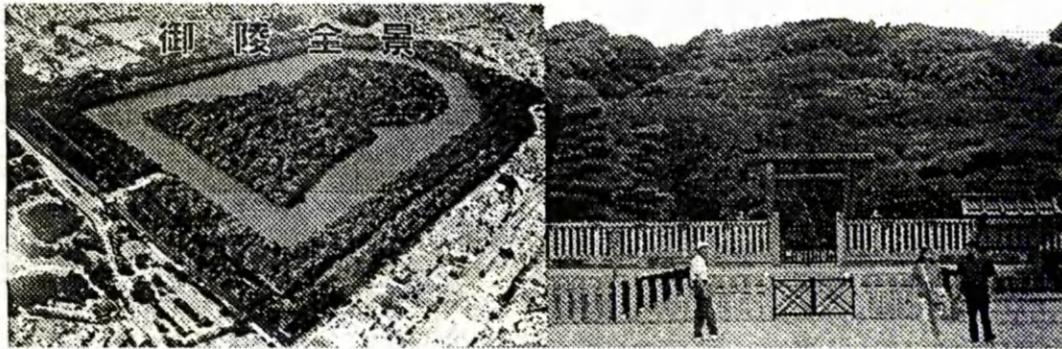
There are estimated to have been about 250,000 mounded tombs in all during the Kofun period. Although more than 95% of these are small round mounds (the size of less than 10 - 20 metres in diameter and 2-3 metres in height)⁷⁴, about 6,000 large keyhole tombs have been discovered and it is expected that more than ten thousand keyhole tombs were constructed during the Kofun period. According to an assessment by one of Japan's largest construction companies, the Obayashi Corporation, the construction of one of the largest keyhole tombs, known as the Daisen Kofun (Nintoku) at the present city of Sakai in Osaka, required a total of 6,870,700 man-labourers over a period of fifteen years and eight months. They also estimate that if we were to construct the same size of the tomb today, it would cost about 80 billion yen.⁷⁵ Tsude Hiroshi also estimates that the total number of man-days required for the construction of mounded tombs in the Kinai region exceeded 80 millions.⁷⁶ Since the population of Japan around 300AD was just over one million⁷⁷, it is easily conceivable that their construction necessitated the Kofun people's utmost devotion.

⁷⁴ Ōtsuka 1998.

⁷⁵ Mizuno 1990:187-8

⁷⁶ Tsude 2000:154.

⁷⁷ Koyama



Daisen Kofun and its front shrine: A lofty barrow surrounded by the three moats constitutes this tomb, and there are 12 minor subordinate tombs that look as if they were guardians of peace for the deceased sovereign. (Area: 115 acres; circumference: 1.7 miles; East-West length: 716 yards; North south Length: 868 yards)

The still dominant view on the construction of the tombs is that they were political monuments for the display of kingly authority. But this view cannot be fully accepted with regard to the keyhole tombs constructed during the Early Kofun period, for political power alone fails to explain the mechanism behind the construction of the tremendous numbers of large mounded tombs. When Sujin's aunt, Yamato-toto-hi-Momoso-Hime, killed herself with chopsticks, she was buried at one of the earliest keyhole tombs, and the tomb was named *Hashi-haka*. The *Nihon Shoki* records that Hashihaka Kofun was constructed by men in the daytime and by gods at nighttime⁷⁸. The word *hashi* does not only mean chopsticks, but also the objects that connect two ends (*hashi*). In the *Kojiki*, for example, the *hashi* (chopstick) played the role of matchmaker between Susanō and Kushinada Hime⁷⁹. In other words, the word *hashi* means to “connect this world and realms beyond”. For example, *hashi* (bridge)

⁷⁸ Aston 1972:159.

⁷⁹ When he saw a chopstick come floating down the river, he thought that someone lived upstream and went in search of them, and he met the maiden crying between an old man and an old woman.

horizontally connects one end and the other. *Hashi-ke* (barge) connects a ship and a pier. Objects such as *hashi-ra* (pillar) and *hashi-go* (ladder) connect vertically.



Up: Hashihaka Kofun and Mt. Miwa at the far left. The tomb measuring 297yards in length, 14yards in height, the round rear-mound 171yards in diameter. A small mound in front of the tomb is called *nakajima*, since it is located in the moat. It is thought to be a ritual site, or a burial ground for a next-of-kin or attendants, but its exact function is still uncertain. Some tombs have four *nakajima* as shown in the aerial photo below (Hachimanzuka Kofun, late 5th century).



In ancient Chinese mythology there was a giant pillar rising to a height of several ten thousand feet, that the gods used as a ladder to travel between heaven and earth⁸⁰. And according to Iwata Keiji, pillars have been regarded as the dwelling place of gods both in Japan and South East Asia. The idea behind these pillars is that deities descend to

⁸⁰ Yuan 1960, cited by Iwata 1991a:52.

them since they are a little higher than the surroundings⁸¹. Given this, it is possible to interpret the meaning of *Hashi-haka* as ‘pillar-tomb’, ‘bridge-tomb’, or ‘ladder-tomb’, a place for connecting between heaven and earth. Yamato-toto-hi-Momoso-Hime was deified as the mediator connecting this world and realms beyond, and thus, the tomb was named *Hashi-haka*. A large mounded tomb that looked like a mountain surrounded by water must have been regarded by the Kofun people as a suitable place for the deified deceased to dwell. So the name *Hashi-haka* is likely to have been given to her tomb not only to mean ‘chopstick mound’, but also to stand for the highly elevated tomb or the ‘shrine’ that connects this world with the divine world. It might sound strange for a deity to be buried within a ‘tomb’. But according to Kawane Kōzō one of the oldest shrines and a lofty building (*rōkaku*), Izumo Taisha, was built as both a shrine and grave for the deity Ōkuninushi⁸². In China, for example, the Yin dynasty kings were regarded as the sole mediator between Heaven and Man since they alone could interpret oracle bones. When these kings were dead, they were believed to become an ancestral deity and protect the human world from tragic incidents. For this purpose, rather than for the admiration of their political power during their lifetime, magnificent mausolea were constructed.⁸³ We find the similar divine characteristics in Himiko whose authority was veiled in her religious power. Therefore, the function of keyhole tombs can be regarded not only as receptacles for the dead, but also as a pre-Buddhist form of ‘shrine’ in which sacred bodies were deposited and devotion was paid to deified people for divine protection.

⁸¹ Iwata 1991a:50.

⁸² Kawazoe 1998:21-43.

⁸³ Matsumaru & Nagata 1985:73-74.

Conventional views, however, hold that temporary shrines (*yashiro* and *yake*) were only built at public places or on the premises of a powerful family for seasonal religious services, and that permanent shrines were never constructed until around the 7th century. According to Okada Seishi, for a place to be regarded as a 'shrine', it has to meet at least three conditions. Firstly, it must have a niche containing a religious image. Secondly, it must have a certain organised group of people who pay devotion to the religious image. And finally, it must have a permanent building (*shaden*) for religious service⁸⁴. Okada argues that as the Kofun period lacked permanent buildings, worship grounded on permanent 'shrines' was not yet formulated during the Kofun period⁸⁵. However, given the above evidence, we should reconsider the definition of what we consider a 'shrine' in this period before the diffusion of Buddhist temple constructions in Japan. We cannot simply apply the definition of the shrine of later generations to the earlier type of 'shrines' constructed during the Kofun period.

Joan Piggott, for example, describes the people who were buried in the tombs and the function of keyhole tombs as below:

That this landscape comprised monuments of death rather than life suggests that rulers of this time, from Miwa paramounts down to the level of the regional chieftains who built keyhole tombs, were viewed as transcendent figures. Considerably higher in prestige than their fellows, they were primarily mediators between this world and realms beyond.⁸⁶

The death of a chieftain who was a mediator between this world and realms beyond was taken as the death of the community, and it signified social disorder and chaos. Grief as

⁸⁴ Okada 1992a:137.

⁸⁵ Ibid: 137-138.

⁸⁶ Piggott 1997:43.

well as feelings of guilt in the community caused by the individual death of the spiritual leader was identical to the social death of an entire community. Thus, the entire community had to undergo rites of passage to create a new order out of disorder so that society might be successfully rejuvenated. In this way, the construction of the keyhole tomb relates to crises in the lifecycle ceremonies of the entire community.

So just like Shinto shrines, the tombs united this world and the divine world. Those tombs surrounded by a moat were the dwelling place of *kami* that protected the region. The moat surrounding the tomb was a boundary (*kekkaï*) marking the sacred area off from the profane.

According to Iwata Keiji, there is a similarity between the Southeast Asian and Japanese evolution of *kami* concepts (called *phi* in Southeast Asia). He argues that the *kami* concepts in both Japan and South East Asia have evolved in three phases. Firstly, *fudōsuru-kami* ('animism'), a germinal state of the *kami* concept involving gods of trees, megaliths, mountains, alien appearance crops and so on. Secondly, *kyoraisuru-kami*, in which local gods, ancestral gods, and rice gods appear only in the event of a festival and take their leave once the festival is over. And finally, *jōchūsuru-kami*, gods remain continuously in the shrine⁸⁷. Iwata's classification roughly coincides with the three-stage development of the *kami* concepts in Japan which I have already described above.

⁸⁷ Iwata 1991b, cited by Hirose 1997:270.

Hirose Kazuo conjectures that the concept of “*kyoraisuru-kami*” was introduced to Japan with wet-rice cultivation from southern Korean Peninsula in the 2nd-3rd century BC, and later evolved into the idea of *jōchūsuru-kami* in the 3rd century. He notes, too, that the timing of its evolution almost coincides with the emergence of the concept of deified chieftains or chieftaincy spirits (*shuchōrei*). Hirose offers support for his arguments with the archaeological remains of buildings excavated from the Nakakaidō site in Kyoto in 1995. From the positioning of the postholes, the buildings are thought to be a shrine dating to 3rd century. The main building had an area of 27.5 square metres, and a 2 metre-wide ditch that marks off the sanctuary surrounded it. The existence of the ditch is a crucial difference in Kofun period shrines compared to those of the Yayoi period. Hirose argues that the ditch not only separated the domain of deities from profane space, but also bound the deities to the shrine. In other words, the Kofun people used them to have the deities remain constantly in the shrine⁸⁸. Moreover, if these ditches functioned to confine deities to a fixed space, it seems reasonable to hypothesise that in the minds of the Kofun people the moats that surrounded the keyhole tombs had a similar function. That is, the Kofun people attempted to confine the spirits of chieftains to keyhole tombs so that even after death they would protect the community. In this way, Kofun period chieftains were expected to remain in the tombs and guard the community for eternity. We may conjecture that the Kofun people indeed regarded keyhole tombs as ‘shrines’.

However, the keyhole tombs and wooden ‘shrines’ constructed during the Kofun Period were significantly different from the shrines constructed after the diffused adoption of

⁸⁸ Hirose 1997:268-269.

Buddhism temple constructions in the 6th century. Whereas the former were maintained only for one chieftain, the latter were maintained for many generations. Wooden 'shrines' were abandoned with the death of a chieftain, and pit dwellings were constructed on the same ground. In some cases, this tendency continued even until the mid-8th or 9th century, as in the case of the Toriba site in Gunma prefecture⁸⁹. As one generation roughly coincides with 20 years, the *shikinen sengū* (reconstruction of Ise Main Shrine at every 20-year interval) might well be the remains of this custom. In addition, no repair works were administered to keyhole tombs once they were completed. These facts suggest that the Kofun people regarded the whole process of construction - the selection of construction sites, construction work, and the completion of the keyhole tombs - as a series of important rituals.

As I noted earlier, the construction of keyhole tombs involved lifecycle ceremonies of the entire community. Thus, the larger the tomb, the more blessings the people could expect. The labour expended by the community and the building materials such as *haniwa*, cinnabars, and grave goods supplied by the family of the mourner may be considered as offerings for the fulfilment of petitions or prayers. Epidemics, drought, famine, and other misfortunes and calamities were regarded as the wrath of deities, caused by offences against them. Such offences were believed to rupture men's relationship with the deities. Thus, the offerings at a time of communal crisis were a vital means of restoring the relationship and of regenerating the declining power of the community.

⁸⁹ Ibid:269-270.

2.3 Dissolution of the Keyhole Tomb System

By the time that the largest keyhole tombs, such as Kondayama Kofun (Ōjin) and Daisen Kofun, were constructed in the early 5th century, the keyhole tomb system had reached its zenith. The conditions that made possible the construction of large tombs were the systematisation of a hierarchy under the Yamato rulership and the expansion of economic growth, backed up by a technical revolution in agriculture and the crafts. For example, the Narutaki site in Wakayama Prefecture, dating to the first half of the 5th century, was accommodated with storehouses capable of storing sufficient rice to support the lives of 10,000 to 20,000 people for one year⁹⁰.

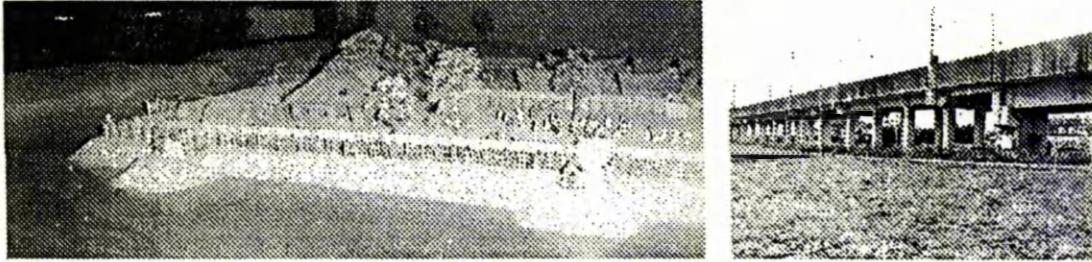
We must not neglect the more favourable climatic condition of this time. The Kofun period is generally characterised by cold climate, known as the Kofun Cold Stage, but the temperatures hit their lowest point around 250 AD and rose gradually until around 400 AD⁹¹. The relatively warm climate in the middle of the Kofun Cold Stage must have supported the development of agrarian communities. People no doubt thought that it was a blessing of the deity enshrined in the tomb, as well as the grace of charismatic rulers. This belief would naturally have reinforced the expansion of the keyhole tomb system.

With the expansion of the economy, however, the distance between local chieftains and commoners increased. Dwellings of the uppermost strata during this period were

⁹⁰ Tsude 1987:64-66. For a good summary of the sophisticated development of civil engineering skills at this time, see also Ibid:66-68.

⁹¹ Sakaguchi 1984:18-36; Sakaguchi 1989:229; Sakaguchi 1995:1-12; Kanehara 1993: 248-261.

detached from commoners. For example, the abode of the local chieftain at the Mitsudera site of the late 5th century in Gunma Prefecture consisted of a square plot of land of about 1.8 acres surrounded by a moat 30 to 40 metres in width and 4 metres in depth⁹². These archaeological sites evince an accumulation of social surplus as well as radically increased status distinctions between chieftains and commoners.



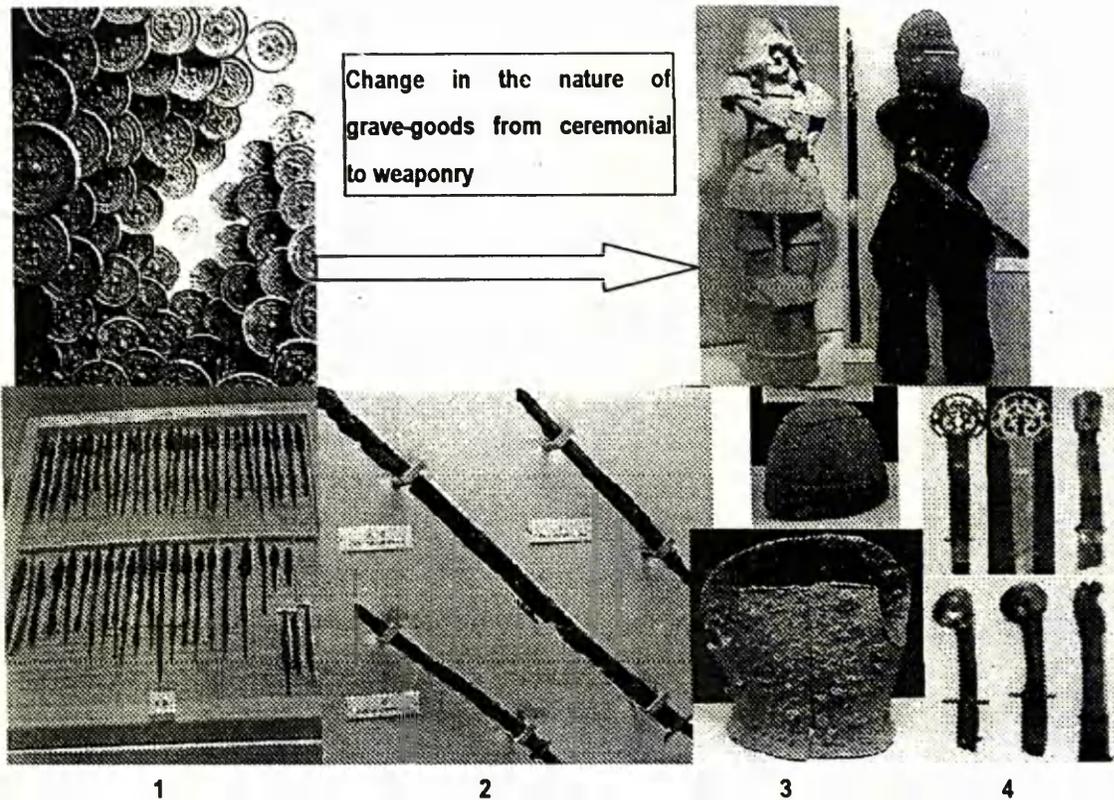
A scale model of the local chieftain's residence at the Mitsudera site in Gunma (Kamitsuke no Sato Museum)

The site was accidentally discovered during the geological survey for the construction of the Tohoku Shinkansen Line. Indeed, quite a few archaeological sites are located along the Shinkansen lines and expressways, since the routes make beelines for the centre of the country. This suggests that the communication between the centre of Japan (Yamato at this time) and local provinces was more intense than previously supposed during the Kofun period.

The changing nature of charismatic rulers can also be detected from the grave-goods deposited in keyhole tombs. In the Early Kofun period, grave-goods were mainly ceremonial, with some iron weapons and armour. By the latter half of the 5th century, however, iron weapons and armour increased drastically while the number of triangular-rimmed beast deity mirrors dropped sharply⁹³. This suggests that chieftains transformed from religious leaders into military and political ones, capable of securing and redistributing iron resources and new techniques; they were men talented in diplomatic and military leadership.

⁹² Shiraishi 1996:56.

⁹³ Fujita 1988; Takizawa 1994.

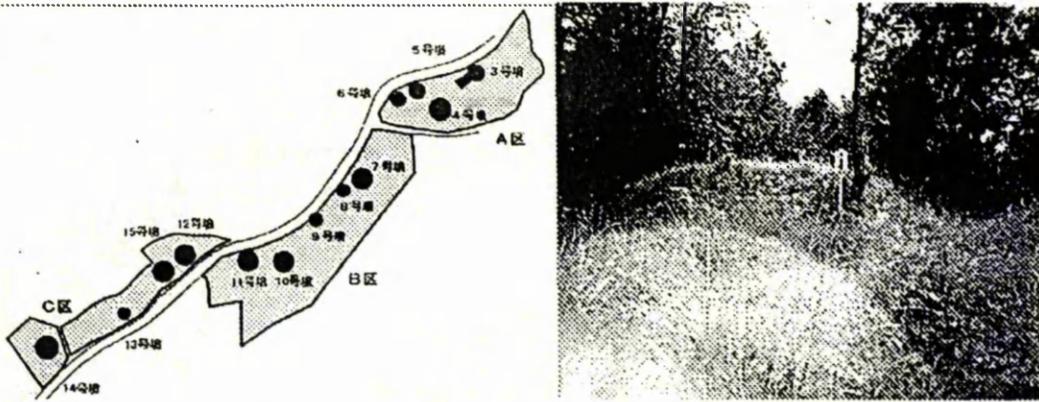


1: Iron Arrowheads (Ryūkakuji Kofun early 6th century); **2: Iron Swords** (Hisagozuka Kofun in Narita, 7th century); **3: Iron Head Piece & Armour** (Kanezuka Kofun in Abiko C.AD600 & Kinreizuka Kofun in Kisarazu c.AD500); **4: varieties of hilts with a sword guard** (Kinreizuka Kofun). Even in the Kanto region, bronze mirrors were substituted by weapons and armours as the most dominant grave-goods by the 6th century. This indicates that the people buried in these tombs were more military oriented than religious affairs. This timing coincides with Japan's active military involvement in the Korean Peninsula.

This change can also be detected by the emergence of an early type of clustered tombs known as *shoki gunshū-fun* from the latter half of the 5th century. For example, the early type of clustered tombs in the southwestern and eastern part of the Nara Basin consisted of numerous small tombs in which one or a few large round mounds formed the core. Most of the grave goods deposited in the round mounds were weaponry and armour but there were few farming tools. Hayashibe Hitoshi has rightly pointed out that the people buried in these tombs were warriors rather than agriculturally oriented people, organised under the command of the Yamato Kingship⁹⁴. This suggests that the religious authority

⁹⁴ Hayashibe 1999:221-239.

of the local chieftains was becoming unimportant during the Middle Kofun period as they became more militarily and politically oriented.



Mukaiyama Kofun-gun in Shizuoka from the early 6th century (The map from The Board of Education in Mishima City)

An early type of clustered tombs started to appear also in the Kanto regions from the latter half of the 5th century, such as Komae Kofun-gun (Tokyo), Shirafuji Kofun-gun (Gunma), and Shimofuchi Natsukagoshi Kofun-gun (Gunma).

The change in the nature of leadership and emergence of a new type of clustered tombs are closely related to the fact that keyhole tombs began to have more political significance than religious one by the latter half of the 5th century. The principal cause for these can be attributed to the Yamato Kingship's new policy of restricting the construction of keyhole tombs. According to Wada Seigo, the demise of both great and lesser local chieftains took place and a new type of leader replaced them after the introduction of this new policy in the early 5th century.⁹⁵ This new policy helped the Great King to expand its political and religious authority while it cut back substantially the charismatic rulership of local chieftains, since the keyhole tomb system began to represent a pyramidal hierarchy with the Great King at the top and local chieftains at the bottom. Thus, keyhole tombs that formerly had multiple functions for local chieftains

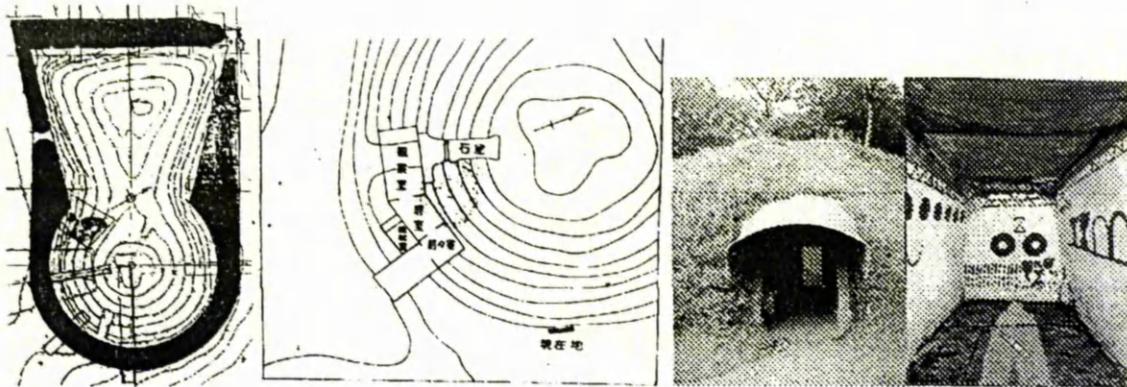
⁹⁵ Wada 1998:160.

were reduced to the status of the mausolea of political leaders and the manifestation of their political and economic power. In short, the keyhole tombs became the vessels of greater political significance for local chieftains. This change in the nature of keyhole tombs had a significant effect on the latter development of the keyhole tomb system.

It should be noted here that the timing of this change also coincides with the lifecycle of the keyhole tomb system in which the construction of keyhole tombs reached its zenith. By the beginning of the 6th century, the construction of gigantic keyhole tombs ended except for the Great Kings, and other forms of tomb burial were not confined to local chieftains but were afforded to a greater segment of the population. Thus, the tombs of the Late Kofun period shrank drastically in size as they increased dramatically in number. The clustered tombs of the 6th century, unlike the earlier type, were constructed on the ridges of mountains without a core of larger tombs, and the distribution of the clustered tombs became much more extensive. They were also characterised by the adoption of a new type of Korean style stone chamber with a corridor entrance (*yokoana-shiki sekishitsu*) that allowed the tomb to be used several times⁹⁶. This new structure prevailed throughout the country and was also adopted for the larger mounded tombs⁹⁷. Such changes in burial methods during the Late Kofun period suggest that the tombs lost their original functions and became mere burial chambers.

⁹⁶ Hayashibe 1999:230-231.

⁹⁷ Wada 1998:144-145,161.

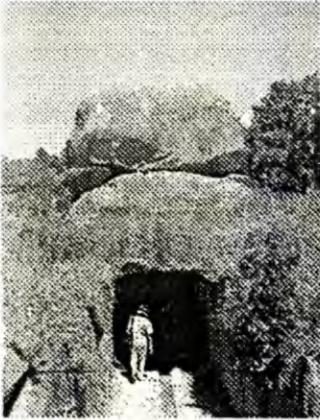


From left to right: The diagram of Toratsuka Kofun having a 4-metre corridor entrance (a round rear mound measuring 32.5m in diameter and 5.5m in height), constructed at the present city of Naka-Minato in Ibaraki, mid-7th century; its close-up; corridor entrance; and stone chamber. Various geometric patterns and the items such as weapons, armour, horse gears, and personal ornaments are painted on the white clay walls with red ochre, and both ceiling and floor were also painted red with iron oxide.

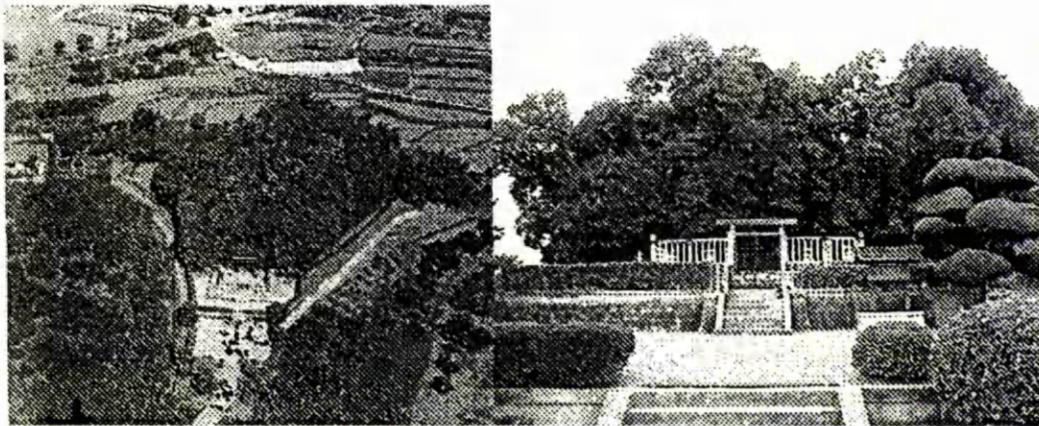
The construction of keyhole tombs was totally abandoned around 600AD (in the mid-7th century in the Tohoku region). The shape of the royal tombs changed to square-mounded (*hōfun*) and then to octagonal-mounded (*hakkaku-fun*) in the mid-7th century⁹⁸. Tsude Hiroshi relates the emergence of the square-mounded tombs to the empowerment of the Soga clan. He also argues that the adoption of the octagonal mounded-tomb was a manifestation of the increased political authority of the emperor after the defeat of the Soga clan in 645⁹⁹. We may agree with Tsude to a certain extent that there exists some correlation between these changes. It was natural that the Soga clan, who encouraged the introduction of Buddhism, contributed to the abandonment of keyhole tomb construction, whereas Emperor Tenmu, an ardent admirer of Chinese civilisation, adopted the octagonal mounded-tomb. The latter symbolised the infinite octagon in Taoism as well as the sacred reign of the Supreme Deity (*t'ien-huang ta-ti*).

⁹⁸ Shiraishi 1982.

⁹⁹ Tsude 1987:71.



Ishibutai Square-mounded Tomb in Asuka (believed to be the barrow of Soga no Umako) The mound had a 54 m each side, but now huge ceiling granites of a stone chamber are outcropped due to the erosion.



Octagonal-mounded Tomb of Tenmu & Jitō, located on the hilltop that commands a view of Mt. Yoshino. Empress Jitō was the first Imperial family who was cremated and buried with her husband Tenmu based on the Taika proclamation that banned extravagant tumulus and funeral rites.

My argument, however, is that the social background for the extinction of the keyhole system and the search for an alternative system had already begun by at least the beginning of the 6th century when the keyhole tomb system was reduced to the mausolea of political leaders, and that the adoption of Buddhism and Confucianism was a natural consequence of this search. In other words, the Soga clan and Emperor Tenmu provided an opportunity for the emergence of a new system, nothing more. If this conjecture is correct, though, what was the fundamental social background for the adaptation of Buddhism and a Chinese-style legal system? In the next subsection the processes of adoption in the Korean Peninsula will be considered, so as to enable us -- through comparison -- to achieve a better understanding of what happened in Japan.

2.3.1 *Adoption of Buddhism and a Chinese-style Legal System in the Korean Peninsula*

The history of the Three Kingdoms indicates that both Buddhism and a Chinese-style legal system were adopted in the wake of social crisis. In Koguryō, for example, Buddhism was adopted in 372, a year after the kingdom was invaded by Paekche and King Kogugwōn (r.331-371) was killed in battle¹⁰⁰. The country was in need of immediate reform to its politico-religious system. In order to overcome the nation's deepening crisis, the new Koguryō King Sosurim (r.371-384) adopted Buddhism for spiritual unity and Confucianism to assist the creation of a new bureaucratic structure. In the following year, he proclaimed a Chinese style legal system. This politico-religious reformation laid the foundation for Koguryō's golden age of political power and the Buddhist flourishing of the 5th century¹⁰¹.

However, the cases of Paekche were different from Koguryō. There was a time lag between the introduction of Buddhism and its official adoption in Paekche. Buddhism was first introduced in 384, but it was not adopted more than one hundred years, as the Han people clung onto their indigenous archaic religion in the form of the *kuei-tao*¹⁰². The social crisis in the late 5th century, however, led Paekche to the official acceptance of both Buddhism and a Chinese worldview as a means of establishing a new identity of the country. Paekche lost most of its territory and was on the verge of extinction, as the

¹⁰⁰ Inoue 1992:63.

¹⁰¹ Lee 1984:38,46.

¹⁰² Sonda & Brown 1993:364-365.

politico-religious system of Paekche were torn apart by the social crisis, and the state lost the power to unite the people¹⁰³.

It may thus be hypothesised that the Buddhism that had been neglected for more than one century received the attention of ruling classes as a new ideology to unite the country in the wake of social crisis. The time lag between the reforms in Koguryō and the reforms in Paekche supports this hypothesis. The cases of both Koguryō and Paekche indicate that the collapse of their politico-religious systems initiated by social crisis, led them to abandon their old system and to adopt the new system of Buddhism and the Chinese-style legal system.

In the case of Silla, Buddhism was introduced in the mid-5th century, but both Buddhism and a Chinese-style legal system were not officially adopted until either 527 or 528¹⁰⁴. This delay was caused by the social environment of Silla in which the principal role of shamanistic Silla kings was to ensure abundant crops and Silla tribal chieftains did not want their kings to have centralised power¹⁰⁵. However, from the end of the 5th century to the first half of the 6th century, the Three Kingdoms entered a period of territorial reorganisation. Silla and Paekche competed with each other to annex Kaya (Mimana) on the southeastern tip of the Peninsula. In order to compete with Paekche and Koguryō, Silla had to transform its political system from the loosely

¹⁰³ In 475 the capital city of Hansu (just south of Seoul) was seized by Koguryō, and King Kaero (r.455-475) was beheaded. As a result, Paekche barely managed to preserve its national existence [Lee 1984:40].

¹⁰⁴ Lee 1984:43,59.

¹⁰⁵ Sonoda & Brown 1993:368-369.

structured tribal confederation to a centralised bureaucratic state¹⁰⁶. Both the Chinese-style legal system and Buddhism were essential for not only the centralisation of its political system but also ideological foundation to unify the people¹⁰⁷. Thus, at the turn of the 6th century, Chijung (r.500-514) took the Chinese title king (*wang*) instead of the native title *maripkan* ('ridge' or 'elevation'), and the country was renamed Silla. These changes signified Silla's willingness to accept the Chinese political system¹⁰⁸. Thus, Silla's official adoption of a Chinese style legal system and Buddhism can be understood as a part of the country's reforms aimed at enabling its rebirth as a full-fledged kingdom.

Soon after the politico-religious reforms were completed in Paekche and Silla in the early 6th century, the Yamato Kingship was introduced to Confucianism. In 513 during the reign of Keitai (r.507-527¹⁰⁹/531¹¹⁰/534¹¹¹), Paekche sent a scholar of the five classics named Tan Yang-ni as tribute to Yamato¹¹². The diplomatic policy of the early 6th century Yamato Kingship was characterised by receiving tributes from the Three Kingdoms in the form of scholars acquainted with the five classics, medicine, and calendars, in return for military assistance¹¹³. This trend continued during the reign of Kinmei, and it was now that Buddhism was officially introduced to Japan. Although the Yamato Kingship was able to suppress the rebellions of Iwai and Musashi, the

¹⁰⁶ Tanaka 1993b:152-181.

¹⁰⁷ Lee 1984:43.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid: Tanaka 1993b:160.

¹⁰⁹ *Kojiki*.

¹¹⁰ *Kudara Hongi & Nihon Shoki*

¹¹¹ *aruhon* cited in the *Nihon Shoki*.

¹¹² *Nihon Shoki*, Keitai 7/6the month.

successive outbreaks of these rebellions indicate that strong local clans were asserting themselves and that the unity of the country was beginning to dissolve in the early 6th century. Thus, Yamato's intake of foreign scholars and the later introduction of Buddhism were not accidental. Indeed the Yamato Kingship, like the Three Kingdoms, was in dire need of a new politico-religious system for the centralisation of government as well as for the unity of the country.

With regard to the adoption of Buddhism, we cannot dismiss two other important benefits. The first benefit derived from the fact that Buddhist monks comprised a group of versatile technocrats. In Silla, for example, King Chijung, as the king of the agrarian communities, promoted agricultural productivity by importing advanced techniques of irrigation and ploughing by oxen¹¹⁴. The versatile knowledge of the monks was highly valued in Silla and in other Korean Kingdoms and subsequently in Japan, too.

The second benefit of the adoption of Buddhism was the border-free nature of Buddhist monks. Once Buddhism was accepted officially in the East Asian countries, the travel of Buddhist monks was not restricted as strictly as embassies, and monks were able to make more personal contacts with political leaders. For example, when Asukadera (Hōkō-ji) was built by the Soga clan in 596, many foreign monks such as Eji of Koguryō and Esō of Paekche resided at the temple, and Eji became the Buddhist master of Prince Shōtoku. Eben of Koguryō was also a Buddhist master of Soga no Umako and Prince Shōtoku. We can surmise that some Buddhist monks of that time also had the

¹¹³ Yoshimura, 1999:45.

¹¹⁴ Lee 1984:43.

role of secret agents as they formed a multinational network of communication¹¹⁵. The establishment of this communication network in East Asia brought about an information revolution.

The adoption of Buddhism brought to a country not only ideological underpinning for the unity and solidarity of the country in the newly centralised Yamato State but also versatile technology and valuable information on other countries. In short, the archaic religion of Himiko and Sujin had already become totally out-dated both domestically and internationally. It was thus inevitable that Buddhism spread rapidly from the Korean Peninsula to Japan.

2.3.2 The Lifecycle of the Keyhole Tomb System

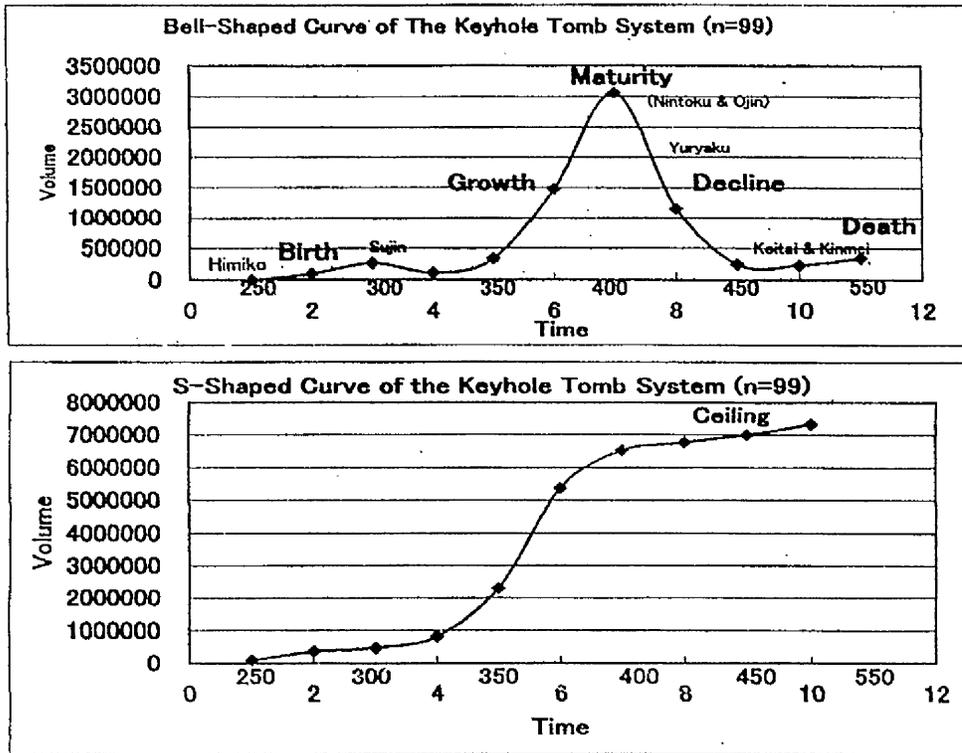
Before offering my conclusion, I would now like to consider the relationship between the dissolution of the keyhole tomb system and the adoption of a new politico-religious system from a rather different perspective. As I have already discussed in the Introduction, most complex systems follow a natural law known as the bell-shaped lifecycle curve that consists of birth, growth, maturity, decline, and death. I have plotted the lifecycle of the keyhole tomb system in Osaka regions, expressed in terms of the volume of keyhole tombs constructed over a span of time (see Figure 2-2. For Yamato regions, see Appendix II). I used the volume of keyhole tombs rather than their number,

¹¹⁵ In the Korean Peninsula, for example, King Changsu (r.413-491) of Koguryō sent a priest named Torim to Paekche. When the priest gained the confidence of King Kaero (r.455-475) through the use of his favourite game of go, he strongly recommended the restoration of the capital to Kaero in conspiracy to bring the country into a financial crisis

as it is a better measure of people's devotion, since it reflects the amounts of energy expended in construction. The rising curve denotes increasing amounts of labour and material devoted to the keyhole tomb system, whereas the declining curve denotes smaller amounts of energy.

Figure 2-3 The Lifecycle of the Keyhole Tomb System in Osaka Area

[The data for the volume is based on Ishikawa 1989; for the dating, I have used Ōtsuka et al. 1989]



As shown in Figure 2-3, the historical development of keyhole tomb construction roughly corresponds with the bell-shaped lifecycle curve. The figure indicates that the construction of keyhole tombs started in the latter half of the 3rd century ('Birth'), increased rapidly during the 4th century ('Growth'), reached its ceiling in the 5th century ('Maturity'), started its decline rapidly from the beginning of the 6th century ('Decline'), and terminated by the beginning of the 7th century ('Death'). The slight decline after the

and made a detail report to Koguryō. Koguryō eventually seized the Paekche capital and beheaded Kaero in 475.

'Birth' was probably due to social turmoil caused by the devastating epidemic outbreak during the reign of Sujin. However, after Sujin and his successors established the ritual system of archaic religion based on the keyhole tombs, their construction entered a period of steady growth until the system saturated its niche. This suggests that the politico-religious system based upon it reached its maturity in the early 5th century. The data indicate that it was destined to decline after maturity, whether or not the Yamato Kingship attempted to enforce a restriction on the construction of keyhole tombs.

As for social crisis, when the system was growing even the most serious social crisis, such as the devastating epidemic outbreak during the reign of Sujin that inhibited construction for a while, was unable to stop the growth. Indeed, social crisis helped elevate Himiko's politico-religious system to the more refined organisation of the keyhole tomb system. Even if Sujin had not established the ritual system based on the keyhole tomb system, someone else would have done so. This is an example of how history is not made by man, but by social crisis. Even a minor social crisis could have easily ended the system if it had been introduced when the system was about to die out. According to Figure 2-2, the keyhole tomb system was destined to terminate around AD 600 in the Osaka region when the construction of keyhole tombs reached its ceiling in the early 5th century¹¹⁶. In other words, the keyhole tomb system like all systems had a 'biological clock' that led to its own death. In this light, the effects of social crisis on the system were subject to the ticking of this biological clock, and the law of natural growth ruled the historical development of the keyhole tomb system.

¹¹⁶ If the construction of the keyhole tomb started in around 250 and reached the ceiling of the tomb construction in around 425, it was destined to end in around 600 $[(425 - 250) + 425 = 600]$.

When we consider the fundamental 'cause' for the adoption of Buddhism and a Chinese-style legal system from the perspective of autocatalytic growth, the decline of the keyhole tomb system itself created the milieu suitable for the introduction of Buddhism and a Chinese-style legal system. When archaic religion emerged in the face of social crisis from around mid-2nd century, it facilitated the appearance of configuration similar to itself (i.e., the keyhole tomb system), and they become more dominant by changing not only themselves but also the environment more suitable for their own growth. However, when the growth reaches a certain level that I have called maturity; the process of such autocatalytic growth was reversed, because the fittest in a specific environment was most vulnerable to the change in the environment, and the archaic religion continued to loose its ground in the changing environment. When keyhole tombs were reduced to the status of mausolea and symbols of political power and lost their religious functions for the general public, the Japanese society was in need for an alternative religious system in this changing environment. In other words, the archaic religion or the keyhole tomb system had to be transcended to a higher religious system as the society becomes more complex. Buddhism and a Chinese-legal system met this demand, and thus they were officially adopted. However, the adoption itself held within itself the seeds of counter-system that eventually challenged the archaic religion and the keyhole tomb system. In effect, Buddhism and a Chinese-legal system served as catalysts and accelerated the dissemination of a new paradigm most characteristic of that period of intellectual ferment, the 6th century Enlightenment. Therefore, the adoption of Buddhism and a Chinese-legal system was both cause and effect of the collapse of the keyhole tomb system. They were interfused along the natural growth curve.

If we compare the lifecycle of keyhole tombs to that of pyramids in ancient Egypt, this will be more evident. The pyramids were built over a period of 2,700 years, but the pyramid age par excellence was from the 3rd until the 6th dynasties of the Old Kingdom, a period beginning around 2650BC and lasting about 350 years. The prototype of the pyramid was the mastaba, a rectangular tomb-chapel known in Egypt from the beginning of the 1st dynasty (c.3500BC). This all changed from the 3rd dynasty with the erection of the step pyramid that was made for the pharaoh, Djoser (c.2650-c.2575BC).

It is noteworthy that, during his reign, Egypt experienced severe famine that lasted for seven years. The pharaoh consulted his vizier, Imhotep who was a man of many talents - architect, physician, master sculpture, scribe, and astronomer. Accordingly, Imhotep travelled to Elephantine at Aswan and built a temple to the god Khnum, ancient Egyptian deity of fertility, associated with water and procreation. Then, the famine ended miraculously, and people believed it was due to this act of faith. The construction of the first pyramid started after the cessations of the famine. It was originally a normal mastaba, but was subsequently enlarged by adding one mastaba on top of another until it consisted of six terraces some 62 meters high. It formed a huge complex (544 × 277metres) surrounded by a high wall faced with fine limestone and containing a series of mock building that represented structure associated with the palace of his lifetime (See the illustrations below). Furthermore, Djoser's life-size statue was installed in the tomb chamber near the entrance, and worshiped as absolute God that would reign over the people even after his death. It is evident that the upgrading of the status of the pharaoh was accompanied by the transformation of the tomb architecture or the emergence of what we may call the pyramid system.

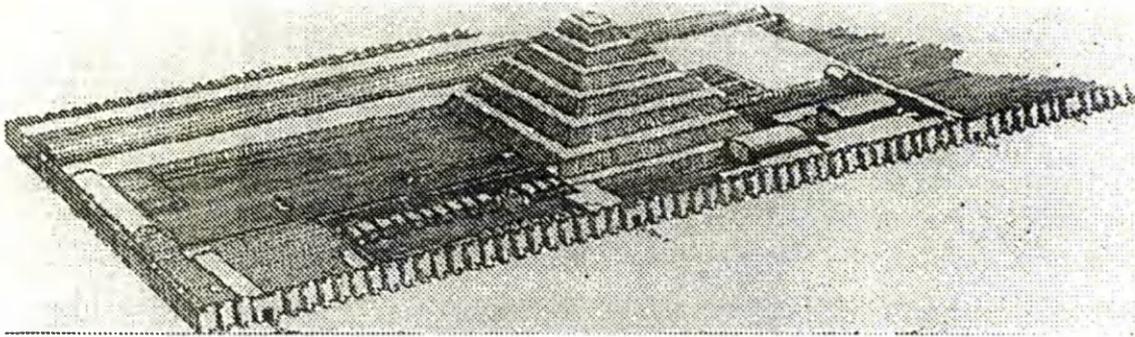
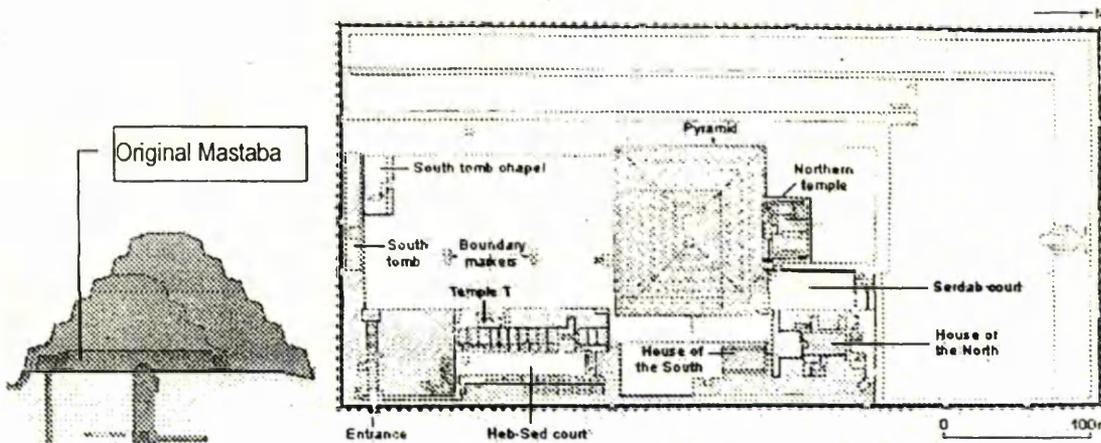


Illustration of Djoser's Pyramid Complex (by Kenneth Bakeman)

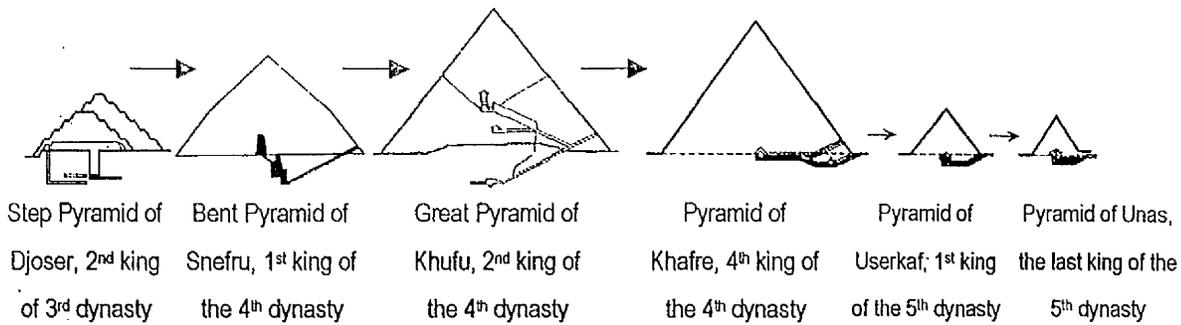


The Step Pyramid of Pharaoh Djoser (the 3rd dyanasty) at Şsqqārah

The evolution toward the strictly pyramidal tomb was marked by the Bent Pyramid (188m square at the base and 98 m high) built by the Pharaoh Snefru of the 4th dynasty in around 2610BC¹¹⁷. This change was brought by the belief that Pharaoh, after his death, becomes the sun god, Ra, and would bring fertility and protect his people's economic and spiritual welfare.¹¹⁸ The pyramid construction reached the acme with Khufu's Great Pyramid at Giza (230 m square at the base and about 98 m high). However, the size of pyramids became smaller at an exponential rate during the 5th dynasty (c.2465-2325BC), measuring only less than 100 to 60 metres at the base.

¹¹⁷ The Bent Pyramid was originally planned as a true pyramid, but its geometry was altered at a point just above half its height.

¹¹⁸ Tsude 2000:96.



The lifecycle of Pyramids in the Old Kingdom of Egypt (Tsude2000:98-99)

This diminishing size tends to be misconceived as a manifestation of Pharaohs' declining political influence. However, we cannot dismiss the fact that it was accompanied again by the religious change. Userkaf (c.2498-c.2345BC), the first pharaoh of the 5th dynasty elevated the cult of Ra to unprecedented importance. Like his predecessor, he built funerary complex, but his pyramid complex is notable for the fact that a mortuary temple was built to the south of pyramid, but not to the east, as was traditional. This is now understood as being due to the increasing importance of the sun god Ra in the south; the temple would be bathed in the sun's ray throughout the day. He was also the first pharaoh to build a sun temple, a monument to worship the sun god Ra. During this dynasty the theology that Pharaoh was the son of the sun was firmly established by the Egyptian priests. They sought the peaceful coexistence of pharaohs and the sun god Ra. As they attached greater importance to the construction of the Sun Temple, the energy devoted to the construction of pyramids was naturally cut down¹¹⁹. With the reign of Niuserre (r.c.2453-c.2422BC), the 6th pharaoh of the 5th dynasty, the solar-cult came to its summit. His sun temple consisted of an entrance hall that was leading to a court of 100x75 m in size surrounded by a wall. In the middle of the courtyard stood a huge obelisk carved from a single piece of granite. It was the cultic

¹¹⁹ Ibid.98.

symbol for the sun god, Ra, and the height of the obelisk (56 m) exceeded that of his pyramid (53 m). It is noteworthy that, during the 5th dynasty, successful trade expeditions were conducted with neighbouring nations; however, there was a major famine due to desiccation, especially towards the end of the 3rd millennium BC, which eventually led to the First Dark Age of Egypt¹²⁰.

The lifecycle of pyramids bears close resemblance to the lifecycle of keyhole tombs. First, social crisis played a critical role for the emergency of the pyramid system in ancient Egypt, as it did for the emergence of the keyhole tomb system during reign of Himiko. Second, when the sun god Ra had risen to his leading position during the 4th dynasty, syncretism was formed between Ra and other gods, producing such names as Khnum-Ra, Ra-Harakhty, Amon-Ra, Sebek-Ra, as it happened in Japan between Ōmononushi and Ōkuninushi during the reign of Sujin. Third, originally the main pyramid was reserved for a pharaoh, while smaller pyramids were built for his wives. But during the Middle Kingdom period (c.2100BC-1700BC), many smaller pyramids surrounded the pyramids of a pharaoh and made up pyramid complexes. This reminds us of the early type of clustered tomb in Japan. Fourth, during the New Kingdom period (c.1500BC-1000BC), small pyramids were built for non-royal family such as aristocrats and high officials, and thus the pyramids as a potent symbol of royal power was greatly depreciated. Meanwhile, royal tombs were carved deep into the limestone with no outward structure and marked only by a doorway carved in the rock face of the Valley

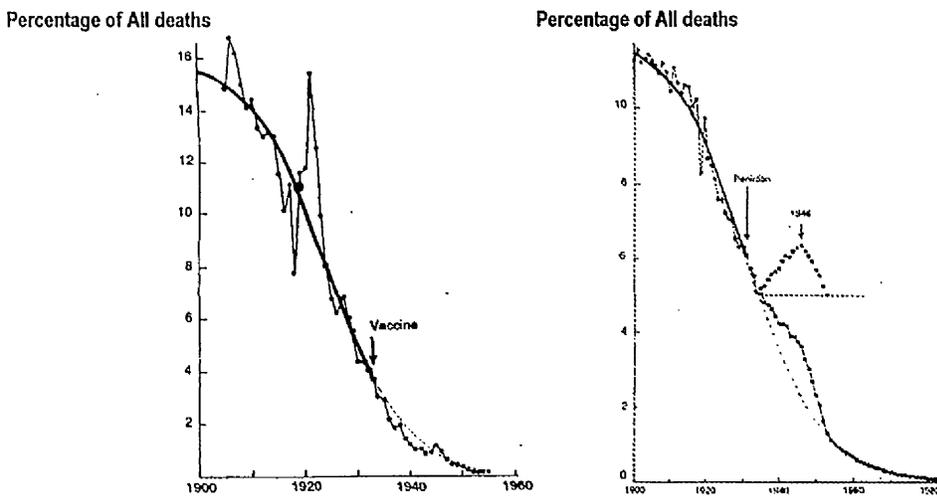
¹²⁰ According to the sources exploited by Bell (1970, 1971), such as the fragments of a large stone stele, carved during the 5th dynasty, which recorded Nile flood levels for every year back to about 3050BC, and numerous tomb inscriptions and papyri, the First Dark Age of Egypt was brought on by a prolonged and intense drought.

of the Kings that itself resembled a magnificent pyramid. These changes in the tomb architecture are again very similar to the emergence of a later type of clustered small-mounded tombs with side entrance and the change in the shape of tombs for the Great Kings. Finally, the declining phase of pyramid construction was marked by the introduction of new religious belief and climatic change.

It is generally believed that the problem with tomb robbers was the main reason for strongly reduced importance of building pyramids. However, exact locations of royal tombs were known to the contemporaries as exemplified by the fact the royal tombs were guarded against tomb robbers. In fact, tomb robbers were intensified after Ramesses IX (1126BC-1108BC) of the 20th dynasty during which royal power started to decline.¹²¹ When pharaoh's tombs were built in the Valley of Kings at full blast, it was the great period of Egypt. The kingdom's wealth and prosperity were increased by the spoils brought home from the many successful military campaigns and the tributes paid by many conquered states. This period is also marked by the development of the strongest regime based on centralised bureaucratic system. Thus, the termination of pyramid construction had nothing to do with the wane of royal power; but rather, it was related to the fading of religious functions of pyramids as a potent symbol of royal power. In other words, the change in the function of pyramids was intertwined with pyramids' phasing out, and the progressive change can be seen both as cause and effect of the phasing out process.

¹²¹ Kondō 1997.

Indeed, many things in our real world manifest a similar phenomenon. It is widely believed, for example, that epidemic disease such as smallpox, diphtheria, and tuberculosis were eradicated or decreased substantially by the invention of vaccine. However, the statistical data indicate that the percentage of deaths from these epidemics had already declined before the introduction of the vaccination in developed countries. In fact, an inoculation against smallpox was known to India and China much earlier than the West, but it had been ineffective in eradicating the disease. For some other important factors, such as living conditions, diet, hygiene, and people's reaction toward the inoculation, were not matured enough to wipe put the disease.



Graph 2-1 Relationships between Epidemics and Vaccine

Left: Deaths due to diphtheria in the United States; **Right:** Deaths due to tuberculosis in the United States, A significant excess is probably due to World War II. (Modis 1992:101&253)

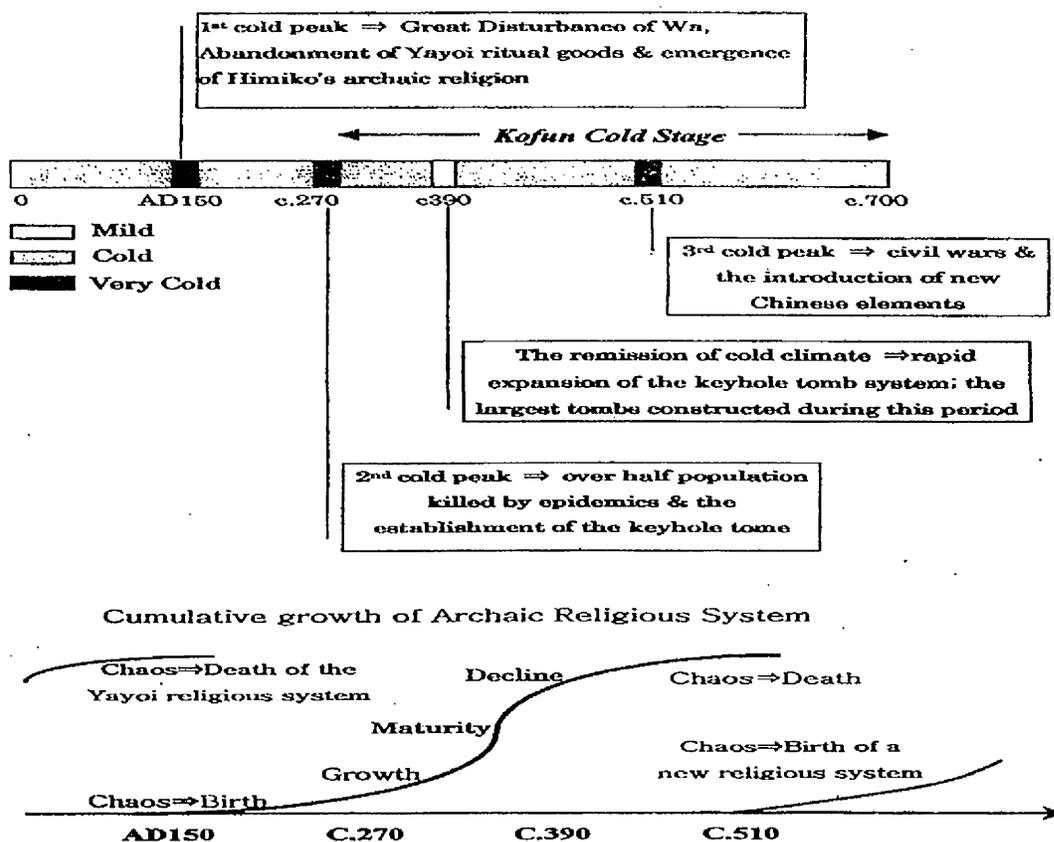
Moreover, as we can see in Graph 2-1, the invention of the vaccine had itself gone through a natural-growth process over many years, for the historical date after the inventions of vaccine coincide with the extrapolation of the fitted curve determined from the date before the introductions (in 1931 for Tuberculosis and 1933 for diphtheria), and the vaccine's history is again intertwined with the epidemic disease's

phasing out. Thus, the natural-growth of epidemics can be seen as the combined evolution of epidemics and vaccine.¹²² Given this, we ought to think about some dynamics that constitutes such lifecycles.

(A) CLIMATE

Then, our next task is to investigate such dynamics hidden behind religious change. For this purpose, I wish to focus on the relationships between the environment and human affairs. The first is the correlation between the lifecycle of the keyhole tomb system and climatic change. As we can see in Figure 2-4, the lifecycle of the keyhole tomb system roughly corresponds to the *Kofun* cold stage.

Figure 2-4
Climatic Fluctuation and the Lifecycle of Archaic Religion
[Climatic data based on Sakaguchi (1984) I]



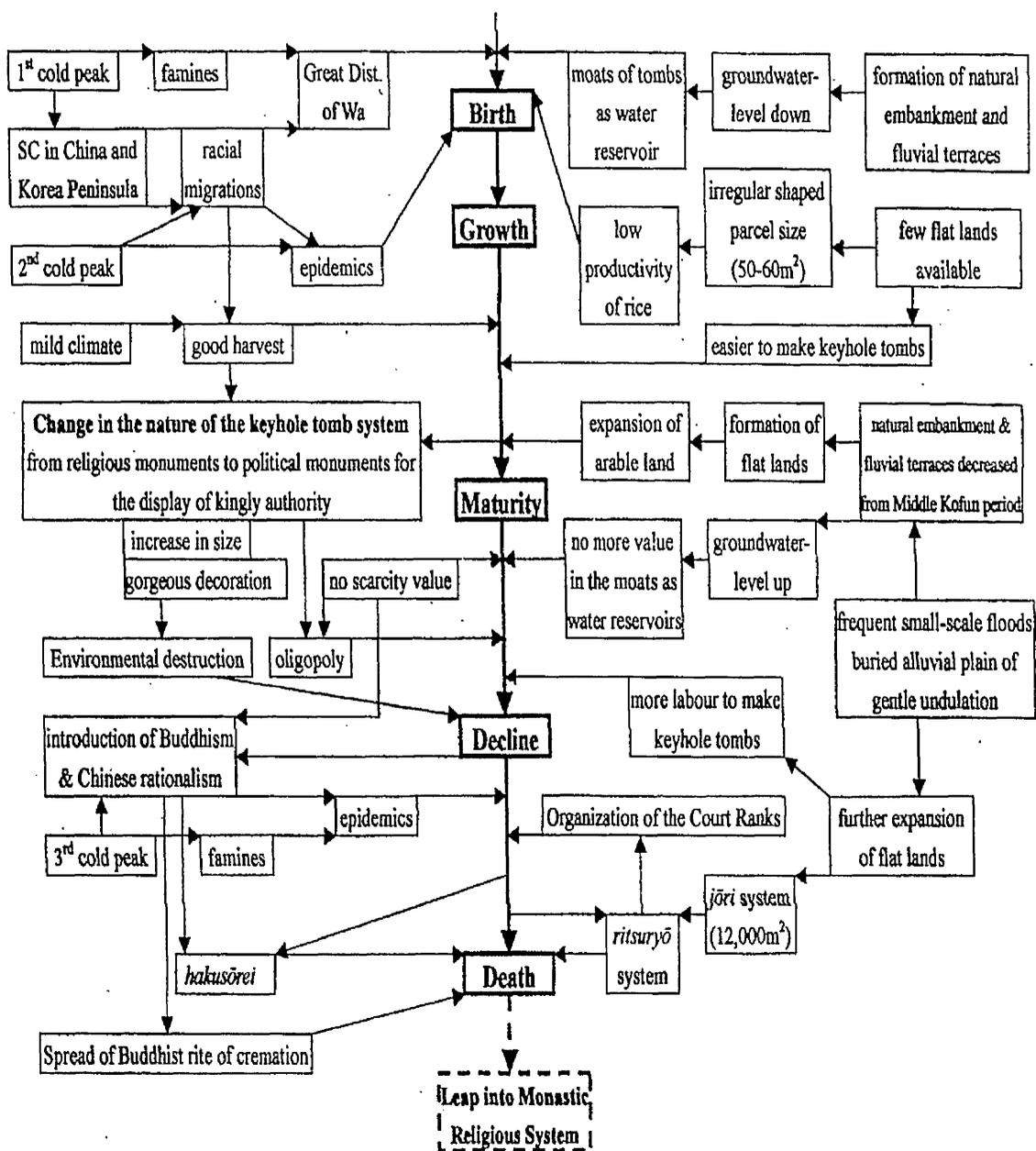
¹²² Modis 1992:102-3.

The first cold peak in the 2nd century and consequent Great Disturbance of Wa gave a great impetus for the abandonment of Yayoi ritual goods such as bronze bells and spearheads as well as the emergence of archaic religion. The 2nd cold peak in the 3rd century killed over half population, and this social crisis promoted the systematisation of archaic religion based on the keyhole tombs system during the reign of Sujin. The remission of the cold climate coming around turn of the 5th century promoted the accelerated growth of the keyhole tomb system during which the largest tombs such as Daisen Kofun and Kondayama Kofun were constructed. During the favourable natural and social environment the system grew and reached its maturity. After this maturity, however, the keyhole tomb system began to decline. During this declining phase, the 3rd cold peak and consequent civil wars appeared to have delivered a final blow to the archaic religion based on the keyhole tomb system from the early 6th century. The final social crisis that led this archaic religion to the death coincided with the introduction of new elements from the Korean Peninsula, such as Buddhism and the Chinese legal system based on Confucianism, which became a foundation for the emergence of a new religious system. In other words, the same social crisis worked negative for the extant religious system but worked positive for a newly emerging religious system. The dual effects of social crisis during the declining phase imply that people searched for a new religious system to cope with their changing environment. These correlations suggest that social crises triggered by climatic fluctuations affected significantly not only the lifecycle of archaic religion based on the keyhole tomb system but also the emergence of a new religious system.

These correspondences do not appear to be coincidental, but seem to signify that both human affairs and the belief system were under the strong influence of climatic change.

It should also be noted that the Kofun Cold stage roughly corresponded to the Korean Three Kingdoms period (300-668) and the Chinese Six Dynasties and Sui Dynasty periods (222-618). As will become more evident in subsequent chapters, climatic change continued to exert a strong influence not only on the outbreak of social crises but also on the length of the lifecycle of each religious system.

Figure 2-5 Archaic Religion and Autocatalytic Networks



I am not trying to argue here that climate is the sole cause for religious change, but as one of the most important parameters that affected the lifecycle of archaic religious system. The relationships between religious change and social crises are so complex that the both take place under the strong influence of autocatalytic reactions of various factors (see Figure 2-5). Moreover, as the number of keyhole tombs increased, they must have lost scarcity value as in the case of Egyptian pyramids, and chieftains may have lost interests in keyhole tomb. That led the decline of the keyhole tomb system and the chieftains to look for another religious system. In other words, when an old religious system saturates its niche, people may simply begin to look for a new religious system in different surroundings.

(B) GEOENVIRONEMT

With respect to the second relationship between the environment and human affairs, we can also identify that the lifecycle of the keyhole tomb system were also strongly affected by the timing of geoenvironmental changes, which was caused by the long-term climatic change.

According to the environmental archaeologist Takahashi Manabu, several drastic changes in land-environment took place from the end of the Final Jomon to the beginning of the Kamakura period. During a period between the Final Jomon and the Early Yayoi, sandbank and river channels formed gently undulated alluvial fans. Settlements and graveyards were located on the sandbank, while small-scale wet-rice cultivation was conducted on the damp hinterland along the alluvial channels. Flat land is an essential condition for wet-rice cultivation, but the size of each lot of paddy fields could not exceed more than 50 to 60 m^2 due to the undulations of the alluvial fans.

Since deltas that used to be under the ocean had not fully emerged yet during this period, only a few people lived on the deltas. From the early Middle Yayoi, however, the inhabitable land on the deltas began to increase, as fluvial terraces were formed along the river channels by river erosion. The expansion of the deltas diminished the size of the lagoons that had sustained the life of hunting-gathering people with their rich biomass. Takahashi argues that the reduction of these lagoons accelerated the speed of the transformation of the Yayoi society into a rice-growing society.¹²³

The emergence of prototypical religion was closely associated with the adoption of wet-rice cultivation. The timing of the geographical changes coincides with the tale of Umi-sachi-hiko and Yama-sachi-hiko, implying the fall of hunting and gathering and the rise of rice cultivation and the further development of prototypical religion. This was manifested in the active construction of large graves such as *funkyūbo* (mound-burials) and *hōkei-shūkōbo* (moated precincts); the abundant Yayoi ritual implements such as bronze bells and spearheads; the practice of pyro-scapulimancy; and the formulation of various myths concerning rice cultivation.

During a period between the Late Yayoi and the Middle Kofun Period, the floodloam of rivers buried natural embankments formed in the deltas during the late Middle Yayoi period. Consequently, the amount of arable land for wet-rice cultivation increased, whereas suitable land for habitation (dry fluvial terrace) decreased. After the first half of 6th century, alluvial plains, which had gentle undulations, were buried by frequent small scale flooding of rivers, and they became flat. Pit dwellings and keyhole tombs

¹²³ Takahashi 1996:119.

constructed on the relatively high location such as terraces and the foothills of mountains were buried under floodloam, too. Since flat land regions expanded further - or the undulation of the ground decreased - from the end of Kofun period, it was no longer necessary for paddy fields to be divided into the previous type small and irregular-shaped parcels. Takahashi argues that the expansion of flat land regions enabled the Yamato Court to implement a system of land division, the so-called *jōrisei*, in the 7th and 8th centuries. Under the Taika Reform of 645 AD, these tracts of flat land were divided into large grid-patterned fields with sides measuring about 2,150 feet (6 *chō*). This *jōri* system made it possible for the Central Government to allocate land smoothly to peasants and facilitated the adoption of the *ritsuryō* system.

A traditional view maintains that a large-scale operation of making land flat was carried out before the enforcement of the *jōri* system. Takahashi, however, disagrees, as he finds no trace of artificial work exerted on the land in the 200 sites that he has excavated. On the contrary, most of the undulations became naturally flat through frequent small-scale flooding of rivers, and he thus argues that the introduction of the *jōri* system during the Asuka and Nara periods required the least manpower in the history of Japan¹²⁴. Takahashi adds that the same thing can be said of the geographical condition for water for irrigation. Prior to the first half of the 6th century, it was difficult to irrigate water from rivers, as the groundwater level was lowered by the formation of fluvial terraces. After the Asuka and Nara period, however, the riverbeds began to rise as the gap (*dankyū-gai*) between fluvial terraces and flood plains was buried by floodloam.

¹²⁴ Ibid:120.

Subsequently, it became much easier to irrigate water directly from rivers, and people were able to reclaim land much more easily than in previous periods¹²⁵.

The *jōri* system and the development of new land were some of the most important elements for the establishment of the *ritsuryō* system. As I will discuss in the subsequent chapter, the Emperor-centred *ritsuryō* system was one of the key factors for the emergence of a new religious system, that I call monastic religion, during the Asuka period, as well as for the sustenance of monastic religion during the Nara and early Heian periods. In other words, the adoption of *ritsuryō* system worked negatively for the dissolution of the keyhole tomb system, but it worked positively for the formation of the new religious system. Thus, we shall find a direct correlation between the age of monastic religion and the geographical changes that facilitated reclaiming large-scale arable land.

Furthermore, Takahashi's findings suggest that the dissolution of the keyhole tomb system was also highly correlated with geographical change. As noted already the Kofun people constructed most keyhole tombs on terraces or in the foothills of mountains in order to facilitate construction with minimum labour and soil requirements. However, the levelling of land caused by the deposit of floodloam from the first half of the 6th century required more work force and soil to construct the same size of keyhole tombs during the Late Kofun period. On top of this the rise in groundwater level that took place during this period appears to have invalidated the function of the tombs' moats as water reservoirs. Within, for example, the cluster of large keyhole tombs in

¹²⁵ Ibid.

Furuichi, Osaka Prefecture, where one of the largest keyhole tombs known as Kodayama Kofun is located, a huge canal (about 20 metres in width and 5 metres deep) has been found threading its way between the moats of different tombs. Archaeologists think that the canal was constructed either for water transportation or for irrigation. As the canal used to cross a fluvial terrace, Tsude has conjectured that the canal was used to irrigate water to paddy fields. The canal also made it possible to draw water from the upper reaches of the Ishikawa River and thereby increase the amount of arable land¹²⁶.

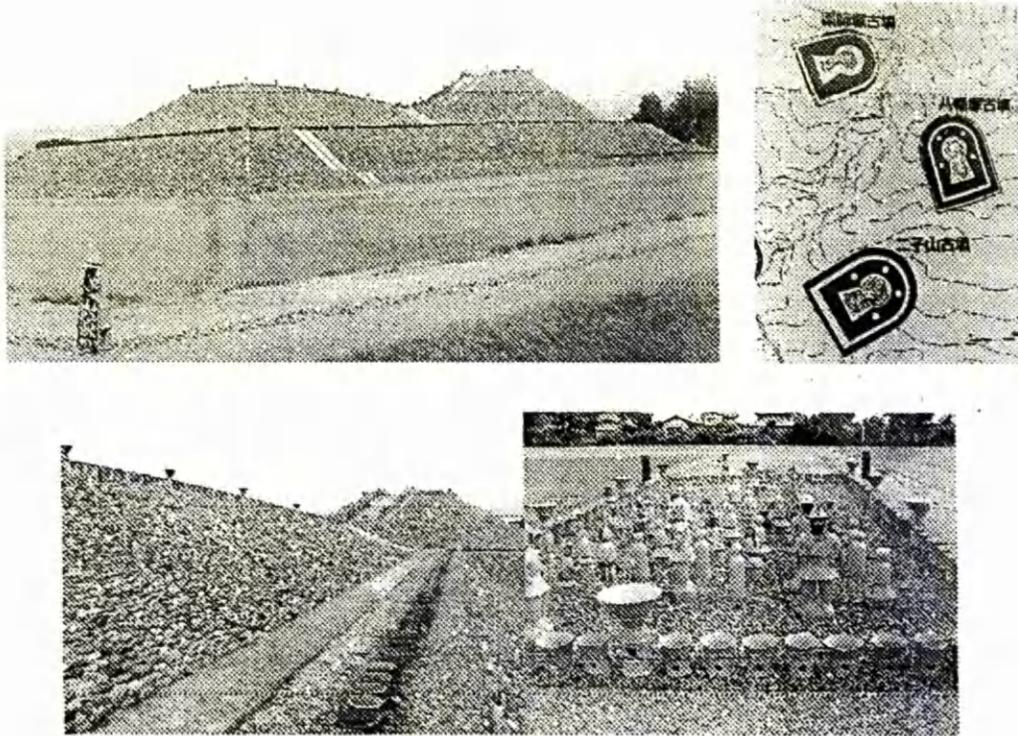
Moats are generally considered as remains made by the digging of earth for the construction of the tombs. But the existence of a canal connecting its way between the moats and the river suggests that the moats served as a water reservoir and for water transportation. After the rise of riverbeds from the end of the Kofun period, however, the Late Kofun people did not have to keep water for wet-rice cultivation in the moats in order to raise the water level, but could draw water into paddy fields directly from rivers. We may conjecture that the value of moats significantly depreciated during the Late Kofun period, and that the Late Kofun people thus devoted less energy to the construction of keyhole tombs. This lesser devotion was encouraged further by the fact that more labour and soil were required to construct the tombs than before. Together, these disadvantages greatly contributed to the dissolution of the keyhole tomb system in the 7th century.

¹²⁶ Tsude 1987:66-68.

(C) ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION

Last but not least, we cannot overlook the adverse effect of keyhole tomb construction on the environment. The construction of keyhole tombs was not the sole cause for the destruction of the surrounding environment, but the extensive use of *haniwa* for the decoration of the tombs as well as for the prevention of mudslides caused widespread destruction of forests. In order to make *haniwa*, tremendous amounts of clay and firewood were required. After artisans from Korea brought the new technology for the production of Sue ware in the 5th century, fired at higher temperatures in a kiln, more firewood was required than with the previous open firing method (*noyaki*). For example, it is estimated that 40 m³ or 30 tons of firewood (equal to 1500m² of forestland) were needed to operate one kiln at one time¹²⁷. One of the largest keyhole tombs, Daisen Kofun, used about 30,000 *haniwa*. As one operation was able to make 30 *haniwa*, 1000 operations were needed to make 30,000 *haniwa*. This means that a total of 1.5 million m² or 370 acres of forestland were deforested in order to make these *haniwa* for the Daisen Kofun alone. Thus, the deforestation of land advanced at an exponential rate with the expansion of the keyhole tomb system. On the one hand, the keyhole tomb system must have contributed to the expansion of cultivated land through the destruction of forests. On the other, the keyhole tomb system that was supposed to protect the surrounding areas and people was reduced to an apparatus for the destruction of the environment.

¹²⁷ Nakamura 1976:213-224.

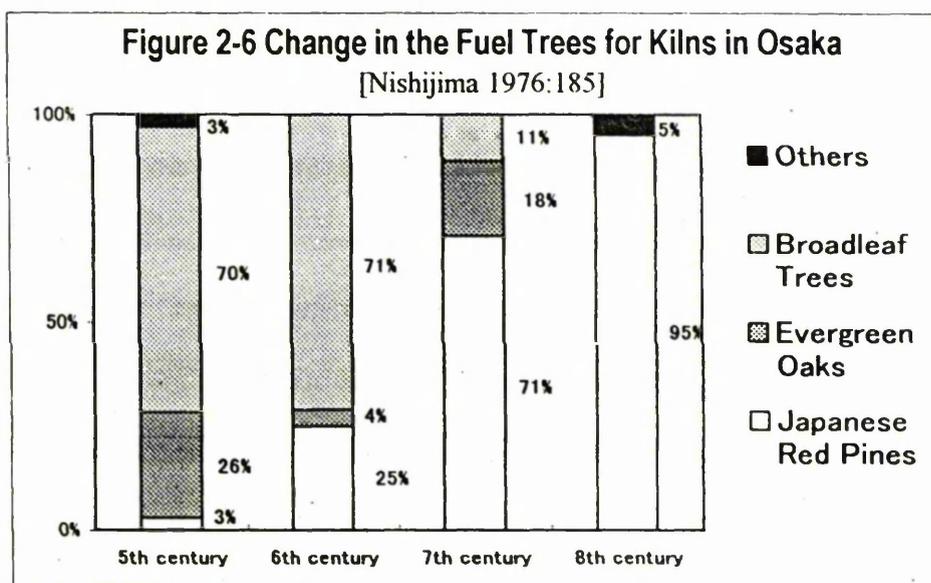


Restored Hachimanzuka Kofun, one of the Hotoda Kofun Cluster in Gunma-machi (late 5th century)

This medium-size keyhole tomb (96m long) accommodated more than 6,000 *haniwa*. Since two other keyhole tombs of about the same size were constructed in a cluster during the late 5th century, a total 90,000 m² or 222 acres of forestland were deforested in a short period even at this distant rural communities from Kinai. In such areas as Ryūkakuji Kofun Cluster in Chiba, 113 large and small tombs were constructed in a short period, of which 13 tombs were decorated with *haniwa*. The countrywide distribution of this type of clustered tombs indicates that the adverse effect of making *haniwa* on the environment was not restricted to the Kinai region.

The trend became more pronounced when the keyhole tomb system reached its ceiling (i.e., maturity). According to Nishida Masanori, broadleaf trees (70%) and evergreen trees (26%) were utilised as fuels to operate kilns in the 5th century. However, these trees had to be substituted by Japanese red pines: one quarter in the 6th century, two thirds in the 7th century, and 95% in the 8th century (see Figure 2-5). Nishida argues that the destruction of broad-leaved forestlands in Osaka region became so extensive during the 5th century that Japanese red pines had to be substituted as an alternative fuel

from the 6th.¹²⁸ The analysis of the sedimentary soil at Osaka Bay also reveals environmentally irresponsible deforestation along the Yodo River. Extensive amounts of earth and sand flowed into the bay from the mudslides of bare mountains and filled up the port of Naniwa in Osaka. Subsequently, the function of the port was suspended¹²⁹.



Reckless deforestation must have induced an imbalance of the ecosystem that was accompanied by soil erosion, the deterioration of soil, and drought, as well as occasional severe floods before the end of the Kofun period. Archaeological evidence suggests that many ancient civilisations were ruined by deforestation. For example, a long period of forest destruction, excessive farming, and excessive grazing deteriorated the milieu of the Mediterranean area¹³⁰. Some environmental archaeologists attribute the fall of the ancient civilisations (e.g., Mesopotamia, ancient Egypt, Indus Valley, prehistoric Greek cities of Minoa and Mycenae, Khmer, and Classic Maya) to

¹²⁸ Nishida 1976:178-187; Idem 1978:132-136.

¹²⁹ Hirakawa 1996:7-19.

¹³⁰ Hughes 1975; and Van Andel & Runnels 1987.

imbalances in the ecosystem caused by forest clearing for agriculture¹³¹. In Japan, the autocatalytic reactions of human activity and the environment must have generated the collapse of the keyhole tomb system.

The keyhole tomb system was further afflicted by a series of misfortunes: the early 6th century coldest peak of the Kofun cold stage, the Rebellions of Iwai and Musashi, and the epidemic outbreaks¹³². As a result, Japan entered another turning point, as people searched for a new system to replace the 'dying' keyhole tomb system. Systems such as *kuni-no-miyatsuko-sei* ('royal vassals') and *miyake-sei* ('royal estate'), introduced after the Rebellions, can thus be understood as first-aid treatments for the 'dying' keyhole tomb system. In other words, the rebuilding of some portions of the society necessitated changes in neighbouring regions. And these changes, in turn, required still further change elsewhere and triggered an avalanche of coevolution that affected an entire society.

In 646, Emperor Kōtoku proclaimed:

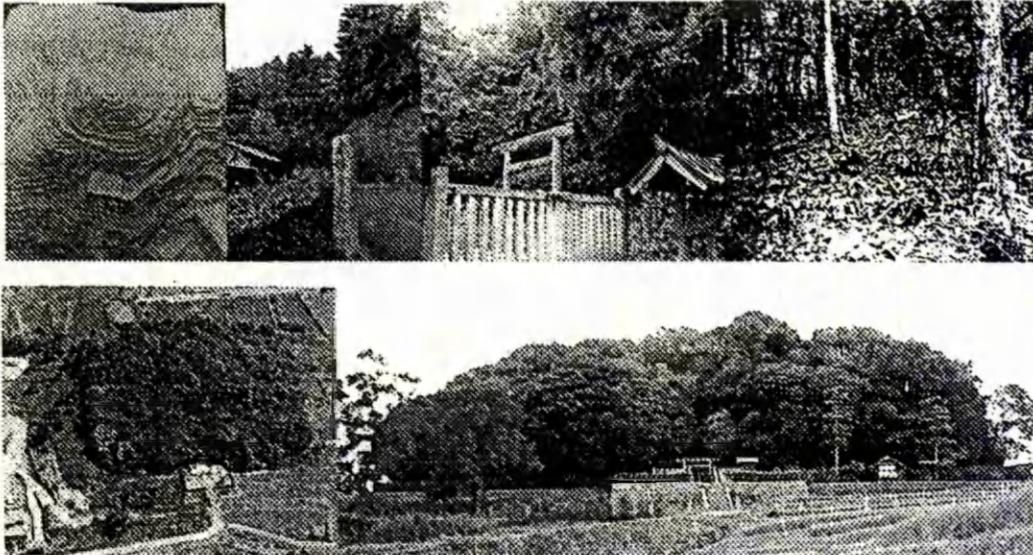
The inner and outer coffin were merely enough to last till the bones decayed, the burial garment was merely sufficient to last till the flesh decayed. Construct my tomb on unproductive pieces of land, to the end that my tomb may be forgotten after generations. Do not deposit gold, silver copper, or iron in the tomb, and let earthenware objects alone represent the clay chariots and straw figures of antiquity. ...Of late, the poverty of our people is absolutely owing to the construction of tombs.¹³³

¹³¹ Sabloff 1971:16-27; Culbert 1973; Deevey et al.1979:298-306; Dorst 1981; Yasuda 1996a.

¹³² Between the reigns of the Sovereigns Kinmei and Yōmei, records of epidemics suddenly began to appear in the *Nihon Shoki* in 552 and 587. The significance of these epidemics will be discussed in the next chapter.

¹³³ Aston 1972: 217-218.

By the time he made this decree, the actual construction of large mounded tombs had already ceased. This was effectively a declaration of the end of the keyhole tomb system and the beginning of a new politico-religious system.



Up: Kōtoku's round-mound tomb; Down: Suiko's square-mounded tomb (both at the present town of Taishi in Osaka) In accordance with his proclamation, Kōtoku's tomb was constructed on the hill site of unproductive land. In contrast, Suiko's tomb - constructed a quarter of a century earlier - is located on the productive flatland.

The transformation of the keyhole tomb system demanded an alternative religious system such as Buddhism and Confucianism for the politico-religious control of Japan from the 6th century onward: Buddhism for the funeral rites as well as for the guardian of the country and Chinese-style bureaucratic system for the centralisation of the country. The adoption of the new systems made the archaic religion of Japan undergo dynamic change during the religious and ideological re-authorisation of the Great King. The dissolution of the keyhole tomb system gave rise not only to the flourishing of Buddhism and the *ritsuryō* system, but also to the transformation of the archaic religion into Bureaucratic archaic religion, as we shall see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

THE AGE OF MONASTICISM

Many previous studies have ignored the continuity and discontinuity of early Japanese religion as it developed from the archaic religion of the Kofun period. They have tended to lack a holistic understanding of religious development after the official introduction of Buddhism. The danger is that without taking into account the reciprocal interaction between archaic religion and its context, we fail to grasp an overall picture of the religion that developed after the Kofun period.

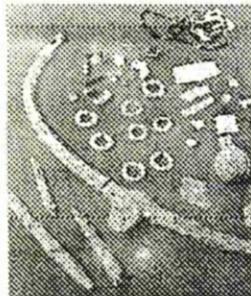
For example, as I have already proposed the adoption of Buddhism and the Chinese bureaucratic system (*lü-ling*) in itself was not a fundamental cause for the dissolution of the keyhole tomb system. Rather, the dissolution of the keyhole tomb system led to the adoption of Buddhism and the Chinese bureaucratic system, along with many other features of Chinese civilisation, such as Chinese medicine, the Way of Yin-Yang (*Onmyōdo*), and Taoist cults. In other words, Japan urgently needed to reform its outdated politico-religious system and to gain the advanced technology from the continent in order to compete on the same footing with other countries in the rapidly changing social situations of East Asia.

Soon after the adoption of Buddhism, the Imperial family and the powerful clans so devoted their energy to the erection of temples and shrines that their number increased at an exponential rate, and the building of keyhole tombs concomitantly decreased and

then ceased. The styles of roof tiles excavated from the ruins of old temples in the Tohoku region indicate that Buddhist monasteries extended to a great extent by the latter half of the Asuka period (c.587-644)¹. During the Nara period (710-784), shrine architecture - formerly of simple appearance resembling storehouses – adopted many elements from the colourful and elaborate Buddhist architectural style². Moreover, the system of archaic religion now evolved into a more complex one under the dominant influence of Buddhism and the Chinese-style bureaucratic system. This influence was not one-sided but reciprocal. Archaic religion was not simply overwhelmed by Buddhism and the Chinese-style government system, for it exerted a strong influence on the formation of Japanised Buddhism and politics. Without taking into account the reciprocal interaction between archaic religion and the newly imported foreign ideas such as Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism, we fail to do justice to the complexity of the situation.



Up: *haniwa* having a *byakugō* (a white hair on the Buddha's brow) on its forehead, imitating a Buddha image (Ozakata Kofun in Ibaraki)



Down: archaic religious objects buried with the relics of the Buddha at the foundation stone for the central pillar of a pagoda (Asuka Temple in Nara)

The adoption of Buddhism did not wipe out indigenous archaic religion, but rather merged to form an enriched worldview that helped to establish a new and unique religious system. From an evolutionary perspective, we could say that varieties of new variants or mutants emerge in transition or at nonequilibrium. However, as a new religious system grow further or takes root in the society, the variants of a higher fitness will eventually wipe out the mutants of a low fitness.

¹ Okamoto 2002:54.

² Matsumae 1993:357.

The major aim of this chapter is to explore this co-evolution of Buddhism and archaic religion during the Asuka and Nara periods in relation to social crisis and the even more centralised form of government, structured as it was by Confucian rationalism. In the first section, a new religious system evolved from the Asuka period will be explored. In the second section, I investigate how factors such as the medical functions of Buddhism and the belief systems of the archaic religion contributed to the rise of monastic Buddhism. In the final section, the causes for the fully-fledged monastic Buddhism during the Nara period will be examined in the context of the social crises of the 8th century.

3.1 The Nature of Monastic Religion

Ever since the formation of Chinese-style centralisation of political power in the late 6th century, governments of Japan had attempted to take the initiative not only in the practise of religious service but also in the development of religious organisations within the precincts of temples and shrines. I call this kind of religious system the monastic or bureaucratic religious system, and the period dominated by the monastic system may be called the *monastic age*. During the age of monasticism, the construction of keyhole tombs was completely superseded by the erection of temples and shrines. In its most prosperous years, monastic religion became an immensely powerful economic and cultural force.

Monastic religion can be divided into two different types of religious organisation: 'monastic Buddhism', which involved state worship of the deities of Buddhism; and 'Shinto' which involved state worship of the deities of Heaven and Earth. Despite these

differences, they shared common characteristics. Together, they may be defined as a new politico-religious system whose major function was to contribute to the protection and prosperity of the emperor-centred *ritsuryō* state (*ritsuryō tennō-sei kokka*). Official priests, namely *kansō* and *shinkan*, performed ritual and liturgical practices within the precincts of imperially sanctioned temples and shrines. During the age of monasticism, these official priests were sponsored by the government or powerful clans and were usually isolated from non-clergy and non-aristocrats, by living in temples or shrines, and institutionalised to serve their patrons.

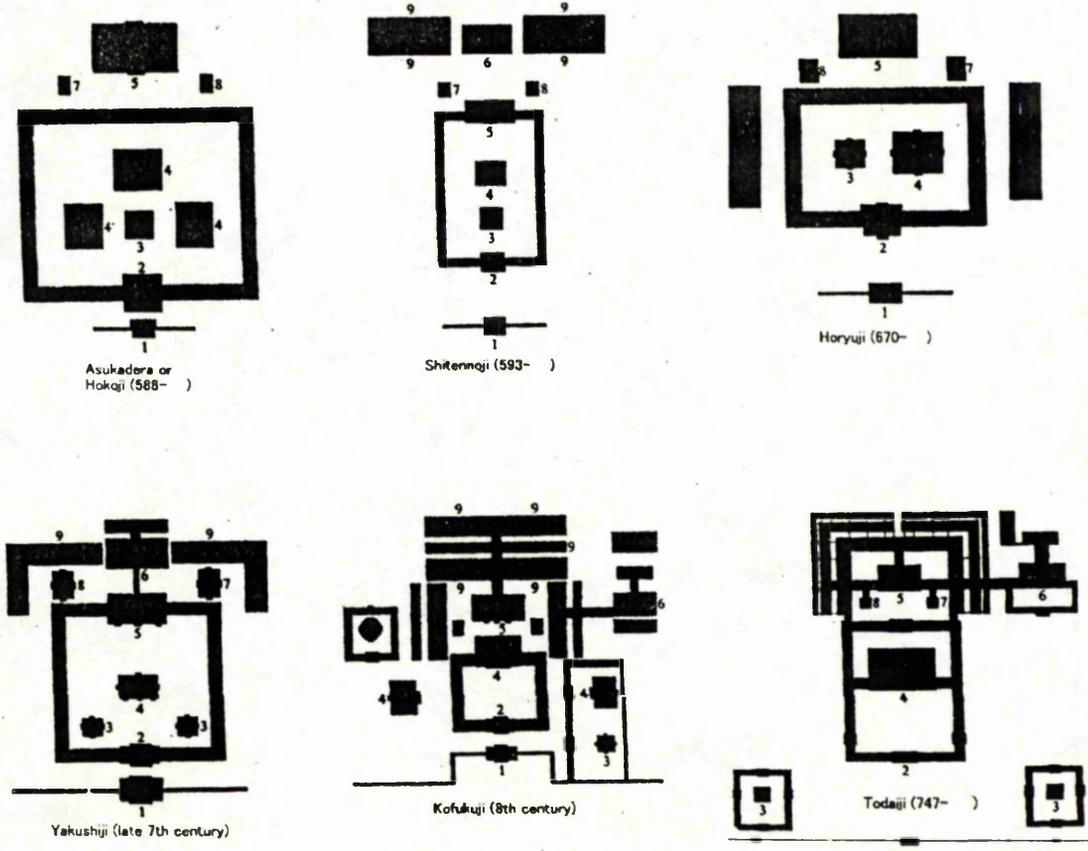
The foremost-distinguished characteristic of monastic religious system is a shift in religious monuments from keyhole tombs to temples and shrines. When Buddhism gained ground during the Asuka and Hakuho periods (c.587-710), for instance, magnificent Buddhist monasteries made of wood with massive tiled were erected. Examples include Asuka Monastery in 588 and Shitennō Monastery in 593. These monasteries were consisted of a pagoda, main halls, gates, and surrounding roofed corridors. According to the *Nihon Shoki*, there were 46 of these monasteries in 624³, but the *Fusō Ryakki* records that the number increased to 545 by 692⁴. It is estimated that more than 680 temples were erected in total during the Hakuho period (645-710)⁵. In the subsequent Nara period (710-794), more than 1000 temples were erected throughout

³ *Nihon Shoki*, Suiko 32/9/3. The numbers of clergies also grew with the increase of temples; 816 monks and 569 nuns. According to the *Nihon Ryōiki*, the numbers of clergies were 837 monks and 579 nuns (1-5).

⁴ *Fusō Ryakki*, Jitō 6/9th month.

⁵ Kitō 1999:23.

Japan⁶. Thus, increased numbers of temples marked the development of Buddhism in Japan, just as increased numbers of the keyhole tombs marked the development of archaic religion during the Kofun Age.



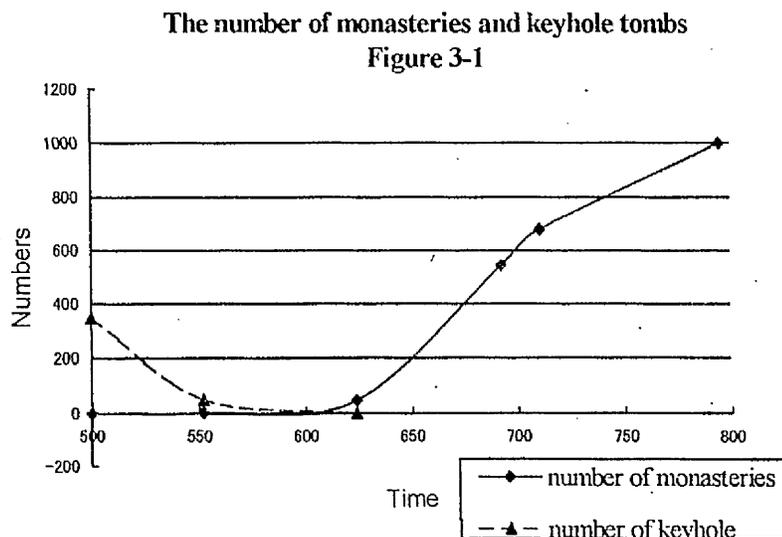
Reconstruction of ground plans of Buddhist monasteries, late 6th – mid 8th centuries

1 great south gate (*nandaimon*); 2 middle gate (*chūmon*); 3 pagoda; 4 main sacred hall (*kondō*); 5 assembly hall (*kōdō*); 6 refectory (*jikidō*); 7 bell tower (*shōrō*); 8 library (*kyōzō*); 9 monk's quarters (*sōbō*).

At the incipient stage, the pagoda that stored the sacred relics was considered as most important; consequently it was built either immediately behind the middle gate, hiding the main hall, or in the center of the square, as the commanding pivot for the other buildings. But the main hall increasingly gained in sacred value and acquired a status equal to that of the pagoda, before superseding it altogether. Indeed, during the next stage, the duplication of pagodas simply indicated a concern for symmetry; and their withdrawal towards the corners showed subordination to the main hall. In the end, their removal from the sacred area brought the process to its final conclusion. Thus, the development of the monastery had itself gone through a natural-growth process.

⁶ Mori 1998, cited by Kaneko 1999:171.

In the Kansai region, the construction of a keyhole tomb ceased by Misemaruyama Kofun (310m long) that is thought to be the mausoleum of Kinmei (r. 531/39-571) who officially adopted Buddhism and a Chinese-style legal system. In the case of the Kanto region, no keyhole tombs were constructed after the construction of Sengenyama Kofun (78m long) in Shimōsa at the beginning of the 7th century, and the demise of the keyhole tomb system was marked by Ryūkakuji Temple erected at around the time of the Taika Reform. In functional terms, then, it is clear that the Buddhist monasteries were built on the precedent of tumuli (See Figure 3.1).



The merging of the lifecycles of the two religious systems signifies that they are mutually exclusive to each other. The lifecycles of the two religious systems signifies that a higher fitness eventually takes over the niche of a lower fitness in the changing socio-cultural environment. Moreover, as a higher fitness facilitates the emergence of configurations similar to itself by autocatalytic growth, the new system grows at an exponential rate.

The exponential growth in the number of monasteries can be explained by the absence of competitors and autocatalytic growth. As the dissolution of the keyhole tomb system created a niche available for other religions, monastic religion started to occupy the niche as a high fitness. This behaviour is similar to the absorption of air into the vacuum. If the vacuum is created somewhere in the atmosphere, the air will immediately surge

into the vacuum since such state is highly unstable. Likewise, if the situation of no religious system is created, some new variants start to occupy the niche. The speed of this occupation depends on the capacity of the niche; the less the niche is occupied by any religious system, the faster it is occupied by a higher fitness. Moreover, when the new variant is occupying the niche, it also transforms the social environment to be more fitting for its own growth. In other words, the higher fitness facilitates the emergence of configurations similar to itself in this transforming environment. Then, it was a natural consequence that the number of monasteries, as the most fitted religious monument, grew at an exponential rate until it would finally fill up the maximum niche.

Monastic religious system, however, was not simply characterised by the change in a religious monument, but its real significance resides in the religious functions that were tightly linked to its religious monument. In fact, a monastery itself, rather than a specific buddha image, was the object of worship at an earliest stage of monastic religion, so that general public prayed at the monastery gate and that only the privileged classes were allowed to enter the precinct. The new religious monuments, whether they were temples or shrines, made up the core of the monastic religious system. Since this new religious system consisted of two different types of religious organisations: monastic Buddhism and 'Shinto', the nature of these religious organisations will be examined separately below.

I. Monastic Buddhism

Since monastic Buddhism evolved on the precedent of the keyhole tomb system, the central government attempted to control the religion from its beginning. In 624, for

example, Suiko set up the Prelates' Office (*sōgō*)⁷ in order to place all monasteries and clerics under government control. The superintendence was strengthened in 645 by the setup of the Ten Masters (*jūshi*), whose role was to supervise all monks and nuns. In exchange for financial support, three Chief Officials of the Buddhist Religion were also appointed to oversee various aspects of monastic property, such as sustenance of households (*fugo*)⁸, distribution of alms (*fuse*), the acreage of cultivate lands, and the number of clerics and slaves⁹. This superintendence was strengthened even further by Japan's first Emperor Tenmu (r.672-686) in 681; He imposed secular control over monastic life and strictly prohibited interchange between clerics and the laypeople¹⁰. When the Buddhist monastic establishment was put under the strict control of a Ministry of Civil Affairs (*Jibushō*) during the Nara period, people wishing to become a monk/nun had to obtain official permission, take a state-sponsored examination, and go through official ordination procedures. According to Inoue Mitsusada, this *Tokudo* system was established so as to make a clear distinction between the 'religious world' and the 'mundane world'. Moreover, the government restricted the annual number of people eligible to become an official priest.¹¹ This system, known as the *Nenbundo-sei*, goes back to the time of Jitō's reign¹². Thus, a thick barrier was placed between the sacred and secular worlds, and anybody who wish to traverse this barrier had to receive

⁷ *Nihon Shoki*, Suiko 32/4/3&17.

⁸ A form of official income allotted to monasteries, shrines, top-ranking officials, and imperial families under the *ritsuryō* system.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Kōtoku 1/8/8.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Tenmu 8/10.

¹¹ Inoue 1971:45.

¹² *Nihon Shoki* Jitō 10/12/1.

a state certificate from the highest ritual coordinator, the Emperor. And if once the people entered the priesthood, they ought to reside only in monasteries.

Of course, there were such eminent clerics as En no Ozuka, Gyōki, and Dōkyō, who were dissatisfied with the detachment and ease of life in the official monasteries. However, Ozuka was exiled to the island of Ōshima in Izu in 699¹³, and both Gyōki and Dōkyō were eventually incorporated as participants of monastic Buddhism. There were also quite a few unauthorized monks known as *shidosō* (private monks) and *kasō* ('house priests') who temporarily resided at the houses of influential families instead of at monasteries. The main intention of these 'private monks' was to avoid taxation by the *ritsuryō* government. In the case of the 'house priests', they served influential individuals such as Prince Nagaya and Fujiwara no Kamatari, whose political power was almost equivalent to that of the Imperial House. They should thus be regarded as exceptional cases. Yoshida Kazuhiko maintains that the number of private monks was not small throughout the Nara period, quoting historical documentation from chronicles. Yet his evidence is biased, since he picked times of social turmoil when an increase of private monks was likely to occur, such as the Great Smallpox Epidemic and the hegemony of Dōkyō¹⁴. In principle, then, the practitioners of monastic Buddhism were official priests who resided in monasteries, and we can thus say that the development of monastic Buddhism was strictly confined to the precincts of monasteries. Confinement to monasteries was the first main characteristic of monastic Buddhism.

¹³ *Shoku Nihongi*, Monmu3/5/24.

¹⁴ Yoshida 1995.

A second important characteristic was its function as protector of State and Imperial House. Official priests were expected to perform various rituals, such *hōe* and *shuhō*, for the *ritsuryō* state and the Emperor in exchange for tax exemption, alms, temple land (*jiden*), and sustenance. The earliest record of recitation of State-protecting sutras (*gokoku kyōten*) such as the *Konkōmyō-kyō* and the *Ninnō-kyō* dates from 676 during the reign of Tenmu¹⁵. These sutras were highly valued by the government in the Nara and Heian periods and were often chanted in monasteries when natural calamities and social crises broke out.

Last but not least was the ideological support monastic Buddhism offered to the rulership of the Emperor. The *Konkōmyō-kyō* and the *Ninnō-kyō* not only preach that there will be no calamities if they are chanted and expounded, but also emphasise the role of the sovereign in earning salvation of the country and its people. In other words, the sutras advocate that the merit of State-protection can be attained only if the sovereign himself defends and maintains Buddhism. One of Tenmu's intentions was clearly to legitimate his existence as a sovereign and his reign by propagating this expedient Buddhist doctrine. Monastic Buddhism was expected by central government not only to protect the state but also to work as an ideological support to justify the *raison d'être* of the Emperor, who was believed to rule 'all under heaven' as a universal sovereign.

This makes the contrast between the keyhole tombs system and monastic religions. To

¹⁵ *Nihon Shoki*, Tenmu 5/11/20.

become a chief mourner of a deceased king was quite significant during the Kofun period; for it demonstrated in and around the country that the chief mourner was a proper successor to kingship. Since the deceased king was believed to preserve the livings from tragic incidents as an ancestral deity of the country, a new king attempted to govern this world by the succession of divine power of the late king. Thus, the mausoleum was an inevitable monument for the legitimacy of kingship during the Kofun period.¹⁶

During the age of monasticism, however, the succession rite was transformed into the *Daijōsai* (Grand Ritual of Thanksgiving) during the reign of Tenmu¹⁷. This change in the succession rite created the need for an alternative funeral rite of Buddhism, as it deprived of the funeral rite that had been conducted in close association with succession rite during the Kofun period, but the *Daijōsai* dissociated the funeral rite from the succession rite. Given aforementioned, it seems not coincidental that the funeral of Tenmu's consort Jitō was conducted by the Buddhist funeral rite of cremation for the first time in the imperial family¹⁸.

This Buddhist funeral rite of cremation also depreciated the value of mausolea. For, during the age of archaic religion, the corpses were intentionally preserved through the use of abundant cinnabar in the coffin, but the Buddhist funeral rite of cremation was

¹⁶ Tsude 2000:151.

¹⁷ *Nihon Shoki* Tenmu 2/12/5. It was the first Rite for Tasting New Fruits performed by a new emperor after his enthronement. For a recent discussion of the relationship between the enthronement (*senso*) and the *Daijōsai*, see Kasai 1998:149-165.

¹⁸ The first cremation was conducted for the funeral of the Buddhist monk Dōshō (329-700).

based on the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, which holds that a corpse must be disposed of quickly so that the deceased can be reborn. By the Heian period, almost all of the bodies of emperors were cremated. In some cases as Emperor Junna (786-840), his tomb was not constructed at all and his ashes were scattered in the mountain of Ōharano in Kyoto in accordance with his last words. From the cloister period, emperor's ashes were laid in a Buddhist monastery.¹⁹ Therefore, the spread of cremation based on a Buddhist funeral rite reduced the politico-religious implication for mausolea, while it added an impetus to the further growth of monastic religious system as developed later in the forms of the family temples or Shrines of deified ancestors and heroes.

II. Shinto: Bureaucratisation of Archaic Religion

Archaic religion also evolved with the formation of the Sinified bureaucratic State and monastic Buddhism. The term 'Shinto' was used for the first time in the *Nihon Shoki*²⁰ in order to distinguish the archaic religion developed the Kofun period from Buddhism. Neil McMullin rightly argues that there was no such a thing as Shinto in the sense of a structured, self-conscious tradition existing over and apart from Buddhism until the late medieval period²¹. As McMullin asserts, the definition of Shinto remained vague in doctrinal aspects until the Kamakura period. However, with the bureaucratisation of archaic religion, we can for the first time and with due caution begin to talk of Shinto.

¹⁹ Tsude 2000:162-163.

²⁰ "Sovereign Yōmei believed in the Law of Buddha (仏法) and revered the Way of the Gods (神道)" [Aston 1972:106].

²¹ McMullin 1989:4.

In other words, archaic religion of the Kofun period began to evolve into Shinto when a strong centralised and Sinified legal order was formed and Japan's emperor-centred *ritsuryō* system was developed from the late 7th century. During the reigns of Tenmu and Jitō, some of the ancient myths, rites, and customs of the archaic religion were revised or restructured after the adoption of Chinese political and cultural models. For example, the Imperial House adopted the Sun Goddess Amaterasu as its ancestral deity and elevated her to the highest standing in the *kami* pantheon. The *Saiō* system in which an unmarried Princess of the Imperial House was selected for service at the Ise Shrine at enthronement was systematised by Tenmu in 673²². Two Imperial Princesses were dispatched to Ise in 675²³, and in 692 Jitō herself went to worship there²⁴.

Tenmu also established strong links with other shrines, such as Hirose and Tatsuta and both Tenmu and Jitō dispatched offerings (*hōheilmitegura*) to various shrines

²² *Nihon Shoki*, Tenmu 2/4/14.

²³ *Ibid.*, Tenmu 4/2/13.

²⁴ In 692's visit, Chūnagon, Takechi Maro of Ōmiwa no Ason (a descendant of Ōta-ta-neko at Mt. Miwa) tried to stop her going to Ise, saying: "During the season of agricultural operations the (Imperial) chariot should not be moved." (Jitō 6/3/3). This incident suggests that he was discontented with the shift in the imperial cult from Mt. Miwa to Ise. According to Matsunae Takeshi (1976), Amaterasu was only a local deity of fishermen at Ise, whereas Takamimusubi no Kami was the original ancestral deity of the Imperial House. However, as I have already described in Chapter 2, quite a few archaeological sites and the location of *yashiro* indicate that the sun had already been widely worshiped by many local clans since time immemorial (For archaeological evidence of sun worship, see Ogawa 1973; Tanigawa 1983:5-50; Yamada 1986). It would thus be more appropriate to say that Emperor Tenmu attempted to monopolise on the Sun Goddess as a universal symbol of the monarch for the legitimacy of the Imperial House after the Jinshin Disturbance.

elsewhere²⁵. Moreover, new courtly rituals, such as the *Daijōsai*²⁶, the *Niinamesai* (Annual Rite of Thanksgiving)²⁷, and the *Ōharae* (Exorcism and Purification Ritual)²⁸, were initiated by Tenmu and systematised by his consort, Jitō. The prototype of the *Jingikan* (Bureau of Worship) emerged during the reigns of Tenmu and Jitō, and the system of central government headed by the twin bureaux, *Dajōkan* (Bureau of State Affairs) and *Jingikan*, was firmly established by the Taihō Code. While the former discharged policy-making functions, the latter superintended numerous official rituals of Shinto, such as the *Daijōsai* and the *Ōharae*.

Because of these radical innovations, the archaic religion was bureaucratised and in the process became what we might call, for convenience, Shinto. By 'Shinto', I mean an organised and systematised form of the archaic religion on a 'nationwide' scale, in which the ancestral deity of the Imperial House, the Sun Goddess, was ranked as the highest deity dominating those of local clans, and the Emperor supported Shinto as the highest ritual celebrant of *kami* worship. For the unification and prosperity of the Emperor-centred *ritsuryō* state, then, both local deities and clans were obliged to acknowledge the Sun Goddess²⁹.

²⁵ The earliest recorded dispatch of offerings by Tenmu to shrines dates from 675 [*Nihon Shoki*, Tenmu 4/1/23].

²⁶ *Nihon Shoki*, Tenmu 2/12/5.

²⁷ *Nihon Shoki*, Tenmu 2/12/5.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Tenmu 5/8/16.

²⁹ For detail about the bureaucratisation of Shinto shrines under the Chinese-style centralised government, see Ōzeki 1996:409-433.

This bureaucratisation of Shinto was made possible by the dynamic system known as *mitegara* or *heihaku*, which involved imperial emissaries being dispatched to present offerings to the deities of strategically important shrines³⁰. In return, *kansha*, or shrines in receipt of Imperial offerings, were called upon to provide divine protection to the Imperial State³¹. The deity of a shrine was also assigned a rank (*shinkai*) by the Imperial court, based on factors such as the circumstances of its foundation, the strategic importance of the shrine's location, and the degree of reverence with which it was worshiped. According to the *Tōdaiji Yōroku (Records of Tōdaiji Monastery)*, for example, Hachiman Taisha was given the third rank for its contribution to the cure of Emperor Shōmu's illness in 746. This system of assignment became customary from the late Nara period. Shrine priests were also institutionalised at some large shrines, such as Iwashimizu, Kamo, Kasuga, and Matsuno'o during the Heian period, where *kamushi* or *shinkan* were appointed head priests.

It should be noted, however, that despite the efforts of the central government progress in the bureaucratisation of Shinto was much slower than that of Buddhism. This was partly because the deities of archaic religion had been organised by the local clans since the Kofun period, so the heads of local powerful families claimed a closer association with their local shrines and presided over communal religious services. This was also partly because the deities and shrines were so numerous, and people's adherence to their local deities and shrines was stronger than to Buddhist deities during the incipient period of monastic religion.

³⁰ Kato 1978; Inoue 1984.

³¹ Okada 1992a.

Consequently, the fully-fledged institutionalisation of Shinto was not established until the compilation (AD927) of the *Jinmyōchō* of the *Engi Shiki* that registered 2,861 *Shikinaisha* (official shrines) and 3,132 enshrined deities (*za*), of which 306 were designated as *Myōjin* ('Great deities')³². These shrines were entitled to Imperial offerings at an annual festival for good crops known as *Toshigoi no matsuri* (observed in the 2nd month), and extra presentations of offerings were also made to the *Myōjin-sha* ('Great-Deity shrines') at *rinji-sai* (special festivals).

In the mid-10th century, the *Jinmyōchō* also distinguished between *Kanpeisha* (Imperial shrines that received offerings from the *Jingi-kan*) and *Kokuheisha* (provincial shrines that received offerings from provincial governors). Shrines were further divided into *Taisha* (major shrine) and *Shōsha* (minor shrine), and the central government accorded different treatments to these four types of shrines (*Kanpei-taisha*, *Kanpei-shōsha*, *Kokuhei-taisha*, and *Kokuhei-shōsha*) at their festivals. Thus, the deities and shrines of the archaic religion were finally consolidated into the pyramid structure typical of Shinto by the codification of the system of Imperial offerings. A network of shrines with a shared symbolism linked to the political centre by the exchange of offerings.

To sum up, then, the principal characteristics of Shinto religion were akin to those of monastic Buddhism. They shared common factors such as financial support from the government, strict control by the government, religious support for the State, religious observances conducted within the precincts of imperially sanctioned places, and

³² *Engishiki*, vols. 9 & 10.

ideological support for the Emperor as the High Priest of Japanese religion and the ruler of the country. The new politico-religious systems of monastic Buddhism and bureaucratic archaic religion (i.e., Shinto) can thus be defined collectively as constituting a monastic religious system. To help us understand this system better, we shall now turn to look at some of the important factors that contributed to the growing popularity of monastic Buddhism.

3.2 The Birth of Monastic Buddhism

The dissolution of the keyhole tomb system was a crucial factor for the adoption of Buddhism and the Chinese bureaucratic system from the Late Kofun Period which, in turn, accelerated the dissolution of the keyhole tomb system. Nonetheless, other important factors also contributed to the dissolution of the Keyhole Tomb System and the development of monastic Buddhism during its nascent period. In this section, these factors will be considered from three different perspectives: firstly, the medical functions of Buddhism; secondly, the concept of *kami*; and finally, changes in funeral rites.

3.2.1 *The Medical Functions of Buddhism*

The assimilation of Buddhism into Japanese society has been mostly investigated from its philosophical and political perspectives, but the practical dimension of medical lore was of the utmost importance and should not be neglected. In his *Asceticism and Healing in Ancient India*, Kenneth Zysk suggested that the Buddha's main teaching of the Four Noble Truths (*shi-shōken*) derived from a medical model, wherein suffering, its cause, its suppression, and the way for its eradication correspond in medicine to disease,

its cause, health, and remedy³³. He also emphasised that Buddhist monasteries performed an important function in the institutionalisation of medicine, and that the social history of Buddhism cannot be fully understood without a full explication of Buddhism's involvement in the healing arts³⁴. Indeed, medicine was always an essential part of Buddhist rites³⁵, and it was through its medicinal cures that Buddhism was successfully imported to Japan during the social crisis of the 6th century.

An opportunity for the expansion of religious influence does not only derive from a religion's doctrine, but can also stem from its miraculous power and a sense of gratitude for its healing. In China, for example, it is evident from early monks' legends and from various canons that no Buddhist monks ever existed in China without an association with faith healing. This applies to the nascent period of Chinese Buddhism through the stage of its establishment and development during the times of Fo-t'u-teng, Kumārajīva (Chiu-mo-lo-shên, 344-413) and T'an-lua (476-542)³⁶. We have seen that the Kofun people were enthusiasts for immortality. The keyhole tombs were built for the 'eternal life' of the people buried in them. Moreover, the advanced medicinal lore of Izumo and Yamato contributed to the establishment of the Yamato Kingship during the reign of Sujin. So even before Buddhism emerged in Japan, a link existed between religion and healing.

³³ Zysk 1991:38.

³⁴ Ibid:44-48.

³⁵ Ibid:68-70.

³⁶ Ishida 1992:188.

Many of the earliest Buddhist temples in Japan were built by the Imperial House to pray for recovery from illness. For instance, according to the inscription on the mandorla of the *Yakushi Nyorai-zō* (Medicine-Master Buddha) enshrined in the Golden Hall of Hōryū Monastery (Hōryūji Kondō), the Monastery was built by the empress Suiko and Prince Shōtoku at the request of the ex-sovereign Yōmei to pray for his recovery from illness. Both Kawara Monastery in Asuka and Kanzeon Monastery in Dazaifu were built by Tenji to pray for the recovery from illness of his mother, Saimei (r.655-661). The origin of the Yakushi Monastery, meanwhile, also known as Moto-Yakushiji, dates back to 680 when Tenmu had a grand service performed to pray for the recovery of his wife from illness³⁷. Thus, a primary motive for the erection of monasteries was for the purpose of healing rather than the protection of the State and the worship of their ancestors. This was certainly so at the incipient period of monastic Buddhism.

It was in order to obtain the miraculous healing and supernatural powers of the Buddha that people revered Buddhism. For example, Soga no Umako asked Bidatsu permission to worship Buddhism so that his disease would be healed and his life prolonged³⁸. Likewise, when Yōmei was infected with smallpox, he expressed his desire to devote himself to the Three Treasures (*sambō*)³⁹. When his disease worsened, Tasuna of the Kuratsukuri-be informed Yōmei that Tasuna would be a Buddhist monk and make an image of Buddha and a temple for Yōmei's recovery⁴⁰. All these records suggest that the

³⁷ Inoue 1971:52.

³⁸ *Nihon Shoki*, Bidatsu 14/6th month.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, Yōmei 2/4/2.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

medical merits of Buddhism attracted many people. Although the 'conversion' of Yōmei and Tasuna did not save Yōmei's life, Buddhism must have offered comfort to him and the bereaved. Buddhism viewed sudden death by disease as one of the obvious facts of human life from its inception, as it was founded in a milieu where the incidence of infectious disease was high. Consequently, Buddhism preached that "death was a release from pain, and a blessed avenue of entry upon a delightful afterlife where loved ones would be reunited, and earthly injustices and pains amply compensated for"⁴¹. Buddhism thus had an advantage over archaic religion in terms of explaining death and offering comfort for the dying and the bereaved.

Among diseases, smallpox especially appears to have contributed to the rise of Buddhism in East Asian countries. Smallpox was still a new disease when Buddhism was officially adopted in East Asia. The first documented smallpox epidemic in China was in around 495, where it was called *hu-dou* (barbarian pox)⁴². Smallpox, supposed to have originated in India, found its way to Japan along the same route - the Silk Road - that Buddhism did. Epidemics spread from the north of China to the Korean Peninsula around 528, at the time when Buddhism was officially adopted as the State religion in Silla and Paekche⁴³. Smallpox was then transmitted into the west of Japan with the first Buddhist missionaries of Paekche around 552⁴⁴. As for India, smallpox had already

⁴¹ McNeil 1976:150.

⁴² Leung 1993:355.

⁴³ Lee 1984:43-44, 59.

⁴⁴ *Nihon Shoki*, Kinmei 13/winter 10th month. Around this time, King Song (r.523-554) encouraged overseas trade and sent the monk Kyomik to India to bring back the Sanskrit texts [Lee et al.1997:38].

been endemic in India when Shakyamuni founded Buddhism. The ancient Hindus regarded smallpox as a manifestation of a Hindu goddess, and they built temples for worship of the goddess as early as 1160 BC, so that she would not spread the disease to the people. More importantly, they knew for thousands of years of a technique for the prevention of smallpox, namely inoculation. Certain classes such as cow-raising people collected the dry scabs of pustules to acquire immunity from the disease. A small portion of the scab was placed on the forearm of a healthy individual, and the skin was punctured with a needle.⁴⁵ So Indian Buddhists appear to have had knowledge about both the prevention and the treatment of smallpox. The *Sutra on the Great Extinction*, for example, depicts a story in which King Ajātaśatru became infected with a disease that had symptoms similar to smallpox (high fever, toxic rashes, and pustules), but his disease was treated by the healing power of the Buddha, and he thereafter became a patron of Buddhism.

The *Nihon Shoki* does not reveal the sort of disease with which Umako became infected, but since a smallpox epidemic was rampant when he became sick, it is likely that he was infected with smallpox like his contemporaries Bidatsu (d.585), Yōmei (d. 587), and Mononobe no Moriya (d.587). Umako lived another 41 years after being healed and converting to Buddhism and during his lifetime established his dominance over other powerful clans, including the Imperial House. Smallpox had no complete cure and only suppressive treatments that removed the outward signs of the disease were available.

The king also entrusted Kyomik and other monks with the task of fostering the spread of Buddhism [Lee 1984:44]. Thus, it seems that the Paekche monks and/or traders transmitted the disease to Japan.

⁴⁵ Chakravorty 1993:408-413; Said 1993:413-417.

This meant that the only effective remedy for smallpox was to increase one's immune response to the disease, the so-called self-healing power of a patient. Since faith healing (*shinkō ryōhō*) can enhance self-healing power we may conjecture that the life of Soga no Umako was saved, like King Ajātaśatru, by his devotion to Buddhism, while his symptoms were alleviated by therapies probably dating to the time of Shakyamuni's physician, Jivaka. Umako's recovery appears to have enhanced his belief in Buddhism and promoted the expansion of Buddhism during the reign of Suiko in 594. In fact, it emerges that the healing methods, both magical and practical, that were adopted by Japanese monks were a vital influence on the rise and fall of various Buddhist doctrines/sects in later centuries.

3.2.2 *The Concept of Kami*

Nevertheless, the official promotion of Buddhism did not mean that Buddhist converts disregarded their national deities. For example, one of the strongest advocates of Buddhism, Umako, kept close associations with shamans and shamanesses and belonged to the *chōrei* cult. This had origins stretching back to Shamanism in the Yayoi period. Although the details are unknown, some scholars conjecture that it involved the worship of birds, which were believed to be the holy spirit of rice and a medium of communication between deities and people. The spirits or souls of the dead were believed to travel freely to the other world by riding these birds. Umako attempted to reconcile these *kami* of Heaven and Earth with the deities of Buddhism⁴⁶.

⁴⁶ Hirabayashi 1996:91-120. For the details about the *chōrei cult*, see Kanaseki 1982; Harunaru 1987; Nakamura 1997:85-110; and Nakano 1997:61-76.

In order to understand the attitudes taken by the Japanese at the time of the official transmission of Buddhism, we need to consider the concept of *kami* and the religious outlook held by the contemporary Japanese. One contemporary anecdote depicted in the *Nihon Shoki* reveals how Buddhism was perceived in East Asia. When an image of the Buddha and Buddhist sutras were presented to Sovereign Kinmei by King Song of Paekche, the envoys informed Kinmei that the deities of Buddhism could create immeasurable and boundless merits and bring about a full appreciation of unequalled wisdom. The envoy told Kinmei that Buddhism was just like a treasure-gem (*hōshu*) that would satisfy all his wishes⁴⁷. In short, Buddhism was believed to bring about good fortune. This sort of understanding was not limited to Korea, but was prevalent throughout East Asia. In China, the superhuman nature of the Buddha was one of the major causes for the spread of Buddhism between the end of the Later Han Dynasty and the Northern and Southern Dynasties (4 to 6th centuries). It was the age of 'supernatural power and evil spirits' (*kuai-li luan-shen*)⁴⁸, and Buddhist monks intentionally induced an altered state of consciousness during meditation in order to gain supernatural power. The first translations of Buddhist canons in China were those dealing with such topics as meditation and mystical concentration by means of breath control, so that a monk practising asceticism could attain the six transcendental powers known as *rokujintsū*. K'ang Sêng-hui (d.280), who founded the monastery Chien-ch'u-ssu in Chien-K'ang (the capital of Wu) and devoted his energies to expounding the Buddhist scriptures, wrote a preface to the sutra of *An-pan shou-I ching* ('Sutra of Ānāpāna Meditation') translated by the Parthian (An-hsi) monk An Shih-kao (d.170), which depicts the way to

⁴⁷ *Nihon Shoki*, Kinmei 13/10th month.

⁴⁸ Yanagida 1976:50.

control breath for mystical concentration. He explained that harmonious breathing could attain the six transcendental powers of a buddha, bodhisattva, or *arhat* (*Arakan*)⁴⁹.

When Buddhism was introduced to Japan, the Buddha was called the *atashikuni no kami* ('deity worshiped by foreigners') in the *Nihon Shoki*, the *takoku no kami* ('foreign deity') in the *Gangōji Engi*, or the *marahito-gami* ('guest deity') in the *Nihon Ryōiki*⁵⁰. None of these indicate that the Japanese of that time considered the Buddha antagonistic to the *kunitsu-kami* ('national deities'); rather, the ancient Japanese regarded the Buddha as *kenzoku-shin* ('demi-god') to their own national deities⁵¹. Dispute over the adoption of Buddhism was not concerned with ideological issues, but with whether Buddhism would bring good fortune or misfortune.

The Japanese believed that the *kami* were very numerous. They also believed that any entities that were able to exert great influence (either benevolent or malevolent) on human life, a community, or the State, were *kami*. In this polytheistic worldview, disputes were not judged with an absolute value system, as in monotheism. If a dispute over two contradictions arose, the Japanese regarded each as accommodating both wrong and right at the same time and so judgement was based on relativism. They thus thought that even deities made mistakes and had defects. The supreme deity Amaterasu,

⁴⁹ Yuasa 1994:109.

⁵⁰ *Nihon Ryōiki*, 1-5.

⁵¹ Hayami 1986:28-37; Wada 1987: 9-50.

for example, could not read the inner mind of her brother, Susanō⁵². The deity named Kuebiko was believed to be omniscient, but had no legs and could thus not move even a step⁵³. Thus, neither absolute truth nor omnipotent deities existed in Shinto, and the worldview that these beliefs engendered enabled coexistence with foreign deities such as the Buddha. The plural-value orientation of the archaic religion inherited from prototypical religion thus played an important role in the development of monastic Buddhism, ensuring that it developed without major conflicts⁵⁴. Consequently, Buddhist deities were enshrined as '*kami*' in the indigenous pantheon from the incipient period of Buddhism in Japan.

3.2.3 *The Ban on the Rites of Mogari*

A third favourable wind assisting the rise of monastic Buddhism was the *hakusōrei* of 646. The edict did not only seek to regulate the construction of extravagant tumuli, but also the detail prescriptions of funeral practices for persons of different ranks. As noted in the previous chapter, the construction of large mounded tombs had already ceased by that time. Thus, the real intention of this edict, as Ebersole has rightly argued, is to consolidate the supremacy of the Imperial House through the regulation of funeral

⁵² When Susanō ascended to the heavens to take his leave of Amaterasu after his expulsion, Amaterasu misunderstood his motives and assured that he was coming up to usurp her land. For detail, see Philippi 1969:74.

⁵³ Ibid:116-117. Kuebiko was another manifestation of the deity, Sukuna Bikona no Kami. He was a dwelling place of the rice-paddy deity or a wisdom deity, who later became confused with a scarecrow (*kagashi*).

⁵⁴ It also promoted the adoption of other foreign religions, such as Confucianism and the Chinese Yin-Yang thought that would be established as *onmyōdō* during the Nara and Heian periods. These ideas also played vital roles for the later development of Japanese religion, but are beyond the scope this thesis.

practices for different ranks.⁵⁵ It should also be reminded, however, that a year before this edict, Kōtoku had already set forth another edict promoting the greater prosperity of Buddhism. In this edict, he proclaimed, “If there is a difficulty about repairing Temples built by any from the Emperor down to the Tomo no Miyakko, We will in all cases assist it doing so”⁵⁶. With this as a turning point, Buddhism began to permeate even among the stratum of local chieftains and their construction of monasteries was intensified⁵⁷. As the edict was issued within less than two months after the assassination of Iruka, it is evident that the Imperial House intended to take over the ritual authority of Buddhism, which had been seized by the Soga clan. Then, the two edicts constituted a pair of the Imperial House’s strategic moves to establish its religious supremacy as the highest ritual coordinator for both the *kami* worship and Buddhism.

Among the prohibitions prescribed in the *hakusōrei*, we find the following:

When ordinary people die, let them be buried in the ground, and the hangings be of coarse cloth. Let the interment not be delayed for a single day.

The construction of places of temporary interment is *not allowed in any case, from Princes down to common people.*

Not only in the Home provinces, but in the provinces generally, let plots of ground be set apart for interments. It is not permitted to pollute the earth by dispersed interments in various places.⁵⁸

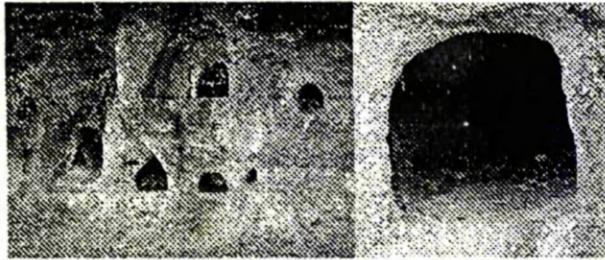
⁵⁵ Ebersole 1989:5.

⁵⁶ Aston 1972:203.

⁵⁷ Okamoto:2002:52-53.

⁵⁸ Aston 1972:219-220. Emphasis added.

The edict reveals us that the rites of *mogari*⁵⁹ (delayed interment or temporary enshrinement) were widely practiced by both the elite and commoners, as it prohibited the construction of temporary structure for the delayed interment (*mogari no miya*) by all but the Great King. The authenticity of this edict can also be confirmed by the emergence of numerous clusters of tunnel tombs (*yokoana-bo-gun*) made for commoners from the latter half of the 7th century throughout the county⁶⁰.



Jūgoro-ana Yokoana-gun located near the Torazuka Kofun at the present city of Hitachinaka in Ibaraki. This cluster consists of hundreds of rock-cut tombs. Varieties of grave goods, such as unglazed stoneware, straight edges and iron implements, were excavated from the tombs in large numbers.

The rites of *mogari* had been performed in an attempt to resuscitate the spirit of the deceased and also to appease the malevolent spirit of the dead. However, as they were reformed under the strong influence of Chinese funeral custom, the latter began to assume greater importance than the former from the early 6th century. Especially the malevolent spirits of the dead who had commanding mystical power, such as the spirits of Great Kings and powerful local chieftains, were believed to cause calamity so that the duration of *mogari* were longer than the commoners.⁶¹ The ban on the rites of

⁵⁹ The rites of *mogari* were conducted on behalf of the dead, and consisted of various procedures, such as *tamafuri*, *mine* (crying aloud), *kabu* (dancing and singing), and *shinobigoto* (condolence).

⁶⁰ In northern Kyushu the precedent goes back to the 6th century.

⁶¹ Kawamura 1989: 46.

mogari, however, deprived the Kōfun people of these important funeral rites⁶². It is easily imagined that the prohibition created an urgent need for the alternative funeral rites. When Buddhism was still new to the country, it had to adapt itself to and partook in the rites of *mogari*. For example, mourning rituals and memorial services were conducted by Buddhist monks and nuns at the temporary structure for the deceased before interment.⁶³ Then, it was a natural conclusion that the religious disarray created by a monopoly of *mogari* by the Imperial House facilitated the local chieftains' implementation of Buddhist funeral rites and the erection of temple to cope with the problems of the malevolent spirits of the deceased. Thus, there is little doubt that the *hakusōrei*, the prohibition order of *mogari* in particular, became one aspect of the momentum that gave rise to monastic Buddhism.

3.3 The Maturity of Monastic Buddhism

The construction of a provincial monastery and convent in each province was probably the most striking development of the monastic religion in Japan. The prototype of the provincial monastery system had already been laid down by Emperor Tenmu. He sent orders to all the provinces stating that, "In every house a Buddhist shrine should be provided, and an image of Buddha with Buddhist scriptures placed there. Worship was

⁶² Despite the prohibition, as recorded in the *Nihon Ryōiki*, the rites of *mogari* were performed outside the Kinai region by those who could not afford the construction of temples until the beginning of the Heian period.

⁶³ Ebersole 1989:129.

to be paid and offerings of food made at these shrines”⁶⁴. These temples were built in an attempt to protect the State from calamity and to bring prosperity to the country. Nevertheless, the advanced development of the provincial monastery system did not start until the middle of the Nara period. The reason for the fully-fledged development of this system and the strong influence of monastic Buddhism over Shinto cannot be considered in isolation from the social crises and conditions of that time. The purpose of this section is to explore the causes for the accelerated growth of monastic Buddhism during the reign of Emperor Shōmu (r.724-749) in relation to the social and natural environment, focusing on the social crises caused by the Great Small Epidemic of 735-737.

3.3.1 *The Social and Natural Environments of the Early 8th Japan*

In 701, Fujiwara no Fuhito (659-720) headed the committee that drafted the Taihō code, and he became a prominent figure at court as a new type of bureaucrat-noble. However, his government faced grave difficulties due to societal crises such as epidemics and famines. Although sporadic outbreaks of epidemics are recorded in the *Nihon Shoki*, later historical sources reveal an alarming number of epidemics and famines from the turn of the 8th century. Based on the records of the *Shoku Nihongi* and *Ruijū Kokushi*, the incidences of epidemics and famines between 697 and 715, with province and year, can be summarised as below (see Figure 3-2).

⁶⁴ Aston 1972:369. Inoue Mitsusada contends that these temples were the primitive form of provincial monasteries and convents sponsored by the government during the Nara period in imitation of a system in T'ang dynasty [Inoue 1971:51-55].

	Epidemic Outbreaks	Famines
697		Harima, Bizen, Bitchū, Suō, Awaji, Sanuki, Iyo
698	Echigo, Ōmi, Ki'i,	
699	Shinano, Kōzuke, Sagami	
700	Shinano, Yamato	
701		
702	Echigo, Kōzuke	Suruga, Izu, Shimōsa, Bitchū, Awa
703	Shinano, Kōzuke, Sagami	Many provinces
704	Shinano, Izu, Iga	Sanuki, Musashi,
705	Many provinces	Many provinces
706	Many provinces	Many provinces
707	Many provinces	Many provinces
708	Sanuki, Yamashiro, Bizen, Tanba, Hōki	
709	Shimōsa, Kazusa, Etchū, Ki'i	Oki
710	Shinano,	Mikawa, Tōtōmi, Mino
711	Owari	Yamato, Sado
712	Suruga	
713	Shima, Yamato, Ōsumi	Sanuki
714		
715		Settsu, Ki'i, Musashi, Echizen, Shima

Figure 3-2 (based on *Shoku Nihongi & Ruijū Kokushi*)

Figure 3-2 indicates that there are only a few records for famines and epidemics prior to the year 697, but that the records of famines and epidemics suddenly increase after the famine in 697 and the epidemic in 698. The number of epidemics and famines continued increasing and reached a peak during the years 705 to 707. However, the epidemics and famines thereafter gradually declined, subsiding in 714 and 716 respectively, until the outbreak of the Great Smallpox Epidemic of 735-737 with only minor incidences in 726 and 733. Wayne Farris attributes the sudden increase of data on epidemics both to the adoption of the Chinese-borne practice of reporting epidemics and to the increased transmission of the disease from China and the Korean Peninsula owing

to heavy traffic between Japan and the Asian mainland⁶⁵. In addition, we should not dismiss two other important factors for the sudden increase in the recording of epidemics and famines from the 8th century onwards. They are (1) a warming climate and (2) the exploitation of peasants by the central government. The complex interrelationships of these two factors were the major causes for the frequent outbreaks of epidemic and famines.

Based on the pollen analysis of the Oze marshes, Sakaguchi Yutaka argues that the switch from cold to warm climatic conditions took place at the beginning of the 8th century, and he calls the period between about AD 700 and 1300 the Nara-Heian-Kamakura Warm Epoch⁶⁶. An analysis of the carbon-13 isotope ratios contained in the cedars at Yakushima indicates that the average temperature was 1 to 2 degrees higher than present, probably because of fluctuations in the sunspot cycle⁶⁷. Historical evidence also confirms this switch in the climatic conditions. A study carried out by Maejima and Tagami on climatic hazard records indicates that the frequency of hot summers suddenly increased from the end of 7th century, hitting the first highest point in the early 8th century.⁶⁸ Moreover, the Nara-Heian-Kamakura Warm Epoch was often accompanied by prolonged droughts with occasional heavy rains, especially during the first two centuries⁶⁹.

⁶⁵ Farris 1985:52, 72.

⁶⁶ Sakaguchi 1984:18-36.

⁶⁷ Kitagawa 1993:42-43; Idem 1995:235-247.

⁶⁸ Maejima & Tagami 1986:157-171.

⁶⁹ Maejima & Tagami 1982:33-43.

The historical records in the *Shoku Nihongi* also confirm that the Warm Epoch was often accompanied by drastic climatic fluctuations, especially during the switch from cold to warm. For example, an Imperial edict was issued on the 3rd day of the 4th month in 705 to the effect that the harmony of *Yin* and *Yang* were out of balance, and rainfall and sunshine were inadequate for good harvests⁷⁰. On the 27th of the 6th month, the *Dajōkan* reported the drought to Emperor Monmu (r.697-707) and asked permission to let monks perform additional prayers for rain. Poor harvests were attributed to dry weather and inadequate rainfall⁷¹. In addition to this, the *Shoku Nihongi* records natural disasters that suggest rising temperatures, such as forest fires on a mountain and damage to the crops from locusts.

The sudden increase of data on epidemics had a close association with the natural and social-environmental change of the time. In a stable environment, opportunistic species that spread infectious diseases are usually kept in check by predators. But in times of accelerated change, such as drastic climatic fluctuations and natural disasters, they grow and spread much faster. For example, a flood spreads bacteria and viruses, promotes the growth of fungi, and is conducive to the breeding of insects. The populations of both insects and rodents explode after prolonged droughts with occasional heavy rains. The number of vector-borne diseases is also regulated by climate, and the timing and intensity of their outbreaks are affected by weather. Since the rate of insect biting and the maturation of microbes within them increase when the air warms, an optimum range of temperature between the limits of too hot and too cold promotes the metabolism of

⁷⁰ *Shoku Nihongi*, Keiun 2/4/3.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, Keiun2/6/27.

the parasites and the chances for disease transmission⁷². Thus, sudden increased outbreaks of epidemics from the turn of the 8th century onwards may be partly attributed to the switch from cold to warm climate.

However, it should be noted that climate warming was not solely responsible for the increase in epidemics. As shown in Figure 3-2, the number of famines also increased after the introduction of the four kinds of tax system such as *so, yō, chō,* and *zōyō*, by the successive administrations of the *Kiyomihara* and *Taihō* codes: many peasants became poverty-stricken after the introduction of the heavier taxation system. Starvation became endemic, and even a minor deterioration in the weather system could prevent access to food resources, and thus lead to outbreaks of famine and malnutrition. Studies of the relationship between infections and immunity suggest that malnutrition has two kinds of negative effects on health. First, it decreases production of immunoglobulins (IgA) in nasopharyngeal salivary secretions, which are found in the mucosa, tears, saliva, and so on. Consequently, the mucosal surface with insufficient IgA is easily colonised by microbes, and thus the incidence of infection is increased. Second, malnutrition is also predisposed to infections through the inhibition of cell-mediated responses. The capacity of the thymus glands, lymph nodes, and tonsils to produce lymphocytes influences a cell-mediated immune response. The organs of malnourished people are smaller than those of well-nourished people are, and thus the people are less resistant to infections. Once a vicious cycle of malnutrition, infections, and

⁷² Epstein 1997:1-24.

immunodeficiency is established, minor change in one parameter can cause an existing infection to become more violent.⁷³

If the epidemics shown in Figure 3-2 originated from the continent, they must have arrived first on the island of northern Kyushu or the coastal line of the Japan Sea. However, most of the epidemic outbreaks at the turn of the 8th century were distributed equally throughout the main island. Thus, the nature of these epidemics was probably endemic and famine-related, and from the distribution pattern of the epidemics, we may conjecture that malnutrition caused by consistent exploitation and famine created the milieu that was susceptible to epidemics. Although the chronicles recorded disasters as either epidemic or famine, the true nature of the disasters was probably the combined effects of infectious disease and malnutrition.

To sum up, then, analyses of social and natural environments of the early 8th century indicate that people were highly susceptible to infectious disease because of a vicious cycle of malnutrition, infections, and immunodeficiency interacting with the warming climate and the exploitative nature of the *ritsuryō* system. The sudden increase in epidemic outbreaks from the turn of the 8th century was a combined effect of the natural environment of the warming climate and the social environment of the exploitative system. In short, both the natural and social environments of early 8th century Japan were extremely unstable.

⁷³ Frisancho 1979:184.

3.3.2 *Impact of the Great Smallpox Epidemic on Japanese Religion*

The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 735-7 was one of the most violent epidemic outbreaks in Japanese history. Some records suggest that it was triggered by a single fisherman who became infected with smallpox in Silla and brought the disease back to Japan⁷⁴. The disease spread rapidly through the rest of the country and killed almost one third of the entire Japanese population⁷⁵. This is a classic case of the butterfly principle at work. The mortality rate was almost equivalent to that of the Black Death in 14th century Europe. In the case of the Black Death, however, it took 7 years to reduce the European population by one third⁷⁶. The population reduction in Japan took place in just three years, and thus the impact of the Great Smallpox Epidemic was that much more profound and drastic.

Wayne Farris points out three drastic changes caused by the Great Smallpox Epidemic. Firstly, the epidemic inhibited agriculture as the population reduction made it difficult

⁷⁴ *Zoku-Kojidan* 1915:270; *Ainōshō* 1936:107-108, cited by Fujikawa 1969:101. In addition, the *Shoku Nihongi* suggests two additional possibilities of the transmission of the disease from the mainland in the *Shoku Nihongi*. Firstly, the first ship of the 10th mission to T'ang returned to Japan, coming back to the Island of Tanegashima in the 21st day of the 11th lunar month in 734⁷⁴, and the party of the mission had an audience with the emperor Shōmu on the 25th day of the 3rd lunar month in the following year.⁷⁴ Secondly, almost at the same time, the mission from Silla arrived at Dazaifu at the end of the year 734, and the chief envoy and his party entered Nara on the 17th day of the 2nd lunar month in 735⁷⁴. As there was no epidemic outbreak in Nara this year, it is certain that the envoys that entered Nara were not infected with smallpox. However, the possibility remains that the disease had infected some members of the missions, such as sailors and merchants who remained at Dazaifu, and that they spread the disease at Dazaifu and prepared the ground for the outbreak of the Great Smallpox Epidemic.

⁷⁵ Farris 1985:65-66.

⁷⁶ Gottfried 1983:48.

to sustain the cultivation of land. The central government was thus forced to stimulate farming by enacting a new law allowing permanent private tenure of newly opened paddy fields in 743. Secondly, the epidemic provided a political opportunity to aristocrats other than the Fujiwara family since all four of the Fujiwara brothers who had seized political initiative in the central government died of smallpox. The epidemic also killed most members of the Supreme Council of State. The situation allowed Emperor Shōmu to plan a complete reform of the administration system that had been controlled by the four Fujiwara brothers. For example, in 738 Tachibana no Moroe (684-757), who had occupied the lowest rank in the Supreme Council of State, was promoted to the rank of *Udaijin* ('Minister of Right'). Finally, and for our purposes, most pertinently, the epidemic profoundly influenced Japanese religion. For Emperor Shōmu enhanced State support of Buddhism by ordering the erection of the great State Monastery Tōdaiji and branch monasteries and convents throughout the countryside.⁷⁷

In what follows I will demonstrate that the Great Smallpox Epidemic advanced the adoption of proactive measures of Buddhism against social crisis and eventually led to the development of the monastic Buddhism based on the totalistic worldview of the *Garland Sutra*.

When Emperor Shōmu was confronted with overwhelming social turmoil during the Great Smallpox Epidemic, he repeatedly offered prayers to various national deities, but all his prayers were ineffectual. He lamented that his repeated requests to the national

⁷⁷ Farris 1993:367-385.

deities were useless, and in 737 he proclaimed two edicts that implied his loss of faith in the Japanese deities. In the first he stated that:

Since the 4th lunar month, epidemic and drought broke out one after the other, and rice plants were withered. Hence, we offered a prayer to the deities of mountain and rivers, and made offerings to the deities of Heaven and Earth. *Nevertheless, the gods haven't shown us any blessing yet.*⁷⁸

In the other edict, issued two months later, he lamented again the ineffectiveness of the deities of Heaven and Earth:

Recently, miasma of epidemics occurred frequently. *Even though we made a fervent request to the deities, bad omens are still to be seen.*⁷⁹

In response to his lamentations, he increased State support for monastic Buddhism. Sutra-chanting (*dokyō*), sutra-copying (*shakyō*), and making Buddha images (*zōbutsu*) were conducted in an attempt to prevent the epidemics from spreading to the rest of the country. When the Great Smallpox Epidemic first broke out in the jurisdiction of Dazaifu in 735, Shōmu sent offerings to the deities of Heaven and Earth in Dazaifu and ordered Kanzeon Monastery at Dazaifu to chant the *Kongō Hannya-kyō*. He also ordered the governors of Nagato province and the eastern provinces along the San'indō to perform the *Michiae no Matsuri*, in order to prevent the epidemic from spreading to the rest of the country⁸⁰. And when the devastation of the Great Smallpox Epidemic

⁷⁸ *Shoku Nihongi*, Tenpyō 9/5/19, emphasis added.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, Tenpyō 9/7/23.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Tenpyō 7/8/12. The *michiae no matsuri* had been performed at the four corners of a capital by the *urabe* of the Jingi-kan twice a year on the last day of the 6th and 12th month at least since the beginning of the 8th century, as codified in the article 9 of the *Jingiryō*. The original purpose of the *Michiae no matsuri*

spread from Dazaifu to the capital in 737, the frequency of Buddhist services actually became greater than offerings made to the national deities. According to the *Shoku Nihongi*, Shōmu ordered every province to make a copy of the *Daihannya-kyō* and a set of *Shaka sanzō* (statues of a Shakyamuni Buddha flanked by two bodhisattvas) on the 3rd day of the 3rd month. Almost one month later, Dōji (d.741), who was the Master of Buddhist Law at Daian Monastery in the capital, reported to the Emperor on the matter of establishing a Buddhist service in which 150 official monks would recite 600 hundred volumes of the *Daihannya-kyō* for the peace and welfare of the State. The request was immediately granted by Shōmu. Nearly a month later, on the 1st day of the 5th month, 600 hundred monks were also invited to the Imperial Palace to recite the same sutra in an attempt to prevent the Great Smallpox Epidemic from coming into the capital.

By the time that the capital was finally whipped into a rage by the Great Smallpox Epidemic, Shōmu lamented the ineffectiveness of prayer to the deities of Heaven and Earth, and he introduced a much stronger religious influence into his government. For example, he increased the number of official priests summoned to the palace by 100 from 600 to 700 and made them recite two sutras (the *Konkōmyō-kyō* and the *Daihannya-kyō*). He also ordered the ordination of 978 official priests all at once. Shōmu probably believed that the more priests recited sutras, the more benevolent the effects of the sutras that could be expected. In 738, he ordered the *Konkōmyō-kyō* to be

was to entertain the holy spirit named Kunado who protects against *kegare* and calamity. Kunado was believed to reside at the boundary (*chimata*) between this world and the other world, such as the junctions of streets, rivers, and the boundary between the mountains and the plains, the rite.

recited for three days throughout the country for the peace and prosperity of the State. On the 19th day of the 6th month in 740, he proclaimed an edict that heralded the introduction of the provincial monastery system: Each province was to make ten copies of the *Hoke-kyō* and to build a seven-story pagoda. Within three months, another edict was issued. This time, Shōmu ordered each province to make ten copies of the *Kanzeon-kyō* and to make a seven-foot-high statue of Kanzeon bodhisattva. On the 15th day of the 1st month in 741, 3,000 'sustenance households' held by Empress Kōmyō (701-760) were subscribed to the casting of a statue of Shakyamuni Buddha in each province. This succession of projects involving sutra-chanting, sutra-copying, making Buddha images, and pagoda-construction was finally put together in the provincial monastery-founding edict of 741.

Then, on the 24th day of the 3rd month, Shōmu proclaimed an edict that effectively instituted a full-scale network of monastic Buddhism, the so-called provincial monastery system. Each province was to build a monastery and a convent, each with a seven-story pagoda and each housing a six-foot statue of Shakyamuni Buddha. In each monastery and convent, twenty monks and ten nuns were to be stationed, respectively⁸¹. As the most important religious institution within the network of provincial monastery system, an immense area extending over 170 acres or seven city blocks was allocated for Todaiji compound. Between the great south gate and the inner gate that led to the precinct of the Great Buddha Hall, a pair of seven-story pagodas rose into the sky at an elevation of 100.59 meters (330 feet)⁸².

⁸¹ Ibid., Tenpyō 13/3/24. According the *Ruiju Sandaikyaku*, this edict was issued in Tenpyō 13/2/14.

⁸² Okada 1977:146.

So what was the cause for Emperor Shōmu attaching greater importance to Buddhism than archaic religion? Why didn't Shōmu rely on the *kami* of Heaven and Earth as Sujin did when epidemics created havoc during the Kofun period? Essentially, it was because the power of *kami* was perceived to be limited. Prior to the Great Smallpox Epidemic, people believed that only the local deities of the community or the evil influences coming from the Land of Yomi could cause calamities. Thus, during the reign of Sujin, the cause of epidemics was attributed to the wrath of Ōmononushi, the local deity of Mt. Miwa in Yamato. In other words, epidemics were believed to break out only from within the community when the local deities were not appropriately enshrined or worshipped, and consequently the communal response was simply to make offerings to them. However, court aristocrats in the capital recognised that the Great Smallpox Epidemic was transmitted from Tsukushi - outside of their community⁸³. This indicates that they acknowledged a different pattern of outbreak for the Great Smallpox Epidemic. With the emergence of this new perception of the aetiology of epidemics, a new type of proactive measure against social crisis was required. Buddhism provided this new proactive measure.

One of the prominent features of Buddhism was the idea of eliminating calamity (*josai*), whereas the major function of the archaic religion was to placate the local wrath of deities enshrined within each community. In other words, the passive measures of archaic religion were insufficient to stop disasters caused by deities enshrined in a

⁸³ *Shoku Nihongi*, Tenpyō 9

different community. Buddhism, on the other hand, was able to eliminate any kind of evil influence regardless of the area of origin. In the provincial monastery-founding edict of 741, for example, Shōmu used the words ‘elimination’ (*jometsu*) and ‘extinction’ (*shōmetsu*) for the first time in Japanese history by quoting the teaching of the *Konkōmyō-kyō*. By making official priests at each monastery expound the sutra, he attempted to “make all the calamities and difficulties be extinct and all the epidemics and sorrow be eliminated by the divine power of the Four Heavenly Kings (*Shitemō*)”⁸⁴. Based on this observation, we may conclude that Shōmu’s heavier reliance on monastic Buddhism derived from the emergence of a different aetiological perception of epidemics during the Great Smallpox Epidemic. He thus relied more heavily on the proactive measures of Buddhism for the elimination of calamity, rather than the passive countermeasures of soothing the wrath of the national deities.

Shōmu’s original intention in founding the provincial monastery system was to adopt a Buddhist proactive measure against calamity. But his intention soon appears to have developed into a more philosophical and ideal system, the totalistic principle of the *Kegon-kyō*. Two years after the provincial monastery-founding edict, Shōmu issued another edict announcing the casting of a colossal gilt-bronze statue of Buddha Vairocana (*Rushana-butsu*), popularly known as Nara no Daibutsu⁸⁵. The ideological foundation for this casting was the teaching of the *Kegon-kyō*. Thus, this edict implies Shōmu’s interest in a new type of Buddhism, as taught by the Kegon School. The Kegon teachings were first introduced from China by the Chinese monk Tao-hsün

⁸⁴ Ibid., Tenpyō 13/3/24.

⁸⁵ Ibid., Tenpyō 15/10/15.

(c.702-760) in 736, and then by the Silla monk Sim-pyong (d.742) known in Japan as Shinjō. After Shinjō gave lectures on the *Kegon-kyō* at the request of Emperor Shōmu for three years from 740 to 742, the sutra and its study began a vital and important development during the second half of the Nara period⁸⁶.

The *Kegon-kyō* or the *Garland Sutra* begins with the Buddha's Enlightenment, the Buddha attended by sacred songs of bodhisattvas and divine beings as numerous as the atoms of all the worlds. There follows a great assembly in the palace of the deity Indra, one of the Four Heavenly Kings, popularly known as Taishakuten, who dwells at the summit of Mt. Sumeru in the Tosotsu-ten. A huge net hangs in the palace in which strands are joined together by jewels. When light reflects onto one of the jewels, the same light is reflected and re-reflected endlessly throughout the expanse of the net. In other words, no single treasure-gem has a separate and independent existence apart from the whole. Using the metaphor above, known as the 'net of Indra's treasure-gems' (*Indara-mō* or the *Taishaku-mō*), the Buddha preaches that all of the elements arise simultaneously, that all things create themselves, and that ultimate principles and concrete manifestations are mutually interpenetrated, interdependent, and thus unable to exist independently⁸⁷. In other words, the *Garland Sutra* emphasises the importance of a harmonious whole of all beings: everything is perfectly interrelated and interpenetrated with the 'Boundless Light' (*Kōmyō Henjō*) known as the buddha Vairocana, at the centre. The Vairocana is the supreme buddha or the buddha of buddhas.

⁸⁶ Kashiwahara & Sonoda.1994:16-17, 254-255.

⁸⁷ Kamata 1988.

There is no doubt that the totalistic principle of the *Kegon-kyō* attracted Emperor Shōmu, who considered himself the king of kings. He thought it was the best tenet to govern his people and country. We are still able to discern the strong influence of the *Kegon* worldview on Shōmu from the engravings on a lotus seat (*renge daiza*) under the colossal seated statue of the buddha Vairocana in Nara. The lotus seat is surrounded by 28 lotus petals. Each petal consists of three parts: the Small One-Thousand World (*shōsen-sekai*) represented by seven Sumeru mountains at the bottom; the Medium One-Thousand World (*chūsen-sekai*) represented by 25 horizontal lines in the middle; and a seated image of Shakyamuni Buddha flanked by 22 transformed bodhisattvas (*kebutsu*) under the 'Boundless Light' (*henjō kōmyō*) representing the buddha Vairocana, at the top. A total of 28 lotus petals engraved with these pictures come together to symbolise the 'Triple-Thousand Great One-Thousand Worlds' (*Sanzen-daisen-sekai*). The buddha Vairocana seated on this 'Triple-Thousand Great One-Thousand Worlds' symbolises the lotus-repository world (*rengezō sekai*) expounded in the *Kegon-kyō* and the *Bonmō-kyō*⁸⁸.

From the architectural design of the Daibutsu described above, we may be able to construe Shōmu's intention, for the Daibutsu was constructed in order to unify all the buddhas and bodhisattvas at provincial monasteries. The Great Statue of Vairocana in Nara was regarded as the supreme buddha, or the body of the ultimate reality, whereas the Shakyamuni buddha at each provincial monastery was viewed as a transformed body (*keshin*) of Vairocana. Thus, the installation of a Vairocana statue at the most

⁸⁸ Maezawa 1999:200-231.

important religious institution within the network of provincial monastery system, Tōdaiji, signifies Shōmu's attempt to realise the lotus-repository world in his own country. This is supported by Shōmu's edict of 741 which states that he wished to, "make the provincial monasteries the flowers of the country (*kokka*)"⁸⁹. The flowers in his mind, of course, were the lotus flowers of the *Kēgon-kyō* (*Garland Sutra*). Once the light from the great statue of Vairocana enshrined in the main hall of Tōdai Monastery was reflected onto one of the provincial monasteries, the same light was reflected and re-reflected endlessly over the expanse of the other provincial monasteries. Perhaps Shōmu conceived such a magnificent sight that could only be observed from the universe, and anticipated that the divine protection of buddhas would permeate into every nook and corner of his country and form a protective barrier against calamity, just like the net of the Indra's treasure-gem. In the same way, he probably also anticipated that as the king of kings his Imperial command would permeate into the whole country and enhance the prosperity of the Emperor-centred *ritsuryō* State.

We should not neglect the pragmatic dimension of the provincial monastery system, either. First, the construction of large-scale monasteries in every province demanded the expertise of Buddhist architecture as well as skilled carpenters and artisans, and thus promoted the diffusion of advanced technology and craftsmen throughout the country.⁹⁰ Second, it also demanded considerable amounts of funds and manpower. The edict of

⁸⁹ *Shoku Nihongi*, Tenpyō 13/3/24.

⁹⁰ For example, when Daianji was moved from Asuka to Nara, many magnificent structures were added under the direction of the priest Dōji who just came back from China in 718. The *Shoku Nihongi* (Tenpyō 16/10/2) records that every workman admired his advanced knowledge of architecture and assimilated every detail of his know-how.

744 orders every provincial government to subscribe 40,000 *tsuka* (79,872kg) of tax rice for the construction of provincial monastery and convent at every province⁹¹. The total tax rice collected annually by provincial governments were 400,000 *tsuka* for the highest-ranked provinces (*taikoku*), 300,000 *tsuka* for the second-class provinces (*jōkoku*), 200,000 *tsuka* for the third-class provinces (*chūgoku*), and 100,000 *tsuka* for the lowest-ranked provinces (*gekoku*)⁹². Thus, 10 to 40 percents of the provincial government's resources were expended annually on public works of constructing provincial monasteries in every province. These expenditures provided temporary jobs for the people who had been devastated by the Great Smallpox Epidemic, and helped revitalising the country's economy, even though such high rates of annual expenditures, in the long term, eventually imposed a strain on the *ritsuryō* system, as we will come to this point at the end of this chapter.

Finally, the provincial monastery system also provided a good opportunity for the central government not only to widely propagate Buddhism but also to invigorate the country's stricken *ritsuryō* system with the Great Smallpox Epidemic. For the construction of provincial monasteries required a systematic management of a large number of people. They could also have been mobilised as the colonist militias who would open up new farmland and defend provincial governments if internal rebellions broke out. In China, for example, a whole new town consisting of 30,000 houses was built in 231BC for the workers engaged in the construction of Emperor Shih huang-ti's mausoleum. These workers were also mobilised as soldiers to protect the capital when

⁹¹ *Shoku Nihongi*, Tenpyō 16/7/23.

⁹² *Ibid.*, Tenpyō 17/11/27.

internal disturbances broke out after the death of the Emperor⁹³. We find similar examples in the *Nihon Shoki*. When Sovereign Jingo returned from her expedition against Silla, Prince Kagosaka and Prince Oshikuma commanded that every workman engaged in the construction of a *misasagi* of Sovereign Chūai in Harima should take a weapon and attack her troop in the Awaji Island⁹⁴. Also just prior to the Civil War of 672, the Ōmi Government instructed the provincial governors of Mino and Owari to designate labourers for the construction of a *misasagi* of Sovereign Tenchi, and they all carried a weapon. Its real intention was to mobilise them as an army against Prince Ōama⁹⁵. Since the construction of magnificent buildings such as mausolea and provincial monasteries demands highly organised groups of people and experts, it may have possessed the functions similar to a government-sponsored colonist-militia system.

Therefore, the provincial monastery system may be defined as a theurgic as well as a practical device for the full-scale development of monastic Buddhism, as well as for the revitalisation of the county. Although there were several causes for Shōmu's adoption of this system, it may be concluded that the Great Smallpox Epidemic that devastated the whole country gathered momentum for its full-scale development of monastic Buddhism under the teaching of the *Kegon-kyō* and the proactive measures of Buddhism.

⁹³ Tsude 2000:55.

⁹⁴ Aston 1972:236.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*,: 303.

Another effect of the Great Smallpox Epidemic on the development of Japanese religion was the shift of state policy toward non-monastic monks prohibited or severely restricted by the central government before the Great Smallpox Epidemic. The non-monastic monks were usually marginal but charismatic figures who lived outside the monasteries and travelled through the country to proselytise the common folk, cast out demons, and heal sick persons. Others lived in the solitude of holy mountains, where they practiced severe austerities in order to attain supernatural power. This shift is well reflected in the government's reversal of policy toward Gyōki (668-749) and his band after the outbreak of the Great Smallpox Epidemic. The edicts issued prior to the outbreak in 717⁹⁶, 722⁹⁷, and 730⁹⁸ denied legitimacy to Gyōki and his activities. Although the government showed some conciliatory attitude toward non-monastic religion in 721 under the Nagaya-Ō regime, the government had insisted on placing non-monastic religion under its control. In the 722 edict, the Supreme Council of State denounced the conduct of non-official monks and nuns in the capital as dishonouring the teaching of saints and demolishing the rule of virtue. They were accused of deceiving the populace with their shallow knowledge and frivolous wisdom by preaching the doctrine of karma. As a result, many people deserted their homes to join non-monastic religion. This edict is supposed to refer to the activities of Gyōki.

⁹⁶ *Shoku Nihongi* Yōrō 1/4/23 & 5/17.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Yōrō 6/7/10.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, Tenpyō 2/9/29. A similar denouncement was also made against another non-Monastic religious groups in the same edict. According to the edict, in the provinces of Aki and Suō, a large number of people were assembled to listen to the preachment on the principle of fortune and misfortune without official permission, and they were attracted by the worship of the spirits.

After the Great Smallpox, however, the government made an abrupt about-turn. Gyōki, who was believed by many commoners to possess the superhuman power of Monju bosatsu⁹⁹, could assemble more than 10,000 people at one religious service¹⁰⁰. He could also raise sponsorship for the construction of bridges, roads, irrigation ponds, ports, and hostels (*fuseya*)¹⁰¹. These were made possible by Gyōki's practice of promoting alms-giving and communal good works. Thus the economic crisis of the *ritsuryō* government after the Great Smallpox Epidemic necessitated the co-operation of monks of eminent virtue for the erections of monasteries, pagodas, and statues. As a result of the Great Smallpox Epidemic, monks of eminent virtue such as Gyōki who were thought to have transcendental power and beneficial effects on the State began to gain State recognition. In 717, for example, Gyōki was referred to disparagingly as 'novice' (*kozō*) by Empress Genshō (r. 715-724)¹⁰², but by 738, a year after the Great Smallpox Epidemic, he was called the great virtue (*daitoku*)¹⁰³. Thereafter, he was appointed as an official priest commissioned by government to raise donations for the construction of a *Daibutsu* at Shigaraki no Miya in 743¹⁰⁴. Finally he climbed all the way up to the highest position in the Prelates' Office (*daisōjō*) in 745¹⁰⁵. These dynamic changes in government policy toward Gyōki and his band appear to have derived from Shōmu's

⁹⁹ For details, see the *Nihon Ryōiki*, I-5, II-29 & 30.

¹⁰⁰ *Shoku Nihongi*, Tenpyō 2/9/29.

¹⁰¹ Nemoto 1991:151.

¹⁰² *Shoku Nihongi*, Yōrō 1/4/23.

¹⁰³ Senda 1994:98,176

¹⁰⁴ *Shoku Nihongi*, Tenpyō 15/10/19.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, Tenpyō 17/1/21.

awareness that the combination of their technical skills and the labour force they offered was indispensable for the accomplishment of the provincial monastery system. This may be inferred from the 743 edict in which Shōmu announced the erection of buddha Vairocana:

We (i.e., Shōmu) are the possessor of the land's wealth and power under Heaven. With this wealth and power, we could easily use them to make a sacred statue [of buddha Vairocana]. However, attaining matters of the heart is too hard to be handled in this way, because we fear lest the people be made to work mercilessly and that the spirit will fail to move within them, or that squabbles will be instigated and we will fall into sin. Therefore, we request that those who are sincere of heart and wish to participate in this project worship buddha Vairocana three times daily with the utmost sincerity so that each one earns his own merit. Thus will the statue take shape. Let those who wish to contribute to the making of the statue by bringing even a single blade of grass or a fistful of earth be allowed to do so. No provincial or district official shall disturb the people or forcefully collect supplies from them for the erection of the image. Let it be proclaimed widely that this is our intent.¹⁰⁶

Although Shōmu made a pretence of wealth and power in this edict, the financial condition of the *ritsuryō* government was harsh following the Great Smallpox Epidemic. A drastic decrease in revenues had ensued, coupled with increased expenditure for religious services and frequent relief needed for victims. It would have been impossible to materialise the project of the provincial monastery system without the collaboration of Gyōki's band and commoners. After the Great Smallpox Epidemic, the long tradition of non-monastic Buddhism that had been nurtured since the inception of Buddhism began to assimilate into the mainstream of Japanese religion. For example, the *Shoku Nihongi* informs us that all the *ubasoku* who had lived in the solitude of mountains and

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., Tenpyō 15/10/15.

practiced pure asceticism for more than 10 years were allowed to take officially sanctioned initiation¹⁰⁷. There were thus eminent shamanistic mountain ascetic monks throughout the Nara period, such as Kudara no Zenji, Hōren, Taichō, Kōdachi, and Shingyō, as depicted in the *Shoku Nihongi* and the *Nihon Ryōiki*.¹⁰⁸

Nevertheless, we should be aware that the fundamental characteristics of monastic religions, such as superintendence by the government, Buddhist Prelacy, its function of State-protection, and the provision of ideological support for the rulership of Emperor, were retained by the central government despite these changes in policy toward Gyōki. This is evident from the fact that Gyōki and many of his followers were eventually incorporated as adherents of monastic Buddhism. For example, a total of 750 *ubasoku* from Gyōki's band, who had contributed to the construction of a large bridge over the River Kizu at Kuni when the capital was moved to Kuni in 741, were allowed to take officially sanctioned initiation (*tokudo*)¹⁰⁹. This signifies that the government intended to enlist non-official monks who were beneficial to the State under the Prelates' Office, by giving them permission to be official monks. Alms-giving and the corporate patronage of unauthorised monks and commoners known as the *chishiki*, thus became vital for the development of monastic Buddhism as well as for the peace and the prosperity of the Emperor-centred *ritsuryō* State. In this way, the government attempted to surmount its difficulties in the wake of the Great Smallpox Epidemic. The essential criteria of monastic Buddhism thus remained unchanged even after the Great Smallpox

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., Tenpyō-hōji 2/8/1.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., Taihō 3/9/25, Yōrō 5/6/12; *Nihon Ryōiki*, I-26, II-26, III-6, III-17, III-39.

¹⁰⁹ *Shoku Nihongi*, Tenpyō 13/10/16.

Epidemic. Indeed, the Great Smallpox Epidemic furthered the growth of monastic Buddhism.

It was not only the non-monastic monks who helped the government during the time of crisis. While Gyōki and his followers contributed to the material aspect of the provincial monastery project, Genbō (d.746) was responsible for its theoretical aspect. Genbō had just returned from China in the year of the Great Smallpox Epidemic, and he suggested to Shōmu and his mother, Fujiwara no Miyako (d.754), the provincial monastery system modelled on the T'ang: one temple in every province¹¹⁰. Furthermore, Genbō contributed to anti-pestilence measures and the protection of the State from the Great Smallpox Epidemic with his knowledge of esoteric Buddhism (*zōmitsu*)¹¹¹. Under Genbō's strong influence, Shōmu came to rely more heavily on Buddhism and appointed him *sōjō* in 737¹¹². What was probably still more significant for the later development of Japanese religion was that Genbō introduced strong doses of esoteric Buddhism during the social crisis. He brought back from China various statues of Buddha and more than 5000 volumes of Buddhist scriptures including esoteric sutras¹¹³. He also introduced esoteric rituals, which aimed to ward off evil and to bring good luck. He served in the Buddhist hall of the Imperial palace (*nai-dōjō*), and infused the

¹¹⁰ Kasahara 1972; Kitayama 1979:286; Hongō 1999:148-165.

¹¹¹ Hongō 1999:163.

¹¹² *Shoku Nihongi*, Tenpyō 9/8/26

¹¹³ Hori'ike 1960:625-637. Different from Kukai's Esoteric Buddhism based on the teachings of Vajrabodhi (d.732 or 741) and Amoghavajra (705-74), the esoteric Buddhist sutras brought back by Genbō's were the sutras translated by Subhākarasimha (637-735), such as the *Dainichi-kyō* and *Soshitsujikara-kyō*.

teachings of esoteric Buddhism into the palace having cured Fujiwara no Miyako of her melancholia with his esoteric rituals¹¹⁴. The influence of esoteric Buddhism on the Imperial palace can be inferred from the fact that Shōmu ordered the copying of one of the esoteric sutras, the *Butchō Sonshō Daranikyō*, in order to pray for the recovery of Genbō's illness in 739¹¹⁵. Although Genbō's power and fortune did not last long because of the emergence of rivals such as Gyōki and Fujiwara no Nakamaro (706-764), he was probably the first to promote the attachment of the State to esoteric-flavoured Buddhism. He thus prepared the ground for the rise of Pure Esoteric Buddhism (*junmitsu*). This, in turn, became a dominant force for the reformation of monastic Buddhism in the early Heian period and marked a turning point for the emergence of a new religious system, as we shall see in the next chapter.

In addition to the impact of the Great Smallpox Epidemic on Japanese religion, we cannot neglect the declining health of Emperor Shōmu in seeking to explain his increasing devotion to Buddhism. While his health was still intact, he attempted to maintain a balance between Shinto and Buddhism. For example, in his provincial monastery-founding edict recorded in the *Ruijū Sandaikyaku*, Shōmu wished that all the *kami* of Heaven and Earth would manifest miraculous power along with Buddhist deities for the protection and peace of the State¹¹⁶. But his devotion to Buddhism intensified after the decline of his health. He suffered from a serious illness and his

¹¹⁴ *Shoku Nihongi*, Tenpyō 9/12/27.

¹¹⁵ Yokota 1973:24-9.

¹¹⁶ *Ruijū Sandaikyaku*, Tenpyō 13/2/14.

condition became critical in 745¹¹⁷. In order to cure his illness, he ordered the performance of the *Yakushi-Keka* ('Rites of Repentance in worship of Buddha Yakushi-nyorai') at various monasteries in Nara and Kinai, and 3,800 people were made to enter the Buddhist priesthood all at once¹¹⁸.

Although Shōmu survived, his health continued to deteriorate¹¹⁹. In order to pray for his recovery, his consort, Empress Kōmyō, built the Shin-Yakushiji (Yakushiji having 'Miraculous Effects') in 747, and a thousand monks took up residence within its vast precincts. In 749, Shōmu abdicated in favour of his daughter, Princess Abe, and became a Buddhist priest. It was an unprecedented event even for an abdicated Emperor to become a Buddhist priest, because one of the *raison d'être*s of the Emperor was his charismatic rule under Heaven as the High Priest of *kami* worship or as an heir of the Sun Goddess Amaterasu. Previous emperors had protected and promoted Buddhism as an 'outside patron and protector' (*gego*), but they had never placed themselves under Buddhist orders. Such an act threatened to disrupt the balance of power between Buddhism and Shinto and undermine the very legitimacy of the Emperor himself. But Shōmu threw himself at the feet of the Daibutsu and called himself "the servant of the Three Precious Things"¹²⁰.

¹¹⁷ *Shoku Nihongi*, Tenpyō 17/9/17.

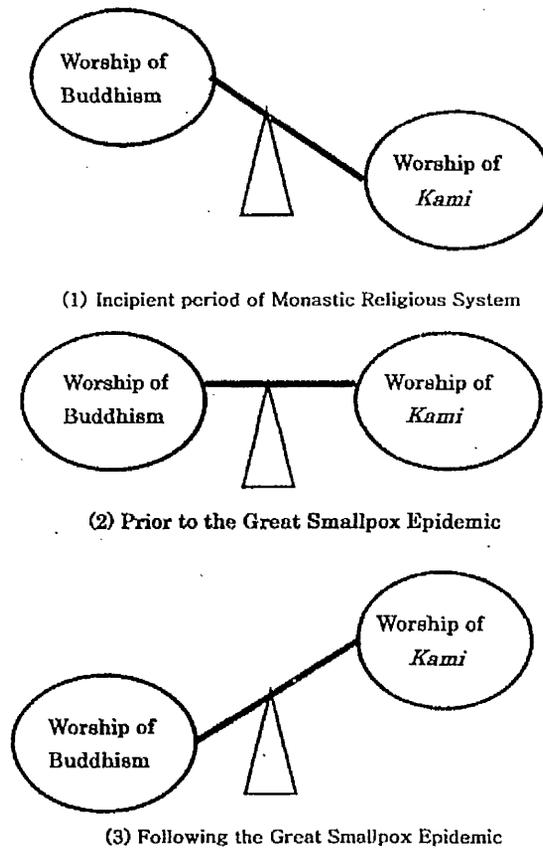
¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Tenpyō 17/9/19. For the *Yakushi-keka*, see De Visser 1935:293-308

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Tenpyō 19/1/1. According to the entry for 756 in the *Shoku Nihongi*, a total of 126 *kanbyō zenji* ('healing-contemplation masters') were mobilized to attend Empress Shōmu on his deathbed.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, Tenpyō-shōhō 1/4/1.

The dynamic transformation in the balance of power between Buddhism and Shinto may be put into the form of diagrams as shown in Figure 3-3. At the incipient period of monastic Buddhism, the reverence for national deities was much greater than for Buddhist deities, but the balance was reversed after the Great Smallpox Epidemics. As a result of his stronger devotion to Buddhism, the influence of Buddhism over Shinto was enhanced further.

Figure 3-3 The Dynamics of Power-Balance between Buddhism and Shinto
 (Diagrams indicate the more heavily revered by the government, the lower the location of the scale.)



Shōmu's disproportionate emphasis on Buddhism eventually led to monastic Buddhism exerting powerful influence on Shinto during the reign of his daughter who ruled twice, first as Empress Kōken (r. 749-758) and then as Empress Shōtoku (r. 764-770). During this period, there were many reports of Japanese deities confessing the pain of being the

national deities and wishing to embrace Buddhism by leaving the body of *kami* in order to overcome their difficulties. This phenomenon, known as *shinjin ridatsu* ('departure from the body of *kami*'), promoted the construction of Buddhist temples on or next to the grounds of shrines, known as a *jingū-ji* ('shrine-temple'). For example, Mangan Zenji, a well-known itinerant monk (*yugyōsō*) of that time, received an oracle of the Great Deity of Tado (Tadodajin) in Ise telling him that the deity needed salvation through Buddhism, and accordingly he built a *jingū-ji* within the precincts of the Tado Shrine in 763¹²¹. Just a few years before this incident, Mangan had already built a *jingū-ji* within the precincts of Kashima Shrine¹²². The idea behind these shrine-temples was that Japanese deities were suffering from 'afflictions' (*bonnō*) like human beings; and they needed the aid of Buddhism in order to escape from the realm of sentient beings (*mei-kai* or *shujō-kai*).

Although this was an opinion advocated from the perspective of Buddhist monks, it exerted a strong influence on the people who enshrined the deities, because they began to attribute the cause of calamity to a deity's failure to embrace Buddhism. In other words, they believed that calamities in their community, such as epidemics and crop-failures, were not caused by the wrath of the deity; rather they were the manifestation of the deity's distress. If the distress of the deity were alleviated, if the deity worshiped by the community was able to leave the body of *kami* and embrace

¹²¹ *Tado Jingū-ji Garan Engi narabini Shizaichō* (c.788). See Yoshida 1996:220-221.

¹²² According to the *Ruijū Sandaikyaku* (2 *nenbundoshaji*, Kashō 3/8/5), it was built during the Tenpyō Shōhō era (749-757).

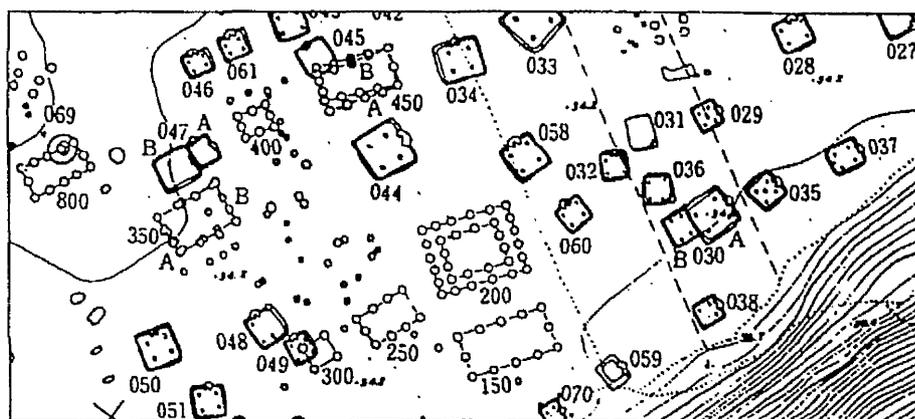
Buddhism, then the community would be free from calamity.¹²³ Based on this logical framework, the worship of Buddhist deities was incorporated into local communities by travelling monks, and the concept of *shinjin ridatsu* along with the erection of shrine-temples facilitated mutual interaction between Buddhism and Shinto at the local levels after the Great Smallpox Epidemic.

To sum up, then, the Great Smallpox Epidemic, triggered by a single fisherman in the warming climate of the 8th century, instigated an autocatalytic reaction that led to four major modifications to Japanese religion. These were: the State's new and unequal emphasis on Buddhism over Shinto; fully-fledged monastic Buddhism; a shift in State policy toward non-monastic priests who possessed supernatural power; and the enhanced mutual interaction of Buddhism and Shinto.

While the first two modifications were significant for the full-scale development of monastic Buddhism based on the teachings of the Kegon School, the last two modifications led to the decline of monastic Buddhism. For example, if we deem religious change the evolutionary appearance and disappearance of species, we could say that a new variant represented by Gyōki and his followers emerged during the social chaos of the Great Smallpox Epidemics, but it was not able to dominate over the higher fitness of that time. This is evident because Gyōki and his followers were eventually absorbed into a magnificent receptacle for the monastic religious system, as the major force of the provincial monastery system.

¹²³ Nakai 1973:197-198.

However, we cannot dismiss the significant effects of the new variant on the latter evolution of Japanese religions. Although the variant did not dominate the niche during the age of monastic religion, it was not extinct at all; rather, it managed to find its niche in the rural communities as ‘popular Buddhism’. We do have very scarce information about the relationship between early Japanese Buddhism and commoners, but the latest archaeological evidence undoubtedly indicates that Buddhism began to permeate also into the small farming villages during and after the activity of Gyōki. For example, the ruins of Buddhist temples constructed from the latter half of the 8th century to the mid-9th century were excavated at the farming village of not only the Kinai region, but also of the eastern provinces. These temples were not tile-roofed, but embedded-pillar buildings consisted of one or two halls with simple facilities. Potteries inscribed the names of temples and monks by ink as well as Buddhist altar fittings and implements used in worship, such as stoneware miniature pagodas, bowls, and incense burners, were unearthed on these temple grounds.¹²⁴



Reconstruction of a grand plan of small Buddhist temples at the Karabe farming village in the present city of Narita (8-9centuryies) (from Okamoto 2002:102)

¹²⁴ Okamoto 2002:102-103.

The law granting permanent private tenure of newly opened lands is thought to have become a momentum for the erection of these temples, as they were erected in new villages when county governors and monasteries reclaimed new lands. Buddhist monks known as *yugyōsō* (itinerant monk) and *bosatsusō* (sage monk) preached the principle of causality, worldly merits of Buddhism, and methods of eliminating calamity and inviting happiness while travelling around these villages, and encouraged cultivation, just like Gyōki did those in the Kinai region.¹²⁵ Thus, the number of the new variants emerged at that time was not limited to Gyōki but plural. Gyōki's accession to the highest position in the Prelates' Office must have assisted the further growth of these non-monastic monks in the rural communities, for they worked in totally different social backgrounds. While the religious activity of Gyōki and his direct followers was mainly in the capital and its suburbs, that of other non-monastic monks was in the newly developed small villages. Since these villages could not afford the erection of the fully-fledged monastery, the niches for the non-monastic monks are thought to have retained even after the establishment of the provincial monastery system. Then, while Gyōki and his direct followers had to adapt themselves to monastic Buddhism for their survival, itinerant monks in the rural communities were able to continue finding their niches that were different from the socio-economic ground of the capital and cities.¹²⁶

The survival of these variants in the rural communities does not necessary mean the

¹²⁵ Ibid., 104.

¹²⁶ We are not certain whether these monks worked for provincial monasteries. However, as we do not find the existence of such monks in the organisation chart of the provincial monasteries, it is very likely that they lived in their own right, although they might have occasionally taken up their quarters in the monasteries.

formation of a new religious system, but as the law of natural growth presages it, the vector for the growth of monastic religious system changed at the moment of its zenith because of these variants. For the growth of their direct descendants or further mutation of their descendants had been fermented by the survival of these non-monastic monks in the rural communities, and they evolved into the monks without a priestly rank known as *hijiri*, such as Kūya in later centuries, and became one of the major forces for the development of a new religious system as we shall see in Chapter 5.

3.3.3 Conflict in Monastic Buddhism

We should not dismiss other important facts that the vector for the growth of monastic Buddhism was changed not only externally by the non-monastic monks but also internally by several innate factors that originated within the system. In 752 a magnificent inauguration ceremony for the Daibutsu in Nara was held at the Tōdaiji Monastery, attended by the ex-emperor Shōmu, the empress dowager Kōmyō, the empress Kōtoku, and all the princes, princesses, nobles, dignitaries, civil and military functionaries, and 10,000 monks from home and abroad¹²⁷. This inauguration ceremony of the world's largest image at that time signified not only a saturation of monastic Buddhism, but also the end of an epoch. When the ex-emperor Shōmu passed away four years later, the glory of the Nara capital as well as the ancient *ritsuryō* State that attained the height of its prosperity with the construction of the Daibutsu, gradually declined.

¹²⁷ *Shoki Nihongi*, Tenpyō Shōhō 4/4/9.

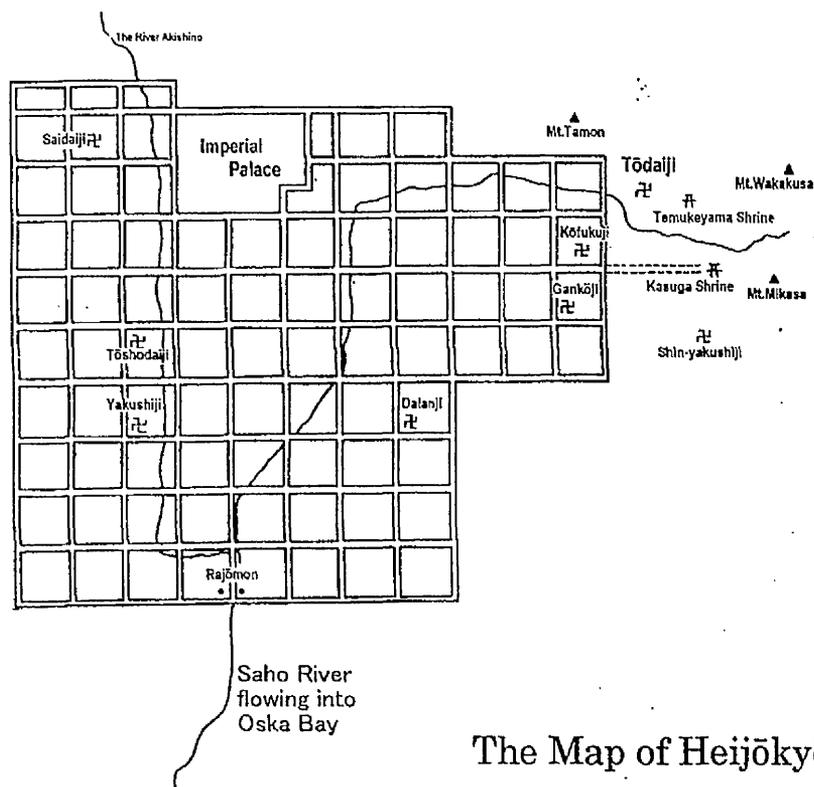
We can identify three major factors within monastic Buddhism that changed the vector for its own lifecycle. The first is environmental pollution to the capital by the construction of the Daibutsu. According to the *Tōdaiji Yōroku*, huge amounts of heavy metals were used for the construction of the Daibutsu: 739,560 *kin* (c. 487 tonnes) of smelted copper, 12,618 *kin* (8.3 tonnes) of tin, 58,620 *ryō* (2,400kg) of mercury, 10,446 *ryō* (440kg) of gold, and 3,358 m³ of charcoal¹²⁸. When the casting of the statue with bronze (mixture of copper and tin) was completed, the bronze statue was fire-gilded; that is, treated with an amalgam of gold and mercury that was heated to drive off the mercury. This means that extensive amounts of toxic mercury and its vapours were discharged into the rivers and the air at the time of gilding the statue, and the local inhabitants were as a result surrounded by polluted air and food. Ingestion of mercury can cause nausea, vomiting, bloody diarrhoea, and kidney damage, resulting in death in extreme cases. Inhalation or absorption through the skin of mercury vapour can cause erethism (a state of abnormal mental excitement or irritability), manifest in symptoms such as excessive salivation, loosening of the teeth, tremors, and permanent neurological damage resulting in irritability, loss of memory, depression, anxiety, and other personality changes. Moreover, a total number of 270 million man-days from all over the country contributed to the work¹²⁹. Since the total population of Japan during the Nara period is estimated to be about 5.6 millions¹³⁰, almost a half of the total population was roped into constructing the Daibutsu. Thus, the adverse effects of the Daibutsu construction on the Nara people cannot be underestimated.

¹²⁸ *Tōdaiji Yōroku* 1971:33-35.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*:37.

¹³⁰ Hayami 1993:121.

It is obvious that poisoning with the organic mercurial compounds inflicted large numbers of labourers and local inhabitants. The *Shoku Nihongi* describes the miserable situation of the Saho River, flowing from just in front of the Tōdaiji Monastery through the centre of Heijōkyō, as a filthy river that was full of skulls¹³¹. This river finally joins the Yamato River that flows into the Osaka Plain to empty into Osaka Bay. Since the water was used for irrigation, drinking, and fishing, there is no doubt that the water pollution exerted significant health problems on the residents living in the vicinity of the Kinai region.



¹³¹ *Shoku Nihongi*, Jingo Keiun 3/5/29. The river originates in the east side of the Kasugayama Mountains.

Other records also indicate that sutra chanting of apotropaic prayers and rituals were often carried out for no apparent causes after the construction of the Daibutsu. It was probably performed to ward off inauspicious incidents caused by mercury poisoning and epidemics spread by the heavy traffic between the capital and the rest of the country during the construction of the Daibutsu. Then, it would certainly seem that the construction of the Daibutsu became one of the reasons to shorten not only the lifecycle of Heijōkyō but also that of the Nara monasticism.

Moreover, we cannot neglect the fact that the great strain was imposed on the *ritsuryō* government and peasants by the construction of 136 magnificent provincial monasteries and convents throughout the country. When the provincial monastery-founding edict was proclaimed in 741, all the expenses for the construction were supposed to be covered annually with only 1,360 *chō* of rice land (3,332 acres, 1 *chō* ≐ 2.45 acres). According to the *Shoku Nihongi*, however, the budget was soon increased drastically to 10,200 *chō* in 747. Only two years after in 749, the amount was augmented ten times to 102,000 *chō* (250,000 acres). Since the acreage of rice land is estimated to be about 601,000 *chō*, they occupied about 17 percents of the total arable land. In addition to this, as noted earlier, a median of 30 percents of provincial revenues from the government loans of rice seeds had been spent annually for the construction since 744. Thus, nearly half of the country's resources were expended every year solely for the construction of monasteries and convents. (This ratio is certainly higher, if the high percentage of abandoned fields is taken into consideration.¹³²) The authenticity of this exponential

¹³² For the abandoned fields, see Farris 1985:81-91.

increase can be confirmed by the *Transition Record of Provincial Governors* in the province of *Kōzuke* (*Kōzuke Koku Kōtai Jitsurokuchō*, c.1030); it records that 40.3 *chō* of rice land were originally subscribed for the construction and maintenance of the provincial monastery and convent in *Kōzuke*, but in 749 the land expanded to 1400 *chō*. The *Transition Record* also documents that both provincial monastery and convent had already fallen into disrepair and the pit dwellings of farmers gradually reoccupied the precincts since the 10th century,

Despite all these efforts, the construction was proceeded at a snail's pace simply because of insufficient funds, which was partly caused by provincial governors' embezzlement and by the increasing abandoned fields due to people's tax evasion and poor engineering. It is clear that the tax burden fell most heavily on the poverty-stricken peasants¹³³, and the number of those who absconded increased at an alarming rate after the introduction of the provincial monastery system. Meanwhile, the aristocracy, the great monasteries, and the local tycoons naturally redoubled their efforts to reclaim the land by transforming the absconders into the labour for these private endeavours. The fact that a large number of vagrant peasants were reorganised outside of the *ritsuryō* system into a labour force to develop land was a decisive factor in the evolution of society after the introduction of the provincial monastery system, for it accelerated the formation of privately owned estates that would eventually undermine the foundation for the *ritsuryō* system.

¹³³ According to the *Shoku Nihongi*, 412 out of 414 were listed as being at the bare subsistence level in Awa Province in 730. The figures for Echizen Province in that year tell the same story; of 1019 households, 996 were found to be poverty stricken.

During the Kofun period, deforestation caused by the construction of keyhole tombs contributed to the dissolution of the keyhole tomb system. This time, ironically, the construction of the Great Buddha of Nara and provincial monasteries contributed to the dissolution of the Nara monasticism and the *ritsuryō* system, respectively. Therefore, the provincial monastery system held within itself the seeds of counter-system that would eventually challenge it.

The second factor that changed the vector of monastic Buddhism was Shōmu's successor Empress Shomu, and her beloved Dōkyō, who rose to become a powerful Priest-Premier (*Dajōdaijin Zenji*) in 765 and eventually a 'King of the Dharma' (Hō-ō), fully utilising his medical skill and esoteric ritual of the *Planet Sutra* (*sukuyō-hihō*). The adverse effects of Dōkyō's undisputed hegemony on State policy were immense. He introduced policies that attached ever-greater importance to monastic Buddhism. For example, manipulated by Dōkyō, Empress Shōtoku built many large monasteries, such as Saidaiji, on a scale comparable to that of Tōdaiji, and subscribed sustenance households and rice paddies to the monasteries. The 743 law permitting private possession of newly opened rice paddies was suspended, and a new law banning the cultivation of new land except by monasteries was proclaimed in 765¹³⁴. What made them even worse was the Empress' attempt to nominate Dōkyō as Emperor, following an oracle sent from the Usa Hachimangū in 769. Even though the plan was prevented by Wake no Kiyomaro (733-799), the entire organisation of government was thrown into

¹³⁴ Ibid., Tenpyō Jingo 1/3/5.

chaos as a consequence of these arbitrary politics. Moreover, a disproportionate emphasis on Buddhism over Shinto had led moral decadence in the Buddhist clergy, degeneration of the ordination system, and the excessive economic and political power of monastic Buddhism over the government.

The third and final factor was people's dissatisfaction with the overwhelming economic and political power of the Nara Buddhist establishment. In conjunction with Dōkyō's undisputed hegemony, a succession of political conflicts broke out. These include the revolt of Tachibana no Naramaro in 757 and the revolt of Emi no Oshikatsu in 764. The price of rice and other grains rose steeply due to the revolts, and the mass issue of currency in 760¹³⁵ and 765¹³⁶ during the reign of Shōtoku worsened the situation. The capital's economy was on the verge of collapse. Furthermore, Empress Shōtoku capriciously awarded court ranks to people who paid her a tribute of rice and money after the revolts¹³⁷.

This excessive issue of currency and the reckless grants of court ranks aggravated social unrest in the late 8th century. People's frustration and discontent manifested themselves in the form of *tōka* ('stamping songs') that came into vogue among commoners in the capital of Heijōkyō. The *tōka* was originally a type of Chinese-style New Year's ritual involving dancing and singing, to pray for the longevity of the Emperor and an abundant harvest. However, the prevalence of the phenomenon at this

¹³⁵ Ibid., Tenpyō Hōji 4/3/16.

¹³⁶ Ibid., Tenpyō Jingo 1/9/8.

¹³⁷ For example, see Ibid. Tenpyō Jingo 1/1/7, 1/2/20, 1/6/12/ and 1/6/13.

time served as an alarm bell to the authorities and as a catharsis for people's dissatisfaction and misery. In other words, the prevalence of the *tōka* at this time was a collective manifestation of people's agitation against the government and monastic Buddhism. The government responded prohibiting *tōka* in 766, under the pretext that its prevalence during the night would corrupt public morals.

Both natural and man-made disaster further aggravated the socio-economic environment for the growth of monastic religious system. In 763, severe droughts struck Sanyōdō and Nankaidō, and the central government had to abandon the reconnaissance officers (*Setsudoshi*) of both regions, who had been reinstated in 761 to prepare for the invasion of Silla. The edict that was issued soon after the suspension of the *Setsudoshi* reveals that a great number of people were killed at this time by epidemics and the deteriorating climate¹³⁸. In 768, the solemn Buddhist service known as *Gosai-e* was carried out at the Imperial palace. Vegetarian food was provided and the *Konkōmyō-kyō* was recited in order to secure the peace and well-being of the State, and it was henceforth performed annually from the 8th to the 14th day of the 1st lunar month.

Social unrest persisted even after the death of Shōtoku and the consequent downfall of Dōkyō (770AD). It was in order to cope with the great confusion of the capital that the government introduced a new religious service. In 770, the Shinto observance called *Ekijin-sai* was conducted to enshrine the deities of pestilence (*ekijin*) at the four corners

¹³⁸ Ibid., Tenpyō Hōji 7/8/18. Since epidemics and deteriorating climate continued, even the last *Setsudoshi* in Saikaidō, located closest to the Korean Peninsula, had to be abolished in 764 [Ibid., Tenpyō Hōji 8/11/12].

of the capital and at the ten borders between the *kinai* and *kigai*, in an attempt to prevent their invasion into the palace¹³⁹. The *Ekijin-sai* was conducted repeatedly throughout the Hōki era (770-781)¹⁴⁰. Frequent performances do not only reveal us that epidemics were recurrent at that time, but also the government attempted to balance the influence of Buddhism and Shinto under the new reign of Emperor Kōnin (r.770-781). The latter can be attested by his edict for the greater prosperity of Shinto in 776. He proclaimed that the worship of the deities of Heaven and Earth was the most important state ritual for the welfare of the country, and that the frequent outbreaks of natural disasters were a result of the negligence of *kami* worship. He cited as examples the many shrines that were in a state of dilapidation and the careless conduct of annual rituals in 776¹⁴¹.

As for the man-made disasters, there were frequent outbreaks of ‘mysterious fires’ (*shinka*) to provincial granaries that stored tax rice collected by the local government¹⁴². These ‘mysterious fires’ were caused either by provincial governors’ attempts to destroy the evidence of misappropriating taxes or by political conflict between provincial governors and local officials. Since monastic religious system was sustained by the tax rice, the decrease in the revenue meant the difference between life and death. In the northern part of Japan, a great rebellion of Emishi tribes led by a naturalised Emishi,

¹³⁹ Ibid., Hōki 1/6/23. Strictly speaking, *ekijin-sai* was one of the *onmyōdō* observances, known as *michiae-no-maturi*, but it was assimilated into Shinto.

¹⁴⁰ For example, see *Shoku Nihongi*, Hōki 2/3/5, Hōki 4/7/10, Hōki 6/6/22, 8/22, Hōki 8/2/28, and Hōki 9/3/27.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., Hōki 7/4/12.

¹⁴² Ibid., Tenpyō Hōji 7/9/1.

Koreharu no Azamaro broke out, which appeared to be developing into full-scale warfare between the *ritsuryō* government and the Emishi.¹⁴³ The social unrest in the capital was aggravated further by the migration of many vagrants, and frequent cases of robbery and arson.¹⁴⁴ Towards the end of the Nara period, the social unrest and people's anxiety provoked the prevalence of several unauthorised theurgic cults. The *Shoku Nihongi* depicts that commoners crowded round a pair of male and female shamans and engaged in 'licentious' ceremonies, and the streets of Heijōkyō were full of 'straw dogs' (*sūku*, thrown away after the ceremony) and mysterious amulets and talismans¹⁴⁵. Since these cults were permitted for the treatment of illness outside the capital, their purpose within the capital was probably related to the treatment of disease as well as protection against various misfortunes and disasters. The prevalence of the folk religion certainly demonstrates that commoners, as opposed to the ideal of Shōmu, were not contented with monastic Buddhism.

In order to surmount the accumulated problems of monastic Buddhism at the end of the Nara period, the new government attempted to reform it. Four years after his edict for the prosperity of Shinto, Kōnin severely criticised the moral corruption of the Buddhist clergy in 780, by claiming that their demeanour was equivalent to that of the laity and he enforced discipline upon them¹⁴⁶. Five months later, Kōnin restricted the period of

¹⁴³ Ibid., Hōki 11/3/22.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., Hōki 11/10/26; Enryaku 3/10/30.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., Hōki 11/12/14.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., Hōki 11/1/20. Abundant records of moral corruption of priests and nuns can be found in other documents, such as the directives of *Dajō Kanpu* in the *Ruijū Sandaikyaku* (Enryaku 2/11/6, Enryaku

jifū (donation of sustenance households to temples) to a single generation due to a curtailed state budget.¹⁴⁷ As a ritual celebrant, he endeavoured to reform the disproportionate balance between monastic Buddhism and Shinto.

Despite his attempts, Heijōkyō was no longer able to function properly as the capital of Japan. Neither, in its Nara form, was monastic Buddhism. Thus, in 784, his successor Emperor Kanmu (r.781-806) decided to relocate the capital about 48-km north to Nagaoka in order to ameliorate the accumulated problems¹⁴⁸. Kanmu's decision to transfer the capital was dictated in part by his desire to remove the court and government away from clerical influence. Transfer of the capital from Heijōkyō made it easier for him to start monastic reform in earnest. Kanmu promoted the reformation of Nara monastic Buddhism in four ways. Firstly, he prohibited additional increase of priests at provincial monasteries and convents¹⁴⁹. Secondly, he forbade further erection of private temples and imposed stricter control on monastic property¹⁵⁰. Thirdly, he supervised the misconduct of the clergy and expelled decadent priests¹⁵¹. And fourthly, he introduced an examination system (*shido seido*) for officially sanctioned initiation (*tokudo*) and ordination (*jukai*)¹⁵². Together, these reforms reduced the rate of growth of

4/5/25 [also recorded in the *Shoku Nihongi*], Enryaku 17/4/15, and Kōnin 3/4/16) and the *Ruijū Kokushi* (186 *Butsudō* 13 Enryaku 17/4/15).

¹⁴⁷ *Shoku Nihongi*, Hōki 11/6/5.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Enryaku 3/5/16.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Enryaku 2/4/28.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, Enryaku 2/6/10. Also recorded in the *Ruijū Sandaikyaku*, Enryaku 2/6/10 *Dajō Kanpu*.

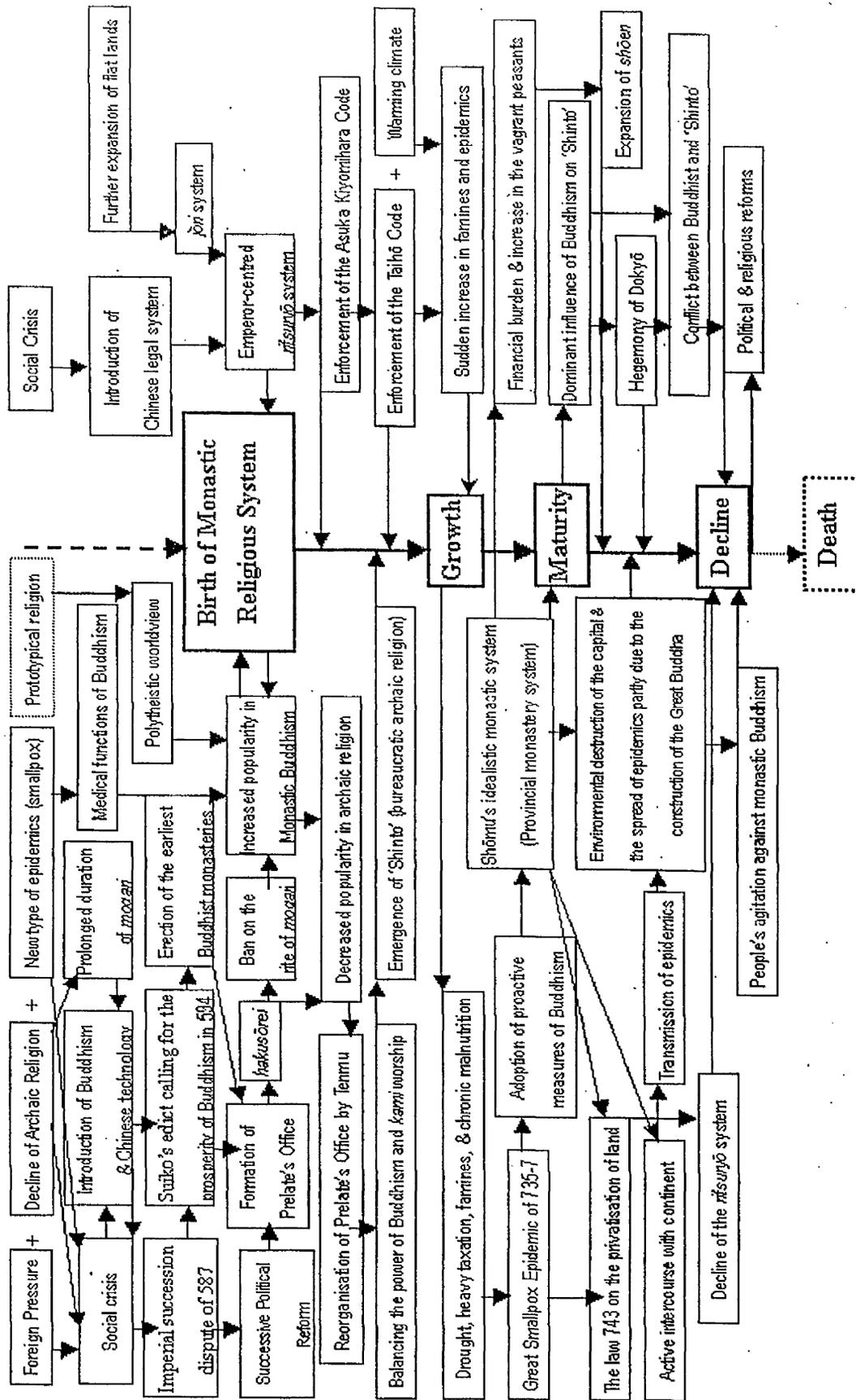
¹⁵¹ *Ruijū Kokushi*, 186 *Butsudō* 13 Enryaku 14/4/23 & 17/7/28

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 187 *Butsudō* 14 Enryaku 17/4/15. For details about the reformations of Buddhism during the reign of Kanmu, see Inoue 197:84-90.

monastic Buddhism. They also provided an opportunity for certain priests to stand out in Buddhist circles: namely, those who were antagonistic toward the secularisation of monastic Buddhism and those who practiced shamanistic mountain asceticism flavoured with esoteric Buddhism, namely Saichō (767-822) and Kūkai (774-835).

Therefore, it is important to note that the waning of monastic Buddhism had already started as soon as it reached its pinnacle because of both external and internal factors, such as the emergence of itinerant monks in rural communities, the construction of the Daibutsu and provincial monasteries, the hegemony of Dōkyō, and the auxetic growth of Nara monastic Buddhism, and of course the social crises induced by both natural and man-made disaster. These, in turn, called for the reform of monastic Buddhism imposed by the government and the emergence of new variants during the early Heian period. As we shall see in the following chapters, the variants and their descendants exerted the tremendous influence both on the disbanding of monastic religious system and the evolution of a new religious system.

Figure 3-4 Monastic Religion and Autocatalytic Networks



CHAPTER FOUR

THE REFORMATION OF MONASTIC RELIGION

Kuroda Toshio's *kenmitsu-taisei* (exoteric-esoteric system) is a well-established theory that has greatly contributed to our understanding of the development of religion in Japan. Kuroda challenged the prevailing scholarly view of sectarian and doctrinal purists in religious studies, what he called the “*shūha-shikan*”, and attempted to synthesise the various developmental phases of Japanese religion¹. Based on his new approach, he identified the loose affiliation of temple and shrine power combined with esoteric Buddhism as the *kenmitsu* system, and argued that the mainstream medieval Japanese religion was not the so-called ‘Kamakura New Buddhism’ but the *kenmitsu* system, or the so-called Old Buddhism². His assertion drastically changed previous perspectives of not only medieval Japanese religions but also of the Heian Buddhism as understood by eminent historians, such as Ienaga Saburō and Inoue Mitsusada³.

In his *Chūsei ni okeru Kenmitsu-Taisei no Tenkai*⁴, for example, Kuroda divided the process by which the *kenmitsu* system was established into three stages. Firstly, there was the unification of various forms of Japanese religions under esoteric Buddhism on a foundation of esoteric incantations and prayers (*kaji-kitō*) in the 9th century. Secondly, Pure Land Buddhism developed in the 10th century as a product of the Tendai school's own self-assertion in the midst of the esotericisation of all religion. Thirdly, there was

¹ Kuroda 1994b:309-324, Idem 1994c:325-340.

² Kuroda 1994d:185-196.

³ Ienaga 1947; Inoue 1956.

formed the doctrine focusing on the mutual dependence and assistance of 'imperial law' (*ōbō*) and 'Buddhist law' (*buppō*). Kuroda, then, described the 'conglomeration of exoteric and esoteric lineages' (*kenmitsu* system) as the developing process of esoteric Buddhism during the Heian period.

Yet some aspects of Kuroda's theory remain problematic. First, although he applied the term "exoteric-esoteric" to his theory, he regarded esoteric Buddhism as primary and exoteric Buddhism as subordinate. Thus, his usage of the term, exoteric-esoteric Buddhism appears contradictory since we cannot neglect the significant roll played the exoteric teaching of Pure Land Buddhism during the Heian period. The second problem concerns Kuroda's assumption that *Onmyōdō* created a superficial social atmosphere that inspired the popularisation of esoteric rituals of *kaji-kitō*. I agree with Kuroda on this point. However, the social-political and environmental crises of the Heian period should not be omitted from consideration of the rise in strong beliefs in superstition. Moreover, the medicinal function of *kaji-kitō* and the theoretical dimension of esoteric Buddhism advocated by Kūkai and Saicho can be shown to have played a vital role for the popularisation of esoteric Buddhism from the early Heian period. Similarly, the popularisation of Pure Land Buddhism was inspired by the socio-political and natural environment, and was not just a product of the Tendai sect's own self-assertion.

Third, scholars have recently begun to recognise the prosperity of exoteric Buddhist teachings even after the 9th century, especially the reciprocal interaction between Nara

⁴ Kuroda 1994b.

Buddhism and esoteric Buddhism⁵. Kuroda, however, overemphasised the esoteric, and so his consideration of Japanese religion only begins with Saichō's Tendai School and Kūkai's Shingon, and thus the continuity and discontinuity between Nara Buddhism and Heian Buddhism remain unexplained. Although it would be too simplistic to label Saichō's and Kūkai's thought as constituting a linear development from Nara monastic Buddhism, it would be similarly inaccurate to divide the two traditions entirely. For example, both Saichō and Kūkai sought to build their schools within the framework of monastic Buddhism, as can be seen from their heavy reliance on State authority and their strong emphasis on the protection of the State. At the same time, they both introduced new elements such as *kaji-kitō*, mountain asceticism (*sangaku tosō*), and *jingi sūhai* (the worship of *kami*), and thus changed the vector of monastic religion.

Last, but not least, is Kuroda's lack of a global perspective. He viewed Japanese religion not only as an isolated system but also as an aspect of the socio-political context, what he called the *kenmon-taisei*⁶. His approach certainly made his study of Japanese religion more comprehensive and synthetic than previous studies. But he ignores the fact that the development of Heian and Kamakura religions did not take place in isolation from East Asia.

In order to surmount the problems of Kuroda's theory and to reach a better understanding of the development of Japanese religion during the Heian period, I will focus on the development of esoteric Buddhism and Pure Land Buddhism. I hope to

⁵ E.g., Sueki 1994:69-86; Uejima 1997:38-68.

⁶ Kuroda 1994a.

demonstrate that the reformation of Nara monastic Buddhism by Saichō and Kūkai exerted a tremendous impact on the evolution of a new politico-religious system which I refer to as confraternal religion (*kyōdan shūkyō*). The study of Kamakura Buddhism has long been subject to the dichotomic categorisations of ‘new’ and ‘old’, and ‘orthodox’ (*kenmitsu*) and ‘heterodox’ (*itan*) groups – both of which are based on Marxist materialist dialectic⁷. In my opinion, however, the life-dynamic approach is both possible and more fruitful. Here I propose what I call confraternal religious system to explain the problematic Heian-Kamakura shift.

Confraternal religion may be defined as a new type of politico-religious system that emerged from the period of Saichō and Kūkai and developed further during the so-called age of the latter days of the law (*mappō*). The monastic religious system was devoted to the protection and prosperity of the Emperor-centred *ritsuryō* State by means of the theurgic power of shrine-temple complexes. In contrast, for confraternal religion, it was the salvation of individuals as well as the fulfilment of secular merits of believers, including commoners. For this, they organised around the symbolic edifices of the temple-shrine complexes, sought the power of holy priests, and engaged in unique methods for inducing an altered state of consciousness. The rise of Saichō’s, and Kūkai’s esoteric Buddhism is regarded as a reformation of Nara monastic Buddhism, as well as a turning point from monastic to confraternal religion.

Since the evolution of Japanese religion during the Heian period is highly complex, I divide my discussion into two chapters. In the second of these, the dissolution of

⁷ Kuroda 1994a:111-138.

monastic Buddhism and the growth of confraternal Buddhism will be analysed in the context of the transformation from the Emperor-centred *ritsuryō* system to the so-called Fujiwara Dynasty (*ōchō kokka*). In this chapter, however, the reformation of monastic Buddhism by Saichō and Kūkai will be analysed in terms of the rise of cults of vengeful spirits. A number of specific issues will be addressed. First, why did the fear of vengeful spirits re-emerge at the turning point from Nara to Heian? Second, why did Saichō and Kūkai's esoteric Buddhism gain so much popularity at this time? And third, what was the significance of Saichō and Kūkai's esoteric Buddhism for the later development of Japanese religion?

4.1 Vengeful Sprits and the Development of Early Heian Monastic Buddhism

From the end of Nara through to Heian, the belief in vengeful spirits of the dead known as *onryō* once more became a prominent mode of thought. Its re-emergence was closely associated with the rise of esoteric Buddhism. As noted by many scholars, the esoteric rituals (*Mikkyō shuhō*) involving *kaji-kitō* for the exorcism of vengeful spirits and for the welfare of the country appear to have played a vital role in the rise of esoteric Buddhism. The purpose of this present section is to investigate the relationship between the rise of *onryō* and esoteric Buddhism from the perspective of social crisis.

4.1.1 Causes for the Rise of the Belief in Onryō

From the end of the Nara period there was a re-emergence of belief in *onryō*, vengeful spirits of people who had died unnaturally or in a state of anger or resentment. They were believed to bring curses (*tatari*) upon the living and misfortunes such as epidemics, unseasonable weather, and natural disasters. They were thus particularly

feared and demanded careful propitiation. It should be noted that the word *onryō* was not used until the *Insei* period in the 12th century. Prior to this, the vengeful spirits of the dead were called *enkon*, *bōkon*, and *mononoke*⁸. Although these words had slightly different shades of meaning, ‘vengeful spirits’ and ‘*onryō*’ will be used interchangeably here unless the distinction is significant.

During the Kofun period, only numina and the spirits of charismatic rulers were believed to bring about misfortunes or curses on the living. From the 6th century however, the causes of the vengeful spirits were expanded from the numina and charismatic rulers to persons of rank or influence. This expansion was caused by the dissolution of the ancient chiefdoms-society (*kodai shuchōsei shakai*) and the adoption of the Chinese custom called the Rite of *Mogari*.⁹ However after the Taika Reforms, the *ritsuryō* government succeeded in suppressing beliefs in the malevolent influence of the dead, at least from the spiritual lives of aristocrats and powerful clans, by erecting temples for the dead and performing Buddhist rites of placating the spirits.¹⁰

No historical records indicate that the spirits of the dead were feared by the aristocrats and powerful clans during the formative period of the *ritsuryō* system in the 7th century, despite the unnatural deaths of such aristocrats as Soga no Emishi (d.645), Soga no Iruka (d.645), Imperial Prince Furuhiito Ōe (d.645), Imperial Prince Arima (640-658), and Imperial prince Ōtsu (663-686). The belief in vengeful spirits, however, became prevalent once more among non-aristocratic people from the mid-8th century because of

⁸ Kawane 1991:225.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid: 224-236.

the accumulation of social, economic, and political instability after the Great Smallpox Epidemics. For example, an entry in the *Shoku Nihongi* for 746 attributes the death of Genbō to the vengeful spirit of Fujiwara no Hirotsugu¹¹. When Tachibana no Naramaro was put to death after an unsuccessful challenge to the power of Fujiwara no Nakamaro in 756, he was rumoured to have become a vengeful spirit. The central government strictly prohibited anyone from spreading the rumour¹². So although belief in vengeful spirits did not originally have a political implication, the government strictly denied the legitimacy of the belief, precisely because it could confuse the minds of citizens and indirectly lead to the criticism of political leaders. Moreover, in principle, Confucian rationalism was the government's fundamental ideology, and thus it needed to suppress belief in vengeful spirits so as to enhance its secular authoritarianism.

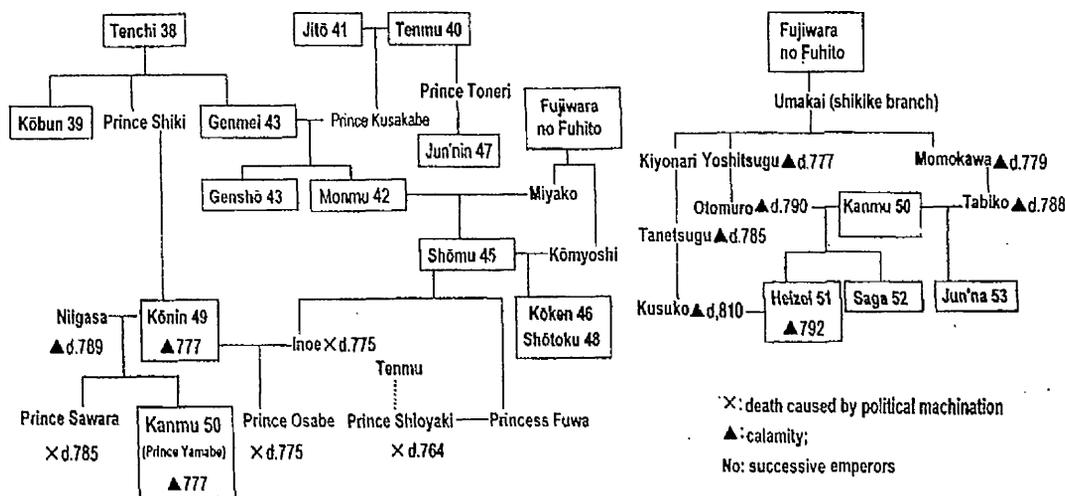
Despite the government's restriction on beliefs in vengeful spirits, the belief nonetheless gradually started to occupy even the minds of court aristocrats from the end of the Nara period. This was partly because of frequent court intrigues during the restoration of the Imperial line of Tenji and the rise in the power of the Northern Branch of the Fujiwara. The belief was fostered in a political environment in which the practices of laying a curse on political rivals and deceiving political opponents in power struggles were rampant. In 772, Imperial Princess Inoe forfeited her court rank, accused of putting a curse on Imperial Princess Naniwa¹³. Three months later, her son, Prince Osabe was also deprived of his title of Crown Prince and became a commoner. He was

¹¹ *Shoku Nihongi & Nihon Kiryaku*, Tenpyō 18/6/18.

¹² *Shoku Nihongi*, Tenpyō-hōji 1/7/8.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Hōki 3/3/2.

accused of the attempted murder of his father Emperor Kōnin¹⁴. In the following year, both Inoe and Osabe were re-accused of having cursed the Imperial Princess Naniwa¹⁵, and two years later, they themselves were poisoned to death¹⁶. During this court intrigue, Imperial Prince Yamabe (Emperor Kanmu before his enthronement) was promoted to Crown Prince¹⁷, although not originally in the line of succession. Yamabe's investiture as the Crown Prince (*rittaishi*) demonstrated that the imperial line of Tenmu and Shōmu had died out with the death of Inoe and Osabe. This was in fact a scheme plotted by Yamabe's father-in-law, Fujiwara no Momokawa (732-779) who wanted Yamabe to succeed to the throne¹⁸.



After the mysterious death of Inoe and Osabe, a series of inauspicious incidents took place: earthquakes, famines, a white rainbow, epidemics, droughts, long spells of rainy weather, a meteor, the observation of Venus during the daytime, storms, solar eclipses, and the revolts of Emishi, followed by the sickness of Emperor Kōnin and Yamabe¹⁹.

¹⁴ Ibid., Hōki 3/5/27.

¹⁵ Ibid., Hōki 4/10/19.

¹⁶ Ibid., Hōki 6/4/27.

¹⁷ Ibid., Hōki 4/1/2.

¹⁸ Sasayama 1984:684.

¹⁹ *Shoku Nihongi*, Hōki 6/5/4, 6/5/11, 6/6/13/, 6/5/14/, 6/6/22, 6/6/25, 6/7/5, 6/7/16, 6/8/5, 6/8/7,

These events were attributed to the vengeful spirit of Inoe. Three days after Yamabe's falling sick, the government reburied Inoe's remains and granted her new burial mound the honourable name of *Mihaka* ('honourable tomb')²⁰. Since Yamabe had not recovered from his illness in the following year, the burial mounds of Emperor Junnin, who was banished to the island of Awaji, and of his mother were also honoured as *Misasagi* (imperial tomb) and *Mihaka* respectively²¹. Yet the Central Government's attempt to placate the vengeful spirits did not succeed. In 779, Momokawa, who had plotted against Inoe, died suddenly at the age of 48 years old²². He had been a central figure in the government, responsible for the enthronement not only of Emperor Kanmu but also of Emperor Kōnin, by eliminating the Imperial line of Emperor Tenmu. Momokawa's sudden death was thus likely to have enhanced Kanmu's fear of the vengeful spirit of the descendants of Tenmu.

In addition, the deaths of Kanmu's political opponents, Inoe, Osabe, Prince Shioyaki (d.764), and Crown Prince Sawara (d.785), were followed by a series of misfortunes in Kanmu's family. For example, in 788, Kanmu's consort, Fujiwara no Tabiko, a daughter of Momokawa, died at the age of 30²³. In 789, his mother Takano no Niigasa died.²⁴ And in 790, another of his consorts, Fujiwara no Otomuro, died at the age of 31²⁵. Moreover, Kanmu's beloved son, Crown Prince Ate (i.e., Emperor Heizei) who had

6/8/22, 6/8/30, 6/9/22, 6/10/1, 6/10/6, 6/10/13, 6/10/24, 6/11/7, 7/2/6, 7/4/1, 7/4/12, 7/5/29, 7/6/4, 7/6/28, 7/7/19, 7/8/15, 7/9/26, 7/10/9, 7/11/2, 7/11/26, 8/2/28, 8/2/30, 8/3/19, 8/5/13, 8/6/13, 8/7/5, 8/7/14, 8/8/8, 8/11/1 & 8/12/25.

²⁰ Ibid., Hōki 8/12/28.

²¹ Ibid., Hōki 9/3/23.

²² Ibid., Hōki 10/7/9.

²³ Ibid., Enryaku 7/5/4.

²⁴ Ibid., Enryaku 8/12/28.

²⁵ Ibid., Enryaku 9/intercalary 3/10.

succeeded Sawara as Crown Prince, became mentally-ill, and his illness was attributed to Sawara's vengeful spirit by the court's master of Yin and Yang (*onmyōji*)²⁶.

Kanmu's fear of vengeful spirits did not cease until the moment of his death. In 806, he gave orders from his deathbed to reinstate the former court ranks of all those punished for involvement in the revolt of Hikami no Kawatsugu and Tanetsugu's assassination. Moreover, he commanded provincial monasteries to chant the *Golden Splendour Sutra* for the Emperor Sudō (a posthumous title of Crown Prince Sawara).²⁷ Although Kanmu is known to us as one of the greatest emperors of Japan for his political and religious reformations, detailed analysis of his personal life discloses that he was tormented by the vengeful spirits of his political opponents to the very end.

(A) POLITICAL MACHINATIONS

Fear of vengeful spirits was exacerbated even further after the death of Kanmu with a succession of other court intrigues. In 809 Emperor Heizei (r.806-809) abdicated in favour of his younger brother Emperor Saga (r.809-823), pleading illness (unable to sleep and eat). Indeed, he had been suffering from the vengeful spirits of his half-brother Imperial Prince Iyo and his mother Fujiwara no Kisshi after the incident known as *Iyo Shimmō no Hen*²⁸. However, a court-lady named Fujiwara no Kusuko, a daughter of Tanetsugu of the Shikike branch and a mother of Heizei's consort, persuaded Heizei to reclaim the throne later in the year. As a result, the court was divided between Emperor Saga's supporters and those of Ex-Emperor Heizei. In 810,

²⁶ *Nihon Kiryaku*, Enryaku 11/6/10.

²⁷ *Nihon Kōki*, Daidō 1/3/15, 1/3/16, 1/3/17 & *Nihon Kiryaku*, Daidō 1/4/15 & 1/3/17.

²⁸ *Nihon Kōki* & *Nihon Kiryaku*, Daidō 4/4/1.

Heizei secretly assembled a military force to reclaim the throne, but the plot was discovered. Kusuko poisoned herself, and her brother Fujiwara no Nakanari was executed. The Ex-Emperor Heizei and his son, Crown Prince Takaoka, were obliged to shave their heads, while those who had remained loyal to them were exiled²⁹. After this incident, the so-called *Kusuko no Hen*, Emperor Saga reinstated Iyo and Kisshi in their former court ranks in 819³⁰, since he feared the scourge sent by their vengeful spirit, and there were no further instances of capital punishment until the Hogen Disturbance (in 1156). These suggest the extent of Heian aristocrats' fear of vengeful spirits. All the evidence points to that the rise of *onryō* was generated by political machinations.

(B) SOCIAL CRISES

In addition to political machinations, events in the social and natural environments of the time were causes for the rise of *onryō*. For even as Emperor Kanmu was tormented by the successive deaths of his relatives and his fear of vengeful spirits, there were frequent outbreaks of epidemics³¹, famines³², deluges³³, and droughts³⁴. The final entry in the *Shoku Nihongi* for 790 provides a grim summary of the major events of that year:

In the autumn and winter of this year, almost all of the men and women under the age of 30 suffered from smallpox. Those who were seriously ill died of the disease. The epidemic broke out all over the country.³⁵

²⁹ Ibid., Kōnin 1/9/12&13.

³⁰ *Nihon Kiryaku*, Kōnin 10/3/21.

³¹ *Shoku Nihongi*, Enryaku 1/7/29, 4/5/27, 9/9/13, 9/12/30, 10/5/6; *Ruijū Kokushi*, 173, Enryaku 9 autumn & winter, Enryaku 10/5/6.

³² *Shoku Nihongi*, Enryaku 4/5/27, 4/6/2, 4/10/10, 8/4/?, 9/3/30, 9/4/29, 9/9/13, 9/9/13 *Nihon Kōki*, Enryaku 18/2/15, 18/2/21, 18/3/2, 18/5/2, 18/6/5, & 18/7/17.

³³ *Shoku Nihongi*, Enryaku 4/9/10, 4/10/27, *Nihon Kiryaku* Enryaku 11/8/9, 11/8/11, 11/8/12.

³⁴ *Shoku Nihongi*, Enryaku 3/9/5, 4/9/10 7/4/11, 9/5/29, 9/9/23, 10/5/6, *Nihon Kiryaku*, Enryaku 11/5/5, *Ruijū Kokushi*, 186 *Butsudō* 13 Enryaku 17/7/28.

The last smallpox epidemic outbreak was recorded a generation before in 763. As the timing of the death and the age of Emperor Kanmu's consort, Otomuro, coincided with these categories, Otomuro must have been one of the victims of this smallpox outbreak of 790³⁶.

In around 790, a cult of sacrificing oxen or horses (*satsu-gyū saishin*) came into vogue in the society, though it was forbidden later by government edict³⁷. The *satsu-gyū saishin* was a cult of Chinese-origin disseminated in Japan from the late Kofun period by immigrants from the continent. There were other Taoist rituals utilising such objects as charcoal-marked pottery (*bokusho doki*) and wooden tablets (*jufu mokkan*)³⁸. Many people engaged in these Taoist-derived rituals to ward off epidemics and flood, or to invite rain. The government banned these cults repeatedly during the Nara and Heian periods, as the prevalence of these cults disturb monastic religion system imposed by the central government. The popularity of these Taoist-derived rituals suggests people's hardship with their lives and dissatisfaction with the system. It also suggests that the epidemics, famines, drought, and deluges plunged society into chaos. In fact, Nagaokakyō survived only ten years, devastated by the flood of the River Yodo and epidemic outbreaks of typhoid and smallpox³⁹.

³⁵ *Shoku Nihongi*, Enryaku 9/12/30.

³⁶ We may conjecture that people who were the age of less than thirty years old and did not have immunity to smallpox, became infected with the disease.

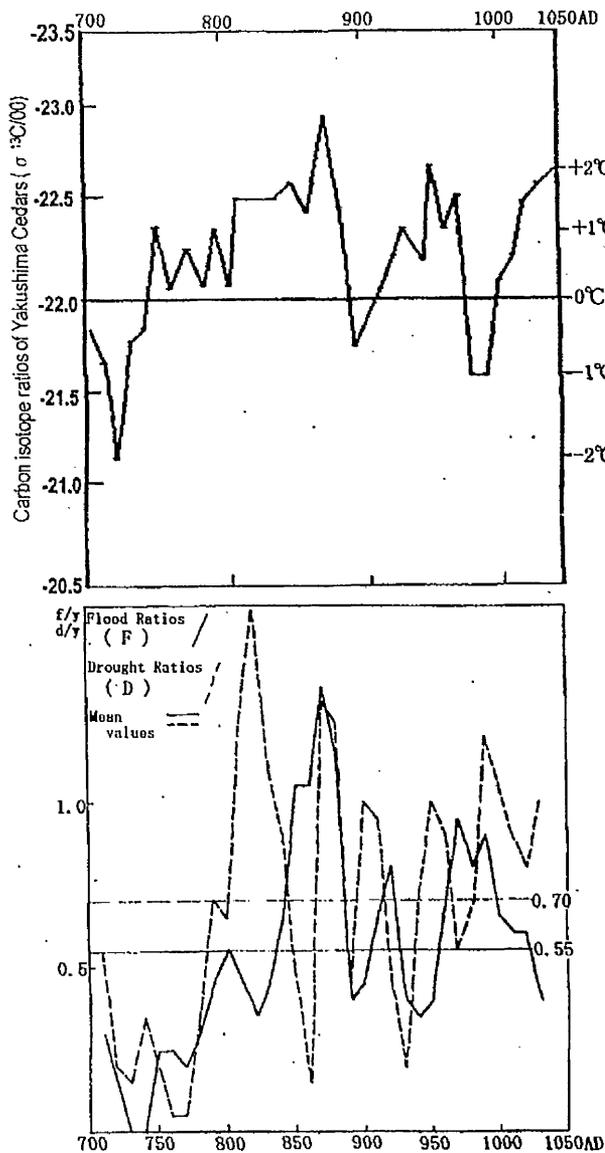
³⁷ *Ibid.*, Enryaku 10/9/16 and *Ruijū Sandaikyaku*, 19, Enryaku 10/9/16.

³⁸ Saeki 1970: 225-266; Kaneko 1999:167-191.

³⁹ Murayama 1984. For the geo-environmental effects on the abolition of Nagaokakyō, see Nagatsuka 1995:171-182.

(C) WARMING CLIMATE

In addition, the climate continued to warm from the early 8th century, accompanied by the sharp increase in both flood and drought from the late 8th century (see Graphs 4-1). These changes were certainly responsible for fostering a milieu congenial to epidemic outbreaks and natural disasters. Indeed, the prevalence of deluges, droughts, and famines during the transitional period from the Nara to the Heian period may be attributed to the climate of that time.



Graphs 4-1 Climate between 700 and 1050

Up: Climatic fluctuation between 700 & 1050 (Kitagawa 1995:50). Note that temperature sharply rose from early 700 to 750. At this time, as already discussed in Chapter 3, the number of epidemics and famines increased and the Great Smallpox Epidemics broke out. From 750 to 800, climate fluctuated between warm and cold, and temperature increased again from around 800, interrupted by brief but sharp drops in temperature in around 900, 1000, and 1200 (not shown here, see Graph 5-1 in Chapter 5). These coldest peaks during the Little Climatic Optimum (8th to 14th century) also exerted significant effects on the later evolution of Japanese religions, as we shall see in the next chapter.

Down: Change in the frequencies of natural disasters in every 20 years between 700 & 1050 (Nakatsuka 1995:178). Note that in the warming climatic condition the frequencies of both floods and droughts sharply increased from the mid-8th century. In 794 Nagaokakyō was abandoned only in 10 years due to the floods of the Yodo River and epidemics outbreaks. Also note that, when the frequency of drought was on the peak during the 1st quarter of the 9th century, Kūkai gained fame by his esoteric rite of inviting rain in 824 & 827 and was promoted to Dai-sōzu in 827.

Emperor Kanmu, however, attributed the cause of the devastation of Nagaokakyō to the vengeful spirit of his younger brother, Crown Prince Sawara.⁴⁰ The Prince had been accused by Kanmu of assassinating Fujiwara no Tanetsugu (737-785), a leading advocate of transferring the capital to Nagaoka, and was confined to Otokuni Monastery in Nagaoka where he died of indignation. Kanmu's fear of *onryō* was exacerbated after this incident, as Sawara's death was soon followed by natural disasters and the deaths of members of his family. Kanmu's paranoia might lead us to conclude that political confusion was a consequence of natural disasters initiated by the warming climate. Therefore, the natural disasters caused by global warming can be seen to constitute one of the underlying causes for not only the political disorder but also the rise of *onryō*.



Otokuni-dera in Nagaoka city

The monastery was dilapidated after the death of Sawara due to people's fear of his vengeful spirit. In 811, Emperor Saga appointed Kūkai the *bettō* of this monastery for the restoration. His success won the further confidence of Saga, and he planned to develop this monastery to the centre of state protection. The premises used to be six times larger than the present (327×218m). The main hall that enshrines the statue of the Great Bodhisattva Hachiman carved by Kūkai (on the left) was reconstructed in 1695. It now belongs to the Buzan branch of the Shingon sect.

⁴⁰ Saeki 1970:215-219; Komatsu 1988:81-88; Takemitsu 1998:198-210.

(D) SEABORNE TRADE

Another underlying cause for the rise of *onryō* was the increased traffic between Japan and the continent after the official adoption of Chinese pharmacopoeia. The provincial monastery system also fostered the import of drugs and spices from the continent. The development of seaborne trade was bound to increase the chance of transmitting diseases from the continent, but the Heian people attributed the cause of the frequent epidemics to vengeful spirits. I will now explore the effects of seaborne trade below, focusing on the imports of spices and drugs that were used in monastic Buddhism.

Before the official adoption of Buddhism and Chinese pharmacopoeia into Japan, varieties of spices and drugs (*kōyaku*) had already been transmitted from the continent⁴¹. However, the adoption of Chinese pharmacopoeia as State medicine in 701⁴² increased the demand for spices: a demand that was further enhanced with the official adoption of Buddhism, especially after the full-scale development of monastic Buddhism. For example, one of the most important state-protecting sutras expounded and chanted at every provincial monastery, the *Konkōmyō Saishō-kyō*, describes how to eliminate every calamity - epidemics, strife, battle, ominous dreams, evil spirits, poison, curses, and black magic - by offering prayers after performing a purification rite. This rite was known as *juyaku senyoku-hō* and involved thirty-two kinds of spices and drugs to purify the body of the prayers⁴³. It is also evident, from the treasures of the Shōsoin repository and various other archives, that Japan imported a wide variety of spices from the continent during the latter half of the Nara period. Most of the aromatic spices and

⁴¹ Miki 1991:32.

⁴² The code of medicine and disease (医疾令), see Inoue et al. 1976:421-422, 675.

⁴³ *Konkōmyō-Saishō-kyō*:228-232.

herbs in the sutra were actually imported to Japan during the Tenpyō era (see below).

32 kinds of aromatics used in the *Konkōmyō-kyō*

(From the Daibenzaitenyōhon 大弁才天天女品)

sweet flag 菖蒲, cattle gallstone 牛黃, red clover (苜蓿香), musk (麝香), realgar (雄黃), silk tree bark (合昏樹), cactus (白及), *Cnidium officinale* (萹蒨), Chinese matrimony vine (苟杞根), turpentine (松脂), cinnamon (桂皮) nut sedge (香附子), agalloch (沈香), sandalwood (栴檀), *tabernaem ontana coronata* (零陵香), clove (丁子), turmeric (鬱金), unknown¹ (婆律膏), unknown² (華香), *Bambusa arundinacea* (竹黃), cardamom (細豆蔻), spikenard (甘松), betony (藿香), *Andropogon muricatus* (茅根香), frankincense (呷脂), dill (艾納), benzoin (安息香), poppy (芥子), unknown³ (馬芹), borneol (龍腦), liquidambar (白膠), costus (青木)

¹ Several different plants were identified with this plant by the scalars: galaca, borneol, or camphor.

² Moroe (1985) supposes that this is a sort of reed called *Amphiodonax karka*

³ This may be *ajowan*.

Spices and other aromatic drugs used during the monastic age

The Inventory of Daianji 大安寺資材帳 of AD 734

mixed musk (合麝香), mixed sandalwood (合白檀), mixed agalloch (合沈香), mixed senkō (合淺香), mixed galbanum (合薰陸香), mixed clove (合丁字香), mixed ebkō (合衣香), mixed lily (合百合香), mixed cantharis (合青), Sausurea (木香), mixed *Lysimachia sikokiana* 合零陵香, mixed stacte (合蘇合香), mixed spikenard (合甘松香), mixed betony (合藿香)

* gō means the aromatic incense mixed with the subsequent spice as a primary ingredient.

The Spices brought to Japan by Ganjin 鑑真渡來準備品目 of AD 743

musk (麝香, Inner Mongolia, northeast China, Siberia, & Korea), agalloch (沈香), spikenard (甘松香, *Nardostachys jatamansi*, Himalayas), borneol (龍腦香, Borneo & Sumatra), ???? (詹糖香), benzoin (安息香, Java, Sumatra), senkō (淺香), morokoshisō, costus (青木香, *Aristolochia debilis*, tropical zone), galbanum (薰陸香), cubeb (畢撥, *Piper cubeba*, Java & Malaysia), myrobolan (訶梨勒), pepper, asabetida (阿魏, Iran & Afghanistan), sugar candy (石密), cane sugar (蔗糖), honey, sugarcane* (甘蔗)

*It is believed that Ganjin brought sugar over to Japan for the first time in 754. The *Tōdaiji Kenmotsuchō* also records the sugarcane in 756: it was used as a drug.

The Inventory of Hōryūji 法隆寺資財帳 of AD 747

galbanum, agalloch, senkō, costus, sandalwood (白檀, India), clove (丁子, the Moluccas), benzoin, spikenard, liquidambar (楓香, Vietnam & south China), stacte (蘇合香, Asia Minor), musk, turmeric (鬱金香, tropical Asia), nut sedge (香附子), *Cyperus rotundus*, throughout tropical and warm-temperate regions, ???? (詹糖香)

The Purchase list of Shōsōin 正倉院買物申請帳 of AD 752

clove, costus, galbanum, musk, *kunokō* (薰衣香), betony (藿香, *Agastache rugosa*, East Asia & North Africa), *Lysimachia sikokiana* (零陵香, morokoshisō, China), spikenard, agalloch, borneol, ebkō or ekō (衣被香), cassia (桂心)

The Memorandum of Medicines 種々藥帳 of AD 756 at the Shōsōin

musk, *Prunus unclata* (薤核, Northwest China), *Corydalis bungeana* (小草), long pepper (=cubeb), black pepper (胡椒), *Spondias mangifera* (阿麻勒, India), *Phyllanthus emblica* (庵麻羅, South China, Malaya, & India), *Ploerhiza kurroa* (黑黃蓮), cantharis (元青), "Prince's Feather" (青箱草), *Blattia* (白及), *Imonite* (禹余糧), *Omphale lapidescens* (雷丸), "Devil's milkstone" (鬼白), sick lac (紫鐵), areca nuts (檳榔子), a kind of Broomrape (突縱容), croton seeds (巴豆), Aleppo Wasp galls (無食子, Minor Asia), *Megrolia bark* (厚朴), Chinese polygala (遠志), myrobolan, cinnamon, *Daphne genkwa* (芫花), ginseng, rhubarb (大黃), bees wax, licorice (甘草), epsom salt, Cane sugar, "Purple snow" (紫雪), lacamahac (胡同律), row salts (石塩), hide of hedgehog (猬皮), Korean wool fat (新羅羊脂), unknown plant root (防葵), mica powder, liharge (蜜陀僧), crude salts (戎塩), Prepared medicine (金石陵), Prepared medicine (石水氷), "Wolfbane" (狼毒), *Gobesium* sp. (治葛), realgar (雄黃), white quartz, hydrated halosile (滑石), musk sac (麝香皮), amber, Sausurea, cloves, sappanwood (蘇芳), bamboo knobbed ginseng (竹節人參), sick lac, *Abrus precatorius* (沒食子之屬), reñite, agalloch, animal gal, sundry roots and fruits, sundry minerals, red lead, silver dust

Trading became increasingly active after the establishment of the provincial monastery system. For instance, Japan prepared 90 tonnes of silk floss to purchase products from Silla in 768⁴⁴. According to the *Purchase Order List to Silla* in the *Shōsōin Archives*, a substantial proportion of the imported items brought over to Japan by the Silla mission in 752 comprised aromatic drugs and pigments not available in Japan. Among these items, cloves, borneol, galbanum, spikenard, sappanwood, and cubeb were not available in either the Korean Peninsula or China. Thus, the Silla trading was a transit trade from South East Asian and Southern Asian countries⁴⁵. The trading by the Silla and Chinese peoples flourished to the point where international markets were held in Kyoto and Dazaifu in the 8th century⁴⁶, and an office for Silla merchants as well as the money order system were established in Dazaifu by the 9th century⁴⁷.

From the early 8th century, the Po-hai also actively participated in the seaborne trade with Japan. There were 42 diplomatic exchanges between Po-hai and Japan, an average of once every 1.7 years over 72 years between 727 to 800⁴⁸. The Po-hai embassy's visits to Japan were so frequent that the Japanese government restricted the mission to once every 12 years in 824. However, the Po-hai often broke the restriction by making up various good excuses⁴⁹, as the seaborne trade was a highly profitable business. They brought various items to Japan, such as furs, handicrafts, and drugs such as ginseng, cattle gallstone (牛黃, *Bezoar Bovis*), aconite (白附子, *Aconitum coreanum*), musk, and

⁴⁴ *Shoku Nihongi*, Jingo-Keiun, 2/10/24.

⁴⁵ Tōno 1992:119. Of various aromatic drugs, only ginseng was native to Silla.

⁴⁶ Emoto 1998:25-32.

⁴⁷ Inoue 1992:115-116.

⁴⁸ Ueda & Son 1994:160-161.

⁴⁹ Yamauchi 1996:16-28.

honey, and returned home with textiles such as silk and floss, and other products such as gold dust, cinnabar, castor aralia (金漆, *Acanthopanax ricinifolius*), pearls, and camellia oil⁵⁰. The Japanese government treated the Po-hai envoys as honoured guests and paid all the expenses for their stay in Japan. In 826 only two years after the establishment of the agreement that restricted the mission to once every 12 years, Po-hai embassies visited Japan again. *Udaijin* Fujiwara no Otsugu (774-843) strongly condemned the envoys, claiming that to receive Po-hai envoys as State guests would be of detriment to the country, because they were nothing more than travelling merchants. Nonetheless, he was in a minority. In fact, many Japanese people looked forward to the Po-hai visit to Japan⁵¹. The Japanese rushed to the guesthouses in Kaga and Tsuruga where the Po-hai envoys stayed, in order to buy their products or set up welcome parties at the international reception hall known as Kōrokan⁵².

There is little doubt that this frequent traffic between Japan and the continent fostered the transmission of epidemics in the 9th century. As noted already, both Japan and China suffered a series of epidemic outbreaks during the above court intrigues in the early 9th century. In China, two-thirds of the population in Che-tung died in an epidemic in 806⁵³. Japan also suffered from very severe epidemics in 805⁵⁴, 807 to 809⁵⁵ and in 812⁵⁶, with these epidemics peaking in 808. The *kansatsushi* ('investigator') of Tōzandō as well as the *azechi* ('inspector') of Mutsu and Dewa provinces, Fujiwara no Otsugu,

⁵⁰ Shu & Gi 1996:138-140.

⁵¹ Ueda & Son 1994:121; Ishi'i 1998:23-31.

⁵² Suzuki 1988:169-192.

⁵³ Twitchett 1979:48.

⁵⁴ *Ruijū Kokushi*, 173, Enryaku 24/7/25.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Daidō 2/12/25, 3/1/7, 3/1/23, 3/1/13, 3/2/4, 3/2/24, 3/3/1, 3/3/8, 3/5/5, 3/5/8, 3/5/10 and 3/9/19; *Nihon Kōki*, Daidō 4/9/7

reported that the epidemics had spread to every province and almost half of the population of the country was killed⁵⁷.

In his *Plagues and Peoples*, McNeill suggests that “this was an irruption of bubonic plague into Japan”,⁵⁸ but this is purely conjectural. There is no extant clinical description that makes identification possible. However, Ming-chou (present Ning-po) located in Che-tung (modern Chekiang province) was the centre of the Japanese trade at that time. Ming-po became an important port from the latter part of the 5th century, as it was a convenient ‘contact point’ for Korean shipping with the southern capital of Nan-ching (present Nanking). This trading route continued throughout the T’ang period.⁵⁹ In 807, Dazaifu asked the central government for permission to re-enshrine the images of the Four Guardian Gods at Konkōmyōji in Chikuzen to their place of original enshrinement, Ōnojō castle in Dazaifu, because an epidemic had rampaged after the removal of the statues⁶⁰. Ōnojō castle had a close connection with Korea, being the oldest Korean-style mountain fort built under the direction of the Paekche migrants, Okurai no Fukuru and Shihi no Fukubu in 665⁶¹. This close connection between the castle and Korea suggests that the epidemic entered Japan from the continent. Dazaifu had also been a port of entry for the Japanese mission to T’ang since the beginning of the 8th century due to the conflict with Silla⁶². Since the 4th ship of the Japanese emissary to T’ang that carried Kūkai back to Japan arrived in Japan in the 10th

⁵⁶ *Nihon Kōki*, Kōnin 3/7/1.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Daidō 3/6/1.

⁵⁸ McNeil 1976:153

⁵⁹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1996.

⁶⁰ *Ruijū Kokushi*, 78 *Butudō shuhō Daidō* 2/12/1.

⁶¹ Sakayori 1998.

⁶² Tōno 1988:145-168.

month of 806, it is highly possible that the disease was transmitted to Japan by either this ship or increased unofficial trade and migration from Silla. The records on the outbreak in China at this time indicate that the infection was a water-borne one such as typhoid or cholera, as it was spread by drinking water in areas where the wells had dried up⁶³. We may thus conjecture that the disease that killed almost half of the Japanese population in 806 was a water-borne infection.

The adoption of Chinese pharmacopoeia and Buddhism; both of which were supposed to further the prosperity of the State, actually served to stimulate seaborne trade and thereby increase the transmission of epidemics from the continent. Ironically, the more frequently epidemics broke out, the more spices were needed, since they were ingredients in Chinese medicine as well as the essential substances used in Buddhist rituals to eliminate the disease. Thus, an increase in spice trading was one of the major factors for the frequent and swift transmission of epidemics into Japan from the continent. However, the contemporary Japanese understood the frequent epidemics as the work of the vengeful spirits of the dead. My proposal is that this understanding in turn promoted the rise of esoteric Buddhism from the early Heian period.

Let us briefly summarise here the causes for the rise of the *omyō* belief. This rise was a consequence of several factors. Political intrigue was important but a study of the natural and social environmental of this period indicates that political strife was but one factor. For this period witnessed deterioration in the natural and social environment, in the form of epidemics, deluges, droughts, and famines. Global warming and the

⁶³ Twitchett 1979:48.

development of seaborne trade set the stage for the prevalence of these disasters. In brief, the true identities of the vengeful spirits were the global warming and frequent transmission of epidemics from the continent.

4.2 Rise of Esoteric Buddhism and Vengeful Spirits

There are two widely accepted explanations for the spread of belief in esoteric Buddhism during the Heian period. First is the idea that the Nara Buddhist establishment gained too much influential power under the preferential treatment granted by Emperor Shōmu and his daughter. Thus, Emperors Kōnin and Kanmu adopted esoteric Buddhism as an alternative to the secularised and depraved Nara monastic Buddhism in an attempt to restrict its economic and political power.⁶⁴ A second view is that prevalent belief in *onryō* laid the foundations for the rise of esoteric Buddhism and *onmyōdō*, as both employed various techniques such as *kaji-kitō* as a countermeasure against the *onryō*.⁶⁵

Both arguments are probably correct to some degree. However, the Buddhism advocated by Saichō and Kūkai has yet to be investigated in relation to the *onryō* phenomena. For example, an eminent historian of Japanese medicine, Hattori Torshirō, maintains that esoteric Buddhism and *onmyōdō* only enhanced the anxiety and worries of the Heian aristocrats who were already very weak and nervous⁶⁶. Although Hattori's assertion is correct to a certain degree, we also need to consider the theoretical and practical dimensions of the Buddhism that Saichō and Kūkai brought back from China

⁶⁴ Inoue 1971.

⁶⁵ Kuroda 1975 ; Hayami 1996.

⁶⁶ Hattori 1980b:37-40.

in its relationship to the *omyō* belief. Moreover, they returned from China in the midst of social crises, and the social crises continued to grow in intensity as they expanded their influence. No attention has been paid to these vitally important facts. The purpose of this subsection, then, is twofold: firstly, to investigate the theoretical and practical dimensions of Saichō and Kūkai's Buddhism in relation to vengeful spirits; and secondly, to investigate the relationship between the rise of esoteric Buddhism and the early 9th century social crises.

4.2.1. Theoretical Dimensions of Esoteric Buddhism

As described in the previous section, a fundamental cause for the re-emergence of the belief in vengeful spirits was court intrigue. There were so many who died as a result of foul play around Emperors Kanmu and Saga, that not only the Emperors but also the Heian aristocrats developed a fear and anxiety of curses. The spirits of these people were believed to remain in this world and put a curse on the living in the form of diseases, epidemics, and natural disasters. A method of placating the anger of the vengeful spirits became an urgent need and my proposal is that the esoteric Buddhism of Saichō and Kūkai provided this.

Prior to the establishment of Saichō's Tendai and Kūkai's Shingon, however, the doctrine of the 'Three Vehicles' (*sanjō-setsu*) taught by the Hossō sect dominated elite society. According to the Mahayana teachings, only the sages who practiced the 'bodhisattva vehicle' (*bosatsujō*) could claim buddhahood. In other words, people who died in a state of anger or resentment could not attain buddhahood, and might instead be able to engage in vengeful acts (*onke*). In contrast, both Saichō and Kūkai advocated

that all sentient beings had the potential to attain buddhahood. Based on the doctrine of the 'Single Vehicle' (*ichijō-setsu*) of the *Lotus Sutra*, for example, Saichō advocated that all sentient beings, even grass and rocks, were capable of attaining buddhahood. If all sentient beings were indeed able to attain buddhahood, then there was no reason to doubt that vengeful spirits were indeed able to attain buddhahood too.

Saichō's assertion thus had great significance for Emperor Kanmu and other Heian aristocrats in their torment. In his *Precepts for Perfect and Sudden Enlightenment* (*Isshin-kaimon*), Saichō applied the doctrine of the 'Single Vehicle' and carried out esoteric incantations (*kitō*) for the vengeful spirits of people who had died before the Enryaku Era. His purpose was to resolve the anger of vengeful spirits and make them transcend to the 'three realms of the world of transmigration' (*sangai*) to attain buddhahood⁶⁷. Moreover, in his *Hokke Chōkō Ganmon*, Saichō asserted that the esoteric power (*genriki*) of the *Lotus Sutra* was able to transform every vengeful spirit of the dead into a guardian deity of the country⁶⁸. In short, Saichō maintained that all the vengeful spirits could be transformed into powerful guardian deities of the country and manifest good influence on people and the country through the esoteric power of the *Lotus Sutra*.

Similarly, Kūkai claimed that his esoteric teaching would provide the easiest and quickest means of attaining buddhahood for everyone⁶⁹. Upon his return from China in 806, he started a campaign to promote Shingon teachings by sending a letter to Emperor

⁶⁷ *Denjutsu Isshin-kaimon*:162.

⁶⁸ *Chōkyō Hokekyō Kōbunryaku Ganmon* 1912:304-305.

⁶⁹ *Shōryōshū* IV-20 Kōnin 1/10/27.

Heizei with the *Catalogue of Newly Imported Sutras and Other Items (Shōrai Mokuroku)*. It appears that he failed to win the attention of the Imperial Court at this time, partly because his return to Japan was premature in relation to the term stipulated for *rugakushō* in China, and partly because Saichō had already established popularity at the Imperial Court as an ‘esoteric’ priest⁷⁰. Nonetheless, Kūkai continued to advocate the superiority of esoteric Buddhism over exoteric Buddhism in regard to attainment of Buddhahood and other benefits. In his *Differences between Exoteric and Esoteric Buddhism (Ben-kenmitsu-nikyō-ron)*, for example, Kūkai argues that *nirvāna* can be attained in this world through the secret doctrine of Shingon, whereas, in exoteric Buddhism, it takes ‘three infinite expanses of time’ (*sandai mushukō*) for even a bodhisattva to complete the practices necessary to become a buddha⁷¹.

Moreover, in the preface to the *Jūjūshinron*, Kūkai attributed the causes of physical disease to curses sent by the vengeful spirits of the dead, *karma (gō)*, and the imbalance of *shidai* (namely earth, water, fire, and wind elements); and the causes of mental disease to the ‘darkness of mind’ (*mumyō*). He then asserted that, “While medicine and physicians are able to cure only the disease caused by the unbalance of the *shidai*, Kūkai’s esoteric rituals are able to cure all kinds of diseases”⁷². According to Kūkai, then, human spirits can be classified into ten stages, and all things in the universe (*shinrabanshō*), including the vengeful spirits of the dead and inanimate objects, are the manifestation of the Highest Being, the spiritual enlightenment of Mahāvairocana or Dainichi Nyorai. Thus, even the lower stages of the human spirit, such as vengeful

⁷⁰ Cf. Inoue 1971:127.

⁷¹ Yoritomi 1988:19-138.

⁷² Tsuda 1993:14.

spirits of the dead, hungry ghosts (*gaki*), and asuras (*ashura*), can attain buddhahood with the help of the esoteric rituals, sutras, ritual objects, mandalas, and statues that Kūkai brought back from China.

In sum, both Saichō and Kūkai asserted that the worldling and the sage were the same in their basic buddha-nature (*bonshō funi* or *bonshō ichinyō*), and that all sentient beings were able to attain buddhahood equally. In the case of Saichō, he advocated that vengeful spirits were able not only to attain buddhahood but also to be transformed into guardian deities of the country. Most importantly, both Saichō and Kūkai provided a theoretical framework to deal with the problems caused by these vengeful spirits.

4.2.2 *Practical Dimensions of Esoteric Buddhism*

A primary purpose of Saichō's going to China was to deepen his understanding of T'ien-t'ai teachings. While he was waiting for a ship to return to Japan, he had the good fortune to study some of the secret doctrines and mystic rituals of esoteric Buddhism from a Chinese precept-master, Shun-hsia, at the mountain monastery of Ling-yen⁷³. When Saichō came home in 805, Emperor Kanmu was critically sick, and every possible traditional means of soothing the anger of vengeful spirits, such as offerings, chanting of sutras, temple building, and pardons had been already exhausted⁷⁴. Saichō was summoned into the palace immediately on his return to conduct esoteric *kaji-kitō* rituals for Emperor Kanmu⁷⁵.

⁷³ Kiuchi 1990:48.

⁷⁴ For detail, see *Ruijū Kokushi, Tennō fuyo* (Kanmu) Enryaku 24 & 25th year.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Enryaku 24/8/9.

Saichō was also ordered by the Emperor to hold the country's first esoteric *kanjō* service which involved the precepts and mystic teachings of esoteric Buddhism known as *kanjō sanmaya* at Takaosanji (now known as Jingo-ji) in Yamashiro. At this service, Saichō conferred an initiation of esoteric Buddhism upon eight high priests from Nara monastic Buddhism. These included Dōshō, Shuen, Gonzō, and Kōen, of which Shuen and Gonzō received *kanjō* on behalf of the Emperor Kanmu. Ten days later, on the 17th of the 9th month, Saichō also conferred an initiation upon the Emperor himself and other priests in the western suburb of Heiankyō⁷⁶.

As a result, Saichō won the highest praise from Emperor Kanmu and Buddhist circles. He found himself suddenly transformed into an authority on esoteric Buddhism⁷⁷, and as a reward for his efforts during the Emperor's illness, he received in early 806 Imperial sanction to ordain two annual quota priests sponsored by the central government (*nenbundosha*)⁷⁸. This marked the beginning of the Tendai sect in Japan. Nevertheless, one priest out of this every annual quota had to study esoteric Buddhism. Although contemporary Japanese regarded Saichō as an authority on esoteric Buddhism, it was not Saichō but Kūkai who had studied orthodox esoteric Buddhism in depth. When Saichō saw the *Catalogue of Newly Imported Sutras and Other Items* that Kūkai submitted to the Imperial Court, he was astonished at the amount of esoteric sutras and treatises that Kūkai had brought back from China. Kūkai also brought back the items that proved his dharma lineage of the most renowned esoteric Buddhist priests in India and China. Saichō eagerly borrowed some of the texts and even became Kūkai's student

⁷⁶ Saeki 1992.

⁷⁷ Matsunaga 1990:23-40.

⁷⁸ *Ruijū Sandaikyaku*, Enryaku 25/1/26, *Dajō Kanpu*, *Nenbundosha-ji*.

by receiving a *gakuho kanjō*. His purpose was to make up the gap between his little knowledge of esoteric Buddhism and to meet the expectations of the Emperor who regarded him as an expert⁷⁹.

(A) THE MEDICAL FUNCTIONS OF KŪKAI'S SHINGON BUDDHISM

Kūkai extended power of his esoteric teachings by innovating two ways of treating patients suffering from fear and anxiety of vengeful spirits. One remedy used esoteric rituals known as *homa (goma-hō)* or *kaji*, while the other used the latest Chinese medicine. So when Kūkai performed *kaji-kitō* for Emperor Saga during his illness, he also administered the latest Chinese drugs, such as *kyōshitō* (a compound of ginger), fermented soybeans (*zushi*), and a dried astringent fruit from East India called myrobalan (*kariroku*). Each ingredient was used to treat a different symptom: ginger for the symptoms of cold, fermented soybeans for fever, and myrobalan as a cure-all for epidemics and ‘wind disease’ (*fūbyō*)⁸⁰. We do not know exactly what this ‘wind disease’ means in Buddhist scriptures, but it was a disease related to the central and peripheral nervous systems, including nervous breakdowns and psychosomatic disease. The *Gobunritsu* records that myrobalan cured Shakyamuni as soon as he took it for his own affliction⁸¹. The *Golden Splendour Sutra* nominates myrobalan as the “king of medicine”⁸². There is no doubt that the combined effects of these drugs and faith healing (*shinkō ryōhō*) greatly contributed to Emperor Saga’s recovery from fears and anxiety of the vengeful spirits. Detailed analyses of the *kaji* support this supposition.

⁷⁹ Matsunaga 1990:28 and Hayami 1996:11,14.

⁸⁰ Nanba 1993:116-118,218-219,246-247.

⁸¹ Takakusu & Watanabe 1925.

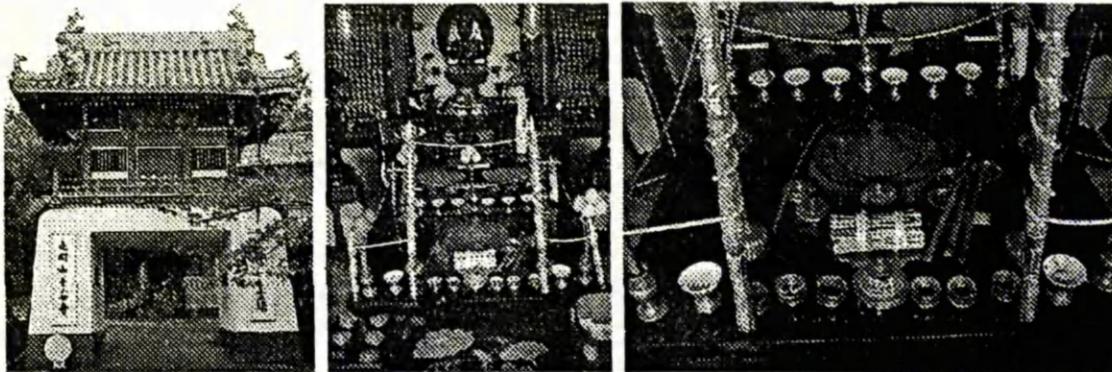
⁸² Mibu 1987:299.

As noted above, during the *kaji* Kūkai performed not only incantation and prayer, but also administered various drugs. The *kaji* thus involved both psychological and pharmaceutical treatments. For example, holy and aromatic water was sprinkled on a patient at the beginning of the esoteric ritual for stopping illness *sokusai goma-hō*. This rite was called *kaji kōzui no gi*, and it symbolised the transfer of Buddha's power to the patient. At the same time, it probably induced an immediate alleviation of symptoms and helped the patient to concentrate on the succeeding rituals. While esoteric incantations and invocations were being chanted, a variety of drugs (*go-yaku*) were put at the bottom of a furnace, and a variety of aromatic spices and other substances (*go-kō*) were burnt in the holy firewood. This was called *ge-goma*, or 'external fire-ceremony'. According to Yamada Kentarō, an eminent historian of spices, spices were employed in sacred rites and ceremonies for their pungent or aromatic odour, which was believed to drive away evil spirits and demons and so gratify deities. The ascending smoke of the incense also symbolised the presence of gods.⁸³

Moreover, a *goma-dō*, or a hall for the external fire-ceremony, was designed in such a way that vaporised ingredients of aromatic substances would saturate the hall, and thus a patient could inhale the aromatic scent. *Go-kō* were burned not only to drive off evil spirits and gratify the deities but also as aromatherapy for the patient. To relieve anxiety and tension, for example, aromatic spices such as cassia and nut sedge; aromatic woods such as agalloch and sandalwood; and other scented substances such as musk and spikenard were burnt in the furnace⁸⁴.

⁸³ Yamada 1994:9-11.

⁸⁴ Nihonyanagi 1997:552.



Goma Hall at Jūrokuji Temple (7th *fudasho* of the 88 Temples of Shikoku in Tokushima) and *gomadan*

At the culmination of the external fire-ceremony, the mixture of *go-yaku* and ash called *Shingon goma no hai* was administered, often with a supplementary drug named *go-hō* or the 'five treasures'. The main substances of the 'five treasures' were mercury, gold, and silver. Since these were heavy metals, they were expected to have a long-lasting effect, while the *go-yaku* were prescribed for both the treatment of disease and the improvement of a patient's constitution. In addition, a hypnotic cure called hand healing (*teate-ryōhō*) and the burning of poppy seeds to induce altered states of consciousness, were frequently applied to a patient during the *kaji*⁸⁵. These treatments helped give the patient a sense of security and enhance self-healing power. They afforded the patient a sense of identity with the practitioner of the *kaji* and the deities of esoteric Buddhism who would remove his/her sufferings. In these ways, the *kaji* saw a dazzling variety of possible medical and psychological treatments administered to the patient. *Kaji* was thus endowed with several characteristics of an intensive care unit, a dispensary, spiritual healing, and religious worship.

In earlier methods operated by Nara Buddhists, drugs and prayers were never

⁸⁵ Ibid 1997:574-579,553-554. For more detail about *goma-hō*, see Takai 1953:366-424; Idem 1976:171-265.

administered to a patient simultaneously. Modern medical research indicates that Kūkai's highly elaborated system of spiritual healing works more efficaciously than the mere administration of medical treatment alone. This mechanism is known as the placebo effect⁸⁶. Other research indicates that there is also a mechanism called immune conditioning in which an individual's immune system can be trained to respond to - for example - the smell of aromatic spices or the stimuli associated with a room, in much the same way as it would respond to powerful immune-promotive or immune-suppressive drugs⁸⁷. This suggests that Kūkai was able to improve a patient's immune system without administration of the drugs once the immune conditioning was firmly established after the repeated pairing of *kaji* with actual administration of drugs. In extreme cases, patients might have been cured by the mere sight of Kūkai, the sound of his voice, or the intake of holy aromatic water prepared by him. The medical and psychological functions of *kaji* may not therefore be discarded as mere superstition. Rather, the *kaji* was based on scientific methods for treating a patient's fear and anxiety of vengeful spirits as well as the treatment of other illnesses, in a space that was an intensive care unit accommodated with aromatherapy, pharmacy, spiritual healing, and immune conditioning. In contrast to the highly superstitious atmosphere of previous esoteric Buddhism (*zōmitsu*), Kūkai's *kaji* was grounded on holistic medical treatment. Therefore, Shingon esoteric rituals based on *kaji* were the best religious and medical innovations available against the fear and anxiety of vengeful spirits. The efficacy of the esoteric rituals undoubtedly contributed to the rise of Kūkai's pure esoteric Buddhism⁸⁸.

⁸⁶ For example, see Hinohara 1997.

⁸⁷ Martin 1997:99-106.

⁸⁸ Here, of course, I am not arguing that the theoretical and practical dimensions of Kūkai's esoteric Buddhism are the sole cause, but one of the major factors for his gaining influential power.

(B) THE PSYCHOLOGICAL FUNCTIONS OF SAICHŌ'S TENDAI BUDDHISM

In contrast to Kūkai's esoteric Buddhism, what Saichō transmitted from China was markedly syncretistic. He sought to incorporate Zen, and esoteric, and monastic discipline teachings into the T'ien-t'ai school. Nevertheless, we can take a general view of Saichō's medical aetiology and practices from one of the major Tendai texts named the *Makashikan* ('*Discourse on Mahayana Meditation and Contemplation*'). As indicated by the formal name of the Enryakuji Monastery, Hieizan Shikan Hokkein, Saichō relied heavily on the teachings of the *Makashikan* for his practices. The *Makashikan* was a series of lectures on the Tendai method of meditation given by the first patriarch of the Chinese T'ien-t'ai school, Chih-i (538-597) and compiled by his disciple Kuan-ting (561-632) in 594. In the *Makashikan*, Chih-i formulated a contemplative approach to enlightenment known as 'the four kinds of spiritual contemplation' (*shishu-zanmai*)⁸⁹. These practices aimed to attain a concentration of thought in the practitioner and his/her realisation of some reality-principle or visualisation of a transcendental object (*samādhi*). What is particularly significant here is that the text expounds the aetiology of various diseases and their cures in relation to contemplative practises. In other words, it is celebrated not only as a manual of spiritual concentration, but also as a Buddhist medical text, one to which Saichō attached great importance⁹⁰.

According to the *Makashikan*, all diseases originate from the 'realm of the inconceivable' (*on-kai-nyū/on-nyū-kai*).⁹¹ In other words, conventional diseases derive

⁸⁹ Sonoda 1974:100-132.

⁹⁰ Yuasa 1994:123.

⁹¹ Nitta 1989:21-22.

from our consciousness, and they are only superficial phenomena. An ultimate cause for disease is the evil passions (*bonnō*) that disturb and pollute our body and mind⁹². In the text, Chih-i gives a detailed explanation of conventional or phenomenal diseases caused by the malfunction of the five viscera and their cures. He argues that these diseases disappear when body energy flow is harmonised by the concentration of mind at the point of the abdomen called *tanden*, located about 2 inches below the umbilicus. In addition, a method of treatment by means of the vocalisation of the six syllables was applied in Tendai medicine. Each vocalisation of the six syllables corresponds to the function of different tracts (*keiraku*) of the renal, splenic, the triple *chiao*⁹³, cardiac, hepatic, and pulmonary systems⁹⁴. On Chih-i's deathbed, his pupils advised him to take medicine, but he refuted the advice by saying that drugs and the human life-span were contradictory to each other⁹⁵. Aetiology in Tendai medicine is thus highly philosophical, and actual treatment requires a lot of contemplation and ascetic training.

Based on the above descriptions, we can identify four distinctive differences in the treatment of disease between Kūkai's *kaji* and Saichō's contemplation. First, Kūkai positively employed the pharmaceutical effects of spices during the *kaji*, whereas Saichō attached greater importance to meditation. In other words, drugs did not play a significant role in the Tendai sect, whereas there was abundant usage of spices and drugs in Shingon. Second, *kaji* required no training for the patient. In contrast, everyday training was essential in contemplative-treatment. Thus, although an adept priest might

⁹² Ōno 1990:93-120.

⁹³ The *san-chiao* or *sanshō* in Japanese has been the source of endless frustration for historians of anatomy unable to locate it definitely.

⁹⁴ Yuasa 1994:124-125.

⁹⁵ Ōno 1990:94.

have been able to carry out contemplative-treatment, the laity could not. In relation to this difference, a third arises. Treatment was administered to the patient involuntarily during the *kaji* whereas contemplative-treatment requires the patient's voluntary participation in his or her own treatment. This difference suggests that the former was developed for the treatment of the laity whereas the latter for monks practising asceticism. In short, the fundamental motives for these practices were different from the beginning. The fourth and final difference is their respective attitudes toward health. It was hardly possible even for an adept to treat himself by contemplation alone when seriously ill. Everyday effort to maintain good health was quite important in Tendai. In other words, contemplative-treatment placed more emphasis on the maintenance of mental and physical fitness whereas *kaji* was usually applied when an individual actually got ill. The emphasis on good health by the Tendai sect is akin to the present-day emphasis on preventive medicine. The major advantage of contemplative-treatment over *kaji* was its cost, because it did not demand expensive imported spices and elaborately decorated altars. It is easy to imagine that the aristocrats who were both mentally and physically weak but wealthy enough to afford expensive treatment preferred *kaji* to contemplative-treatment for its easiness and convenience. However, we cannot neglect the fact that the disadvantages of the Tendai contemplative-method proved to be an advantage from the 10th century, as it evolved into the form of *nenbutsu-dancing*, which attracted the majority of people. Thus, Pure Land Buddhism was not a product of the Tendai School's self-assertion; rather, it was a further evolution of pre-medieval Japanese religion, in that it was transformed into 'popular religion' by being able to fill in the gap between the aristocrats and commoners. We will come back to this point at the end of this chapter.

(C) COMPARING SAICHŌ AND KŪKAI

Although both Saichō and Kūkai provided frameworks to deal with the vengeful spirits of the dead, the practical dimension of the Shingon sect overrode the philosophy of the Tendai sect, and treatment by *kaji* gained popularity over contemplative treatments among the Heian aristocrats. After the death of Saichō, the Tendai sect was permeated by the practice of *kaji* and other Shingon doctrines. As recorded in the *Sandai Jitsuroku*, for example, the *Dajōkan* began to consider that “the teachings of the Tendai sect are essentially the same as those of the Shingon sect despite the difference between the practices of *shikan* (contemplation) and *shingon* (mantras)”⁹⁶. As will be described below, Kūkai began to acquire influence from the reign of Emperor Saga, and he transformed many rites not only of the Tendai sect but also of Nara Buddhism into Shingon-style esoteric rituals. As a result, the Shingon esoteric ritual of *kaji-kitō* became the most popular means of fighting against disease and calamities during the early Heian period.

4.2.3 *The Expansion of Shingon Buddhism and the Social Crises of 820s & 830s*

I would now like to consider the relationship between the rise of Kūkai’s esoteric Buddhism and the social crises of 820s and 830s. Ever since Kūkai voluntarily performed esoteric rituals for the protection of the country at Takaosanji in 810⁹⁷, he gradually found favour with Emperor Saga and the government. Nevertheless, he could not distinguish himself as the best esoteric priest until the death of Saicho in 822. In that year, Kūkai was asked by the government to perform the esoteric rituals known as

⁹⁶ *Sandai Jitsuroku*, Jōgan 3/6/3.

⁹⁷ *Shōryōshū* IV-20 Kōnin 1/10/27. See also Miura 1985:241.

sokusai zōyakuho. These aimed to stop calamities and to increase benefits, as there was a thunderstorm in the preceding winter which suggested the impending outbreak of calamities from epidemics and adverse climate. For these rituals Kūkai built a Shingon altar known as *Kanjō Dōjō* or Tōdaiji Shingo-in within the Nan-in ('Southern Temple') of Tōdaiji.⁹⁸ The government appointed him to this role probably because of Saichō's declining health and his antagonistic relationships with Nara monastic Buddhism. In other words, the government began to place greater expectations on Kūkai as a successor to Saichō as the latter's death approached. The expansion of Kūkai's influence was generated partly by the death of Saichō in 822. The instalment of the Shingon altar within Tōdaiji was significant for the later development of monastic Buddhism, as it exposed the centre of provincial monasteries to the influence of esoteric Buddhism and became a means for spreading Shingon teachings from within Nara monasteries. Indeed, Kūkai's promotion and the esoterisation of monastic Buddhism continued even further.

The period from 822 until his death in 835 was the most successful period for Kūkai. This can be partly attributed to the death of Saicho in 822, but there was also a direct correlation between Kūkai's advancement and a succession of social crises. The social and natural climate of the whole East Asia deteriorated from the early 820s after a brief respite during the 810s. Officials were dispatched to provide relief in Kai province in 822, where an epidemic had broken out⁹⁹. In 823¹⁰⁰ and 824¹⁰¹, the whole country

⁹⁸ *Ruijū Sandaikyaku, Dajōkanpu* of Jōwa 3/5/9, quoting the *Dajōkanpu* of Kōnin 13/2/11.

⁹⁹ *Ruijū Kokushi*, 173, Kōnin 13/7/8.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, Kōnin 14/2nd month. On the 8th day of the 3rd month of this year, the rite of *Yakushi (Yakushi no Hō)* was conducted to eliminate epidemics.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, Tenchō 1/5/2.

was affected by a great epidemic, which extracted a heavy death toll in the coastal areas. The outbreak was associated with famine, drought and crop-failures due to adverse climate¹⁰². When the epidemic broke out in 823, Kūkai was ordered to perform the esoteric rite of *sokusai zōyakuho* in the Kōgōin ('House of Empress') for three days and three nights from the 13th day of the 10th month¹⁰³. On the 2nd day of the 12th month, Emperor Junna ordered Kūkai to perform the rite of protecting state, assisted by fifty Shingon priests of the Tōji¹⁰⁴. On the 23rd day of the same month, Junna ordered Kūkai to perform a penitential service called the *Dai Tsuhōkō-bō* in the Seiryōden, living quarters of Emperor¹⁰⁵. And later that year, ex-Emperor Saga personally studied Shingon rites with Kūkai and received *kanjō*¹⁰⁶.

When there was a great drought in 824, Kūkai performed the esoteric rite of *shōukyō no hō* (inviting rain) in the Shinsen'en ('Garden of the Divine Well') by order of the Emperor, and one month later was appointed *Shō-sōzu* (Minor Secondary Prelate) as a reward for its success¹⁰⁷. It was in this year that the Takaosanji was upgraded to a *jōgakuji*, a temple sanctioned and supported by the government, and given a new name, Jingo Kokuso Shingonji, where 21 Shingon priests resided¹⁰⁸. The Tōji and other monasteries were rewarded with 12 tons of cotton by the government too¹⁰⁹. When another severe drought broke out in 827, Kūkai again performed the rite in the Daigokuden ('Imperial Throne Hall'), assisted by one hundred monks. No sooner was

¹⁰² Ibid., Kōnin 14/7/19 & 14/7/20.

¹⁰³ *Nihon Kiryaku*, Kōnin 14/10/13.

¹⁰⁴ *Kōbō Daishi Denki Shūran*: 508.

¹⁰⁵ *Nihon Kiryaku*, Kōnin 14/12/23.

¹⁰⁶ *Kōbō Daishi Denki Shūran*: 509-513.

¹⁰⁷ *Sōgō Bunin*, 1 Tenchō 1/3/26.

¹⁰⁸ *Ruijū Kokushi*, Tenchō 1/9/27. Kūkai was first an abbot of Takaosanji

the rite completed, than abundant rain covered the ground three inches deep. Kūkai gained fame¹¹⁰, and was finally promoted to *Dai-sōzu*¹¹¹.

When epidemics, drought, and famines ravaged the country in the early 820s, Kūkai advised Emperor Junna to reorganise the annual service of *Nimmōe*, formerly conducted by Nara exoteric priests. The *Nimmōe* was first held in 660 during the reign of Empress Saimei and had been conducted annually since 693, during the reign of Empress Jitō, to secure good harvests and ward off epidemics. In 825, however, Kūkai composed a prayer (*ganmon*) for the *Nimmōe* and used the latest version of the *Nimmō-kyō* translated by the famed *Chen-yen* (Shingon) master, Amoghavajra (705-774), instead of the oldest version translated by Kumārajīva (334-413) that had been used by Saichō and priests in provincial monasteries¹¹².

Japan suffered from another series of natural disasters and minor epidemics prior to the outbreak of the cruel epidemic of 833. A severe drought broke out in 829¹¹³, and a large number of young peasants were killed by epidemics in many provinces in that year¹¹⁴. In 830, a large-scale earthquake struck the northern province of Dewa, causing landslides and floods¹¹⁵. In the same year, “a great number of young people were killed by the epidemics in Dewa, Mutsu, and Dazaifu”¹¹⁶, and the province in western Honshū.

¹⁰⁹ *Nihon Kiryaku*, Tenchō 1/9/27.

¹¹⁰ *Ruijū Kokushi*, 170, Tenchō 4/5/26; *Shōryōshū*, VI-47:292-294.

¹¹¹ *Kōbō Daishi Denki Shūran*, Tenchō 4/5/28. According to the *Shoku Nihon Kōki* (Jōwa 2/3/25), he was appointed *Dai-sōzu* three years later in the 7th year of Tenchō era.

¹¹² Inoue 1971:123.

¹¹³ Gondō 1932:39.

¹¹⁴ *Ruijū Kokushi*, 173, Tenchō 6/4/17.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 171, Tenchō 7/1/28.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 173, 7/4/26. On the 6th day of the 5th month, 100 priests chanted the

Hōki, suffered from famine¹¹⁷. In the wake of a severe crop-failure and famine in 831, followed by a drought and an epidemic in 832, frequent outbreaks of fire further aggravated the situation¹¹⁸. The year 833 witnessed another general epidemic outbreak. The Japanese chronicles reveal that the epidemic was accompanied by a severe famine in every province. An epidemic and a famine struck Tōtōmi, one of the 15 provinces in Tōkaidō, and relief measures were taken in the 4th month, but both epidemics and famines took hold throughout Japan so that imperial orders had to be issued to encourage the affluent to give aid to the poor¹¹⁹. This suggests that the public granary had run out of stock, and that the gap between the affluent and the poor had widened further.

When epidemics and famine devastated every province again in the early 830s, Kūkai criticised another Imperial service, the *Gosai-e*, and made a proposal to the new Emperor Ninmyō (r.833-850) in 834 as follows:

Buddha preached the Law in two ways. One way comprises shallow and abridged sermons called *Senryakushu*, and the other deep and secret sermons called *Himitsushu*. The former consists in prose and hymns (*gāthās*) of the sutras, whereas the latter consists in mystic spells and phrases (*dhāraṇī*), found in the sutras. For example, *Senryakushu* is just like a futile explanation of the origin of diseases and the medicinal benefits of diverse medicines simply based on medical books. The secret formula of *dhāraṇī*, on the other hand, is just like a prescription that actually removes the disease. No matter how hard you try explaining the cause of a disease and the efficacy of a drug, a patient will never be cured. However, if you prescribe a drug for a disease

Daihannya-kyō at the Daigokuden to prevent earthquakes and epidemics.

¹¹⁷ Gondō 1932:39.

¹¹⁸ *Ruijū Kokushi*, 173, Tenchō 9/5/16. Fire broke out from the kitchen of the *Dajōkan* in the midnight [Ibid.:Tenchō 9/5/18].

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 173, Tenchō 10/3/20, 10/5/28, 10/6/8 & 10/6/10, *Shoku Nihon Kōki*, Tenchō 10/5/11, 10/5/26, & 10/5/28.

and give the drug to the patient, we can actually cure the patient and preserve his life. In the same way, the simple reading of the text of *Saishōō-kyō*, as now read in expounding the sutra, is not sufficient. Neither the painting of images, nor the setting of an altar (*kechidan*), nor the rites are adequate. The sweetness of the nectar (*kanro*, which wards off age and death) is merely explained, but I, Kūkai, am afraid that his Majesty cannot actually experience the taste of the ghee (*daigo*, which cures all diseases in a miraculous way). Therefore, I humbly addresses this petition to his Majesty that thenceforth a facility for esoteric Buddhist service might be arranged solemnly within the Imperial Palace and that the mystic formulae of *Shingon darani* be intoned.¹²⁰

The Emperor soon approved his proposal, and an esoteric service called *Goshichinichi no mishiho* replaced the former exoteric service of *Gosai-e*. Kūkai first held the ceremony in 835 at the Shingon-in throughout the whole of the 2nd week of the 1st month, and it later became an annual service performed by the Shingon priests (*Ajari*) of the Tōji monastery.¹²¹ It was as a result of this that the teachings of esoteric Buddhism penetrated deep into the court.

What I have described above points to a direct correlation between the early 9th century social crises and the expansion of Kūkai's Shingon Buddhism. Whenever a natural disaster broke out, Kūkai, by offering countermeasures, gained power in government and Buddhist circles. This bears a close resemblance to Genbō's fortunes during the Great Smallpox Epidemic of 735-737.

Although this simple correlation does not of itself demonstrate that the rise of esoteric

¹²⁰ *Shoku Nihon Kōki*, Jōwa 1/12/19.

¹²¹ *Ruijū Kokushi*, Jōwa 1/12/25. The term *goshichinichi* (the latter seven days) was used because it was conducted seven days after the completion of various Shinto rituals of the

Buddhism was enhanced by the 9th century social crises, the assertion can be further supported by comparing the early 9th century epidemics with the 8th century Great Smallpox Epidemic in the pattern of outbreaks. When the Great Smallpox Epidemic ravaged the country, the Nara people clearly recognised that the epidemic was transmitted from Dazaifu to the rest of the country. The Heian people, however, somehow appeared unable to identify the source of epidemics in the early 9th century. How so? The answer is closely related to the increase in the number of ports of entry and the frequency of ship arrivals from the continent. The Japanese government made it a rule for every foreign mission to call at Dazaifu. However, wrecked ships or smugglers often drifted ashore in such places as Dewa, Sado, Iki, Noto, Kaga, Echizen, Wakasa, Tango, Tajima, Izumo, Nagato, and Tsushima¹²². For example, ships from Po-hai called at Kaga, Iki, and Tajima in 823, 825 and 827 respectively¹²³. Moreover, trade between the northern district of Tōhoku and Sakhalin was also quite active¹²⁴. The existence of these multiple entry-points implies multiple sources of infection. And indeed, an epidemic broke out simultaneously in Dazaifu, Mutsu, and Dewa in 830¹²⁵. These multiple points of entry, then, made it more difficult for the Heian aristocrats to identify clearly the origin of epidemics. As the outbreak of epidemics was so widespread, it may be surmised that the Heian aristocrats had to rely on local deities for the protection against scattered epidemics, and they thus paid more attention to the worship of *kami* enshrined. This conjecture can be supported by the fact that many important shrines (*myōjinsha*) began to recapture lost ground from the early 9th century.

New Year.

¹²² Matsueda 1994:180.

¹²³ *Ibid*:182.

¹²⁴ Saitō 1996:439-489 & Kimura 1997:121-136.

¹²⁵ *Ruijū Kokushi*, 173, Tenchō 7/4/26.

The special offerings (*rinji-hōhei*) to the *myōjinsha* suspended for epidemics since 737 were resumed in 812. This time, as the epidemics and famines broke out, Emperor Saga sent special offerings to the Ise Shrine and other *myōjinsha*¹²⁶. This was 3 years after one of the cruellest epidemic outbreaks of 807-9 that killed more than half of the entire population.

In the midst of this social turmoil, Emperor Heizei became emotionally disturbed and abdicated in favour of his younger brother. When yet another epidemic broke out in 818, special offerings were made again to the Ise Shrine¹²⁷, and at the time of the more serious epidemics of 823, offerings were made to the deities of the 'Five Central Provinces and Seven Ways' (*goki-shichidō*). Their purpose was to redress their wrongdoing before the deities and to appease 'miasma' (*ekiki*), which was believed to cause epidemics¹²⁸. Likewise, a year after the epidemic of 833, Buddhist monasteries in the capital were ordered to chant the *Daihannya-kyō* and the *Kongōhannya-kyō* for the deities of Heaven and Earth to eliminate miasma¹²⁹. In the following year (835), almost a week after the death of Kūkai, an epidemic broke out in many provinces all at once. The *Ruijū Kokushi* attributes the cause of this to the *onigami/kijin* (the ox-headed vengeful deities who take the lives of people), and esoteric incantations were conducted to suppress them and so epidemics.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ *Nihon Kōki*, Kōnin 2/7/1 & 2/7/2.

¹²⁷ *Ruijū Kokushi*, 173 Kōnin 9/9/11.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, Kōnin 9/9/11.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, Jōwa 1/1/25.

¹³⁰ *Ruijū Kokushi*, Jōwa 2/4/3. For the nature of *onigami* or *oni* during the early Heian period, see *Nihon Ryōiki* (I-5, I-24, I-28, II-5, II-24, II-25).

As noted earlier, one popular countermeasure against the evil influence of the *onigami/kijin* involved sacrificing oxen to the deities (*satsugyū-saishin*). This cult was popular because it was believed that the *onigami/kijin* were fond of beef and they would spare the lives of people who made meat offerings. However, Kanmu was especially sensitive about this cult as he was born in the year of the ox (丁丑), and the act of killing oxen symbolised the act of killing Kanmu. In the 23rd year of the Enryaku era, for example, when the buildings (*chūin* and *seirō*) of the Imperial Place were blown over by the typhoon and an ox was crushed to death, Kanmu grieved at the incident as he interpreted it as a foreboding of his own death. Moreover, some members of the Imperial family such as Osabe and Inoe died with resentment in their heart on the day of the ox (己丑). Thus, Kanmu prohibited the cult in 791 and 801, and it finally died out after 801.¹³¹ With these prohibitions, the central government became desperate to find alternative methods of placating the curse of vengeful spirits/deities as epidemics attacked at random. One of these involved Heian aristocrats returning to *kami* worship. Another was the esoteric ritual of *kaji-kitō*. These rituals, especially the latter as performed by Kukai, were quite timely as they met the exact demands of the government. Indeed the expansion of Kukai's Shingon Buddhism can be explained in terms of it being the right remedy for the cause of disasters, which were believed to be the curse of vengeful spirits. Kūkai's Shingon Buddhism offered people the best possible countermeasure against the evil influence of vengeful spirits, supported by the most sophisticated theory and practice available at that time. Therefore, we may conclude that the different pattern of epidemic outbreak - or the different perception of the origin of the epidemics - from the early 9th century greatly contributed to the return

¹³¹ Saeki 1970:256.

of aristocrats to *kami* worship as well as to Kūkai's promotion and the subsequent spread of Shingon Buddhism.

The different perception of the causes for natural disasters that emerged in the early 9th century finally led to the first government-sponsored *Goryōe*. This was held at Shinsen'en in 863 to pacify the vengeful spirits of Sudō Tennō, Prince Iyo, his mother Fujiwara no Kisshi, Fujiwara no Nakanari, Tachibana no Hayanari, and Funya no Mitamamaro, as they were believed to have caused the epidemics. They were offered a lecture on the sutras *Konkōmyō-kyō* and *Hannyashin-kyō*, followed by performances by the artists of the Bureau of Music of Chinese and Korean dances, *sangaku* performances, shooting arrows from horseback, *sumō* wrestling, and puppet plays.¹³² This was the first occasion on which the word *goryō*, meaning literally 'august spirits', was used to represent the *onryō* in the historical documentation. Kuroda Toshio has rightly argued that the *goryō* represent a further evolution of the *onryō*, in that they could be transformed into the divine status of *kami* by being enshrined as *goryō*¹³³. In other words, the purpose of the 863 *goryōe* was, rather to banish them, to convert the vengeful spirits into beneficent, tutelary deities. We find the same principle of "transforming every vengeful spirit into a guardian deity of the country" in Saichō's *Hokke Chōkō Ganmon*. Although the methods of transforming vengeful spirits to benefactors in esoteric Buddhism and *kami* worship were different, they were based on the same principle of making vengeful spirits attain buddhahood, and promoted by the

¹³² *Nihon Sandai Jitsuroku*, Jōgan 5/5/20.

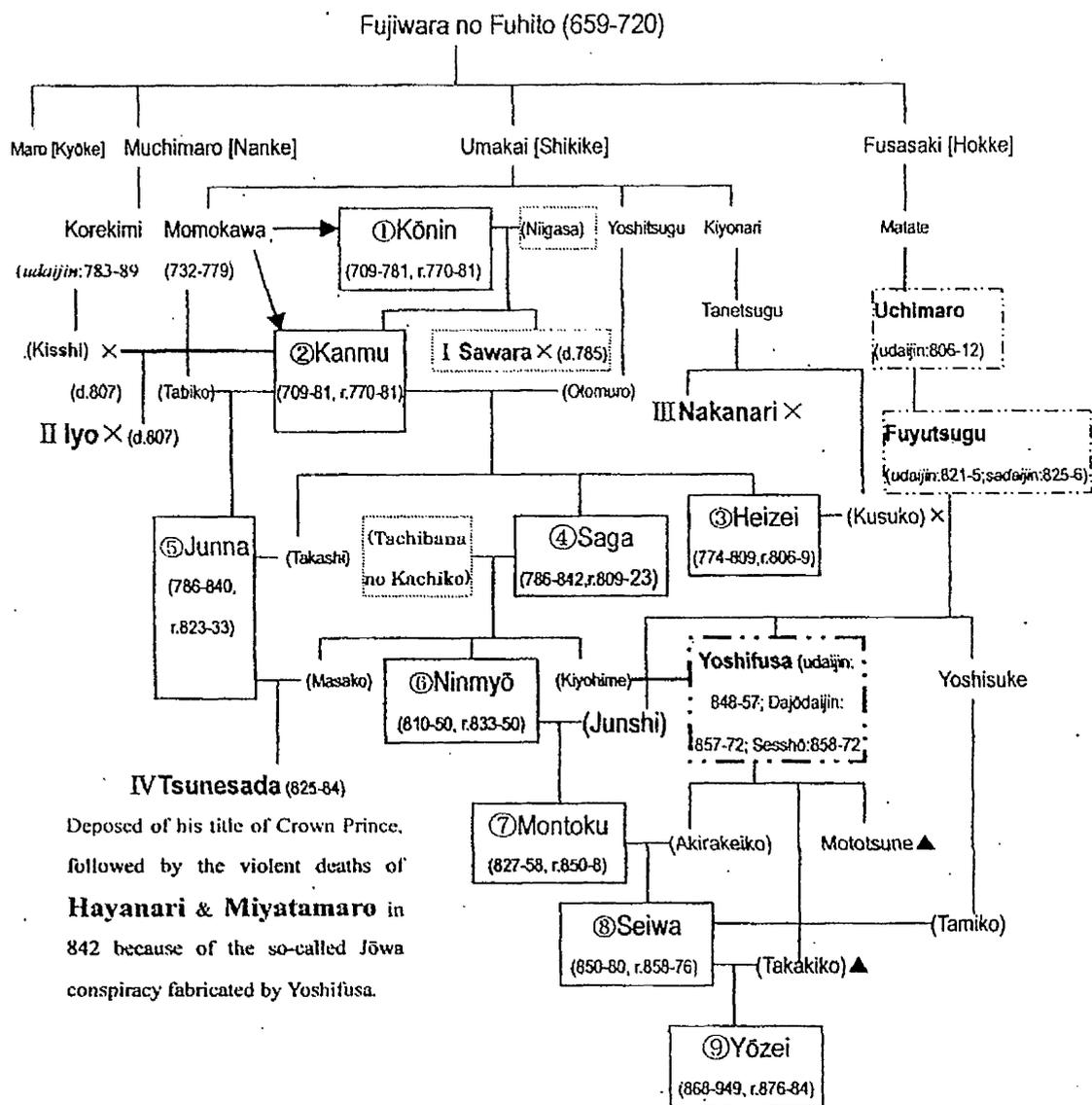
¹³³ Kuroda 1995:139. For an English article on the *goryō* cult, see McMullin 1988:270-293. He also points out social unrest and political machination in the early Heian period as causes for the performance of the *goryōe* of 863, but fails to discern the different perception of the causes for natural disaster.

same sense of social crisis. This can be confirmed by the fact that the Buddhist service of chanting the *Nimmō-kyō* by esoteric priests shortly standardised the *goryō* cult.

Before ending this section, I would like to point out one more important factor for the formation of the government-sponsored *goryō* cult, as it is closely related to the development of confraternal religious system. In contrast to Heijōkyō, no monasteries were to be allowed within Heiankyō with the exception of the state-sponsored Tōji and Saiji constructed near the gate Rajōmon for the protection of the city. Moreover, the government settled the new capital with government officials, local clans, artisans, and merchants who came from outside Heiankyō and other provinces. Thus, as several scholars have rightly argued, the need of a new type of religious service for these people emerged with the urbanisation of the city.¹³⁴ However, why was the first government-sponsored *goryō* cult conducted for the aforementioned six vengeful spirits in 863?

As we can see in the figure below, the death of the six people is clearly associated with the gradual domination of the Northern branch (*Hokke*) over not only the imperial family but also other branches of the Fujiwara family. Yoshifusa (804-72) became de facto regent of the child-emperor Seiwa (r.858-76), by being both the grandfather and father-in law of the young ruler. Moreover, his wife was Imperial Princess Kiyohime who was the daughter of Emperor Saga as well as the sister of Emperor Ninmyō.

¹³⁴ Takatori 1959; Kikuchi:1960; Inoue 1976; Wakita 1999.



The Blood Relationships between the Imperial Family and the Fujiwara Family during the Early Heian Period
 (× violent death; () woman; ▲ adoptee; non-Fujiwara blood)

This complete domination of the Northern Branch was not achieved all of a sudden, but rather gradually by the political machinations of the Fujiwara family and the competition among the Fujiwara branches for its political leadership. At first, Prince Sawara, became the victims of an imperial succession dispute in 785 because his mother was not of Fujiwara blood. After the elimination, two grandchildren of Yoshitsugu of

the Shikike branch and a grandchild of his younger brother Momokawa came to the throne in succession: Heizei, Saga, and Junna, whereas the half-brother of these emperors Prince Iyo and his mother Kisshi (daughter of Korekimi of the Kyōke branch) were implicated in a plot by the Shikike and Hokke branches and poisoned themselves in 807. The prosperity of the *Shikike* branch did not last however, for both Yoshitsugu and Momokawa died early, and their nephew Tanetsugu, who took over their authority, was assassinated during the construction of the Nagaokakyō. Moreover, Tanetsugu's children Nakanari and Kusuko attempted usurpation with the retired emperor Heizai in 810. The former was shot to death, and Kusuko poisoned herself. On the other hand, during the turbulence which led to this Kusuko incident, Yoshifusa's father Fuyutsugu was appointed by Emperor Saga the Head of the *kurōdo-dokoro*, and began to outstrip the Shikike branch in power and prestige. Fuyutsugu consolidated his power by having his daughter married to Emperor Saga's son (Emperor Ninmyō) and his son Yoshifusa married to Saga's daughter Kiyohime.

According to the succession rule of that time, however, Crown Prince Tsunesada, a son of Emperor Junna and Tachibana no Masako, was to succeed to the throne after Ninmyō. So, after the death of the retired emperor Saga in 842, Yoshifusa accused Tachibana no Hayanari and Tomo no Kawamine, apparently unjustly, of plotting a rebellion to enthrone Tsunesada. As a result of Yoshifusa's conspiracy, both Kawamine and Hayanari were exiled, and Prince Tsunesada was deposed. Hayanari and the *Kanzatushi* Miyatamaro died on their way into exile. This incident known as the Jōwa conspiracy, fabricated by Yoshifusa, eventually paved the way for a permanent Fujiwara regency government for the next 300 years by the Hokke branch. In short, the violent deaths of

the six individuals were caused by the elimination of real or potential threats to a virtual monopoly of the Fujiwara family and the competition against rivals within the Fujiwara family. Especially the deaths of the last three persons, Nakanari, Hayanari, and Miyatamaro, were directly related to Yoshifusa and his father, and thus the Hokke branch and the lineal descendants of Emperor Ninmyō was most likely to be the target of their vengeful spirits. To sum up, then, the fact that Fujiwara regency politics developed at the same time as the first government-sponsored *goryōe* is not coincidental, and Yoshifusa nominated the last three persons, despite their low court ranks, for 'august spirits' in order to avoid becoming the victims of their vengeful spirits.

This will be more evident if we look at the natural and social environment of that time. In 848 Yoshifusa was installed as the Minister of Right and became the head of the Fujiwara family both in name and reality. However, the security of the capital started to deteriorate because of frequent earthquakes, fires, and floods¹³⁵. In 850 his brother-in-law, Emperor Ninmyō, suddenly became sick and entered the priesthood in March, but three days later he passed away at the age of 40. Then, in 858 his son-in-law Emperor Ninmyō was also attacked by the mysterious disease and suffered from a speech defect. Within a few days after the loss of speech, he passed away, this time younger than his father, at the age of 31.

Finally, just before the first government-sponsored *goryōe*, the dysentery epidemic in 861 and influenza epidemic in 862 were recorded for the first time in Japanese

¹³⁵ Gondō:1982:42-44.

history¹³⁶. The rapidly growing population of the capital and heavy traffic fostered the social environment for the new types of epidemics. Moreover, the natural environment was aggravated by the climatic change. As we can see in the graphs 4-1, temperature sharply dropped from the latter half of the 8th century and the number of flood sharply increased. This frequent flood must also have fostered the natural environment for the first outbreak of the dysentery epidemics. The cold climate, on the other hand, must have advanced the likelihood of the influenza epidemic, as it continued to break out in 863, 865, and 872.

Since the victims of influenza are usually the aged¹³⁷, Yoshifusa at that time 59 years old is more likely to be killed by the disease. Probably, he did not want to commit the same error as Yoshitsugu and Momokawa did in the middle of their prosperity; they died on their way to monopolise Heian politics by the Shikike branch. His adopted son Mototsune was still too young (24 years old) to take over all his power and prestige so that he had to survive by all means. Moreover, the victims of the dysentery epidemics were, as clearly recorded in the *Sandai Jitsuroku*, young children. As can be seen in the relationship that existed between Seiwa and Yoshifusa, it was the policy of the Fujiwara to have a young imperial grandson of the head of the clan occupy the throne and to have him abdicate early in favour of another child. So if something would happen to his young grandson Emperor Seiwa, he could have lost the final locus of his power.

¹³⁶ *Sandai Jitsuroku* Jōgan 3/8th month, Jōgan 4/1st month, and Jōgan 5/1st month. It appears that Japanese knew dysentery prior to 861 since the medicine to treat this disease had already existed since the Nara Period, but its outbreak was not recorded until the 3rd year of the Jōgan era.

¹³⁷ Benson 1975:pp.159-163, 288-297. In 790, the victims of the smallpox were those under the age 30, the immunity had already been acquired by the survivors from the last outbreak of 763. An influenza infection provides later protection only against the specific

Give this, there is little doubt that Yoshifusa did not bring the *goryō* cult into the political mainstream, simply because he wanted to legitimise his newly acquired power by sponsoring this cult, or he used this cult to compete religiously against rivals within the clan. Rather, he really feared the vengeful spirits. This assumption can be further supported by the fact that Yoshifusa, unlike previous leaders of the Fujiwara family, gave important posts to the descendants of his political opponents even after he became de facto regent. To sum up, then, it is clear that the *goryō* cult was introduced into the political mainstream by the first nonimperial regent Yoshifusa as a joint memorial service for the people victimised under the political conspiracy of the Fujiwara family in order to religiously assure the self-perpetuating cycle of the Hokke branch by means of appeasing and converting the vengeful spirits of their political opponents into beneficent, tutelary deities, rather than expelling them from the human world.¹³⁸ What is significant for the latter evolution of early Japanese religion is that this ‘privatisation’ of the *goryō* cult by the Fujiwara family, together with the aforesaid citydwellers and esoteric Buddhism, marked an important turning point not only for the decline of monastic religion but also for the emergence of confraternal religion.

4.3 The Birth of Confraternal Religion

The establishment of Tendai and Shingon by Saichō and Kūkai introduced several new elements into the monastic religious system, and that these two religious giants laid the foundations of Japanese Buddhism in the early Heian period. We can trace some archetypical elements of the so-called Kamakura New Buddhism back to both Saichō’s

strain of virus.

¹³⁸ Cf. McMullin:1988:288-91

and Kūkai's thoughts. Both Kamakura New Buddhism and Kamakura Old Buddhism originated from the further development and adoption of early Heian Buddhism as founded by Saichō and Kūkai while these two religious giants interacted and debated with other priests like Tokuitsu of the Hossō sect. In order to support this view that the old Buddhism of Kukai and Saichō affected new Buddhism, this section seeks to identify those elements newly introduced into the monastic religious system by Saichō and Kūkai in the early Heian period and to explore their effects on the subsequent development of Japanese religion.

(A) MOUNTAIN WORSHIP

The first element introduced by Saichō and Kūkai was an emphasis on mountains. While most of the official priests of the Nara monastic Buddhism lived in the cities, in the *Gakushō-shiki* ('*Regulation for Tendai Students*'), Saichō required his students to spend twelve years in seclusion under strict discipline at Enryakuji Monastery located on Mt. Hiei¹³⁹. Similarly, Kūkai took refuge in the deep mountains and holy places of the Island of Shikoku as an itinerant hermit practicing meditation, taking rocks for his pillow and the grass for his bed. For more than ten years from the age of 18, he wandered alone and engaged in rites of repentance (*sange-no-hō*) whilst abstaining from food and drink¹⁴⁰. Even after coming back from China, Kūkai sought to spend as much time as possible in the mountains of Nara and Kishū and built a monastic centre of Shingon Buddhism on Mt. Kōya. So both Saichō and Kūkai attached greater

¹³⁹ *Gakushō-shiki* 1990:20 & 24; *Nihon Kiryaku*, Kōnin 13/6/3.

¹⁴⁰ *Nihon Kōsō-den Yōmonshō*, Kōbō Daishi:2.

importance to mountain asceticism than the priests of Nara monastic Buddhism ever did.

In Japan, mountains had been worshiped as the sacred abodes of various deities since at least 6000 BC¹⁴¹, and this practice grew further during the Tumulus Age. By the time that Buddhism and Taoist cults were unofficially introduced to the country, many ascetics (*gyōja*) and migrants began to adopt the life of the mountain ascetic in order to obtain the theurgic power of the mountain-dwelling *kami*¹⁴². However, the number of mountain ascetics declined in response to repeated restrictions by the government following the rise of monastic Buddhism, especially during the time of Dōkyō. According to the *Shoku Nihongi*, after an edict in 764 strictly prohibited all mountain ascetic activity, this number dropped down to only a few by 770. Thus, the Prelates' Office had to petition the government to allow priests to resume the practice in 770¹⁴³. As a result, the number of mountain ascetics began to increase again from the reign of Emperor Kōnin (r.770-781). In 772, for example, an eminent meditation master Kōtatsu, who had trained in the mountain of Kinpu in Yoshino since the reign of Emperor Shōmu, was appointed one of the 'Ten Meditation Masters' *jū-zenji* who served the Buddhist chapel within the Imperial Court (*Naidōjō*)¹⁴⁴. Successive Emperors such as Kanmu and Saga also highly valued mountain ascetics for their transcendental power. For example, Kanmu engaged a mountain ascetic Shōgu (d.794), the disciple of the eminent Chinese

¹⁴¹ Watanabe 1998:4-9.

¹⁴² Miyake 1979:67-83.

¹⁴³ *Shoku Nihongi*, Hōki 1/10/28.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Hōki 3/3/6. According to the *Nihon Ryōiki* (II-26), Kōtatsu entered the mountain of Kinpu.

mountain ascetic Shen-jui¹⁴⁵, as a Master of Buddhist Law (*risshi*). Thus, mountain asceticism was not necessarily new by the time of Saichō and Kūkai.

What was innovative was that both Saichō and Kūkai linked mountain asceticism to the protection of the country and the benefit of people. The mountain ascetic Segyō might have been the first to make this linkage¹⁴⁶, but Saichō strengthened it much further. In his *Kenkai-ron* (*gekan* 53), he criticised mountain ascetics for their egoistic pursuit of benefit. He advocated purging undesirable elements from among mountain ascetics and making mountain asceticism contribute to the benefit of the country. Saichō believed that only priests who aspired to buddhahood or Enlightenment by religious training in mountains were able to contribute truly to the peace of society¹⁴⁷. Saichō's wishes accorded perfectly with those of Emperor Kanmu and his successors. In short, mountain worship became one of the most important aspects of monastic Buddhism (which had been originally designed to develop in cities like Heijōkyō), and laid the foundation for the growing popularity of pilgrimage to holy mountains, the emergence of *hijiri*, and the formation of *Shugendō* in later centuries. As we shall see in the next chapter, the last two became the major force for the full-scale development of confraternal religion.

(B) AFFILIATION BETWEEN MONASTIC BUDDHISM AND SHINTO

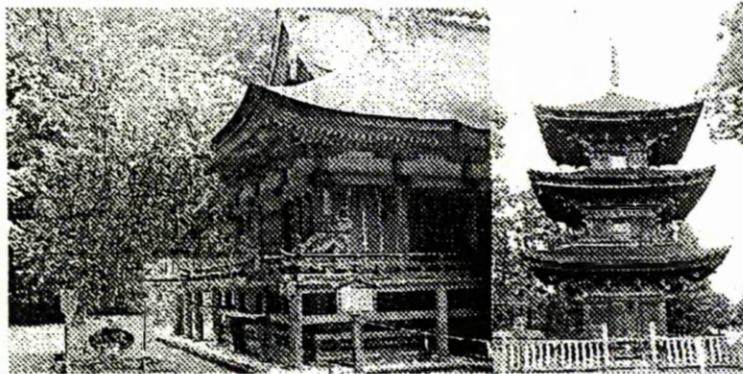
The second element introduced by Saichō and Kūkai was a closer affiliation between monastic Buddhism and Shinto. Saichō was born to the east of Mt. Hiei and grew up in a religious environment that venerated Mt Hiei's guardian deity (*jinushi no kami*),

¹⁴⁵ *Nihon Kōki*, Enryaku 16/3/6.

¹⁴⁶ *Ruijū Kokushi*, Enryaku 11/1/15.

¹⁴⁷ *Isshin-kaimon*.

Ōyamatsumi no Kami, popularly known as 'Mountain King' (*Sammō*). Indeed, Saichō built a small hermitage at the root of Mt. Hiei to enshrine the deity which he incorporated as a tutelary deity of the Enryakuji Monastery¹⁴⁸. Kūkai, on the other hand, enshrined Mt. Kōya's two tutelary deities of the land called Niutsu-Hime no Kami or Niu Myōjin and her son Kōya Myōjin, and incorporated them as tutelary deities of Kōngōbuji Monastery. Saichō and Kūkai no doubt anticipated that by erecting their monasteries deep in the mountains, their esoteric power of State-protection would be enhanced by the deities.



Left: West Main Shrine of Hiyoshi Taisha (reconstructed in 1586) and the bamboo trees that are said to have been brought back by Saichō from Mt. T'ien-tai; Right: Three-story pagoda erected in the precincts of Hiyoshi Taisha during the Heian period, based on Saichō's teaching of interdependence between *kami* and Buddhism (reconstructed in early 1500 and repaired in 1595)

There were also practical territorial and economic reasons for their strong reverence for the mountain deities. Both Kūkai and Saichō had to obtain divine sanction to enter the dominion of Yama no Kami to build the monasteries there. Niutsu-Hime no Kami, for example, was the ancestral deity of a powerful clan, the Niu-shi, who specialised in the

¹⁴⁸ Kimura 1986:289-308, Kashiwahara & Sonoda 1994:28.

development of cinnabar mines and the refinement of cinnabar¹⁴⁹. They first landed at Ito-koku in Fukuoka, probably from the kingdom of Wu in China, during the Early Yayoi period and expanded their influence along a fault zone known as the Median Tectonic Line (*chūō-kōzōsen*, 'cinnabar street'), running from Yatsushiro in Kumamoto across Shikoku, the Ki'i Peninsula, Yoshino, Ise, and to the south banks of Lake Suwa¹⁵⁰. As we have seen, cinnabar was highly valued for its role in protecting against evil, praying for rebirth, and in rituals for the cult of immortality during the Yayoi and Kofun periods. Even after the Kofun period, cinnabar remained an important ingredient for painting temples and shrines red and for making the drugs of immortality and cosmetics as well. For example, Emperor Ninmyō (r.833-850) himself prescribed the elixir of life under the influence of the Taoist cult of immortality that was quite popular at this time¹⁵¹. Cinnabar – or mercury vermilion - was also essential for refining gold and gilding. The *Tōdaiji Zōryū Kuyōki*, compiled at the end of the Heian period, records that, "The statue of Buddha cannot be made without mercury even if there is plenty of gold"¹⁵². It is worthwhile recalling that 58,620 *ryō* (about 2,200 kg) of mercury was used to cast the Daibutsu in Nara. According to the *Shoku Nihongi*, a village named Nyū/Niu located close to the Ise Shrine paid tribute to the value of 750kg of mercury for this casting.¹⁵³ Thus, cinnabar was a precious and essential substance not only for the life of the ancient Japanese but also for the maintenance of the monastic religious system, and to have access to cinnabar mines guaranteed a large profit.

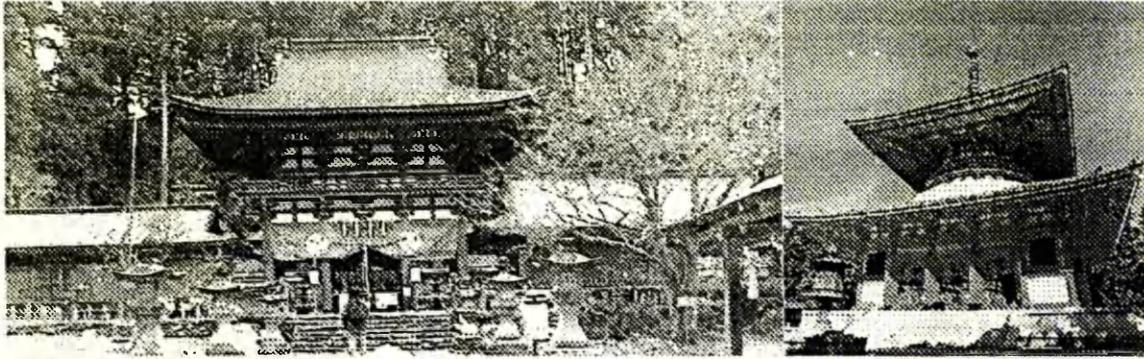
¹⁴⁹ Matsuda 1986.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid: 9-15; Nyū 1977.

¹⁵¹ Hotate 1999:27.

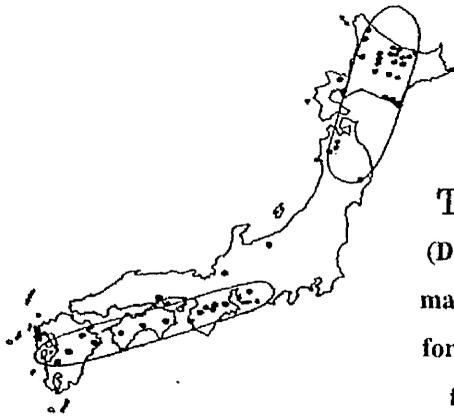
¹⁵² *Tōdaiji Zōritsu-kuyōki*:104.

¹⁵³ According to the *Tōdaiji Zōritsu-kuyōki*, the Nyū village made contributions of another 750kg of mercury for the recasting of the Daibutsu in 1195.



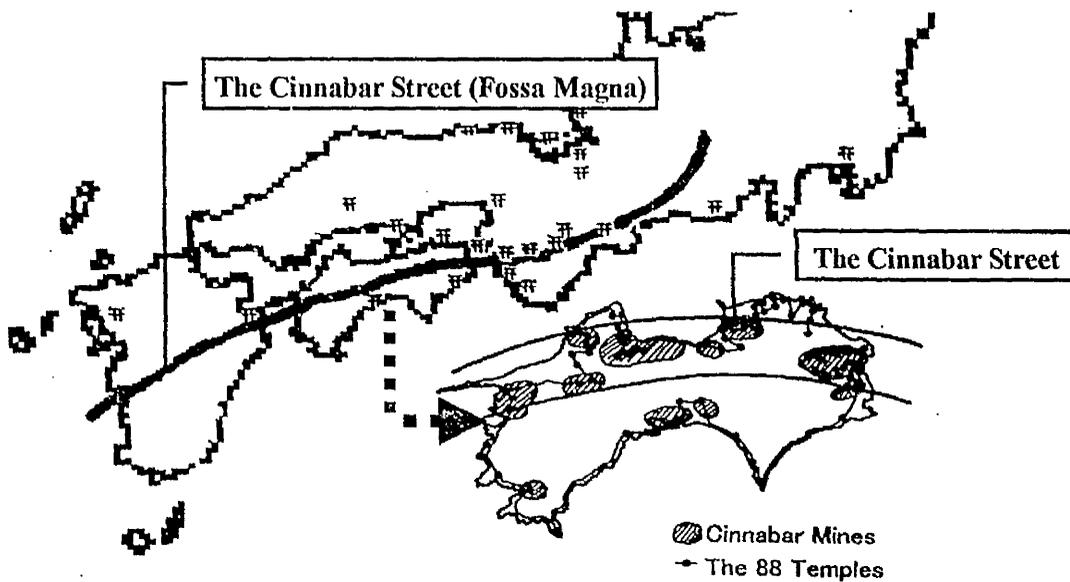
Upper left: Niutsu-hime Shrine (Itogun near Mt. Kōya); Upper right: The 'Great Tower' (Daitō) of Kongōbuji Monastery on Mt. Kōya (reconstructed in 1937); Lower left: The 'Great Gate' (Daimon) of Kongōbuji Monastery (reconstructed in 1705). These buildings are painted in brilliant red by cinnabar. We can still observe cinnabar deposits on the geological layer of Mt. Koya.

Kūkai probably directed his attention to Mt. Kōya partly at least because of the abundant cinnabar mines in the Ki'i Peninsula and the financial support given him by the Nyū clan. Kongōbuji Monastery on Mt. Kōya was not sponsored by the central government until it became a *jōgakuji*, one month before Kūkai's death in 835. This means that he would have needed financial support for the construction and maintenance of the monastery. Since the 'cinnabar street' overlapped with Kūkai's birthplace and his mountain ascetic training sites in Shikoku, Ki'i, and Yoshino, he is likely to have established a close association with the local residents who worshipped Niutsu-Hime no Kami. It also seems not coincidental that the 88 Temples of Shikoku for pilgrimage are stationed along the cinnabar street and that both Kōyasan and Kūkai's birthplace - Zentsūji Temple – are situated in the same latitude 34 degrees and 12 minutes north. (see Maps below).



The Cinnabar Street and Niu Shrines

(Dots in the upper section of a map indicate the location of major cinnabar mines; shrine symbols in the middle section for the location of major Niu Shrines; and the lower section for the locations of the 88 Temples and cinnabar mine)



The miners spent most of their time working underground and so attached great importance to Sun worship. As the red colour of cinnabar symbolised the sheen of the sun, cinnabar was often associated with the sun¹⁵⁴. According to the records of Niutsu-Hime Shrine (Myōjin Taisha, one of the central Nyū shrines, also known as Amano Taisha) located east of Mt. Kōya at Itogun in Wakayama, Niutsu-Hime no Kami was identified as a younger sister of the Sun goddess Amaterasu¹⁵⁵. The central buddha in Kūkai's Shingon Buddhism was the 'great illumination of the sun' (*Mahāvairocana*). The similarities in the nature of these deities probably made their close association

¹⁵⁴ Chevalier & Gheerbrant 1996:194.

inevitable. For example, the Shingon sect of Mt. Kōya (*Kōyakei Shingonshū*) identifies Niutsu-Hime as Mahāvairocana in the Taizōkai mandala¹⁵⁶.

In my counting there were over 210 shrines that enshrined Niutsu-Hime all over the country, 75 of which were located in the Ki'i Peninsula and 10 of which were at Kūkai's birth place Shikoku. Since the goddess was incorporated as a tutelary deity of the Shingon lineage, as the lineage expanded the Ki'i Peninsula could remain as stronghold of Nyū shrines and the number of shrines that enshrined the goddess could increase. Thus, the prosperity of Niu shrines owed much to Kūkai's enshrinement of the deity but, during the incipient period of Shingon, Kūkai probably received financial and political support from the Niu shrines¹⁵⁷. The relationship between the Shingon sect and the Niu shrines was thus both harmonious and reciprocal.¹⁵⁸

In this way, both Kūkai and Saichō furthered the closer association between Buddhism and Shinto, and contributed to the restoration of *kami* worship. In 812, for example, the central government resumed the special offerings to the deities of various shrines (*rinji hōhei*) that had been suspended since the Great Smallpox Epidemic in 737. This time, special offerings were made to the Ise Shrine and others in the various provinces whose *kami* bore the *myōjin* title¹⁵⁹. With the expansion of esoteric Buddhism, the number of shrines in receipt of offerings to help prevent epidemics and famines gradually

¹⁵⁵ Maruyama 1986:339-348.

¹⁵⁶ Matsuda 1986:108-109.

¹⁵⁷ It has been suggested by several scholars that Kūkai's travel to T'ang China was founded by those who engaged in cinnabar business and that his death was caused by mercury poisoning in an attempt to mummifying himself for Nirvana.

¹⁵⁸ Both Niu Shrine in Uda and Hie Shrine were included the Twenty-Two Shrines in 1038.

¹⁵⁹ *Nihon Kōki*, Kōnin 3/7/1 & 3/7/2.

increased¹⁶⁰. Although the restoration of *kami* worship cannot be attributed solely to the rise of esoteric Buddhism, it is almost certain that Saichō and Kūkai's emphasis on *kami* worship greatly contributed to its revival. In addition, the closer affiliation of Buddhism with Shinto laid the ground for the development of 'eclectic' ritual and philosophical systems in later centuries, such as Ryōbu Shinto, San'nō Ichijitsu Shinto, and Miwa Shinto.

(C) THE FORMATION OF BUDDHIST LENEAGES

The third element introduced by Saichō and Kūkai was the sectarianism of Japanese Buddhism. According to Inoue Mitsusada, the Six Buddhist sects - the so-called *Nanto Rokushū* - were organised during the Tenpyō-shōhō era (749-757)¹⁶¹. However, these sects were more like 'academic subjects' than truly independent groups. Thus, priests were able to study these 'academic subjects' by visiting various monasteries, such as the headquarters of the Hossō at Yakushiji, the headquarters of the Ritsu at Toshōdaiji, or the headquarters of the Kegon at Tōdaiji. The exchange of Buddhist texts among different 'sects', as occurred between Kūkai and Saichō, was normal practice at that time.

Sone Masato argues that the reformation of the *nenbundosha* system ('annual quota priests system') in 806 discouraged the traditional method of interdisciplinary study, and thus strengthened sectarianism¹⁶². Uejima Susumu, on the other hand, attributes the

¹⁶⁰ For example, see *Ruijū Kokushi*, 173 Kōnin 9/9/11, Tenchō 1/5/2, Jōwa 1/1/25, 2/4/3, and 3/7/16.

¹⁶¹ Inoue 1961:2-14.

¹⁶² Sone 1984:655-717.

cause for sectarianism to the establishment of distinctive doctrines by each sect from the end of the Nara period¹⁶³. There is no doubt that both of these factors greatly contributed to the formation of sects or lineages from the early Heian period. However, it is almost certain that the establishment of Tendai and Shingon was decisive in creating a much clearer distinction between these lineages, especially after the breakdown in the relationship between Saichō and Kūkai. Both Saicho and Kūkai performed the esoteric service of *kanjō*; Saichō even sought to construct an ordination platform that was quite independent of Nara monastic Buddhism. A week after his death, in 822, the Tendai lineage finally succeeded in receiving Imperial sanction to set up a hall of the Mahayana-precept platform (Daijō kaidan'in) for independent Mahayana ordination ceremonies on Mt. Hiei. What Saichō wanted was to abolish all government control over religious organizations¹⁶⁴. This trend became much more prominent during the Kamakura period, when independent initiation ceremonies and ordinations became common practices.

(D) REVERENCE FOR FOUNDERS

The fourth element introduced by Saichō and Kūkai is closely related to the third. Prior to the advent of Japan's religious giants, Saichō and Kūkai, Buddhist priests and the laity did not display extreme faith in the founder of a sect. However, after the advent of Saichō and Kūkai, they began to display a strong reverence for them as founders of the Tendai and Shingon lineages. This trend became enhanced in later centuries. By the Kamakura period, not only the priests of a sect but the laity too, began to have a strong

¹⁶³ Uejima 1997:48.

¹⁶⁴ Kashiwahara & Sonoda 1994:37.

religious faith in their founders. This development followed after the advent of eminent *tonseisō* who withdrew from the officially recognised temples, such as Hōnen, Shinran, and Nichiren. All these monks established their own orders for other *tonseisō* and believers, and were regarded and even revered by them as the founders of these new orders¹⁶⁵.

(E) ORIGINAL ENLIGHTENMENT

The fifth element is the primordial idea of 'original enlightenment' (*hongaku shisō*) - as opposed to 'incipient enlightenment' (*shigaku*), the gradual process of attaining enlightenment - that we find in the thought of Saichō and Kūkai. *Hongaku shisō* maintains that enlightenment is not something to be obtained as a distant goal, but it exists in full reality in the present moment, and therefore sentient beings need only to be awakened to it. This affirms that the phenomenal world is the Enlightened World itself. We find the precedent of the *hongaku shisō* in the *Daijōkishin-ron* (*Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*) and the *Engakukyō* (*Perfect Enlightenment Sutra*), which postulate symmetry between the mind of sentient beings and the Buddhist absolute, or the 'True Thusness' (*shin'nyo*). Although *hongaku* thought is now better known as Tendai *hongaku* thought, it was Kūkai who first emphasised this concept in Japan. He often cited the *Shaku-makaenron* (*Commentary on the Daijōkishin-ron*), and established his Shingon Buddhism on the doctrine of *hon'u hongaku* ('inherently existing original enlightenment')¹⁶⁶.

¹⁶⁵ Matsuo 1998:122-243.

¹⁶⁶ Kuroda 1975:76.

Saichō did not attach as much importance to the idea of original enlightenment as Kūkai. Nonetheless, we can find some influence of the *Daijōkishinon-ron* on Saichō, through such concepts as the *zuien shimmyo* ('absolute conforms to causation'), *musa sanjin*, and *kyōzō enyū*, and in his assertion that all beings have the potential for buddhahood. Moreover, his eclectic approach to the study of Buddhism laid the foundations for the development of the so-called Tendai *hongaku* thought during the Insei period,¹⁶⁷ which in turn fostered the popularisation of Buddhism. It is widely recognised that *hongaku* thought played a vital role as the common ideological foundation of Kamakura New Buddhism. Moreover, both Saichō and Kūkai advocated that all sentient beings were able to attain buddhahood in principle, and so their assertion fostered the theoretical foundation for the possibility of attaining buddhahood even by commoners. Therefore, we can trace the origin of some important elements in confraternal religion to Saichō and Kūkai.

(F) REALISATION OF BUDDAHOOD

Last but not least is the assertion of the 'realisation of buddhahood with this very body' (*sokushin jōbutsu*) made by Saichō and Kūkai, which derived from the radically immanentist view of *hongaku* thought. As I have already discussed, both Saichō and Kūkai advocated *sokushin jōbutsu*. Although we cannot determine which man first introduced the concept of *sokushin jōbutsu* in Japan¹⁶⁸, it is evident that both Saichō and Kūkai advocated that their teachings were superior because they led to buddhahood more rapidly than the other sects. The difference in the method of attaining buddhahood

¹⁶⁷ Sueki 1993:312-346.

¹⁶⁸ Groner 1989: 53-74.

between Saichō and Kūkai exerted significant influence on the subsequent development of Japanese religion. Thus, I would like now to discuss the difference and its consequences in some detail below.

(G) SIGNIFICANCE OF SAICHŌ AND KŪKAI FOR SUBSEQUENT JAPANESE RELIGIONS

In his *Sokushin Jōbutsu-gi*, Kūkai gives details of the fundamental principle and practices of *sokushin jōbutsu* in terms of the *Rokudai* (the six great elements)¹⁶⁹, the *Shishu-mandara* (four kinds of mandalas), and the *Sanmitsu-kaji* (three ritual mysteries of the body, speech, and mind). He regarded the *Rokudai* as the ultimate substance of all existences rather than mere constituent elements, which embrace the cosmic buddha Dainichi¹⁷⁰. Kūkai argued that the six ultimate substances of every individual can interchange with those of Dainichi, and thus that every individual is identical with Dainichi. He further argues that the *Shishu-mandara* and *Sanmitsu-kaji* are obligatory for the aspirant to identify himself with Dainichi. These mandala, according to Kūkai, contain all the power of the cosmos, and help the aspirant in his quest to identify his buddha-nature with the cosmic buddha Dainichi¹⁷¹. The identification with Dainichi was further assisted by the *sanmitsu-kaji* of body, speech, and mind. By these three kinds of *kaji*, the aspirant seeks to attain unity with Dainichi¹⁷². Based on this organic and pantheistic view of the universe, Kūkai asserted the possibility of becoming a Buddha in this world while possessing a human body. Nevertheless, we should be aware that his assertions signify that for the laity to realise buddhahood would require

¹⁶⁹ The *Rokudai* were earth, water, fire, wind, space, and subjective consciousness (*shikida*)

¹⁷⁰ *Sokushin jōbutsu-gi*: 168.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*: 191-198.

¹⁷² *Ibid*: 198-218.

the assistance of priests who had trained and held special knowledge of *kaji-kito*. In other words, there was a clear distinction between the laity and the clergy. Consequently, this distinction gave rise to the relationship between the laity and the clergy in which the former was benefited by the esoteric rituals of *kaji-kitō* performed by the latter.

In the case of Saichō's *sokushin jōbutsu*, on the other hand, there was no such clear distinction as in Kukai's assertions. In his last written work, *Hokke shūku* (821), Saichō introduces and develops the concept of *sokushin jōbutsu*. He quotes the Chinese T'ien-t'ai monk Chan-jan's (711-782) discussion of the dragon king's daughter's realization of buddhahood in the "Devadatta" chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* and demonstrates that the *Lotus Sutra* applied to all sentient beings¹⁷³. Saichō interpreted the story of the dragon king's daughter, writing:

She is an animal, (one of the lower levels of the) six destinies [realms], obviously the result of bad karma. She is female and clearly has faculties which are not good. She is young and thus has not been practicing religious austerities for a long time. And yet, the wondrous power of the *Lotus Sutra* endows her with the two adornments of wisdom and merit.¹⁷⁴

Based on the story of the dragon king's daughter, Saichō argued that virtually any sentient beings could attain buddhahood by the power of the *Lotus Sutra*, although he admitted that those with lesser abilities might require additional time¹⁷⁵. In other words, Saichō removed the fundamental difference between the clergy and the laity, and unlike Kūkai, he asserted that even the occupants of the secular realm were able to attain

¹⁷³ Groner 1989: 58.

¹⁷⁴ *Eizan Daishiden*, quoted by Groner 1989: 61.

¹⁷⁵ Groner 1989: 62.

buddhahood without the assistance of the clergy, based on his *absolute* belief in the power of the Lotus Sutra. Here then, we notice a prototype for Hōnen's *senju nenbutsu* (exclusive practice of the *nenbutsu*), although their methods of salvation were different.

Nevertheless, Saichō died before he could elaborate on the actual method for *sokushin jōbutsu*. As a result, his immediate successors, Ennin (794-868) and Enchin (814-891), had to develop their own methods.

By the end of the 9th century, Enryakuji flourished as the centre of the esoteric teachings of the Tendai sect (*taimitsu*). After studying esoteric and Tendai Buddhism in China (838-847), Ennin adopted *nenbutsu-zanmai* (*nembutsu* meditational exercises), current at the Chinese Buddhist centre on Wu-t'ai Mountains, as the method for attaining buddhahood, and thus laid the foundation for the rise of Pure Land Buddhism at Mt. Hiei from the 10th century. The idea that salvation in Amida's Pure Land of the Western Paradise could be attained not only by the discipline of monastic life but also by the contemplation of Amida or the invocation of his sacred title - the *nenbutsu* - became a vogue in Tendai monasteries. This belief, taken out of the monastic context, was carried to commoners by Tendai-lineage priests, such as Kūya (903-972), Hōnen, Shinran, and Ippen (1239-1289). The vivid descriptions of the sufferings of Hell and the bliss of the Pure Land were expressed in the *Essentials of Pure Land Rebirth* (*Ōjōyōshū*), compiled by the Tendai priest, Genshin (947-1017) in 985, and were based on his study of the Lotus Sutra. For Genshin, Pure Land faith was totally coherent with the Tendai teachings of 'One Vehicle' to Buddhahood, and it became one of momentum for the full-scale development of what I call confraternal Buddhism during the Kamakura

period. Enchin, on the other hand, declared after studying esoteric and Tendai Buddhism in China (853-858) that esoteric teachings based on the Mahāvairocana Sutra were superior to Tendai teachings based on the Lotus Sutra (*enretsu misshō*).

Saichō was an extremely idealistic, imposing, and introverted person. His grandiose plan was to make the whole of Mt. Hiei into a place of learning, but he failed to demonstrate a definitive method of attaining buddhahood. But as I have suggested, the lack of a definitive method ironically inspired students at Enryakuji to develop various new methods for salvation, Pure Land belief being one of these.

Kūkai, on the other hand, was pragmatic and extrovert, akin to an able businessman in our times. His promotion of Shingon Buddhism was ingenious and creative, and he provided a definitive method for attaining buddhahood. Yet he did not leave much room for his successors to renovate his doctrines and methods, although we cannot dismiss eminent Shingon priests such as Shinzen (804-891), Meizan (1021-1106), and Kakuban (1095-1143). Nevertheless, the impact of Kūkai's thought on people and society in general was probably more significant than Saichō's. Based on *hongaku* thought, Kūkai asserted that the potentiality for Buddhahood exists latently in all creatures and needs not so much to be developed as simply evoked. After all, enlightenment can be achieved immediately with our present body if only we realise that our own buddha-nature is identical with Dainichi. This assertion did not only encourage an optimistic perception of enlightenment, but also a positive affirmation of this world and of happiness in this life. In contrast, exoteric Buddhism regarded the achievement of enlightenment in this world as almost impossible.

Kūkai's positive affirmation of this world brought about a drastic change in the Japanese mentality at that time. Prior to this, Japanese inspiration was characterised by contradictory ideas lying between the Buddhist denial of this world and the Confucius emphasis on this world. This Japanese mentality may be likened to a set of screws rotating in opposite directions in which one screw gives forward motion to a ship and the other backward motion. After the undisputed hegemony of Dōkyō, Nara monastic Buddhism exerted an adverse effect on State policy. But Kūkai's positive affirmation of this world caused each propeller to rotate in the same direction and allowed each individual to seek happiness in this world. This change in mentality affirmed people's interest in worldly merits (*genze riyaku*) and contributed to the further development of commerce in Japan, which in turn prepared the ground for the rise of confraternal religion in later centuries. Moreover, Kūkai's method of attaining buddhahood required plenty of expensive spices and herbs for use during the *kaji-kitō*, and caused various changes in the society, to which I shall return in the next chapter.

At this point, then, let us consider the role played by Saichō and Kūkai for the subsequent development of Japanese religion. We have seen how Saichō and Kūkai introduced new elements to monastic Buddhism: a strong emphasis on mountain asceticism, a close affiliation of monastic Buddhism with Shinto, clearer distinction of lineages and extreme faith in the founder of lineages, original enlightenment, and swift enlightenment. All these elements influenced the subsequent development of Japanese religion. However, although both Shingon and Tendai sects were originally independent religious organisations, free from government control, both sects were soon

incorporated as parts of the monastic religious system as they received financial and political support from the Imperial Court and the nobility. Esoteric Buddhism required a grandiose *mise en scène*, and its various ritual services required a monastic setting. Inevitably, both Saichō and Kūkai needed financial support to maintain their monasteries and disciples. Moreover, they were advocates of strict monastic discipline, and their ultimate goal was the security of the Emperor-centred *ritsuryō* State. In these respects, both Saichō and Kūkai may be categorised as participants in monastic religion, but at the same time, their Buddhism contained many archetypical or primordial characteristics of the confraternal religion of later centuries.

Monastic Buddhism as it developed after the advent of Saichō and Kūkai may be called esoterised monasticism or the prototype of confraternal religion. I do not argue that the esoterised monasticism is completely different from monastic Buddhism; rather it signifies the decline of the monastic religious system as well as the burgeoning of confraternal religion. These dual characteristics of the esoterised monasticism can be put into the form of a diagram (see Figure 4-1 & 4-2). In short, the esoterised monasticism may be taken as a turning point from monastic to confraternal religion. In the next chapter, I shall probe the fundamental causes for this dissolution of monastic religion and the further growth of confraternal religion.

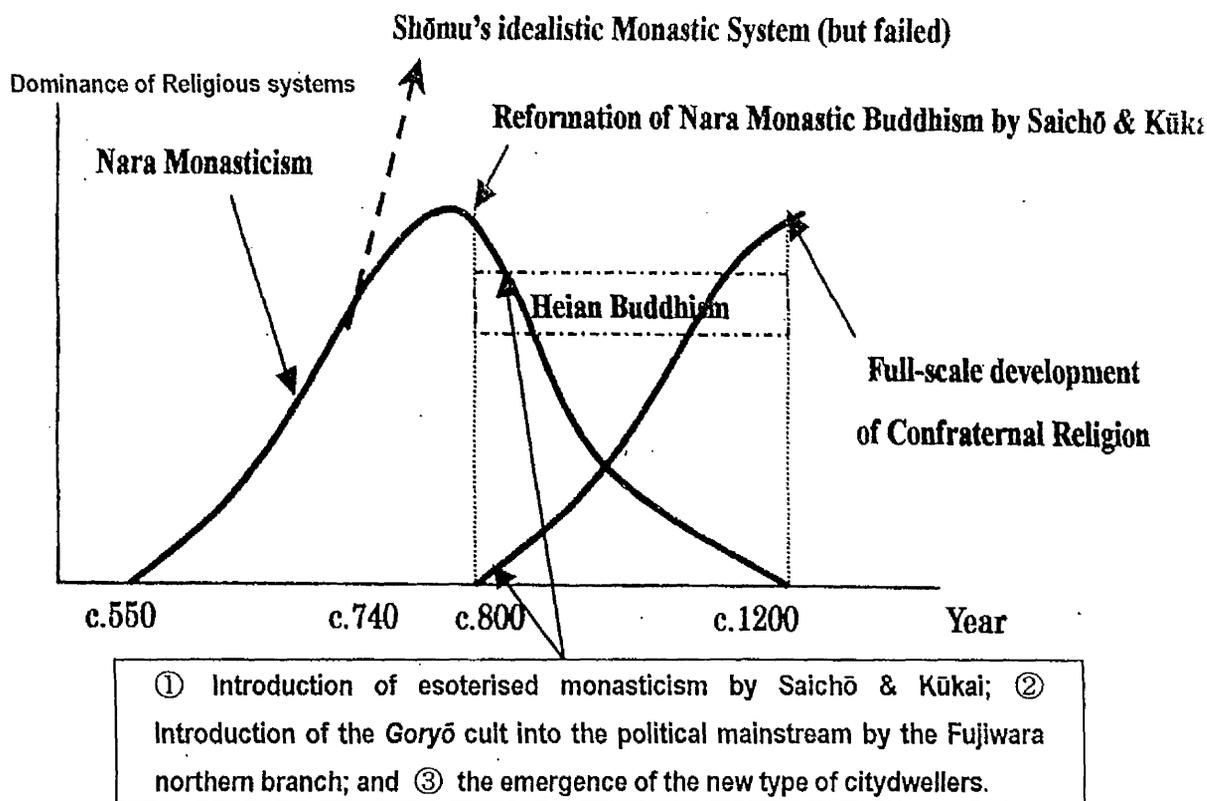
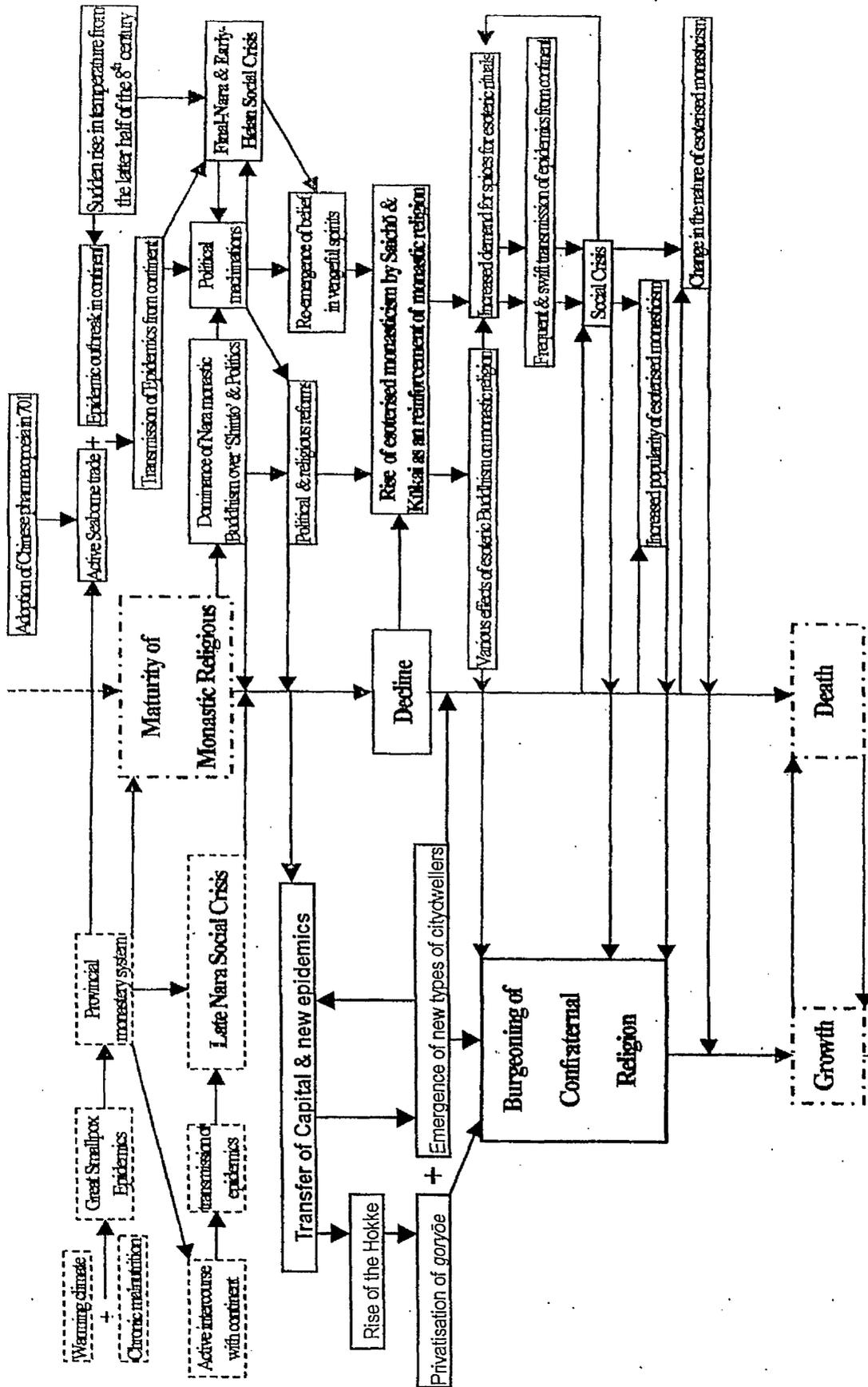


Figure 4-1 Conceptualised transformation of religious systems

The figure shows that reformation of Nara monastic Buddhism by Saichō and Kūkai, combined with the effects of privatisation of the *goryō* cult by the Hokke branch and the emergence of new types of citydwellers in the increasing urbanised society, became momentum for both the decline of monastic Buddhism and the emergence of confraternal religion. Thus, Heian Buddhism should not be regarded as a simple transition between Nara and Kamakura; rather it played critical roles for the full-scale development of confraternal religion as its major characteristics had already been moulded in early Heian. On the other hand, the full-scale development of confraternal religion or the emergence of the so-called Kamakura New Buddhism at the turn of the 13th century can be considered as a result of competition between the high fitness (confraternal religion) and the lower fitness (monastic religion) in the new socio-political environment of the Heian period. Curiously enough, as we shall see in the next chapter, many factors including the socio-political environment co-evolved in unison for the dominance of religious niche by the confraternal religion toward the Kamakura period.

Figure 4-2 Reformation of Monastic Religion and the Burgeoning of Confraternal Religion



CHAPTER FIVE

THE GROWTH OF CONFRATERNAL RELIGION

From the end of the Heian period toward the beginning of the Kamakura period, Japan underwent drastic change in many areas, such as religion, politics, literature, and the arts, showing a creativity that was fundamentally different from before. These new developments that were closely related to one another appeared simultaneously in many different fields¹. This period, then, between the end of the 12th century and the middle of the 13th century, characterised by creativity and spontaneity, was a turning point in the development of Japanese religious and social activities. We may understand this as the typical manifestation of an autocatalytic growth: stable configurations that facilitate the appearance of configurations similar to themselves became more numerous. In other words, the reconstruction of one fraction of the network called for changes in neighbouring regions and triggered an avalanche of co-evolution that affected an entire society. The purpose of this chapter is to explore this dynamic co-evolution of confraternal religion and the society that took place from the early 10th century to the turn of the 13th century.

In total, there are four major factors that greatly contributed to the rise of the new religious system as well as the dissolution of the old: Firstly, Saichō's and Kūkai's Buddhism; secondly, the transformation of a governing system from the emperor-centred *ritsuryō* system to the Fujiwara dynasty; thirdly, the rise of aristocratic culture and

¹ Yoshitomo 1993:255-295.

Buddhism; lastly, the rise of Pure Land Buddhism and the Buddhist eschatological worldview. As expected, the introduction of these factors into society during the Heian period was closely related to the social crises of that time. Since I have already discussed the impact of Saichō's and Kūkai's Buddhism, I will like to examine the three other factors in this chapter.

This chapter also aims to demonstrate how the rebuilding of one particular factor catalysed the changes of the other factors, and finally led to the full-scale development of confraternal religion. This is the fourth and final stage of early Japanese religious system, which began to grow at an exponential rate from the early 9th century and continued developing further during the so-called age of the Fujiwara dynasty (c.900-c.1200). The earlier monastic religion had concerned itself with the protection and prosperity of the emperor-centred *ritsuryō* state through exploiting the theurgic power of temple-shrine complexes. This new religious system, by contrast, aimed at individual's salvation and the fulfilment of personal needs, including those of commoners, who had formed communes centring on the power of holy monks or the symbolic edifices of religious institutions. As it developed, the methods of attaining salvation or altered states of consciousness also changed. Previously, religious practitioners had used expensive psychoactive drugs, such as spices and poppy seeds, in their efforts to attain salvation, nirvana, or enlightenment. In contrast, the practitioners of confraternal religion advocated the use of methods that were more freely available to the general populace, such as *nenbutsu*-dancing, contemplative-*nenbutsu*, and Zen meditation, though there were some exceptions to it. During the age of confraternal religion, the functions of monasteries and shrines were also transformed into a site for pilgrimage or a place that

provides a sense of community to believers who held an unquestioning faith in the teachings of a particular lineage or organised around the symbolic edifices of religious institutions. Confraternity of mutual support and assistance while seeking his/her needs is one of the most outstanding characteristics of this religious system, and thus I have chosen the term “confraternal” to describe this newly emerging religious system.

Means of Inducing ASCs

	Type A	Type B	Type C	Type D
Kūkai's gomahō	◎	○	◎	◎
Saichō's shishu zanmai	○	○	×	○
Ennin's fudan nenbutsu	○	◎	○	◎
Kūya's nenbutsu-odori	△	○	△	◎
Genshin's kansō-nenbutsu	○	△	×	◎
Hōnen's senju nenbutsu	×	×	×	◎
Nichiren's daimoku-nenbutu	×	×	×	◎
Eisai's Zen meditation	×	◎	△	◎
Dōgen's Zen meditation	×	◎	×	◎
Ippen's odori-nenbutsu	○	◎	△	◎
Shugendō	○	◎	○	○

◎ Conspicuous; ○ moderate; △ weak; × none

- (1) Type A [change in external stimulation] - abnormal increase or decrease in the *amount* of sensory input; change in the variety of sensory input such as a constant rhythm and beating of drums; and change in the meaning of external stimulation such as in a hypnotic induction.
- (2) Type B [change in physical activity] - greater amount of physical activity and feedback in the form of internal, kinaesthetic stimulation such as dancing and lying very still.
- (3) Type C [change in physiological state] - psychoactive drugs such as marijuana, LSD, alcohol, and so on (turmeric and tea); hypoxia (oxygen starvation), dehydration, starvation, deliberate fasting, and malnutrition.
- (4) Type D [change in focus of attention] – repeating a particular word or phrase (mantra) over and over (either vocally or subvocally), concentrating on a particular mental image.²

² The classification of the methods used to induced ASCs is based on arthing 1992:212-214.

5.1 The Transformation of the Governing System

5.1.1 *The Dissolution of Emperor-centred Ritsuryō System and the Social and Natural Climate of East Asian*

After the reign of Emperor Kanmu, successive emperors and the heads of the Hokke branch of the Fujiwara family attempted to preserve his politics, and Japanese society enjoyed some 150 years of peace. However, after the rebellions of Taira no Masakado (d.940) and Fujiwara no Sumitomo (d.941) broke out, society became increasingly chaotic, and the idealistic political regime based on the emperor-centred *ritsuryō* system itself began to fall apart because of difficulties in carrying out the census-based allotment system.

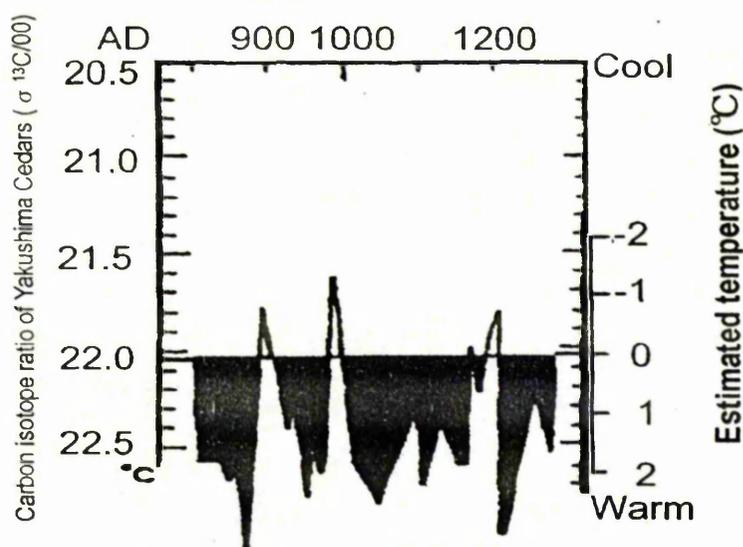
As we have seen, the era from 700 to 900 marked a time of famines and epidemics in Japan. There were 118 famines and 70 epidemics over 200 years, an average of one outbreak every 1.7 years for famines and one every 2.9 years for epidemics³. The increasing number of famines and epidemics can be shown to have had several adverse effects on the continuation of the *ritsuryō* system. These included: a shortage of labourers, migration, a growing maldistribution of income, drastic changes in political power, alterations in tax structure, and the reduction in the size of the government bureaucracy⁴.

COLD PERIODS WITHIN THE LITTLE CLIMATE OPTIMUM

I have already suggested that one of the causes for the increasing numbers of famines and epidemics to have been global warming and the adoption of Chinese style *ritsuryō* system. As we can see in the figure below, the so-called Little Climatic Optimum that

³ Fujikawa 1969; Nakajima 1976:15.

lasted from the 8th to 14th century in Asia was interrupted by a brief cold climate at three junctures around 900, 1000, and 1200. These cold periods initiated migration and invasion by nomadic peoples over continental Asia, and these population movements themselves had profound consequences for the rest of human civilisation and economy.⁵ I argue that the collapse of the emperor-centred *ritsuryō* system was closely related to the turbulence in the Eurasian Continent initiated by the first of these cold climates.



Graph 5-1 Climatic Fluctuation between 800 and 1300

(Data based on Kitagawa 1993:43)

TURBULENT SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF EURASIAN CONTINENT

During the first cold period, drastic changes took place in the Eurasian Continent. T'ang China collapsed with the numerous rebellions that swept the country in 907, initiated by the revolt of Huang Ch'ao (875-884)⁶. With a rapid expansion of population in China, forests were destroyed for cultivation, fuel, buildings, and public works. This

⁴ Farris 1993:381.

⁵ Suzuki 1990:154-155; Yasuda 1996:12.

⁶ Tonami 1991:C-228-C-231.

deforestation induced frequent outbreaks of locust plagues⁷. Moreover, since deforestation reduces the amount of annual precipitation, even minor fluctuations in climate could have aggravated the social crises in China. Thus, a man-made disaster initiated by the population growth and advanced technology needs to be included among the major causes for the large-scale migration and social upheaval in China.

For the next half a century, China entered a period of political disunity, known as the age of the Five Dynasties and the Ten Kingdoms (907-960), which came to an end in 960 only with the rise of the Sung dynasty. The impact of the Chinese upheaval on the surrounding countries was also great. In 926, the Po-hai kingdom located at the north of the Korean Peninsula was completely wiped out by Mongolian nomads, the Khitan. Prior to this, the kingdom's agricultural productivity had already dropped sharply due to the cold climate and the volcanic eruption of Mt. Paektu⁸. In 935, the unified Silla dynasty (668-935) also totally lost control, and was overthrown by the Koryö.

In Central Asia, the newly arrived Pechenegs (nomadic Turkic people who occupied the northern steppes of the Black Sea) attacked and drove the Magyars to the western extremities of the steppes, and in turn, the Magyars invaded Europe at the end of the 9th century. In 906, they destroyed the Moravian Kingdom in central Europe. These 'barbarian' invasions of Europe fostered the development of personal vassal-lord bands known as *Gefolgschaft* ("band of young nobles bound to a peer leader by an oaths of

⁷ Ihara 1997:109-110.

⁸ Yoshino 1995:143-155.

fealty”⁹) in order to protect against the invasions. In doing so, the foundations were laid for the rise of feudalism in the Middle Ages¹⁰.

AFTERMATH IN JAPAN

Like other Eurasian countries, Japanese society was also in a state of domestic disturbance from the end of the 9th century. Robber bands led by Mononobe no Ujinaga and others rose in revolt over wide areas, in provinces such as Shinano, Kai, and Musashi in 889. This disturbance grew into a rebellion, known as the Engi Tōgoku no Ran in 901. Although the rebellion was soon suppressed, many raids against provincial governors’ offices continued, in such provinces as Echigo, Suruga, Hida, Simōsa, and Kazusa as well as Capital Provinces (Kinai).

In addition, the aftermath of the turbulent social conditions in the Eurasian Continent hit Japan. The southwestern parts of Japan were overrun by large-scale bands of pirates from Silla in 893 and 894, and the ‘Jōhei southern-sea pirates’ (*Jōhei Nankaizoku*), consisting of more than 30 piratical bands, overwhelmed the Inland Sea and its coasts for 6 years from 931 to 936¹¹. In 903, the Ebisu - the aboriginal inhabitants of the northern part of Japan - rebelled in Mutsu and Dewa provinces. A conflict between the Ebisu of Watari Island and the aborigines of Mutsu also broke out¹². Finally in the late 930s, the rebellions of Taira no Masakado and Fujiwara no Sumitomo erupted simultaneously,

⁹ *Oxford Duden German Dictionary* 1999.

¹⁰ Suzuki 1990:155.

¹¹ Yamauchi 1996b:52-63.

¹² Saitō 1996:439.

throwing the whole country into confusion. In short, like other Eurasian countries, Japanese society faced grave crisis from the turn of the 10th century.

Under these circumstances, like the personal vassal-lord bands in Europe, private estate proprietors (*shieiden ryōshu*) and local officials in the provinces (*zaichō kanjin*) began to form private military organisations of warriors military bands (*bushidan*) out of related and dependent families in order to protect their lands¹³. By the late 9th century, the Imperial family's fortunes had completely declined as the Fujiwara regency government rose to prominence. According to the *Kojidan*, when Emperor Kōkō (r. 884-887) ascended to the throne backed by Fujiwara no Mototsune (836-891), townspeople surged into the palace in order to demand repayment of the money he had borrowed before his enthronement¹⁴. The *Kojidan* also records that his consort, Empress Nakako, had to go to market by herself¹⁵.

Based on the above description of the social environment at the turn of the 10th century, we may conclude that the collapse of the emperor-centred *ritsuryō* system was indeed closely connected with the upheavals in the Eurasian Continent triggered by the sudden temperature drop at the turn of the 10th century. More precisely, all East Asian countries had been in a state of near collapse due to a series of social crises from the late 9th century, and the famines, epidemics, migration, and invasions caused by the climatic fluctuation at the turn of the 10th century became conclusive factors for the disintegration of their respective political systems.

¹³ Shimomukai 1995:175-211.

¹⁴ Nezu 1976:201-202.

¹⁵ Hotate 1999:51.

5.1.2 *The Development of the Fujiwara Dynasty*

In order to overcome the crises of the emperor-centred *ritsuryō* government, the central government in Japan introduced two major changes at the beginning of the 10th century. First, it decided to calculate taxes based on paddy fields instead of individuals, so that both rent and corvée could be calculated without difficulty. Second, it entrusted the details of administering provincial affairs to governors (*zuryō*) and local resident officials (*zaichō kanjin*) in exchange for a stipulated tax payment to the central government. The new regime based on these changes is called the Fujiwara dynasty or the *ōchō kokka*, which continued for about three hundred years until the Kamakura. Thus, despite the collapse of the emperor-centred *ritsuryō* system, Japan was not overthrown like other East Asian countries, since it succeeded in establishing a new-politics from the beginning of the 10th century.

Unfortunately, entrusting so much authority to governors opened the gates for further abuse, in particular the possibilities for increasing the amount of lands held in tax-free estates. As a result, the reality of Heian society continued to deviate from the *ritsuryō* ideal and finally came to a deadlock in 1140s. Sakamoto Shōzo thus named the regime prior to 1140s the early Fujiwara dynasty, and the regime after the late Fujiwara dynasty. It was during this latter period that a kind of eschatological thought became prevalent, known as *hyakuō shisō*: a belief that the reign of emperors would terminate after 100th generations¹⁶. It should be noted that the early Fujiwara dynasty roughly coincided with the period of Fujiwara regency government and of the cloister government (*insei*). The periodisation of the Fujiwara dynasty derives mainly from the difference in the governing

system of publicly administered land (*kokugaryō*) and private estates (*shōen*), while the periodisation of the regency and the cloister governments derives from the form of the central government.

Japan was able to overcome the social crises without a total disintegration of society by transforming the system of government from the *ritsuryō* system to the Fujiwara. This new governing system generated momentum for various changes in Japanese society, such as the popularisation of Pure Land faith, the development of aristocratic culture and Buddhism, and the development of the warrior class (*buke*). These changes became the major forces for the dissolution of monastic Buddhism as well as for the further growth of confraternal religion.

¹⁶ Sakamoto 1972; Idem 1984.

5.2 The Rise of Pure Land Buddhism and Eschatological Thought

The rise of Pure Land belief and the Buddhist eschatological thought of *mappō* ('the latter dharma') are closely related to each other. According to the Mahayana Buddhist view of cosmic history, the period after the death of Shakyamuni can be divided into three periods. First, the period of the 'true Dharma' (*shōbō-ji*) during which the Buddha's teaching is properly practised and enlightenment can be attained. Second, the period of the 'semblance Dharma' (*zōbō-ji*) during which the teaching is practised but enlightenment is longer possible. Third, the period of the 'last Dharma' or 'decadent Dharma' (*mappō-ji*) during which only the Buddha's teaching exists.

This Buddhist view of cosmic history, popularly known as the tripartite schema (*sanji-setsu*), was very significant for Buddhists as it was closely related to ascetic practises and the possibility of attaining buddhahood. In other words, the ages they lived in would determine the dispositions of the Buddhists, since during a degenerate age of *mappō*, the teachings of the Buddha were already in decline and people would fail to reach enlightenment by their own efforts. Thus, the determination of the three periods was very important for the priests and their pursuit of enlightenment.¹⁷

However, the length of the three periods varied, depending on the interpretation given in various sutras. In addition, there were six different ideas for the year of Shakyamuni's death. As the most generally accepted year of Shakyamuni's death was about 949 BC in those days, the possible years of entering *mappō* were AD 52, 552, or 1052. Thus, the opening year of *mappō* depends on choice, a choice strongly influenced by the Buddhists'

historical and ideological perception of society. For example, in China, the monasteries had become an economic power and enjoyed special privileges by the beginning of the 6th century. This developed into a major source of conflict between the clergy and the State government, and led to an anti-Buddhist movement between 574 and 578, when harsh restrictive measures were imposed upon monasteries. Assuming the year of the Buddha's death to be 949 BC, the Chinese Buddhists calculated the age of *mappō* would begin about AD 552. The anti-Buddhist movement, which broke out almost at the same time, gave Chinese monks an impression that the society had already entered the period of *mappō*. In these circumstances, a new worldview in Chinese Buddhism started to arise in the late 6th century¹⁸.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS FOR THE RISE OF ESCHATOLOGICAL THOUGHT

Ennin transmitted Fa-chao's method of chanting the *nenbutsu* in five cadences (*goe-nenbutsu*) to Japan in 847¹⁹. He linked it with a relatively simple method of continuous walking and chanting Amida's name for the purpose of attaining rebirth in the Western Paradise, also known as *fudan-nenbutsu* or *yama no nenbutsu*. As this new method expanded its influence, its theory, Pure Land Buddhism, also gained popularity at Mt. Hiei. And the mountain eventually became the centre of Pure Land Buddhism during the latter half of the Heian period²⁰.

However, for Pure Land teachings to be fully infiltrated into the spiritual life of the

¹⁷ Kumada 1986:297-313.

¹⁸ Ibid:289.

¹⁹ Sonoda 1981:163-191.

²⁰ Inoue 1971:134-137; Hayami 1974:190-204.

Japanese, one crucial factor was still missing. Pure Land faith has its foundation on the eschatological worldview of *mappō* or the pessimistic worldview in which this world is regarded as a 'defiled world' (*edo*). In other words, Pure Land Buddhism, which teaches people to aspire and seek rebirth in the Pure Land (*gongu-jōdo*), could not really take root without the idea of this world being defiled and without a desire to leave this defiled world (*onri-edo*). However, such a view certainly contradicted the *ritsuryō* ideal of Confucianism that attached much greater importance to this world. This was probably one of the main reasons why Pure Land Buddhism did not gain much attention among Heian aristocrats until the turn of 10th century, despite the fact that Pure Land texts had been transmitted to Japan since the Asuka period and studied by Nara priests, such as Chikō and Chikei. Before the turn of the 10th century, the worship of Amida Buddha or Pure Land Buddhism was nothing more than a kind of memorial service for the dead²¹. Since the *ritsuryō* system did not totally disintegrate despite the many hardships, Pure Land Buddhism could not develop into tenets for the living. It is noteworthy that Pure Land teachings in China became prevalent when the country was in a state of upheaval. Thus, material and mental distress in this world and the rise of Pure Land Buddhism are closely related to each other in China and Japan.

5.2.1 The Rise of Military Bands and the popularisation of Pure Land Belief

The revolts of Taira no Masakado and Fujiwara no Sumitomo generated momentum for the sudden popularisation of Pure Land belief from around the mid-10th century. Thus, the causes for these revolts will be considered first, in the context of the social crises after the establishment of the Fujiwara dynasty. Shimomura Tatsuhiko attributes the frequent

²¹ Inoue 1956:1-5, 83-84.

uprisings and the emergence of the warrior class from the end of the 9th century to the drastic reforms in the taxation system during the Kamyō (889-898) and Engi (901-923) eras. He also regards the revolts of the Jōhei and Tenryō eras as military protests demanding higher political standing appropriate for their distinguished services in suppressing the revolts of private warriors in eastern Japan and the pirates in southwestern Japan, respectively²². Although this is credible to a certain extent, we also need to consider events in the natural and social environments of that time.

During the social uprisings at the turn of 10th century and after the establishment of the Fujiwara dynasty, there were droughts in 898, 901, 904, 908, 910, 915, 917, 920, and 922; floods in 897, 907, 909, 914, 916, 929, and 938; and famines in 897, 908, 917, 919, 920, 930, and 940²³. General epidemics also broke out in 898, 901, 904, 908, 915, 920, 922, 923, 925, 928, 929, 930, and 932²⁴. Moreover, there was an eruption of Mt. Fuji in 937²⁵, followed by large earthquakes and a series of smaller earthquakes.

EARTHQUAKES

According to the *Teishin Kōki*, a series of earthquakes broke out during the revolts of the Jōhei and Tenryō eras. There were 60 earthquakes in 938, 11 earthquakes in 939, and 2 earthquakes in 940²⁶. In 938, a building used to prepare food for the emperor's table (*Naizenshi*) was destroyed by the great earthquake, and four people were killed. The *Teishin Kōki* also records that almost most of the houses and fences in the capital

²² Shimokukai 1995:186-191.

²³ Gondō 1932:50-58.

²⁴ Fujikawa 1967:24-27.

²⁵ Koyama 1998: 323-347.

²⁶ *Teishin Kōki*:168-203.

collapsed, and the extent of the damage was beyond description²⁷. On the 15th day of the 4th month in 938, the Hasedera was destroyed by fire after the earthquake²⁸. In these conditions of social turmoil, the outbreak of the warfare both in eastern and western part of Japan was predicted by divination in 938²⁹. On the 22nd of the 5th month, the central government changed the era name from Jōwa to Tengyō in an attempt to eliminate these bad omens. But, in the following year Masakado's intrafamily quarrel developed into a genuine rebellion against the central government, and Fujiwara no Sumitomo also rose against the central government in the west.

As natural disasters were regarded as punishment sent by heaven or the deities, the Heian aristocrats were seized with panic³⁰. The earthquakes were interpreted as a bad omen portending the collapse of the whole country, as had happened elsewhere in East Asia like T'ang, Po-hai, and Silla. Thus, the central government took very strict measures against Taira no Masakado for his quarrels over the land. These drove Masakado to commit treason. In the midst of the earthquakes, Masakado appointed his own provincial governors, and assumed the title of 'New Emperor' (*shinkō*), authorised by the oracle of the Great Bodhisattva Hachiman and the vengeful spirit of Sugawara no Michizane in 939. Masakado justified his enthronement by comparing himself to the king of the Khitan Liao dynasty (907-1125) who overthrew the Po-hai kingdom in 926³¹. It was the first time in Japanese history that a large warrior band had succeeded in extending its control outside its province for even a short period.

²⁷ Ibid:168.

²⁸ Gondō 1932:57. In 941, the Todaiji was also destroyed by fire.

²⁹ Fukuda 1989:3/97-3/127.

³⁰ For the panic in the capital, see the *Shōmonki*:191-212.

³¹ Amino 1997:16-17.

In his letter to the *Dajōdaijin* Fujiwara no Tadahira, Masakado confessed that he “reluctantly plunged into the occupation of the Kanto region as there was little difference between overthrowing one province and a hundred provinces”³². If the government had taken conciliatory measures without fearing the outbreaks of earthquakes and the social disturbance in East Asia, the intrafamily quarrel would probably not have developed into rebellion. For Masakado (probably also for Sumitomo), of course, the eruption of Mt. Fuji and the earthquakes that followed must have symbolised the end of the old regime and the beginning of the new. Then, both the social climate of East Asia and natural disasters played their part in the outbreak of the rebellions of Masakado and Sumitomo. The fundamental causes for these rebellions can be understood as a part of an autocatalytic reaction of disintegration of the entire old East Asian world.

IMPACT OF THE REVOLTS OF TAIRA NO MASAKADO

Although the central government was able to suppress the revolts of the Jōhei and Tengyō eras, with the help of other military bands, the revolts lowered the prestige of the central government and initiated the fatal collapse of the *ritsuryō* ideal. It may not be a coincidence that the regency became essentially a permanent hereditary privilege of the head of the Fujiwara family from 967 onward. In contrast, the political and social standing of the warrior class, previously been despised by aristocrats, was elevated, and the government’s close affiliation with the warrior class became an indispensable condition for its continuation. Therefore, the social crises and the resulting rebellions in the early 10th century gathered momentum for the rise of warrior government and the

pervasion of an eschatological worldview among even the ruling classes in the later century³³.

SOCIAL CLIMATE OF HEIANKYŌ

The revolts that took place in the middle of the natural disasters not only generated the rise of the warrior class, but also the popularisation of Amida's Western Paradise among both commoners and some Heian aristocrats and priests. Following a period of travelling to famous mountains and holy caverns throughout Japan, Kūya, a pioneer of popular Pure Land belief, returned to Kyoto in 938. At this time, repeated flooding had already devastated the western part of Heiankyō, and created a muddle of dwellings of the nobility and the poorer classes in the eastern part. The residential areas for the lower classes were so congested that a fire in one hut could destroy the whole area. Epidemics spread rapidly, originating in the swamps of the western part of the capital. The lower classes were particularly vulnerable to disease, and they quaked with the terror of vengeful spirits, which were believed to be the source of the disease. The marketplaces and streets were full of deprived people, beggars, vagrants, abandoned children, the sick, and robbers. Countless numbers of corpses were simply discarded in the plains and fields. This social environment was made even worse as labourers on public works projects had just been released from their duties and many people were weary of their hand-to-mouth existence.³⁴

³² *Shōmonki*:126.

³³ Yoshie 1995:113-152.

³⁴ Nishiyama 1991:233-251; Itō 1994:52-62.

Under these circumstances, Kūya took up the role of mendicant monk, distributing alms to the poor and the sick. Like Gyōki, he repaired impassable roads and built bridges. Through the practice of the oral invocation of Amida's name and the bodhisattva, Kūya also attempted to bring relief to commoners, conveying the Pure Land teachings to those who wanted to escape from the distressful and 'defiled land' (*edo*). When an epidemic prevailed and killed many people in the capital and its surrounding provinces, he made a statue - the eleven-faced Kannon - for the victims so that they would rest in peace. Under the leadership of Kūya the statue was carried along the streets of the capital to chase off the pestilence³⁵. As a result, he achieved fame not only as a Pure Land Buddhist but also as the great practitioner (*genja*) of pacifying dead spirits in a society where they prompted great fear. It is evident that Kūya's *nenbutsu*-dancing (*nenbutsu-odori*), featuring rhythmic oral invocation and shamanistic-ecstatic dancing, induced an altered state of consciousness in the minds of participants and helped them to attain euphoric moments in what was a distraught and defiled world³⁶. Under the social turmoil described above, it seems almost a natural consequence that Kūya became the focus of public attention, and his teaching of *nenbutsu* dancing spread quickly among the townspeople.

Kūya's fame signifies that the social chaos of the early 10th century and a consequent decline of monastic religion allowed a descendant of the Gyōki-type non-monastic monk to re-occupy the religious niche of the capital, which had been suppressed for nearly two centuries by the dominance of monastic monks. This time, however, the descendant had already evolved further and made a leap forward in the new environment by transforming

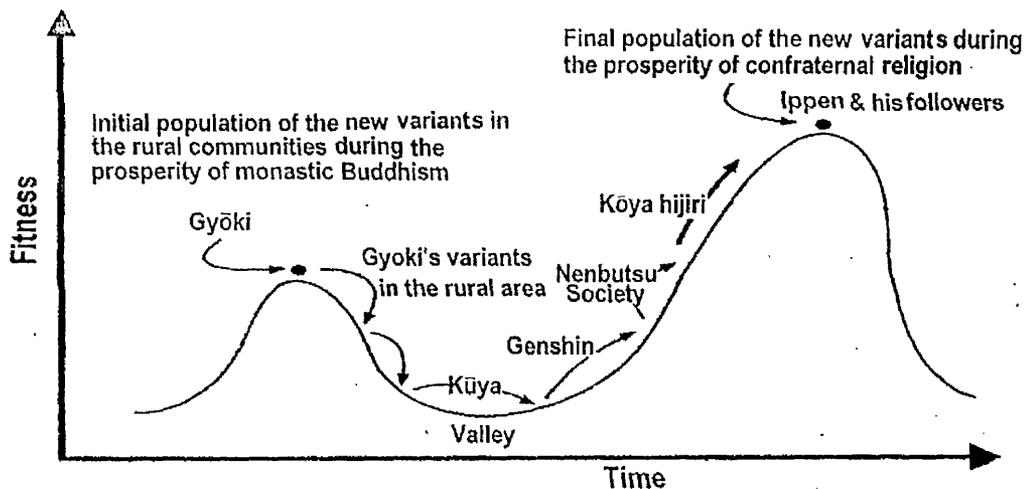
³⁵ Itō 1994: 57.

³⁶ Gorai 1998:81-97. For the psychological mechanism for the shamanic procedures producing analgesia, euphoria, amnesia, and ASCs, see Prince 1982:409-423.

into the great pacifier of dead spirits and a Pure Land Buddhist. As we have seen in Chapter 3, in the heyday of monastic Buddhism, Gyōki-type monks could survive for only a generation in the city of Heijōkyō, but continued to exist in the rural communities of eastern provinces. It then seems not coincidental that he started his activities just after coming back from the northern and eastern provinces where the descendants of the Gyōki-type non-monastic monk still survived.

The game simulations for co-evolution by Kaffman-Johnson and Bak-Sneppen indicate that the wider the gorge between the hills is, the longer it will take for the variant to evolve further, as nothing can happen until some variant makes a leap. Thus, all population of the variant faces large obstacles to further evolution if the width of the gorge is extensive. This explains why it took nearly two century for the descendant of the Gyōki-type non-monastic monk to reoccupy the religious niche in the capital. At the same time, however, the simulations also reveal us that even a single evolutionary step made by one variant can destabilise the situation of other species, and can trigger chain reactions of evolution that sweep through most of the ecosystem before things again settle down.³⁷ As these game simulations suggest, the leap made by Kūya, at the time of decline of monastic religion and the rise of confraternal religion, was so significant that it caused chain reactions of further evolution followed by other new variants (see Figure below).

³⁷ Buchana 2000:120-3.



The game simulations for co-evolution suggest that a population hung on a fitness peak can only make it over to another by mutating its way through an intervening valley of lower fitness. Multiplying and climbing, the new variants such as Genshin, the member of Kangakue, and Kōya *hijiri* carried a population upwards to another peak after the leap made across the valley by Kūya with the decline of monastic Buddhism and the rise of confraternal religion.

For example, in 964 under the strong influence of Kūya's activities, erudite priests of the Tendai sect such as Genshin and Heian literati such as Yoshishige no Yasutane (931-1002) and Minamoto no Tamenori formed Japan's first *nenbutsu* society, known as Kangakue³⁸. In his *Records of Pure Land Rebirth in Japan (Nihon Ōjō Gokurakuki*, c.985), Yasutane depicted Kūya as "a messenger sent by Amida Buddha to bring salvation to all those fallen into pollution and evil in this worldly existence"³⁹. By the time that *nenbutsu* society was established, it had become a generally accepted idea that the world would enter the latter dharma in 1052⁴⁰.

This belief was further enhanced by an armed conflict between Enchin's line, *Jimon*, and Ennin's, *Sanmon*, involving thousands of warrior-monks (*sōhei*), which eventually led to

³⁸ Inoue 1971:150-153,169-171.

³⁹ *Nihon Ōjō Gokurakuki*, cited by Itō 1994:53.

⁴⁰ Kumada 1986:304-305.

Enchin's successors being driven out from Mt. Hiei to the Onjō Monastery in 993. This conflict was just one manifestation of the intense rivalry for the acquisition of landed estates (*shoryō*) among the monastic religious institutions since the latter half of the 10th century⁴¹. This violence among the warrior-monks and the wretched or defiled state of Heiankyō were one of major factors in people turning their backs on orthodox monastic Buddhism as well as in the rise of belief in *mappō*. The world seemed about to enter *mappō*; it appeared full of defilement (*kegare*). Sickness, aging, and death were inevitable realities of this world, and people would never be free from suffering or *kegare* unless they attained rebirth in the Pure Land. The Heian people came to believe that attaining rebirth in the Western Paradise was the only choice left to them.

In 985, Genshin, who had taken refuge in a small and secluded temple at Yokawa, wrote the *Ōjōyōshū*, describing in great depth the bondage of karmic transmigration as a painful alternative to Pure Land rebirth. This became an epoch-making work for the rise of Pure Land Buddhism among the Heian aristocrats. Heian aristocrats were terrified by its vivid descriptions of hell even as they were attracted by its vivid descriptions of the Pure Land. Even men of power, such as Fujiwara no Michinaga (966-1028) and Fujiwara no Yorimichi (992-1074) were beguiled by the charm of the Western Paradise, and they built temples such as the Hōjōji and Byōdōin in order to facilitate their own rebirth in the Pure Land. Thereafter, Amida's Western Paradise became a major motif in Heian aristocratic culture. Thus, during and after Kūya's *nenbutsu*-dancing in the city of Heiankyō, there was a significant change for the spread of Pure Land faith among not only commoners, but also the Heian aristocrats and official priests. For this to happen, the introduction of

⁴¹ Yoshie 1995:119,126.

varieties of *nenbutsu* cultivated in China and in Japan was critical. Chih-i's contemplative-method of inducing ASCs, as already discussed in the previous chapter, was designed for religious professionals but not for the laity. Thus, a further evolution of this method was essential to be fully assimilated into the general public. Kūya's *nenbutsu*-dancing met this demand so that the commoners, who could not afford the expensive *kaji* rituals, jumped into this method of inducing ASCs to cope with their harsh lives. However, what are the reasons for the spread of *nenbutsu* and a consequent rise in Pure Land belief among the aristocrats? So, in the next section we shall now explore how Pure Land belief was assimilated into the minds of the Heian aristocrats.

5.2.2 Further Development of Pure Land Buddhism

During the Fujiwara dynasty, a 'truly' nativised culture, the so-called *kokufū bunka* or Fujiwara culture, flourished. What had been imported during the past several centuries was now fully assimilated and became more nativised. For example, a typically Japanese architectural style, *shinden-zukuri* was created, as was the Japanese style of painting known as *yamato-e*. In literature, the *kana* syllabaries were invented and used not only for literature but also for Chinese texts, in the form of 'translated Chinese' (*kundoku kanbun*) using transposition marks (*kaeriten*). Finally, in religion monastic Buddhism's emphasis on discipline and doctrine declined, and instead, eschatological worldviews of Pure Land Buddhism began to spread.

DEVELOPMENT OF FUJIWARA CULTURE

The usage of *kana* syllabaries allowed the Japanese to express their thought more freely, and this contributed to the development of so-called *ōchō bungaku*, of the *Taketori*

Monogatari, the *Ise Monogatari*, and the *Genji Monogatari* are classic examples. In my view, the frequent usage of *kana* syllabaries and *kundoku kanbun* changed the interpretation of Chinese texts and facilitated the nativisation of Chinese Buddhism and culture, as people began to understand them in their own language. Pure Land Buddhism, for example, might not have been assimilated into the minds of the Japanese people had the Chinese version of the Pure Land texts not been fully understood by the Japanese in their own language.

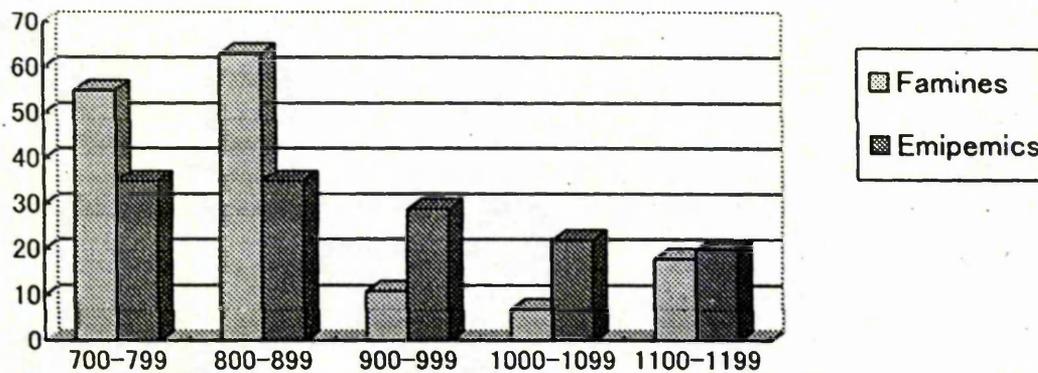
The usage of *kana* syllabaries and *kundoku kanbun* thus greatly contributed to the interpretation and understanding of Pure Land Buddhism. In the *kundoku kanbun*, for instance, the order of words in Chinese (subject, verb, object) is reversed in reading to match Japanese word order (subject, object, verb), and Japanese verb endings and grammatical particles are added. Japanese readings of certain Chinese characters were also added to the right of, or directly below, the characters to which they adhere. In this way, the invention of *kundoku kanbun* with the assistant usage of *kana* and transposition marks helped the Japanese to understand the Chinese texts easily. They thus contributed to nativisation of Chinese culture.

A DROP IN LIFE EXPECTANCY RATES AND *MONO NO AWARE*

The development of an aesthetic ideal pervading all Heian literature, *mono no aware* (a deep, empathetic appreciation of the ephemeral beauty manifest in all living things), was also a crucial factor for both the nativisation of Chinese culture in Japan and the popularisation of the eschatological or ephemeral worldview of Pure Land thought. What

I now wish to establish is a linkage, improbable though it may sound, between the high death rate of the period on the one hand and aspects of Fujiwara culture on the other.

Unexpectedly, the number of epidemics and famines recorded in the major Japanese documentations decreased during the Fujiwara dynasty, compared with the previous 200 years. There were 29 famines and 11 epidemics in the 10th century, 22 epidemics and 7 famines in the 11th century, and 20 epidemics and 18 epidemics in the 12th century (see Graph 5-2).



Graph 5-2 Epidemics and Famines between 700-1199

(Data based on Fujikawa 1969:13-37 & Nakajima 1976:15)

The graph indicates a sharp decrease in the number of famines and a gradual decrease in the number of epidemics after 900. However, the record keeping of epidemics and famines was poor during the Fujiwara dynasty. No regional outbreaks of famines and epidemics were recorded after the 10th century, only the major outbreaks that raged through the capital or multiple provinces at one time. This is because the central government entrusted the details of provincial affairs to local governments, and thus local outbreaks of famine and epidemic were not reported to the central government. If, coupled with this poor reporting, we also take into account the development of seaborne

trade during this period, it is very unlikely in fact that the rates of epidemics and famines did decline during the Fujiwara dynasty. It is more plausible that the actual rates remained constant or even possibly increased during the Fujiwara dynasty.

The above supposition is supported by the life expectancy rates of the Heian aristocrats. While Nara aristocrats lived 63.6 years, early Heian aristocrats lived 65.7 years. However, this dropped to 57.1 years during the latter half of the Heian period, and was 61.4 years during the Kamakura period. In the case of women only, they lived an average of 52.3 years during the mid-Heian period, but the rate hit a low of only 46.3 years during the reign of Fujiwara no Michinaga⁴². This decrease in the average life expectancy from the mid-Heian period, especially during Michinaga's era, was partly caused by the life-styles of the Heian aristocrats⁴³, but it is almost certain that epidemics were a major cause, as indicated by historical documentation and Japanese literature such as the *Genji Monogatari* and the *Eiga Monogatari*. For example, many of Genji's lovers, families, and friends suddenly died at a young age because of epidemics or the tale refers to as *mononoke*. Smallpox epidemics also eliminated all Michinaga's rivals, and so helped him establish his political supremacy.

It is not a coincidence that the ephemeral worldview of *mono no aware* became a major motif in Japanese literature when life expectancy was at its lowest. The Heian aristocrats sought eternal life in the Western Paradise when the ephemeral worldview dominated in the society. Thus even men of power such as Michinaga, who had enjoyed uncontested political dominance, prayed for rebirth in Amida's Pure Land. In his later years,

⁴² Hattori 1980b:3.

Michinaga suffered from terminal symptoms of diabetes including cataracts and cardiac neurosis⁴⁴. In 1019, his suffering led him to resign as *Dajōdaijin*, and he became a Buddhist monk devoted to Amida Buddha. His suffering in his later years was certainly a major reason for his conversion from Esoteric Buddhism to Pure Land Buddhism⁴⁵. The conversion of this man of power had significant effects on the rest of the Heian aristocrats, and the new belief soon spread amongst them.

Constant epidemic outbreaks were escalated by the adoption of Chinese Buddhism and culture since they increased the exchange of people with the continent. On the other hand, constant epidemics greatly contributed to the nativisation of Chinese Buddhism and culture, as Wayne Farris has rightly argued because “the constant plagues killed off the experts in Chinese language and the classics, thus making these subjects harder to learn”⁴⁶. The drastic reduction in the number of Chinese language experts seems to have led to the more frequent use of *kana* syllabaries and *kundoku kanbun*. By the middle of the Heian period, *katakana* was jointly used with *kundoku kanbun* in some dictionaries, and some writers chose to use *katakana* in their writings. During the Kamakura period, some Chinese texts, - the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Analects of Confucius* - were written in entirely hiragana⁴⁷. Therefore, the increasingly common use of *kana* syllabaries and *kundoku kanbun* greatly contributed to a better understanding of Chinese Pure Land Buddhist texts and the pervasion of the Japanese version of Pure Land Buddhism.

⁴³ For detail, see Hattori 1980b:3-19

⁴⁴ Hattori 1975:174-189.

⁴⁵ For the transformation of Michinaga’s worldview from the worldly belief (*gense shugi*) to the Pure Land belief, see Tamura 1983:51-62.

⁴⁶ Farris 1993:381.

⁴⁷ Chikushima 1998.

5.3 The Fujiwara Dynasty and the Transformation of Japanese Religion

Since we have already look at the various factors for the rise of Pure Land Buddhism, which laid the foundations for the development of confraternal religion, we shall explore now how each element contributed to the transformation of monastic Buddhism into confraternal Buddhism. We are going to see below; not only the socio-political and cultural dimensions but also the society as a whole co-evolved in the wake of social crises to degenerate monastic Buddhism among the Heian aristocrats, whereas the co-evolution assisted the further growth confraternal religion.

5.3.1 *The Impact of the Fujiwara Dynasty on Monastic Buddhism.*

The power of the Fujiwara regency reached its climax during the age of Fujiwara no Michinaga, and a turning point at which eclectic Pure Land Buddhism superseded the dominant power of monastic Buddhism. It will be demonstrated in this section that the development of the Fujiwara dynasty was closely related not only to the rise of Pure Land belief but also to the dissolution of monastic Buddhism and the growth of confraternal religion. The transformation of the political and the economic system during the Fujiwara dynasty had significant effects on monastic Buddhism. We will now consider each of these in turn.

THE FUNCTION OF RELIGION

First, the function of religion now changed, in that it began to serve the salvation and prosperity of individuals rather than the protection and prosperity of the State. Under the Fujiwara regency, Heian aristocrats sought to resolve their dissatisfaction with public

affairs, and began to attach greater importance to their private life or what Hayami has called the realm of 'individualism'⁴⁸. We find this individualism in Pure Land Buddhism, in that individuals attempted to seek rebirth into the Buddha Amida's Western Paradise by reflecting on their conduct and realising their worldly desires and sins. The development of 'individualism' characterised by reflection and soul-searching formed the basis of not only Fujiwara culture, but also the development of the confraternal *nenbutsu* associations.

ESOTERIC RITUALS

The second implication of the Fujiwara dynasty was an intensification of the esoteric rituals of *kaji-kitō* for the purpose of worldly merits, and the secularisation and aristocratisation of monastic Buddhism. During the Fujiwara dynasty, the significance of the *kaji-kitō* was not superseded by the rise of the Pure Land belief, for it actually increased in numbers; rather, it came to be used in different ways. After the development of 'individualism', the *kaji-kitō* was conducted for personal worldly benefit, safe delivery and subduing rivals. During the period of the Fujiwara regency, blood relationship with the imperial line and the elimination of rival families were essential conditions for the prosperity of aristocratic houses. In other words, the indispensable qualification was that one should be the emperor's maternal grandfather or father-in law. As a result, there were constant struggles among the aristocracy involving the expulsion of members of other families by the Fujiwara family or wrangling within the branches of the extensive Fujiwara clan itself. Thus, esoteric rituals were frequently performed, using esoteric

⁴⁸ Hayami 1996:26-27.

priests called *gojisō*, in order to pray for the safe delivery of a baby boy or for subduing rivals⁴⁹.

A Tendai priest of the Sanmon-ha, Ryōgen, was probably the most active *gojisō* at this time. He performed esoteric rituals for the daughter of the Fujiwara northern branch (Hokke), Udaijin Fujiwara no Morosuke (908-960), and safely delivered a baby boy, Norihira (later known as Emperor Reizei, r.967-969). However, Emperor Murakami (r. 946-967) already had a baby boy (Imperial Prince Hirohira) with the daughter of the southern branch, Chūnagon Fujiwara no Motokata. Motokata had been employing another Tendai priest of the Jimon-ha, Kansan, as his *gojisō*. Since Morosuke's grandson was appointed Crown Prince after the esoteric rituals of Ryōgen, Ryōgen began to distinguish himself in Buddhist circles under the patronage of Morosuke⁵⁰.

When Ryōgen became the head priest of the Enryakuji (*Tendai-zasu*) in 966, he was able to rebuild the Enryakuji destroyed in the disastrous fire of 966, through the donation of a huge legacy by Morosuke. Morosuke's 10th son, Jinzen (943-990), became a disciple of Ryōgen. When Morosuke lost his wife through sudden death in 957, he had Jinzen become a priest. The sudden death of his wife made Morosuke decide to foster a successor of Ryōgen from his own family so that, even after the death of Ryōgen, Jinzen could use his esoteric power to contribute to the prosperity of his clan. When Morosuke died in 960, his vast private landed estates were donated to the Enryakuji. During his almost twenty-year term in office, Ryōgen brought the sect to the height of its

⁴⁹ Ibid:28.

⁵⁰ Ibid:30-31.

prosperity⁵¹. Having a close association with the dominant figure of the Fujiwara family became an important criterion for the prosperity of a priest and his monastery during the Fujiwara dynasty, and thus the esoteric rituals of *kaji-kitō* for the worldly merits became indispensable to the everyday life of the Heian aristocrats.

In addition, the secularisation and aristocratisation of monastic Buddhism became an inevitable fact at Mt. Hiei. Jinzen succeeded the position of the Tendai *zasu* at the age of 43, after the death of Ryōgen in 985. His accession marked a turning point during which the Tendai tradition, which had attached greater importance to scholastic pursuits, virtuous deeds, and 'pure practice' (*jōgyō*), collapsed. Jinzen died at the age of 48 due to illness, but the secularisation and aristocratisation of the Tendai sect continued, and the number of priests who came from upper-class aristocracy steadily increased from the end of the 10th century⁵². These aristocratic priests began to take over important positions, such as *zasu*, *bettō*, and the posts at the Prelates Office, and by the 12th century these were monopolised by secularised priests⁵³. Consequently, the nature of monastic Buddhism completely changed its forms from the protection and prosperity of the State to the individual and his welfare.

Accordingly, a new type of temple, the so-called *goganji* ('august prayer-offering temple'), began to emerge from the end of the 10th century, and thereafter increased in number. These temples were erected and sponsored by powerful families, such as the Fujiwara and the Imperial family, in order to meet individual needs. For example, the

⁵¹ Inoue 1971:143-145.

⁵² Tamura 1983b.

⁵³ Hayami 1996:36-37.

cause of Michinaga's eye diseases (cataract) was attributed to the vengeful spirit of the late Emperor Sanjō (r.1011-1016), so he built the Muryōjiin temple (later known as Hōjōji) in order to cure himself⁵⁴. Since the temple received no financial support from the State, it was not obliged to obey State's orders⁵⁵. With the rise of the warrior class from the end of the Heian period, the construction of this type of temple increased. During the Kamakura period, Zen Buddhism was most active in the adoption of this type of temple and became quite popular among the warrior class⁵⁶.

FEAR OF *ONRYŌ*

The third feature of religion during the Fujiwara dynasty was the further escalation of the fear of *onryō*. The fear of *onryō* reached its climax during the time of Michinaga. During the Fujiwara regency there was a growing tendency for Heian people to attribute the causes of disease and calamity to the vengeful spirits of the dead and sometimes also to the vengeful spirits of the living, - known as *ikiryō*. Other malevolent creatures such as *tengu*, foxes, badgers, and goblins were also identified as responsible. For example, the cause of Emperor Reizei's mental derangement was attributed to the vengeful spirit of Fujiwara no Motokata, who had died in despair after he lost the prospect of becoming a grandfather of an emperor⁵⁷. In the *Tale of Genji*, quite a few characters, including Genji himself, were seriously influenced by the vengeful spirit of both the living and the dead. The tale depicts how the esoteric ritual of *kaji-kitō* was commonly used among aristocrats at that time to ward off vengeful spirits. After all, the Heian people firmly believed in the

⁵⁴ Hiraoka 1986:47.

⁵⁵ Hayami 1996:33-34.

⁵⁶ Hiraoka 1986:49.

⁵⁷ Hayami 1996:30-31.

malevolent influence of *mononoke*, *ikiryō*, and malevolent creatures, and their belief was cultivated by the severe competition among the upper-class aristocrats at the court and the frequent sudden deaths caused by epidemics.

The stronger and wider the belief in the malevolent influence of *onryō* became, the more frequently the esoteric rituals of *kaji-kitō* were conducted. *Kaji-kitō* was performed 87 times as a remedy for the Heian aristocrats while medicine was taken only 4 times during the period of 76 years between 997 and 1028 as described in the *Eiga Monogatari*⁵⁸. As noted already, *kaji-kitō* were also frequently performed to pray for safe delivery and to subdue political rivals. Consequently, the nature of monastic Buddhism deviated further from its original goal of protecting the State, and so transformed its function to meet individual needs. Thus, the intensified fear of *onryō* contributed greatly to the dissolution of monastic Buddhism from the second half of the Heian period.

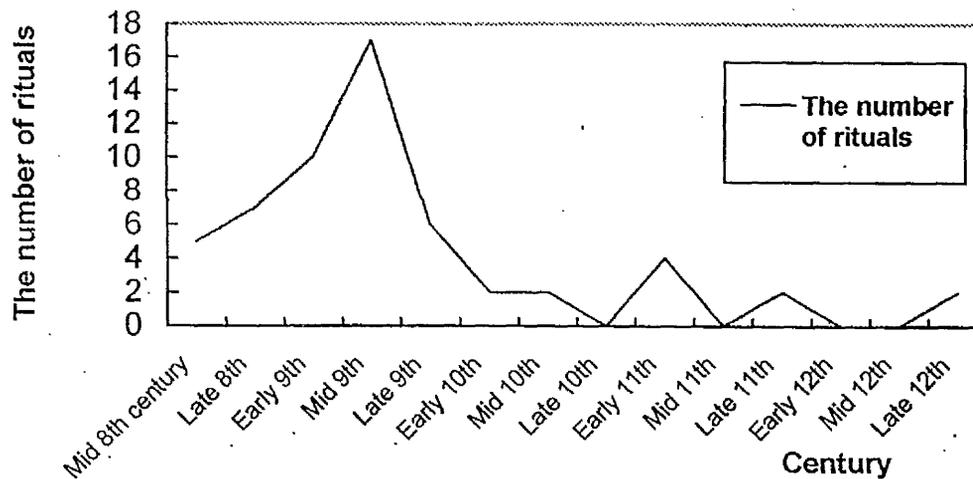
SOURCES OF REVENUE

The fourth and probably most significant effect of the Fujiwara dynasty on monastic Buddhism was the change in the source of revenue for the management and maintenance of the monastic religious system. During the emperor-centred *ritsuryō* state, both Buddhism and Shinto were heavily reliant on state financial support. During the Fujiwara dynasty, however, this all changed. The dilapidation of provincial monasteries vividly relates the decline of monastic Buddhism. Nearly half provincial monasteries were collapsing after the 10th century. Although they still relied on *shōzei* (tax rice levied by the government and stored in provincial granaries under the *ritsuryō* system), many

provincial monasteries were reduced to being branch temples of powerful monasteries. The number of state-protecting rituals (*hōe* and *shuhō*) held at provincial monasteries decreased drastically from the 10th century after reaching a peak in the mid-9th century (see Graph 5-3). Instead, their involvement in military and police affairs became now conspicuous. From the 11th century, *kōji/kōshi*, a priestly official sent by the central government to provincial offices to superintend monks and nuns to give lectures on Buddhist texts, became a titular title⁵⁹. Provincial monasteries became nothing more than local temples because of their failure to establish close associations with local powerful people.

Graph 5-3 The number of rituals at Kokubunji

(Date based on Oishio 1996:80)



Even the Tōdaiji, symbolic culmination of Buddhist prosperity under imperial sponsorship, had been in a serious financial crisis since the middle of the Heian period.

⁵⁸ Hattori 1980b:40.

⁵⁹ Oishiro 1996:74-120. See also Maezawa 1999: 214-231. Most of the earliest temples which were constructed during the Hakuho period were also on the verge of dilapidation by the 9th or 10th century [Satō 1995:123].

The situation grew worse during the late Fujiwara dynasty, or the cloister period, in which Tōdaiji's landed estates of in various parts of Japan shrank through the embezzlement of provincial governors; its halls and pagodas remained unrepaired due to the financial problems⁶⁰. Other monasteries such as Daianji and Gangōji were in a similar situation. Without the sponsorship of the powerful aristocrats they could not avoid poverty⁶¹. In contrast, Kōfukuji and Kasuga Shrine flourished as the tutelary temple and shrine of the Fujiwara family respectively, and experienced unprecedented prosperity during the early Fujiwara dynasty. Their extensive estates, taken over from the Kasuga Shrine, enhanced the thriving power of Kōfukuji further⁶². Reflecting the relaxation of governmental control of religion and the rise of folkloric beliefs, small Buddhist halls, such as Rokkakudō, Kawadō, and Inabadō, began to emerge within the city of Heiankyō, in response to the religious devotion of the townspeople from the turn of the 10th century⁶³. The popularity of this type of sacred space continued to grow.

The pressure of the new political system extended not only to so-called Nara Buddhism but also to Kōyasan. Since Kongōbuji was located at a remote place from the capital, it failed to attract worshipers, and Kōyasan was temporarily eclipsed by Heiankyō's main Shingon monastery, Tōji⁶⁴. Then, in 994, fire devastated the Kōyasan. Enryakuji and Tōji, meanwhile, enjoyed the advantage of being located close to the capital. Enryakuji, in particular, flourished as the centre of the esoteric teachings of the Tendai sect (*taimitsu*)

⁶⁰ In 917, the resident priest's quarters and a lecture hall were destroyed by fire. In 934, lightning burnt down the West Pagoda. In 962, the South Gate collapsed.

⁶¹ Tamura 1983a:249.

⁶² Nagashima 1959:13-19.

⁶³ Sasayama 1984:40.

⁶⁴ Tamura 1983a:251.

under the 3rd abbot Ennin and the 5th abbot Enchin. However, as noted already, Enryakuji was devastated by the conflict between the *sanmon-ha* and the *jimon-ha* from the late 10th century. Thus, the decline of Kōyasan and Enryakuji was conspicuous during the 10th century.

During the Fujiwara dynasty, having a close relationship with the Fujiwara family was crucial for the maintenance and restoration of monasteries, as apparent in the case of the restoration of Enryakuji by Ryōgen. During the height of Fujiwara no Michinaga, Jōyo, a Shingon priest at Kōyasan also known as Kishin Shōnin, attempted to reconstruct Kongōbuji. Especially, Michinaga's pilgrimage to Kōyasan in 1023 facilitated the restoration of Kōyasan. During the cloister period, Kōyasan was fully restored by Meizan (1021-1106), and patronised by retired emperors Shirakawa and Toba. For example, ex-Emperor Shirakawa visited Kōyasan in 1088, 1091, and 1103, and ex-Emperor Toba in 1124. Both Shirakawa and Toba visited Kōyasan again in 1127. Their visits set a precedent for future sovereigns, and helped Kōyasan to win renown as a sacred place for pilgrimage. As a result, Kōyasan obtained a large amount of landed estate from powerful families of that time⁶⁵. Kōyasan was thus able to restore successfully its power under the sponsorship of Fujiwara no Michinaga and retired emperors.

The key factors that enabled Kōyasan to become reinvigorated were the cult of *Kōbō Daishi nyūjō shinkō*, the idea of the 'sacred charnel' (*nōkotsu reijō-setsu*), and the religious activities of the *hijiri* groups who formed confraternal communities in the area. When the Buddhist eschatological worldview became prevalent, people began to believe

that Kōbō Daishi had attained *nirvāna* with his living body and continued to be the saviour of all the people. It was also believed that rebirth into Amida's Western Paradise could be attained if the ashes of an individual were laid on the ground at Kōyasan. Obviously, these beliefs derived from the combination of Kūkai's charismatic figure and Pure Land thought. All these ideas were propagated by the *kōya hijiri* since high-ranking Shingon priests at Kōyasan did not preach directly to the masses. In the 11th and 12th centuries, *hijiri* were organised into formal groups chartered by the great Buddhist temples for fundraising (*kanjin*). Thus, they were not hermits as opposed to the ancient Buddhist establishment as postulated by Inoue Mitsusada⁶⁶; rather they played a crucial role in the regeneration of ancient Buddhism in medieval Japan⁶⁷. *Hijiri* became important figures in this regenerated Buddhism, and their fundraising activities became a major factor in the spread of Pure Land Buddhism to the Japanese masses.

In sum, monastic Buddhism had to meet the individual needs of powerful families such as Fujiwara family and retired emperors who became Buddhist priests (*Hoō*) for its survival and growth, and to transform itself from state-protecting Buddhism (*gokoku bukkyō*) into 'aristocratic Buddhism' (*kizoku bukkyō*)⁶⁸. Likewise, the system of imperial offerings based on the pyramid structure of Shinto, codified by the *Engishiki* in 927, collapsed at the turn of the 11th century due to the decline of the *ritsuryō* system initiated by social crises and the rise of local powerful families. Other systems of classification began to develop from around the turn of the century, such as the Twenty-Two Shrines (*nijūnisha*)

⁶⁵ Miyasaka & Satō 1984.

⁶⁶ Inoue 1956.

⁶⁷ Kuroda 1994e:3-44; Amino 1978.

⁶⁸ Hayami 1998:3-30.

in the Kinai region⁶⁹, and the *ichi-no-miya* ('First Shrines')⁷⁰ and the *sōsha* ('Combined Shrines')⁷¹ in local areas. Thus, only the limited number of shrines was able to receive financial support. Equally, the Sōgō system that strictly controlled Buddhist official priests began to collapse at about the same time. From the latter part of the Heian period, the *sōgō* and *sōi* titles lost their specific priestly application, and they were conferred upon laity, such as artists and sculptors of Buddhist images. Thus, the official monasteries fell apart from the turn of the 11th century.

5.3.2 *The Formation of Confraternal Alliances (Communes)*

Under these circumstances, monasteries and shrines had to create new sources of revenue in order to outgrow their dependence on the aristocracy (*kuge kenmon*). The formation of *hijiri* groups for fundraising was one such measure. Another was incorporation of people known as *jinnin* or *yoryūdo* into their religious organisation. During the Fujiwara dynasty, not only religious institutions but also influential farmers were striving to achieve autonomy, and many farmers who sought to escape public duties subordinated themselves to powerful institutions or individuals and provided non-agricultural services in exchanges for protection and special privileges. A major task of the *jinnin/yoryūdo* was estate (*shōen*) management, but they also actively engaged in commerce, artisanship, and theatrical performance. For example, the *jinnin* of Enryakuji was one of the most prominent groups during the cloister period, and laid the foundation for Enryakuji to hold

⁶⁹ *Hyakurenshō*, Eihō 1/11/18 (AD 1051).

⁷⁰ The origin of the *ichi-no-miya* system is not clear, but the appellation first appears in the *Konjyaku Monogatari* (*maki* 17-23) compiled in the early 12th century. Since the appellation was also used in the *Kyōzutsu* ('cylindrical sutra') dating 1103, excavated from the precincts of Shitori Shrine in Tottori prefecture, the system was believed to have arisen around the turn of the 12th century.

⁷¹ From the middle of Heian period, the deities of many shrines of a region were enshrined together near provincial government offices in order to economise the expenditures of offerings and to facilitate the

the largest usury organisation (*kashiage*) in the medieval period⁷². We cannot dismiss the effects of the *jinnin/yoryūdo*'s activity on the dissolution of monastic religious system and the full-scale development of the confraternal religious system during the Kamakura period, to which I will return below.

GEOENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

It is noteworthy that the period between the end of the 10th century and the beginning of the 12th century was marked by drastic geoenvironmental change. According to the geo-archaeologist Takahashi Manabu, the riverbeds of alluvial fans dropped several metres and began to form fluvial terraces again. Subsequently, rivers eroded alluvial fans. Similar geographical changes took place during the early Middle Yayoi period, but the impact during the late Heian period was incomparable with the Yayoi period, as much wider regions had already been transformed into paddy fields during Heian. The groundwater level dropped significantly, so that land situated higher became drier. The fall in groundwater level greatly decreased the amount of arable land for wet-rice cultivation. Some farmers adopted the cultivation of new rice plants that could grow in less water; others changed paddy fields to dry fields⁷³. In the worst cases, farmers abandoned cultivation and turned the paddy fields into wastelands (*arano*)⁷⁴, and so had to look for alternative work as the *jinnin/yoryūdo*, *hijiri*, townspeople, or warriors. These newly emerging groups of people were to become the major forces in the development of confraternal religion.

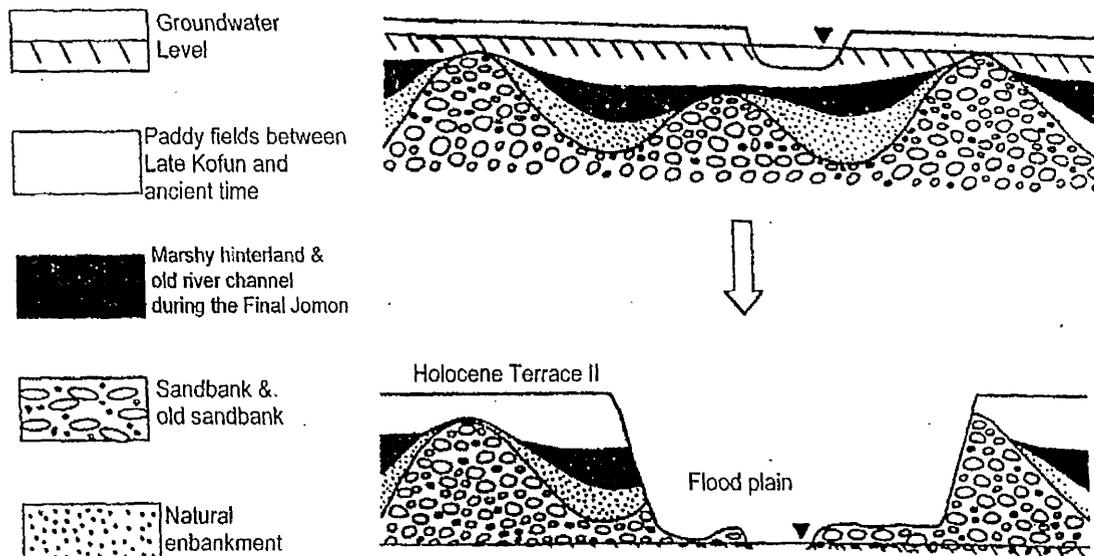
governor's worship of the most prominent of the shrines in the administrative region.

⁷² Hotate 1999:173.

⁷³ Takahashi 1996:120-122.

⁷⁴ Kurōda 1987:52.

Takahashi points out another important geographical change that took place toward the end of the Fujiwara dynasty, that is, the emergence of dry riverbeds or *kawara*. Since the difference in height between rivers and fluvial terrace increased, the area subject to flooding became restricted to the dry riverbeds⁷⁵ (see the figure below). These newly emerged lands were regarded as land of *bonavacantia* (no ownership), and they thus became unrestricted areas for various purposes. In the city of Heiankyō, criminals were executed at the dry riverbed of the Kamo River after the 11th century. Many dead bodies of famine and epidemic victims were simply discarded on the dry riverbeds. In addition, the people who occupied the lowest stratum of Japanese society, such as vagrants and lepers, dwelled in these areas, and they thus became popularly known as *kawaramono* ('dry riverbed people'). *Kawaramono* usually carried out the most despicable tasks or engaged in occupations that involved contact with corpses and carcasses, helping the funeral services of Buddhist monks.



The Formation of the Holocene Terrace II
(Takahashi 1996:121)

⁷⁵ Takahashi 1996:125-126.

Shinran postulated the theory of *akunin shōki* that an evil person was the chief object of Amida's compassion. Ritsu priests Eizon and Ninshō also made efforts to help lepers and worked among outcasts, striving to teach and administer precepts to them. Among the *kawaramono*, a variety of entertainers, singers, dancers, musicians, acrobats, and puppeteers, performed on the dry riverbeds. They were the major supporters of confraternal religion and greatly contributed to the fundraising for the construction and repair of temples and shrines during the Kamakura and Muromachi period⁷⁶. Confraternal religion was able to develop with the support of such newly emerging groups of people as it provided salvation to them.

5.3.3 The Fall of the Fujiwara and the Expansion of Confraternal Religion

During the Fujiwara dynasty, seaborne trade continued developing further through the increased demand for spice for *kaji-kitō*, as well as for the latest foreign products such as Chinese porcelain. By the end of the 11th century, a Chinese traders' settlement - the *Hakatatsu tōbō* - was established in Hakata, and the traffic between Japan and China became an almost everyday occurrence⁷⁷. This flourishing of seaborne trade, however, brought about trade deficits in Japan. During the early Fujiwara dynasty, the government funded the purchase of foreign articles with natural resources, such as cinnabar, pearls, and gold. Indeed, the Bureau of Archivists and Chamberlain's Office (*Kurōdodokoro*) directly controlled the gold mines in Mutsu province and the cinnabar mines in Ise province⁷⁸. This situation began to change from the mid-11th century. Good-quality

⁷⁶ For the historical development of a fund-raising performance at the *kawara* in the city of Heiankyō and its vicinities, see Moriya 1985.

⁷⁷ Ueda 1989:133-147; Hayashi 1998:575-591.

⁷⁸ Hotate 1999:124-125.

cinnabar had already run out Japan, and Japan became an importer from China by around 1050⁷⁹. During the cloister period, even the production of gold became scarce, and tradesmen and *jimin* bought up the gold of Mutsu province⁸⁰. In addition, the central government began to lose its monopoly over seaborne trade. The Kōrokan in the capital had already lost its primary role as a trading place, after the fall of the Po-hai Kingdom in 926, and the cornerstones of the building were carried away in 1021⁸¹. By the beginning of the 12th century, the last Kōrokan located in Dazaifu was totally dilapidated⁸².

Religious establishments (*jike kenmon*), on the other hand, began actively to participate in the seaborne trade from the mid-11th century and began to establish a foothold in commerce. For example, the *jimin/yoryūdo* of leading monasteries and shrines, such as Enryakuji, Iwashimizu Hachiman Shrine, Hie Shrine, Daisenji in Hōki province, Hakozaki Shrine in Chikuzen, Munakata Shrine in Okinoshima Island, worked as dockers, goods agents, overland transporters, and distributors⁸³. Priests were better versed in the Chinese language than others, and they were also good at keeping accounts – a skill developed under the bureaucratic religious system of the previous centuries.

Many shrines and monasteries (especially shrines) were located at important points for traffic and the transportation of goods along the sea, river and important roads, such as watersheds, capes, inlets, islands, and mountain passes. Moreover, major monasteries

⁷⁹ Matsuda 1986:58. Japan still exported low quality cinnabar to China.

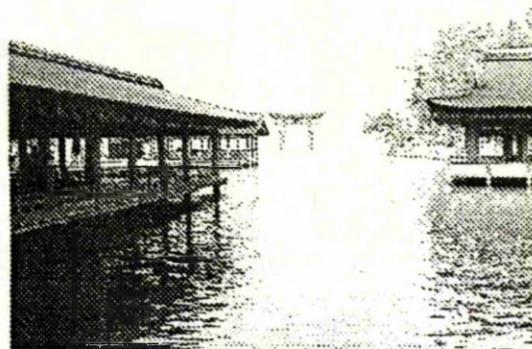
⁸⁰ Hotate 1999:173.

⁸¹ Hara 1998:1-25.

⁸² Mori 1979:450.

⁸³ Hayashi 1998:584-585. Nishiyachi contends that chronic agricultural crisis caused by the 11th century warming climate contributed greatly to the development of commerce [Nishiyachi 1998:5-22].

and shrines had their own branches across the country. By the middle of the 12th -century, while the central government was losing its monopoly over commerce and accumulating severe financial problems, shrines such as Ise, Kumano, Usa, Hakozi, Hie, Kasuga, and Kamo and monasteries such as Enryakuji, Kōfukuji, and Onjōji - which had all succeeded in establishing their means of earning money by commerce and the expansion of *shōen* through the activities of the *jimin/yoryūdo* - no longer relied financially on the Fujiwara and other aristocratic establishments.⁸⁴



Left: the Setagawa overlooked from the Ishiyama Temple (It flows from the Lake Biwa to Osaka Bay via Uji Shrine & Byōdōin, southern Kyoto. It also enables people to travel from the lake to the Sea of Japan.); **Right: Itsukushima Shrine** (The shrine is located at a strategically important point for maritime transportation along the Seto Inland Sea.

However, the conditions for the religious establishments began to become less favourable from the late Fujiwara dynasty. In 1156, the cloister government issued new laws known as Hogen no Shinsei ('New System of Government in Hogen Era'), which limited the further expansion of *shōen*⁸⁵ and the number of *jimin/yoryūdo* of the leading shrines and temples. The law also prohibited the religious establishments from imposing

⁸⁴ Amino 1997b:78-82.

⁸⁵ For the relationship between the eruption of Mt. Asama (AD 1108) and the formation of the *Shōen* system in the Kantō region, see Minegishi 2001:43-63.

high interest rates⁸⁶. It is obvious that these laws were issued in an attempt to inhibit the further expansion of the religious establishments. Moreover, from the early 12th century the Taira family came to exert control over Sino-Japanese trade by seizing strategic locations for commerce, such as Dazaifu, the Itsukushima Island, and Fukuhara. Taira no Kiyomori (1118-1181) set up a firm political foundation extending from Kyushu to the eastern part of the Inland Sea and made a fortune in Sino-Japanese trading. The development of Sino-Japanese trade by the Taira family, in particular the inflow of large amounts of Chinese coins from the mid-12th century, also had a significant impact on the Japanese society. The circulation of these Chinese coins exerted enormous influence on the development of monetary economics in Japan, and increased the power of merchants⁸⁷. In brief, the power of religious establishments was drastically reduced by the new laws as well as by the rapidly expanding power of the Taira family and wealthy merchants.

Active trading brought Japan not only Chinese coins but also various epidemics, such as smallpox, influenza, and even new types of pestilences known as *fukuraibyō*, *yōbyō*, and *zeni no yamai*. The nature of these pestilences is uncertain, but records suggest they were the mumps⁸⁸. The epidemic killed immeasurable numbers during the late Fujiwara dynasty. Moreover, the great fire of 1177, the so-called Angen no Taika, destroyed a third of the capital city including the Great Hall of State (Daigokuden) and the Suzaku Gate⁸⁹. From 1180 to 1185, the Taira and Minamoto families clashed violently, and the capital

⁸⁶ Ishii 1970.

⁸⁷ Hotate, 1999:174-177.

⁸⁸ Hattori 1964:206.

⁸⁹ *Hōjōki*:24.

turned into a battlefield. The residents of Heiankyō were in a state of great anxiety as Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147-1199), who had mobilised in Kanto in 1180, was about to retaliate against the Taira family. Meanwhile, Taira no Shigehira and his troops initiated retaliatory attacks against the Nara Buddhist establishments, the last anti-Taira stronghold, and burned down Tōdaiji and Kōfukuji⁹⁰. The entire city was thus devastated by epidemics, civil war, and fire.

The total destruction of the vast monastery complex of the Tōdaiji and of the Kōfukuji by Taira no Shigehira (1157-85) in 1180 signalled the total change that monastic religion had already undergone. Even though the Tōdaiji was reconstructed in 1195, it was built under different sponsorship and in a different architectural style, one known as the 'great Buddha style' (*daibutsuyō*) or the 'Indian style' (*tenjikuyō*). Chōgen (1121-1206), who had studied Southern Song style architecture in China, founded perhaps the most prestigious *hijiri* organisation, the *Kōya hijiri*, in order to raise money for its reconstruction, unifying popular support and encouraging donations.

THE COMPARISON OF MONASTIC AND CONFRATERNAL RELIGIONS

Although Chōgen contributed greatly to the renaissance of the Nara Buddhist establishment, the new Nara Buddhism founded by Jōdo priests was different from the previous one in three distinctive manners. First, the renaissance of Nara Buddhism would not have been possible without the collaboration of *hijiri* who travelled throughout the country preaching the religious merits of building temples, erecting statues, and holding services. They were so successful in raising funds that other temples organised similar

⁹⁰ Machida 1999:23-24.

groups. *Hijiri* thus became a permanent feature of medieval Japanese Buddhism and contributed greatly to the spread of Buddhism to the Japanese masses.

Second, since most of the temple-shrine complexes were reconstructed and maintained by the donations of people and public works, its function also changed: they aimed at providing individual salvation and secular merits of not only the aristocratic and warrior classes but also commoners, rather than the protection and prosperity of the state. Due to Kuroda's overemphasis upon the doctrine of *ōbō-buppō* mutual dependence to support his theory of *kenmitsu* system, we tend to mistake that temple-shrine complexes continued to perform the apotropaic prayers and rituals for the protection of the state even during the medieval period. Although it was certainly true to a certain extent, the reality was quite feeble. For example, from the law issued by the court in 1253, we know that shrines were censured for the negligence of various rituals concerning the peace and prosperity of the state and for the embezzlement of treasures dedicated by the court for these rituals⁹¹. As for Buddhism, in 1271 only a limited number of priests attended the Buddhist services, such as *shushō-e* and *higan-e*, which were quite significant for the peace and prosperity of the state⁹². This situation continued so that, in 1360, priests were ordered by the temples to write an oath (*kishōmon*) stating that they would never be absent from the Buddhist services. If they broke the oath, they were deprived of the qualifications for the post of an erudite priest (*gakuryō*)⁹³. Thus, the temples could not keep appearances of the doctrines of *ōbō-buppō* mutual dependence despite all their efforts, and even the erudite priests did not consider the protection of the state as their

⁹¹ *Chūsei Hōsei Shiryōsyū* I, *tsuika-hō* 280, Kenchō 5.

⁹² *Kamakura-ibun* no. 10856, Bunei 8.

⁹³ *Kōyasan-monjo* vol. 6, no. 1319, Shōhei 15 (in the *Dainihon Komonjo*).

important duty: It was no more than a chore to earn their provisions. It is then evident how monks of lower ranks and itinerant monks regarded their duty.

Worthy of note are the actions of temple-shrine complexes when the threat of Mongol invasion created the national emergency in Japan. The court let them perform the apotropaic prayers to protect the state from the invasion, and they earnestly conducted the prayers in their own ways. However, even in the middle of this state emergency, the shrines such as Hie and Kasuga marched repeatedly into the capital, bearing portable shrines (*shinyo*) and sacred objects (*shinboku*), for their self-interested demands, and such actions brought the court into a crisis. Also in 1286, when troops of warriors were stationed in the vicinity of Rokuhara for the preparation against the third Mongol invasion, the Kanshin'in Temple (now Yasaka Shrine), which belonged to Hieizan at that time, ordered the troops to evacuate the land, as it was a territory of the temple⁹⁴. These temple-shrine complexes' reactions to the state emergency certainly indicate that the *ōbō-buppō* doctrine was no more than a sophistic device to increase their influence and power as well as the offerings from the secular authorities. Therefore, the idea of state protection was still officially recognised but did not exist in reality.

Third, as the style of temple-shrine complexes changed, the practice of religious services also changed⁹⁵. Under the monastic religious system, religious services conducted within the precincts of monasteries and shrines had meaning for the protection and prosperity of the state, but now people's voluntary participation became more important. Various

⁹⁴ *Kamakura-ibun* no.15887, Kōan 9.

⁹⁵ Because of limited space, I cannot go into detail. For the changes in the functions of monasteries from the late Heian period, see Yamagishi 1990.

confraternities known as *kō*, which attached greater importance to the worship of the founders of particular sects, were organised from the late Heian period, becoming a major stream during the Kamakura period. Memorial services for the founders of particular sects were also conducted for the purpose of attaining individual salvation and secular merits, such as Daishikō of the Shingon and Tendai sects, Hōonkō of the Jōdo Shinshū, Hokkekō of the Nichiren, and Eiheijikō of the Sōtō. In the case of syncretic Shugendō and Shinto, a system known as the *oshi* system⁹⁶, was developed from the late Heian period. The system was employed at Ise, Kamo, Yasaka, Kitano, and other shrines, and the *oshi* organised confraternal networks, such as Isekō, Kumanokō, and Inarikō⁹⁷. These confraternal associations in both Buddhism and Shinto greatly contributed to the rise of pilgrimages to famous shrines and temples and played a vital role in the full-scale development of the confraternal religious system during the Kamakura period.⁹⁸

Finally, although the construction of temple-shrine complexes continued after the Heian period, their functions were different from those of previous ones. During the age of monastic religion, the precincts were clearly set apart from the mundane world by a religious boundary (*kekkaï*) so that ordinary people were not allowed admissions. In contrast, there was no such a taboo in confraternal religion. In principle, every young and

⁹⁶ *Oshi* is a term of Buddhist origin that refers to masters of exorcism and others with certain religious or magical powers. Later, *oshi* functioned as agents between shrines-temple complexes and believers. They travelled throughout the county, visiting their *dan'na* (clients) in various localities and distributing amulets and supplications from devotees. They also provided lodgings and other services to pilgrims visiting their respective shrine-temple complexes.

⁹⁷ For the development of *Kō* system, see Sakurai 1962.

⁹⁸ From the middle Edo period, the number of pilgrims increased more rapidly than medieval period. Behind this phenomenon, however, lies a desire for temporary escape from urban centres, a resurging interest in religion, and nostalgia for the past. Thus, the nature of pilgrimage in the medieval period is different from the Edo-period pattern of pilgrimage.

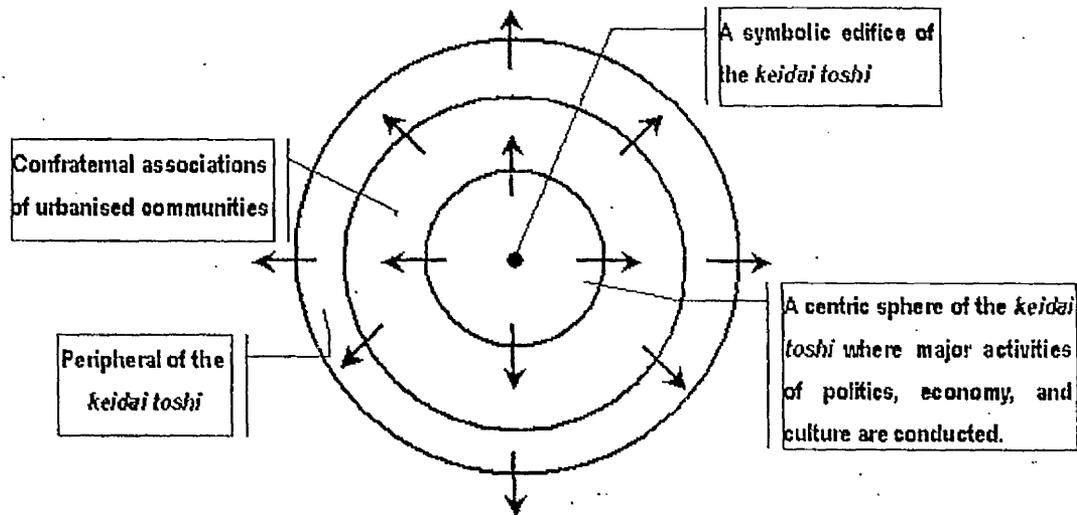
old of both sex and every load and loon were able to go into the centre of all sacred areas except for the temples inhabited by an ordained ex-emperor, prince or princess (*monzeki*).⁹⁹ In other words, the temple-shrine complexes were the only places that commoners were able to enter without any restriction. As these temple-shrine complexes provided the security and the concentration of resources essential for the development of an economic centre, they began to form the nuclei for the so-called *keidai toshi* ('a precinct city') from around the 11th century. The *keidai toshi* was a large built-up area developed along both inside and outside the gates of major temple-shrine complexes, and formed the confraternal association of urban communities. According to the *Sandai Jitsuroku*, for example, the old capital of Heijōkyō had already fallen to ruin after the transfer of the capital to Nagaoka, and both the large and small streets were transformed into paddy fields by at least 864AD. However, the outskirts of Heiankyō (*gekyō*) in the vicinity of large temple-shrine complexes, such as Kōfukuji and Todaiji, were gradually urbanised at least by the mid-11th century, for they attracted a great number of people, such as craftsmen and labourers for the construction and repair of the buildings, merchants for the necessities of existence, and retainers for high-ranking and aristocratic priests.¹⁰⁰ In addition to these people, the *keidai toshi* were also inhabited by the variety of occupational professionals including quite a few 'monks' who engaged in the moneylending or weapon business¹⁰¹. Such a confraternal alliance of commercial, industrial, and financial communities organised around the temple-shrine complexes made up the base of tremendous power and influence of the *keidai toshi* and flourished throughout the country, especially in the Kinai and Kingoku regions (the neighboring

⁹⁹ Itō 1999:126. But no women were admitted to the Daibutuden until 1516.

¹⁰⁰ Yasuda 1998:9-16.

¹⁰¹ Itō 1999:14-43.

sixteen provinces)¹⁰² until they were gradually superseded by the castle towns of the warrior class from the 16th century and eventually reduced to temple towns (*monzen machi*) during the early Tokugawa period.



5-1 Schematic Diagram of the *Keidai Toshi* emerged from around the 11th century and flourished until the 14th century. The *keidai toshi* were not static but dynamic: With the population growth and urbanisation of the *keidai toshi*, each outer sphere was engulfed by the growth of an inner sphere, and finally grew into Japan's metropolises during the medieval period (The diagram created based on Ito:1999:132-3)

The symbolic edifices of the *keidai toshi*, such as the Daibutsuden, Konpon Chūdō, and the Daitō of Mt. Kōya and Negoroji were the spiritual fulcrums of the urban communities and also the sites for pilgrimage. Some religious ceremonies were taken out from the temple-shrine complexes, and were conducted on the streets of the *keidai toshi* for religious fundraising, featuring playful elements such as the *goryō* cult, *nenbutsu*-dance, and *kanjin nō*. They were also conducted in rather personal settings for the members of confraternal associations such as *kō* confraternities. This sort of confraternal configurations of the people began to form the *keidai toshi* from around the 11th century, and grew further during the medieval period. Therefore, the real substance and

¹⁰² Itō 1999. For the varieties of occupational professionals that constituted the participants

participants of what Kuroda called '*jisha seiryoku*' (the power and influence of medieval religious institutions) was not religious institutions but the confraternal or communal associations of various 'monks' and townspeople who organised around the symbolic edifice of religious institutions for mutual protection and assistance while each individual having engaged in various businesses autonomously for their individual needs (See Diagram 5-1).

Each *keidai toshi* also maintained autonomy with no supervision of any ruling elites (*kenmon*) while having been loosely connected with other *keidai toshi* by means of pilgrimage and fundraising. Thus, they acquired substantial amounts of power and influence as a whole during the medieval period. Indeed, we find that this type of confraternal configurations that had a holarchical structure in every corner of the medieval society. These include such as (1) Ryōnin's *yūzū nenbutsu* in which one 'interfuses' (*yūzū*) with other practitioners, leading to one's birth in the Pure Land of Amida and enabling the salvation of all humankind; (2) the *myōden* system - the landholding pattern under the private estate and public domain system (*shōenkōryōsei*); (3) the *kenmon* system - the mutual dependence and support among ruling elites with substantial degrees of independence; and (4) the *sō* system - the mutual protection and assistance of the residents in each village and town, as well as (5) the networks of pirate- and warrior-bands and even (6) the governing structure of the Kamakura shogunate featured by the *sōryō* system (see Diagram 5-2). In these systems, each lower part of the system functioned harmoniously and was united as a whole for the higher part while each part behaved as an independent and an autonomous whole.

of *keidai toshi*, see *ibid.*:14-43.

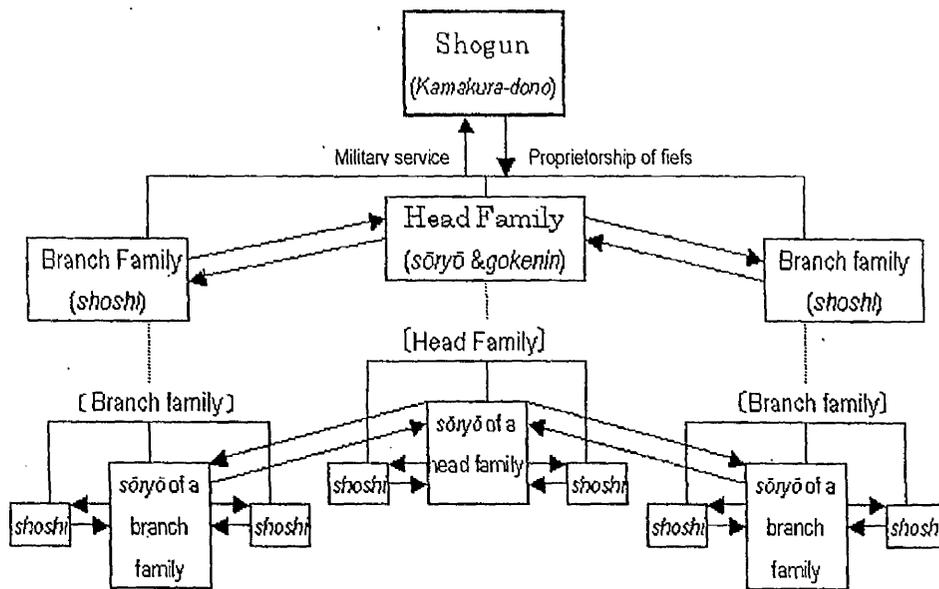


Diagram 5-2 The Hierarchy of the *Soryō* System

Similar to the social organisation of the *keidai toshi*, from the late Heian period the warrior class also developed the confraternal alignments known as the *soryō* system that was characterized by holarchical structure, in which a lineage chief (*sōryō*) of a warrior band exercised leadership over his relatives (*shoshi*), but each *shoshi* of branch families and a head family as well as the *sōryō* of branch families maintained certain degrees of independence and autonomy from the lineage chief while each worked harmoniously and was united as a whole for higher organizations of the branch families and the head family. The Kamakura shogunate adopted this system for the government of direct vassals. Thus, even after the lineage chief of the head family became a direct vassal of the Kamakura shogunate, his leadership over the clan remained intact. Toward the close of the Kamakura period, however, this confraternal configuration of the warriors who organised around the head family or the shogun were gradually cut off because of limited fiefs and a concentration of power by military governors (*shugo*), and only a hierarchical dimension became prominent. Thus, frequent revolts by confraternal alliances starting from the first half of the 14th century, such as *tsuchi-ikki*, *kuni-ikki*, and *ikkō-ikki*, can be partly understood as rebellions against the disruption of their confraternity by the increased power of the military governors.

Despite Kuroda's great contribution to the study of Japanese history, his theory of *kenmitsu* system adheres to the dichotomic categorisation of 'orthodox' and 'heterodox' groups. Thus, he had to separate many of his attractive findings into two groups, and fell into the fallacy known as *dichotomy by contradiction* (for instance, 'Everything must be red or not red'). In fact, the recent research suggests that the Kamakura shogunate

supported the Shingon and Zen sects of Buddhism in rivalry with the Enryakuji and attempted to build the 'zenmitsu system' rather than the *kenmitsu* system¹⁰³. Kuroda overlooked the multidimensional features of the medieval Japanese society that consists of many kinds of individuals and groups who concentrated on the different symbols of confraternities while each having pursued his/her own needs. In other words, the people had to organise confraternal associations for their survival in the society where no exclusive political power existed to guarantee their lives, once if they were detached from the confraternity¹⁰⁴. Therefore, not only the *kenmitsu* system but also the so-called Kamakura New Buddhism was nothing more than one of the configurations of the confraternal system that actually became most dominant during the medieval period.

Since history is like living organisms in nature, the life-dynamic paradigm helps us to better understand history from broader perspective by extracting essence from myriad historical phenomena and thus is more appropriate than the materialistic interpretation of history. Diagram 5-3 below reveals us that confraternal alignment of people became the most dominant stream during the medieval period, and generated the lifecycle of confraternal system until it was finally superseded by the full-scale development of what we might call the warrior government system, which is characterised by its attempts to transform the holarchical structure of confraternal system into hierarchy by cutting the horizontal networks of the people. We shall see in more detail about the significance of the life-dynamic paradigm in the next final chapter.

¹⁰³ Sasaki 1995.

¹⁰⁴ During the medieval period, if nobody appealed to the government for murder, the murderer was not punished at all. This means that the medieval people's lives were always in extreme peril once they would leave the community village or if they did not belong to any confraternal association.

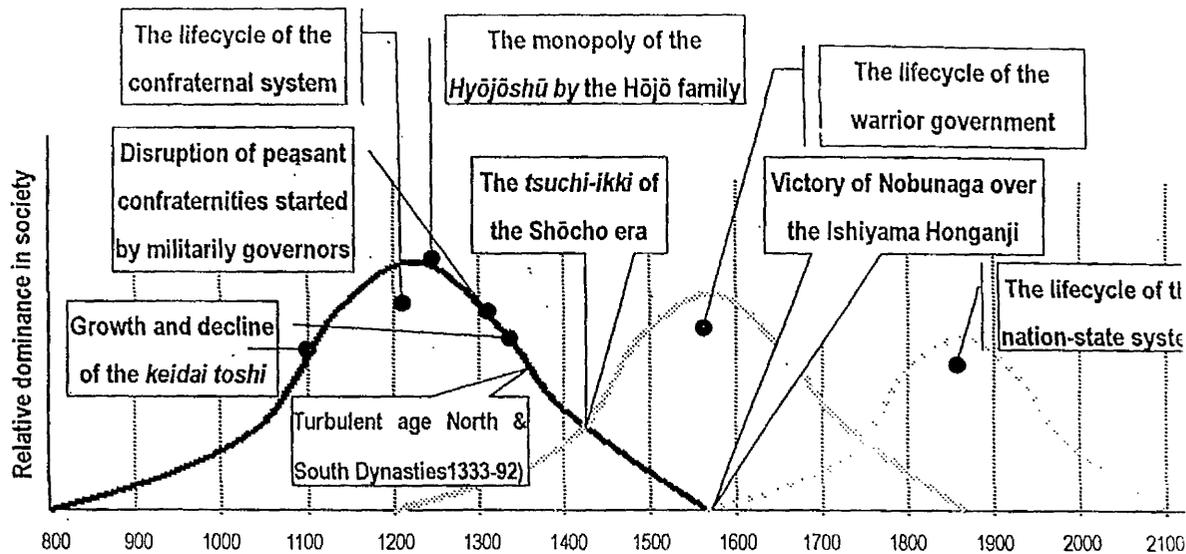
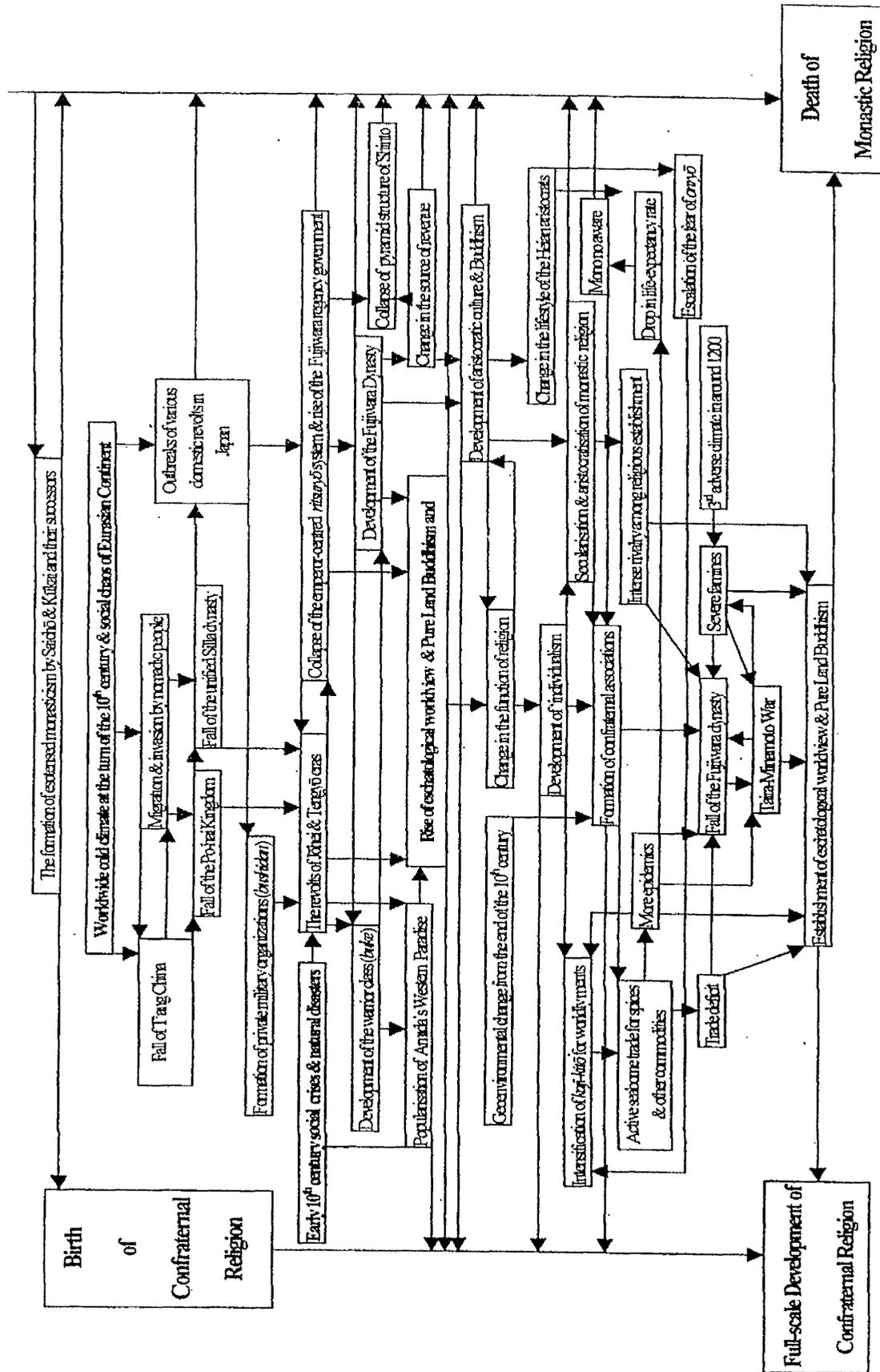


Diagram 5-3 Mutual interaction of the complex systems

The above diagram is made based on the idealised natural lifecycle model and on the assumption when each system was emerged and died, but it perfectly matches with the actual historical events and also helps us to better understand the significance of the events out of myriad historical phenomena. For example, the idealised natural lifecycle of the confraternal system indicates that it reached the climax at around the creation of the post of assistant regent (*renshō* or consigner) in 1225 and of *Hyōjōshū* (Council of State) consisting of 11 members (later around 15) in 1226, in which administrative matters and legal disputes were discussed by the confraternal alliance of the influential vassals, and decisions were reached by majority of vote. These were originally set up to allow broader participation in government, but soon by the mid-13th century it was dominated by the Hōjō family. Moreover, since a religious system co-evolves with many other systems, such as politics, culture, and society, the warrior government system lasted from around 1190 to 1867 is also likely to have co-evolved with the new religious system developed subsequently to the confraternal religion. Since the confraternal system ended by the time of Nobunaga's complete victory over the Ishiyama Honganji, we may envisage that the relative dominance of the new religious system over the confraternal system, as shown in the diagram, had already been achieved, unexpectedly before the Ōnin War (1467-1477), when armed revolts by an extensive alliance of the self-governing villages (*gōson*) broke out frequently in the wake of great famines and epidemics in the early 15th century. In fact, this envisagement perfectly coincides with the actual trend toward the increased disruption of the confraternal alliances of peasants by military governors from the first half of the 14th century as well as the gradual taken-over of the *keidai toshi* by military governors' castle towns from the mid-14th century. The diagram also indicates that the warrior government or a new religious system reached the golden age, before the formation of the *bakuhān* system, in the middle of the Warring States period and that the relative rate of dominance by the system in the society was lower than that of the confraternal system because of its shorter lifecycle. The diagram also suggests that the new system that was different from the warrior government and the early modern Japanese religion had already emerged in the middle of the Warring state period. Indeed, the new political system of nation-state based on the mechanical world paradigm and 'mercantalism' emerged during the Azuchi-Momoyama period (1568-1600) and grew further throughout the Tokugawa period, which is foretold again by its natural lifecycle model to cease eventually by the turn of the 22nd century.

Figure 5-1 Autocatalytic processes of a complete shift from monastic to confraternal religions



CONCLUSION

Our investigation into the evolution of early Japanese religion in relation to social crises is now complete, though it is but a rough sketch of an immense landscape.

It has been demonstrated that social crises initiated by climatic fluctuations, geo-environmental changes, and the self-destructive mechanisms of religious systems, played a critical role in the evolution of pre-medieval Japanese religion. The purposes of this final chapter is to look at the lifecycles of religious systems from more theoretical perspective and to present a conceptual model that can usefully explain the dynamics involved in this religious change, a model that might even prove useful in explaining some of the dynamics involved in human cultural change in general

First, I will briefly reiterate some of the religious changes covered in the preceding chapters. Next, I explore the phase transition through which the older religious systems were substituted by new ones, better suited to the changing environment. Then, I will explore theories of ASCs and nonequilibrium or non-structured states of consciousness (NSCs), and how they may be used to help understand the dynamics of religious evolution. Finally, I will propose a theoretical model that I call the *passage of consciousness*, which may help us better to understand the relationships between religious change and social crises. The model suggests that NSCs - the collective states of mental uncertainty that make human thought more changeable, or ASCs in a broad sense - involuntarily induced by social crises may facilitate not only the evolution of religion, but also the development of human thought.

A BRIEF REMINDER OF FOUR RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS

We have seen how prototypical religion emerged out of the old system of beliefs and customs of the Jomon people through autocatalytic reactions, initiated by the global climatic change and social crisis, and then by the introduction of wet-rice cultivation and the worldview of migrants from the Asian continent. This prototypical religion symbolised the Yayoi people's attempt to reunite Heaven and Earth in response to the chaos generated by the initial major turning point in the scope of this study. The result of this attempt was the doctrine of microcosm and macrocosm - the belief that the world is a gigantic organism in which every part can affect every other part and the whole. This phenomenon was not specific to Japan. It is one aspect of the global and synchronic rise of New World Religions due to shared ecological crises, from around the last millennium BC to the Common Era. The new modes of thinking that emerged in Japan were fundamentally the same as in other new world religions. What motivated them all was a desire to resolve conflict and recover harmony and cosmos, or to bring the nonequilibrium state of society back into an equilibrium state.

The reason for these similarities is mainly that they all evolved out of an old system that involved the so-called Grand Origin Myth. Global inter-linkage was, moreover, not as weak as has been traditionally believed, with climate and microbes probably playing a critical role as media in transmitting signals of ecological imbalance and social disorder through migrations, epidemics, and famines.

We have seen, too, how prototypical religion prepared the ground for the emergence of what we have called archaic religion, at around the shift from the Yayoi to the Kofun period that reflected the second major tuning point in Japanese history. The implicitly conceptualised system of prototypical religion became more explicitly defined and

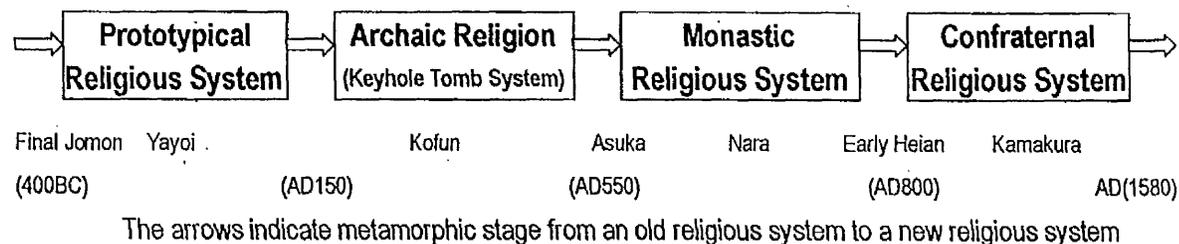
organised, and emerged as the earliest religious system comprising a complex of gods, priests/priestess, worship, sacrifice, and charismatic rulers. These charismatic rulers actively entered altered states of consciousness (ASCs) during rituals, in order to interact with supernatural beings, and aimed thereby to control the natural and human world that merged with a natural-divine cosmos.

Archaic religion continued to develop in the form of a politico-religious system, the so-called keyhole tomb system, during the Kofun period. However, from the end of the Kofun period, another new religious system - monastic religion - began to emerge at the third major turning point. This system was facilitated by the official introduction of Buddhism and, with it, the Chinese-style legal system into Japan. Monastic religion grew into the dominant mode of Japanese religion from the late Asuka period through to the first half of Heian. The religion was 'monastic' or 'bureaucratic' because the monasteries, shrines, and bureaucratic organisations of the clergy were indispensable for the maintenance and development of the system. The major function of this religion was the protection and welfare of the Emperor-centred *ritsuryō* state.

However, with the collapse of the Emperor-centred *ritsuryō* state and the emergence of the Fujiwara dynasty from the beginning of the 10th century, another form of religious system, what I have called confraternal religion, began to develop. The prototype of this religious system can be traced back to Saichō's and Kūkai's religions that were adopted as the reformation of Nara Monastic Buddhism. However, they transformed considerably and grew as the confraternal religion at this fourth major turning point. It matured as the dominant religious system from early Kamakura. The major differences between monastic religion and confraternal religion were that the latter aimed at the salvation of individuals based on the teachings of the founders of each lineage or the

symbolic edifices of religious institutions. It was also characterised by the fraternal association of people rather than a government-centred religious orientation. Monasteries and shrines were thus transformed into the sites of a confraternity for people's mutual protection and assistance to survive in the multi-layered society of no single rulership (see Figure 6-1 for the summary of early Japanese religious systems).

For all of these drastic changes, autocatalytic reactions were at work in which causes and effect are inseparably intertwined. A change in a single element – usually climate - triggered an avalanche of coevolution that shaped the configuration of each religious system.



Comparison of Religious Systems

Time of Emergence	Collapses of hunting-gathering	Expansion of Wet-rice cultivation	Dissolution of the Keyhole Tomb System	Dissolution of the <i>Ritsuryō</i> System
Rituals	Loosely Structured Diviners & Bronze Ornaments	Well-defined true cult Sun & Serpent Worship	Wooden monasteries & Shrines, restricted to Precincts	Founder of religious sect Pilgrimage, Confraternity around the symbols
Functions	Reunification of Heaven & Earth Doctrine of Macro-Microcosm	Cult of Immortality, Good harvest, Protection against Evil influence	Protection & Prosperity of State & Sovereign	Salvation of individuals, Fulfillment of Personal Needs
Impact	A Mould for later Japanese Religions	Promotion of the Keyhole Tomb System	Harmonisation of Buddhism & kami Worship	Transformation of Pre-Medieval Japanese Religion

Figure 6-1 Phase Transitions of Early Japanese Religious Systems

1. The Dynamics of Religious Change

A religious system comprises distinct functions and rituals, which are strongly affected by their time of adoption and environment. Given this, as already suggested in the previous chapters, a more appropriate framework for understanding religious change is the life-dynamic paradigm or evolutionary appearances and disappearance of species as well as the ecological dynamics of various interacting species.

In the field of economics, for example, Silverberg has advocated an alternative to the neoclassical approach to technical change: the so-called “biophysical” perspective. This considers each technology and product as a species engaged in some sort of population dynamics. Silverberg emphasises the principles of mathematical biology, which are closely related to the functioning of dynamical systems, self-organisation, and evolution, for the analyses of fundamental problems in the economics of technical change. He suggests that growth functions, such as bell-shaped curves and S-shaped curves, offer highly resourceful techniques for understanding the effects of sequences of innovations competing for a particular economic niche¹.

New transportation systems, for example, which are better capable of adapting themselves to continuously changing social, economic and environmental boundary conditions, gradually substitute older ones. A transport system is one in complex multi-layered systems. Each subsystem, canals, railways, roads, and airways, interacts with the others at different levels of structure. The growth of a particular technological system or niche reaches its ceiling at a certain point because of market saturation, social satisfactoriness, environment restrictions, and so on².

¹ Silverberg 1992, cited by Reggiani & Nijkamp 1994:93.

² Reggiani & Nijkamp: 1994:94.

THE NATURAL LIFECYCLE OF EARLY JAPANESE RELIGIOUS SYSTEMS

If we adopt a biophysical perspective on the evolution of pre-medieval Japanese religion, its dynamics can be put into diagram form based on both the data I have accumulated so far, such as patterns in the rise of keyhole tombs or shrines and temples or rituals at Kokubunji, and extrapolations from the law of natural growth. (see Figure 6-2a). These figures I use are constructed on the assumption that idealised natural lifecycles apply to religious systems. While they thus do not necessarily show the exact trajectories of actual growth, they nonetheless help us to achieve conceptual images for the evolutionary dynamics of early religious systems.

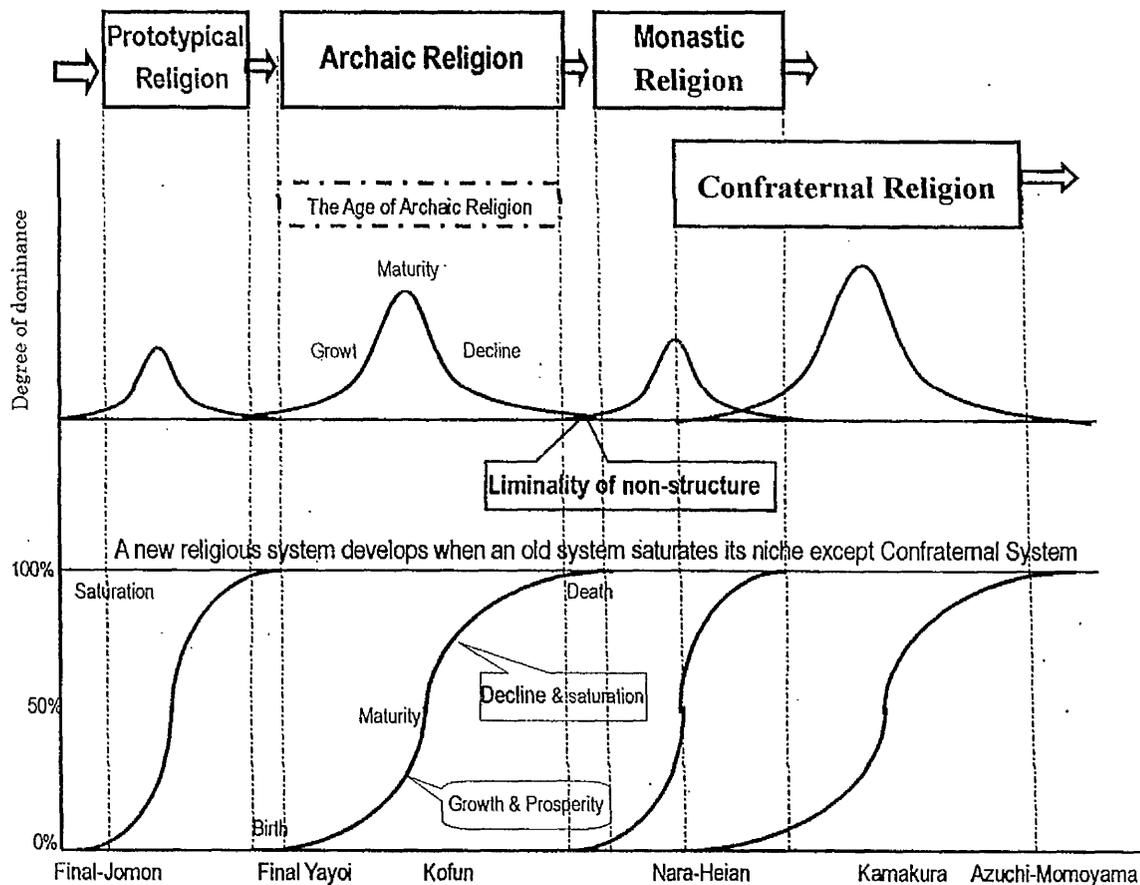


Figure 6-2a Idealised Natural Lifecycle of Religious Systems

Both bell-shaped curves and S-curves represent natural-growth processes and thus can be extrapolated time periods for which quantitative data cannot be actually obtained, such as exact number of ritual objects (bronze bells and weaponry) for prototypical religion, and exact number and periodisation of keyhole tomes and exact number and periodisation of monasteries and shrines

In Figure 6-2a, we see in idealised natural-cycles of four religious systems. The figure indicates the five growth processes of each religious system, 'birth', 'growth', 'maturity', 'decline', and 'death'. After 'birth', the growth rate for each system reaches a maximum at 'maturity', and then declines until the system stops growing at 'death'. The 'decline' and 'death' of each religious system signifies that the system has saturated the niche, and that new religious systems have substituted old ones. The 'decline' phase of each religious system thus overlaps with the 'birth' phase of the subsequent system. The periods that do not overlap with other lifecycles correspond to equilibrium, structured stages of Japanese religion (such as the age of archaic religion or the age of monastic religion) in which only one type of religious system dominates the niche. By contrast, the periods where systems overlap correspond to nonequilibrium, metamorphic stages, or the liminality of non-structure, from one religious system to the subsequent one. These metamorphic stages are characterised by competition between an old and a newly emerging religious system. The relationship between the exponential decline of an old religious system and the exponential growth of a new religious system can be explained by the absence of competitors. As the dissolution of the old created a niche available for the new, the niche or the 'vacuum' is immediately occupied by the fittest in the present social environment. Once this process is triggered, the new system starts surging into the niche while transforming the social environment to be more suitable for its own growth by the mechanism known as autocatalytic growth.

The figure, of course, comprises a vastly simplified view of idealised natural-cycles of religious systems. To be precise, the most realistic landscape of bell-shaped distribution curves in the middle has some degree of ruggedness - just like charts for stock prices and exchange rates - with peaks of various sizes interspersed with valleys. However, these idealised bell-shaped curves enable us to discern the general trend of each

religious system and the timing of transition from one religious system to another. Thus, they are very helpful tools to find out the general pattern of historical change in religious systems.

As for the evolution of pre-medieval Japanese religious systems, I have demonstrated that social crisis triggered by events such as climatic fluctuations and geoenvironmental change significantly affected not only the emergence of new types of religious practitioners and political leaders but also the lifecycle of each religious system. I have shown how a first social crisis gives birth to a new religious system; how a second social crisis promotes the systematisation of the new system; how, during a favourable environment, the system grows and reaches its maturity; and how, after the maturity, it declines. During the declining phase, a third social crisis delivers a final blow to the system whilst simultaneously promoting the development of a new religious system. This dual effect of social crises during the declining phase suggests that people search for new religious systems as their living environments change significantly during the nonequilibrium state of society.

Moreover, the self-destructive mechanism contained within the structure of each religious system played a critical role for the evolution of pre-medieval Japanese religious systems. For each of religious systems that this study focuses on has behaved as if it had a sort of biological time bomb, ticking away, that would eventually lead to its own demise. In other words, a religious system holds within itself the seeds of counter-system that will eventually challenge it.

The S-shaped curves at the bottom of Figure 6-2a, on the other hand, show the cumulative growth of each religious system, and give us a better image of niche

saturation during the equilibrium state of society. These curves indicate that as the niche for a system fills up, growth slows down and goes into the second bend of the S-shaped curve, eventually flattening out. The rising part of most curves coincides with the upswing of the lifecycle indicating the growth and prosperity of each religious system, while the downswing of the cycle indicates a decline in the system. Therefore, while the bell-shaped curves depicting the rate of natural growth return to zero, the S-shaped curves of cumulative growth reached saturation. In other words, both these diagrams indicate that each system has to die out eventually when its growth process reaches a ceiling, except for the case of confraternal religion: It started to develop as soon as monastic religion reached the zenith. How could this irregularity happen?

If we look at the evolution of Japanese religion from a broader perspective, we may realise the different evolutionary configuration of early Japanese religions. The bell-shaped curves at the upper part of the figure indicate that the evolutions of the first three religious systems are in fact an overall evolutionary process of pre-medieval Japanese religion, for the first three systems evolved as an integrated meta-system despite the successive dissolution of individual systems in the face of social crises. In other words, pre-medieval Japanese religion consists of three smaller lifecycles of prototypical, archaic, and monastic religions. By contrast, confraternal religion, which emerged at the beginning of the Heian period, continued to grow and finally matured as medieval Japanese religion during Early Kamakura, and thus constitutes independently the lifecycle of medieval Japanese religion (see Figure 6-2b). This interpretation can be supported by the major difference between the pre-medieval and medieval Japanese religions. The former mainly aimed at the protection of the community or the state by heavily relying on religious objects, such as the construction of keyhole tombs and temple-shrine complexes, whereas the latter at the salvation of individuals who

organised around the founders of religious sects or the symbolic edifices of religious institutions.

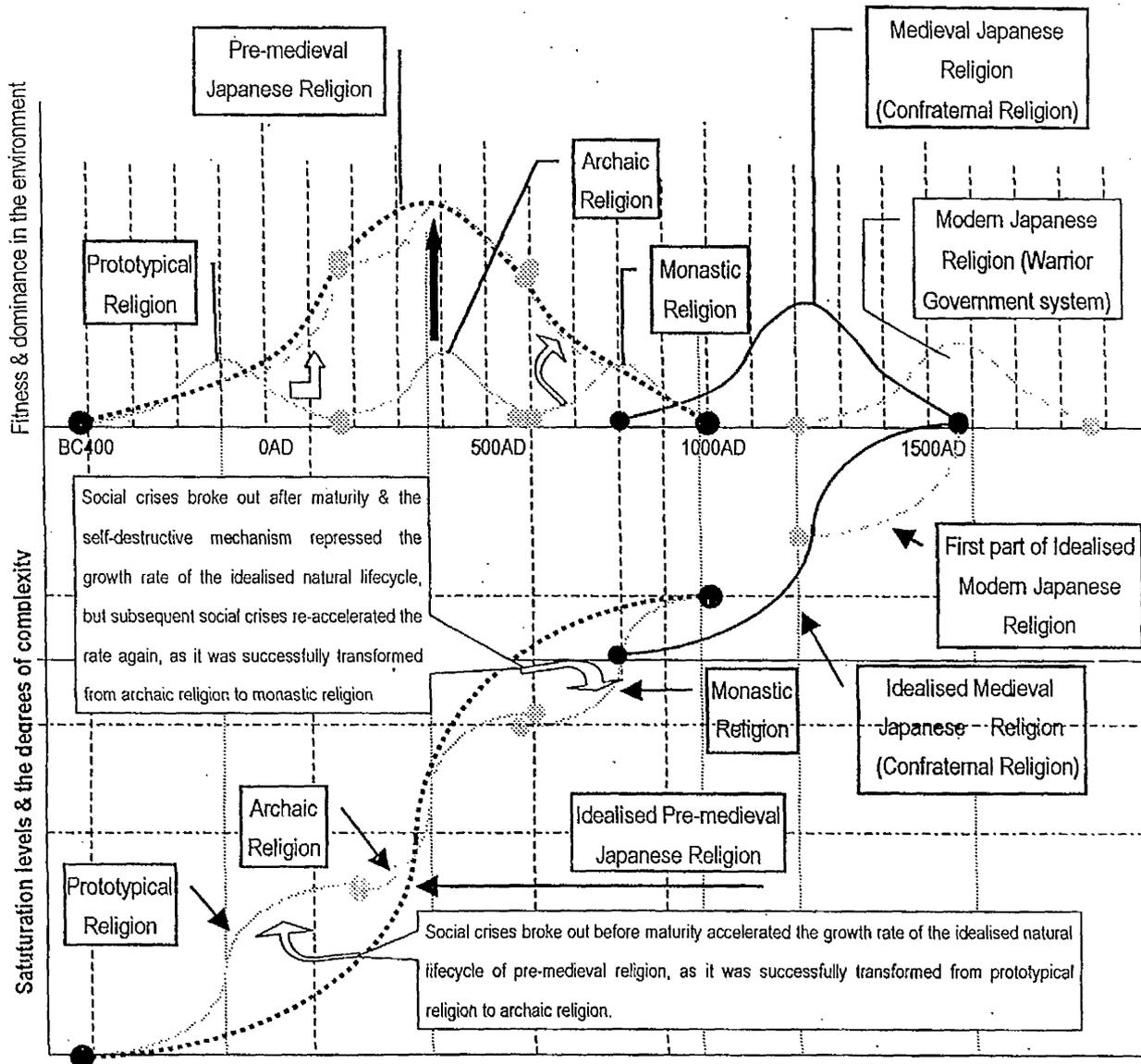


Figure 6-2b Idealised Natural Lifecycles of Pre-medieval & Medieval Japanese Religions

The first three systems as a whole constitute a natural lifecycle of pre-medieval Japanese religion, while confraternal religion the lifecycle of another, that is, the lifecycle of medieval Japanese religion.

The difference can also be detected in the cognition of people. For example, Keikai's *Nihon Ryōiki* (c.823) marked a breaking point with respect to the cognitive satisfaction of people from the archaic to the medieval paradigm, as it expounded the basic

worldview of Buddhism in the form of the law of karma and transmigration³. According to LaFleur, this paradigm shift was made possible because Keikai successfully integrated primitive shamanism and divination with the Buddhist principle of karma and transmigration, as epitomised by the tale of Gyōki's 'heavenly eye' in Keikai's *Nihon Ryōiki*. Keikai established a medieval episteme that enabled not only a new way of understanding nature, but also a new way of understanding the old way of understanding nature⁴. In other words, Keikai explained things that had been mysterious by advocating that anomalies occur due to the principle of karma and transmigration, and indicated a causal relationship between individuals' past actions and future lives. As Machida rightly argues, however, the concept of hell had not yet fully matured during the early Heian period, as Keikai's *Nihon Ryōiki* possesses a horizontal structure that implied the possibility of going there and coming back again. It offers a contrast to the vertical structure of Indian Buddhism or the radical break between this world and hell as described in the *Kusharon (Abhidharmakośa-śāstra)*.⁵

By the end of the Heian period, however, Indian Buddhism's conception of hell had deeply penetrated into the mind of the Japanese, as portrayed in the *Konjaku Monogatari*'s presentation of hell as a vertical beyond⁶. The vertical structure of the Indian Buddhist hell was also represented to people visually by the folding screens of the six ways known as *rokudōe*, which illustrated the transmigration of hell, the realms of hungry spirits, animals, asuras, men and heavenly beings. During *Butsumyō* congregations held in the Imperial Court, 'hell screens' (*jigokue*) were set up, and their verisimilitude of terrifying the Heian aristocrats is recorded in the *Pillow Book*. In his *Monjōshū*, Saigyō (1118-1190) composed 28 poems under the single heading, "On

³ Takatori 1967:164.

⁴ LaFleur 1986:34-48.

⁵ Machida 1999:31

⁶ Ibid.

Having Seen a Hell Screen". Machida conjectures that Saigyō wrote these poems because the numerous hell screens available at that time cultivated the medieval episteme that death would lead directly to hell. In fact, during the Heian and Kamakura periods, the horrifying pictures of hell were often painted on the temple walls behind Buddhist statues.⁷ With the diffusion of these horrifying pictures through the society, the people were captured by the fear of death. Through the particularisation of hell, Machida asserts that life after death ceased to be an undifferentiated world of monotonous and eternal darkness such as *tokoyo* or *yomi*. For sinners it now became a place of never-ending corporeal agony, characterised by the 'eight great hells' (*hachidai-jigoku*) of extreme heat and deafening screams without intermission.⁸ In other words, the array of horizontal hell was completely reshuffled to form a new array of vertical hell at some time during the late Heian period. Therefore, the timings for the development of medieval episteme – the birth and maturity of vertical hell - coincide with the lifecycle of medieval Japanese religion.

The S-shaped curves at the lower part of Figure 6-2b, on the other hand, represent the overall evolution of early Japanese religion in which each religious system leaped into a more complex religious system, and finally evolved into the medieval Japanese religion of confraternal religious system. What is noticeable in the evolution of pre-medieval Japanese religion is that, when the natural-growth process of each religious system is about to saturate its niche in the society, the subsequent religious system starts to develop, eventually superseding the previous system. This successive emergence of new religious systems resembles the behaviour of a sand pile with occasional avalanches, or the dynamics of old transport systems that are substituted by new ones.

⁷ Ibid:32.

⁸ Ibid:33.

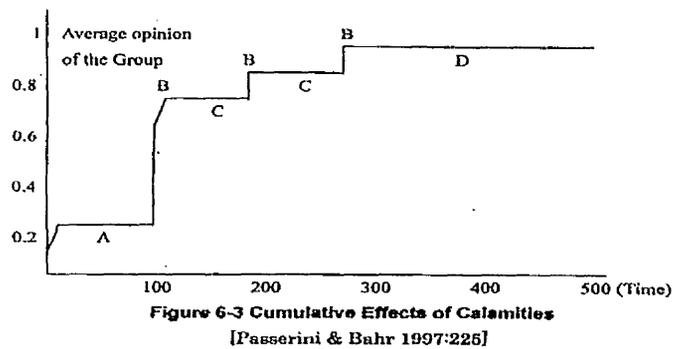
This concomitant decline and growth of the old and the new may be explained by the law of natural growth. This law, however, puts us into paradoxical situations in which traditional causal relationships do not apply, as a new religious system is destined to emerge when the growth of the old religious system reaches a saturation level no matter what else happens. For example, Theodore Modis argues that we can predict the final size (the value of the ceiling) of any system and the timing of the ceiling ahead of time if we take accurate measurements of the growth process⁹. In this light, both the timing of the social crises that leads old religious systems to collapse and the timing of a new religious system are pre-programmed to take place before the events themselves actually happened.

The above proposition, however, becomes incompetent because of two reasons. First, we can never take perfect measurements of growth processes. One consequence of this predicted by the butterfly effect is that even the slightest imperfect measurement will eventually lead to a deviation or poor fitting between observed data and predictive models. Thus, as the dynamics of religious change result from simple, but highly nonlinear processes, long-term prediction is impossible (although short-term prediction is still possible).

Second, the paradoxes also derive from the irrationality of human beings, the frequency and magnitude of social crises, and the presence of 'noise,' such as misinformation. As we have seen in previous chapters, disasters often produce substantial feelings of grievance towards existing religious systems that can lead to religious change. According to Passerini and Bahr's simulated study of the relationship between collective behaviour and disasters based on a cellular automaton model, people in a

⁹ Modis 1992:36.

community interact until opinions reach some kind of equilibrium before the initial disaster (see A in Figure 6-3). When a calamity breaks out, the number of people who believe that some kind of mitigative action should be taken to cope with the calamity suddenly leaps (B in Figure 6-3). When every person is completely rational, the effect of each disaster is cumulative or linear. While no one changes opinions during the absence of calamities (C in Figure 6-3), the number of people who change in favour of increased mitigation increases after every calamity until everyone in the community arrives at a consensus that something must be done about the calamity (D in Figure 6-3).



In real life situations, however, people are not completely rational. As irrationality rises, those who initially changed their opinion after the calamity in favour of mitigation are more likely to change their opinion back toward the old equilibrium, as they forget the lessons of past calamities. The likelihood of a consensus being reached is also affected by the frequency and the magnitude of calamities: The higher the magnitude and frequency of the calamity, the more likely people are to reach a consensus, but for small or infrequent calamities they tend not to reach consensus (see Figures 6-4 & 6-5)¹⁰. Thus, in real life situations the effect of each calamity is nonlinear rather than linear. Moreover, the presence of 'noise' such as miscommunication and misinformation significantly affects collective behaviour after calamities, since it will often alter the

¹⁰ Passerini & Bahr 1997:215-228.

opinion of some individuals¹¹. When this occurs to an influential individual, as we have seen in the case of Emperor Shōmu and Fujiwara no Michinaga, this change of opinion can considerably affect the views of many other people.

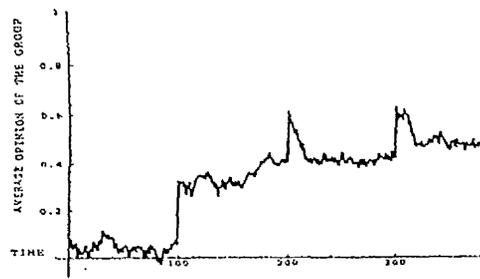
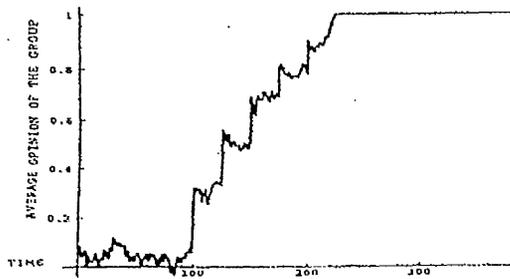


Figure 6-4 Frequent disaster: every 25 times steps Figure 6-5 Infrequent disasters: every 100 time steps

[Passerini & Bahr 1994:226-227]

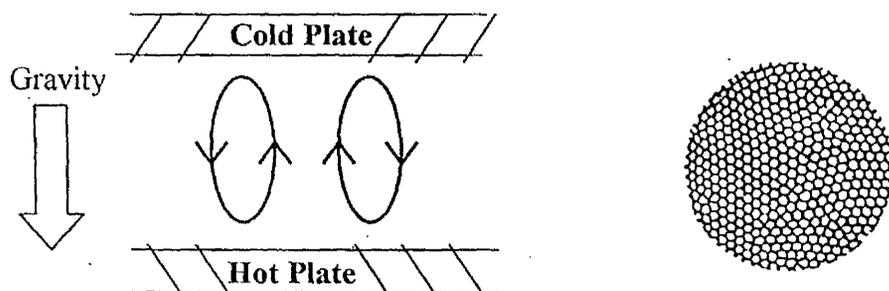
As collective behaviour is thus strongly affected by various factors, such as accuracy of measurement, human irrationality, the frequency and the magnitude of social crises, and the presence of ‘noise’ such as rumour and opinion change, we cannot predict the accurate trajectories of bell-shaped curves and S-shaped curves. Indeed, some deviances were detected between the idealised natural lifecycle of pre-medieval Japanese religion and the actual trajectories of the first three systems. Because of the reasons that will soon be evident below, if social crises break out before maturity, the actual growth rate of a religious system becomes higher than that of an idealised natural lifecycle. But if social crises break out after maturity, they have adverse effects on the system and reduced the actual growth rate lower. In other words, the higher fitted the system is in a specific environment, the more it is vulnerable to the change in the environment. Consequently, actual trajectory before maturity is lifted up whereas the actual trajectory after maturity is lifted down as we find in the figure 6-2b. As pre-medieval Japanese religion was successfully transformed from archaic religion to monastic religion in around 600AD, subsequent social crises accelerated the rate again until monastic religion matured in around 800AD. To sum up, then, although we cannot exactly predict

¹¹ Ibid:226.

the trajectories of any religious systems in a long term, the natural lifecycle model enables us to better understand the schematic patterns of religious change and to formulate the theory of religious evolution as follows.

DISSIPATIVE STRUCTURES AND SELF-DESTRUCTION

Religious systems are sustained by the persistent dissipation of matter and energy, in the form of people's devotion, donation, and the construction of various religious monuments. Prigogine calls such systems that are sustained by the constant dissipation of matter and energy dissipative structures. In the case of a fluid in a pan heated from below, for example, when the temperature difference between the two plates is great enough (the left of Figure 6-6), a pattern of convective rolls known as Bénard cells appears on the surface of the fluid (the right of Figure 6-6). However, as soon as the temperature difference (energy) is removed, the convection cells disappear. Similarly, in order to maintain the coherence of one religious system, persistent dissipation of matter and energy is required, and as soon as that ceases the structure decays.



The Bénard cells appear when a liquid is heated through the lower plate and cooled at the upper.

Spatial pattern of the Bénard convection, viewed from above in a liquid heated from below.

Figure 6-6 Dissipative Structure and the Bénard convection

(Atkins 1994:183-184)

So why does each religious system consist of a self-destructive mechanism, and why does a new dissipative religious system self-organises when the development of an extant system reaches saturation? In order to answer these questions satisfactorily, two

important points about dissipative structure need to be understood. First, the second law of thermodynamics postulates that when dissipative structure emerges, the rate of generating disorder or entropy (a process of degradation or 'running down') is increased, as energy is now being dissipated more rapidly as it flows in an orderly way within the system. Second, a structure emerges where no structure existed before and there is a more rapid production of entropy. To be more precise, a global structure supersedes one that is merely local. However, as soon as the energy flow decreases to a point that cannot sustain the global structure, it reverts to the local, and the dissipative structure disappears.¹²

Together, these ideas mean that a certain amount of energy flow is essential for a religious system (a dissipative structure) to continue existing, and that the amounts of energy required increase with the growth of the religious system. Thus, while the system is sustained by the continuous influx of energy, greater disorder is generated elsewhere as the system grows. This is the source of the generation of self-destruction in the system. The disorder initiated by the generation of entropy creates nonequilibrium or imbalances in the ecosystem, which in turn creates social crises. We have seen such cases in the dissolution of keyhole tomb system where the production of *haniwa* devastated the environment; similarly the decline of the monastic religious system is partly at least to be explained by the devastation wrought by the construction of the Daibutsu and provincial monasteries. In this way, the expansion of religious systems has adverse effect on the systems themselves.

The characteristics of the dissipative structure also explain why the growth rate of religious systems declines after they reach maturity; i.e., energy dissipates more quickly

¹² Atkins 1994:183.

at maturity as systems are organised in a more orderly fashion. People thus have to exert more effort or energy to maintain the dissipative structure of the system as it grows. However, the total amounts of energy that can be devoted by the people are limited, and in the wake of catastrophe, the amounts unavoidably go down. If, at that time, an alternative system is introduced, people switch to the system that requires less amounts of energy than the old system, as it has not yet formed a dissipative structure. Therefore, if social crisis breaks out before the maturity of a new system, people's devotion to the alternative system pushes the actual growth rate higher than that of an idealised natural lifecycle. However, when it breaks out after maturity, it pushes the rate lower than that of an idealised natural lifecycle. In short, the same social crisis has positive effects on a new system and negative on an old. And if social crisis breaks out when the system reaches saturation, tremendous amounts of energy are required to sustain the dissipative structure of an old system, and thus people tend to look for an alternative, new system. In this way, one religious system gives way to another.

However, it is important to note that, despite the successive dissolutions, some factors of the previous religious systems are handed down to the successive systems, and they continue to exist in different forms. For example, the construction of giant keyhole tombs was succeeded in the form of the construction of large-scale temple-shrine complexes during the Monastic age, and again in the form of Tōshōgū shrines constructed over one hundred throughout the country during the Tokugawa period. The essence of confraternal associations was also succeeded in the form of various *kō* systems that became rampant from the latter half of the Tokugawa period.

How, though, could incredibly complex new religious systems harmoniously organise into integrated entities when an old religious system is about to saturate its niche and

collapse? How could chance alone or random events, as suggested by Darwinian evolutionary theory, be responsible for the successive emergence of new and successful structures one after another in the face of changing environments?

SELF-ORGANISATION AND EVOLUTIONARY CHANGE

In answering these questions, some scientists and philosophers have postulated the existence of additional organising forces or guiding principles that drive evolutionary change in the direction of better adaptation and more developed levels of organisation. This claim, of course, has its origin in Aristotelian teleology, whereby evolution is directed towards a specific goal by the action of final causes. For example, in his *Évolution créatrice* (1907; *Creative Evolution*), the French metaphysician Henry Bergson (1859-1941) proposed that an *élan vital* ('vital impetus'), which is continually developing and generating new forms, was responsible for directing evolutionary change in a creative and felicitous manner¹³. It is interesting that some experimental and theoretical scientists have come to somewhat similar conclusions, such as Imanishi Kinji with his evolutionary theory through group selection¹⁴, Ludwig von Bertalanffy and his general system theory¹⁵, Arthur Koestler's *holon*, Francisco Varela's *autopoietic* systems¹⁶, James Lovelock's Gaia theory, and Stuart Kauffman's self-organisation¹⁷. These all emphasise the holistic existence of organisms or systems and the self-reproducing or self-organising characteristics of the systems.

¹³ Bergson 1911.

¹⁴ Imanishi 1941.

¹⁵ Bertalanffy 1971. Bertalanffy attempted to provide a common methodological approach for all of the sciences, based on the idea that systems of any kind – physical, biological, psychological, and social – operate in accordance with the same fundamental principles.

¹⁶ Varela 1979. He postulate a new systems theory on the concepts of self-production known as *autopoiesis*.

¹⁷ Kauffman 1984.

Based on the concept of self-organisation, for example, Mitchell Waldrop stated that:

In every case, moreover, the very richness of these interactions allows the systems as a whole to undergo *spontaneous self-organization*. Thus, people trying to satisfy their mutual needs unconsciously organize themselves into an economy through myriad individual acts of buying and selling; it happens without anyone being in charge or consciously planning it. The genes in a developing embryo organize themselves in one way to make a liver cell and in another way to make a muscle cell. Flying birds adapt to the actions of their neighbors, unconsciously organizing themselves into a flock. Organisms constantly adapt to each other through evolution, thereby organizing themselves into an exquisitely tuned ecosystem.In every case, groups of agent seeking mutual accommodation and self-consistency somehow manage to transcend themselves, acquiring collective properties such as life, thought, and purpose that they might never have possessed individually.¹⁸

What Waldrop argues is relevant to the evolution of both religion and human thought. Borrowing Waldrop's expression, we can say that groups of people seeking mutual accommodation and self-consistency somehow manage to transcend themselves, acquiring the collective properties of religious systems or worldviews, at the edge of order and chaos.

PHASE TRANSITION and BIFURCATION POINT

While the assertions of these scientists help us to achieve a better perspective on the evolution of religions and mentality, they do not fully elucidate the mechanism of orthogenetic evolution and its timing. For instance, how is harmonised evolution, self-organisational evolution, or autopoietic evolution of religious systems possible? Imanishi, for example, asserts that all the individuals of a species change at once when the time to change arrives¹⁹. Complexity theorists, on the other hand, provide a better

¹⁸ Waldrop 1992:11.

¹⁹ Imanishi 1941.

explanation for the mechanism of change, emphasising the concept of a phase transition and a bifurcation point.

Stuart Kauffman, theoretical biologist, rightly argues that dynamical systems are at their optimum fitness at phase transition state, as they reach the boundary between order and chaos by themselves and adapt to that state of transition at peak fitness²⁰. In other words, complex systems are at their optimum performance potential during the phase transitions. We all have heard the stories of great philosophers, novelists, and artists who live on this poised state between sanity and insanity that propagates the perturbations, that allows them to create their masterpieces. The phase transition is a sublime balance between stability and instability during which all choices are open, creativity evinces itself, decisions are roughly wrought, and mental turmoil is at its most torturous.

During a phase transition, the internal workings of the stuff, such as atoms, molecules, and human mind, change and organise themselves differently. In the case of magnet, when cold, atomic magnets within a piece of iron manage to line up with one another and the iron becomes magnetic (Figure 6-8a & Figure 6-9b). In other words, the forces of order win out. When it is hot, however, the battle goes the other way and chaos rules: the atomic magnets point up and down with equal likelihood (Figure 6-8b). At some intermediate temperature (770 degrees Celsius), namely a critical point, the force of order and chaos must fight to stalemate: the army of arrows are neither organised nor disorganised, but somehow balanced on the delicate boundary between order and chaos, where the condition of the magnet balanced precisely between its magnetic and non-magnetic states. At this critical point or nonequilibrium, the groups of magnets come in all magnitudes, ranging from single isolated magnets up to massive clumps that

²⁰ Kauffman 1993:181-218.

extend across the entire magnet. If we take snapshots at different moments, we would see the amalgamation of factions constantly shifting, with some breaking up and other developing.

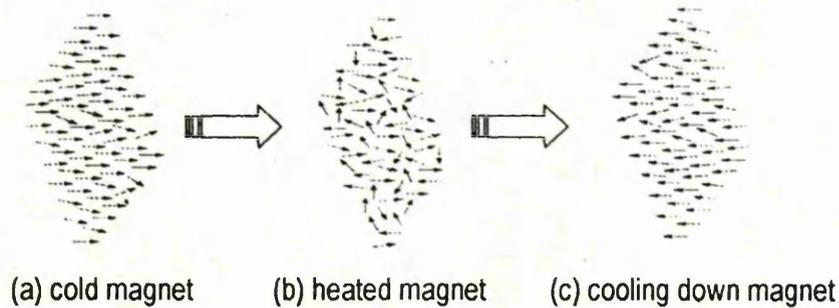


Figure 6-8 Directions of Magnetic Arrows

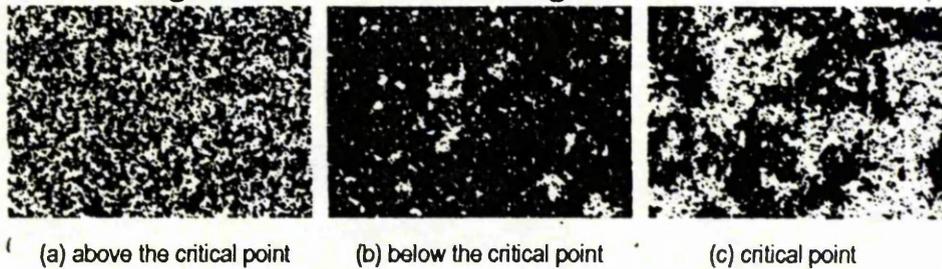


Figure 6-9 Critical Phenomena

[images from Binney et al. 1992, reprinted by Buchanan2000:78]

The significance of the critical state is that it is subject to tremendous fluctuations, and always remains perched on the very edge of abrupt and revolutionary change (Figure 6-9c). As the army of arrows is balanced on the precipice between order and chaos, even a tiniest influence can push it over the edge and just a single magnet flipping over can trigger an avalanche of further flippings that would rampage from one side to the other (Figures 6-8c & Figure 6-9b).²¹

Similarly, a bifurcation point signifies the branching of social phenomena seen during chaotic episodes such as social crises and radical environmental change including climate. Systems that are going along in a relatively stable and deterministic way

²¹ Buchanan 2000:72-9 & 169.

suddenly enter a state of chaotic dynamics, and at this moment drastic changes take place (Figure 6-10). In other words, when societies reach critical stages that push them toward the realm of chaotic dynamics, something new emerges at the bifurcation points. Indeed, disruptions of order are necessary, as the interplay of order and chaos constitutes the creative potential of nature.

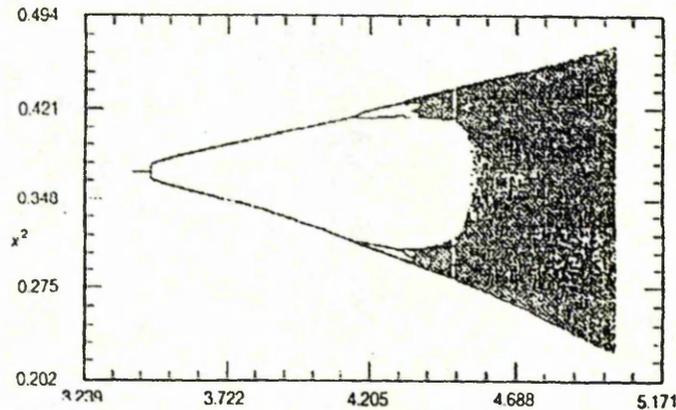


Figure 6-10 Bifurcation Diagram

[Greiner & Kugler 1994:47]

Complexity theorists are now beginning to recognise the *ubiquity* in which all physical systems fall in to universality classes. Mark Buchanan, for example, argues:

Things that live in critical state tend to show similar kinds of organisation, and this organisation arises not from specific details of those systems and the elements that make them up, but from the far deeper skeletons of basic geometry and logic behind these details. The critical form wells up in things regardless of what they are. So when something is recognised to be in a critical state, its essential character can be understood even by ignoring most of the details.²²

For complexity theorists, many other things such as economics, ecological communities, even the workings of science itself share aspects of this organisation too. Since critical states come in only a few particular kinds, the kinds of organisation that are able to exist in the world are in fact very limited. Things that appear on the surface very different may actually be deeply similar in their essential organisation and character. The kinds of

particles and how strongly or weakly they interact with one another do not affect the organisation of the critical state even a tiny bit. Physicists refer to this significant phenomenon as *critical state universality*, and it has now been supported by thousands of experiments and computer simulations.²³

If this is the case, isn't it possible for us to apply the critical state of atomic magnets and sandpile to the theoretical explanation of religious change? In fact, in the previous chapters, I have demonstrated that social crises caused both externally and internally are one of the most important factors pushing societies toward the realm of chaotic dynamics or a critical point, where old religious systems leap to new religious systems. But what was actually happening at the phase transition from the older system to a new one? Our concern here is the mechanisms for evolutionary change, and as we are interested in human behaviour, we can rephrase this question as, 'What is the psychodynamics responsible for all these evolutionary changes in human cognition?' Religious change, by its very nature, is motivated by crowd psychology. Without due acknowledgment of crowd-thinking, our theory of religious change leave much to be desired. At the same time, we occasionally notice that mass movements initiated by one or a few individuals can unexpectedly sweep across an entire society. To better understand crowd-thinking as well as individual-thinking, we thus need at first to understand what actually takes place in the human mind during the phase transition. Complexity theorists have not yet given a definite answer to this question, but in the following sections, we will now explore the general process for the evolution of worldviews and religious change, focusing on the significance of fluid states of consciousness that I call nonequilibrium states of consciousness (NSCs), where all choices are open.

²² Ibid.:83.

²³ Ibid.:82.

2. The Passage of Consciousness Model

The law of natural growth explains why any systems eventually die out, but fails to explain why a new system emerges. This is because the law of natural growth works only at equilibrium setting whereas the emergence or self-organisation of a new system takes place at nonequilibrium. Thus, we need to adopt the concept of NSCs - collective state of mental uncertainty that makes cognitive change possible, or ASCs in a broad sense - to understand the dynamics of cognitive change during the phase transition. This section explores how ASCs and NSCs create fluid states of consciousness for religious leaders and followers respectively, how they enable to shatter tradition and encouraged the evolution of Japanese religious systems.

According to Victor Turner, similar to Kuhn's paradigm theory, human beings evolve dialectically by fluctuating between structure and non-structure²⁴. When a state or a system is shifted from one structure to another, it also goes through the liminality of non-structure. Prototypical, archaic, monastic, and confraternal religions correspond to these structured states in early Japanese religion. Non-structured states existed in the metamorphic stages between them. Both the non-structured states and the metamorphic stages correspond to complex theorists' view of a state of chaotic dynamics or the phase transition during which drastic changes take place, or choices are made and take place.

The process of historical evolution may be schematised below:

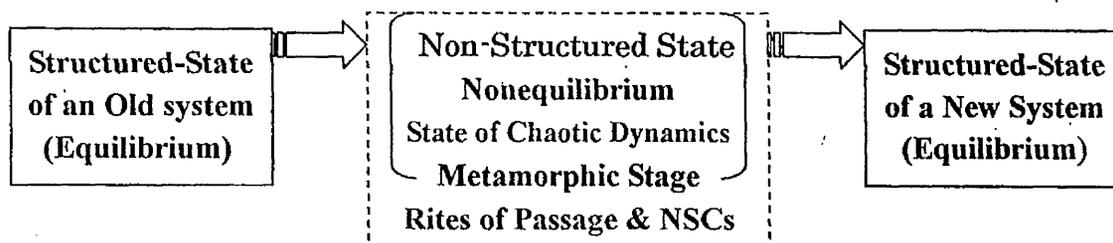


Figure 6-11 Structured & Non-structured States

²⁴ Turner 1977.

Figure 6-11 suggests that any system must undergo a non-structured state (nonequilibrium) in order to evolve into the structured state (equilibrium) of a new system. Our main concern here is what is actually taking place during the non-structured state of chaotic dynamics or phase transition between two structures in which a sudden release of stress in one place can trigger an avalanche of further releases that can affect anything from a few individuals to almost every single individual in the society. For this purpose, I would first like to analyse the psychological dimensions of people who are put into non-structured states of consciousness (NSCs) during social and personal crises. I would then like to propose a new model that I call “passage of consciousness” as a possible explanation for the evolutionary change in religion and human thought.

2.1 Psychological Dimensions of Experiencing NSCs during Critical States

A critical state of society is usually accompanied by social crises, such as epidemics, famines, warfare, and intense migration, and people in these situations are likely to enter NSCs *accidentally* in the face of the traumatic events. The occurrence of NSCs for an individual is a result of the interaction of such events with variables such as personality, mood, expectations²⁵, as well as physiological state, and the social and physical setting²⁶. Thus, it is reasonable to suppose that the occurrence of NSCs for the mass of the population is also affected by the similar variables. When people enter an NSC, there are two types of possible outcomes, positive or negative. It is suffice here to remind the readers that these positive and negative outcomes of NSCs are quite similar to the behaviour of magnets above a critical point in which the directions of magnetic arrows pointing up and down at random and loose the quality of magnets. The

²⁵ Kirsch 1985:1189-1202.

²⁶ Farthing 1992.

significance of this binary code of opposites will be evident as we proceed with our investigation further.

The most notable feature of NSCs is that they are distinctively different from general experiences and it may present quite a traumatic experience for the mass of the population. If the trauma overloads people's available information processing capacity, or if two incompatible pieces of information exist at the same time, or if the new information is too unusual to interpret²⁷, an unstable mental state may be created, called cognitive disintegration²⁸ or dissynchrony²⁹. Consequently, existing mental states may be seriously challenged or threatened as "known worlds collapse and belief systems collide"³⁰ or there is "potential breakdown of their assumptive worlds"³¹. Alternatively, an involuntarily induced NSC may simply change the meaning or significance of certain experiences³². Jean Piaget used the term accommodation to describe the modification of internal schemes to fit new experiences. Experiences that do not match the 'reality' then become more likely to exceed what Piaget called the schema's accommodation capacity, and a higher order cognitive structure becomes necessary.³³ Similarly, Epstein pointed out that the breakdown of 'reality' has the potential of being constructive, as it can give an opportunity for a new and more advanced theory of reality to emerge.³⁴ Whatever the consequence, people thus tend to try to create order or meaning to help them cope when experiencing such a dissociative state of mind during the phase transition. Making sense of experiences is thus a fundamental psychological process.

²⁷ Averill 1976; Lazarus & Averill 1972.

²⁸ Averill 1976.

²⁹ Greyson 1991:487-508.

³⁰ Atwater 1988:xvii.

³¹ Janoff-Bulman 1988a:1789-1809.

³² cf. Ludwig 1966:225-234.

³³ Piaget 1977:33.

³⁴ Epstein 1983:219-47.

We may be able to describe the emergence property of new religious systems as being characterised by a state of cognitive equilibrium that is disturbed by a period of imbalance followed by a destabilising at a higher level of organisation. In other words, a new religious system develops as the information that is continually being received from both internal and environmental sources becomes synthesised. When people encounter experiences that do not match an existing religious system, they generally handle these contradictions by distorting the input or by altering the religious system. When experiences are incongruent with the existing religious system, they may be assimilated through unconscious distortions that code the experience so it conforms to the existing religious system, or such experiences may be catalysts for revising the existing religious system so it can accommodate the new input. However, when new information is not consistent with existing religious system, how can people accommodate themselves toward greater harmony with the experience, instead of distorting perceptions in the service of maintaining consistency with the existing religious system? The answer seems to be found in the passage of human consciousness.

A useful starting place in forming the passage of consciousness model is the anthropological study of ritual. Early in the last century, from his extensive study of religious belief and ceremonialism, the French ethnographer and folklorist Arnold van Gennep proposed the concept of rites of passage. Van Gennep suggested it was possible to distinguish three major stages during both any life-crisis ceremony or, more generally, what we would refer to as states of chaotic dynamics. These states or stages were: separation (preliminal), transition (liminal), and reincorporation (postliminal)³⁵. The individuals on whom the rites centre are first symbolically severed from their old status, before undergoing adjustment to their new status during a period of transition (a state

³⁵ Van Gennep 1960.

regarded as sacred, ritually dangerous, and vulnerable), and then finally being reincorporated into society in their new social status. Although van Gennep's rites of passage focused on individuals, it also has direct relevance for both wider groups and theories of change in general. Thus, it is a quite useful conceptual framework for considering both religious change and changes in collective worldviews.

2.2 General model for the evolution of religious systems

Van Gennep's three-stage concept is also surprisingly similar to the sequential phases of Selye's stress theory (the stages of alarm reaction, resistance, and exhaustion)³⁶ and cognitive theories³⁷, as well as the three-stage of magnetic behaviour. To reiterate, above the critical point, atomic magnets point up and down with equal likelihood (i.e., preliminal). The critical point itself is a peculiar netherworld between order and chaos, where up and down magnets mingle in ever-shifting factions of all sizes (i.e., liminal). Below the critical point, however, almost all of the magnets succeed in lining up again, but in a different direction this time (i.e., postliminal). Even if humankind is far more complicated than atomic magnets, we are all in the same way prone to influences, and as a result, mass movements are common in the same way even a single flip of magnet can trigger an avalanche of further flipping from one side to the other at the critical point. Thus, it is important to note that the critical state is subject to tremendous fluctuations, and always remains poised on the very edge of sudden and radical change. Only the difference between magnet and religion is that the former repeats the same drastic change repeatedly, while the latter accumulates different changes at each critical

³⁶ Selye 1956.

³⁷ For instance, Janoff-Bulman's cognitive appraisal model proposes a sequence of cognitive systems that may occur around the traumatic events in PTSD, and that may cause the collapse of an individual's assumptive world in a manner that leaves their life without meaning or control. This corresponds to a period of trauma. During the post-trauma, individual attempt to make sense and to gain control in the real world by employing inappropriate cognitive reactions. Janoff-Bulman considers these states adaptive and necessary in order to rebuild the assumptive world (Janoff-Bulman (1988a).

point and this accumulation enables the religion to transcend its previous structure at another critical point. However, the dynamics of change for both magnet and religion are essentially identical.

Human thought, for example, evolves along with the classical Socratic dialectic in which a thesis comes to be opposed by an antithesis, leading eventually to a synthesis that brings the stronger elements of each into a higher level of organisation. Hegel, who placed the dialectic at the foundation of his philosophical system, asserted that everything contains its own negation: life ends with death, decay with renewal. Based on his extensive study of myth, Claude Levi-Strauss also identified a binary code of opposites in which every point has a counterpoint. He believed that this pattern of opposites reveals the structure of human mind itself, and suggested that this binary code was the prototype for the conflict between thesis and antithesis in the dialectical process.³⁸ In Piaget's term, this dialectic involves mutual assimilation and accommodation between conflicting experience and cognition. He sees reciprocal assimilations and accommodations that occur between the non-equilibrium of cognitive structures or at a liminal stage, eventually leading to mutual integration.³⁹

Since the very process of structuring 'reality' requires a certain form of boundaries be created, the old religious system contains a set of limitations that need to be transcended as experiences accumulate and the society becomes more complex. Ideally, the synthesis emerging from the dialectic will incorporate the most vital elements of the opposing systems of the previous religious system, yielding a more inclusive and coherent new religious system. One of the ways that emerging counter-elements may first be glimpsed is through a non-structural state of consciousness, and it may be

³⁸ Levi-Strauss 1964.

³⁹ Piaget 1977:10.

initially symbolised in an emotionally charged vision of religious leaders. These symbols are also the psyche's primary vehicle for helping people to reconcile the opposing tendencies that reside within.

By employing the three-stage concept or dialectic processes, the passage of consciousness model is able to illustrate the importance of NSCs for our understanding of the dynamics involved in religious change. A framework for understanding religious change derives from the observation of these three characteristic functions of change; deconstructing the inertia of images, advancing counter-images, and the transcendent function of promoting a synthesis between the two.

The taxonomy of this three-stage concept would also apply to the process of NSCs. NSCs thus may be divided into three phases, pre-NSC, intra-NSC, and post-NSC. As shown in Figure 6-13, for psychologically healthy individuals and communities, the first stage of the passage of consciousness corresponds to the pre-NSC when separation from structured states may take place. This is the time at which an individual or community is confronted with traumatic or stressful life events, and an inevitable separation from their normal state of consciousness,⁴⁰ or the deconstruction of the inertia of images begins. This, then, is the period of transition from order to chaos. This stage corresponds to Selye's stage of alarm reaction⁴¹ and the dissolution of assumptive worlds or belief systems; and it is at this point that the ordered array of atomic magnets begins to lie in disarray. Each flips back and forth and at random. This is in the realm of pure chaos.

⁴⁰ By 'state of consciousness', I am referring to both the content of what we perceive, and the way in which we conceive.

⁴¹ During this first stage, body temperature and blood pressure decrease, muscle tension may be lost, blood may be thickened and the function of the nervous system may decrease significantly. This part of the first stage seems comparable to the beginning of the ASC in which an unusual event occurs and is considered as stressful to individuals.

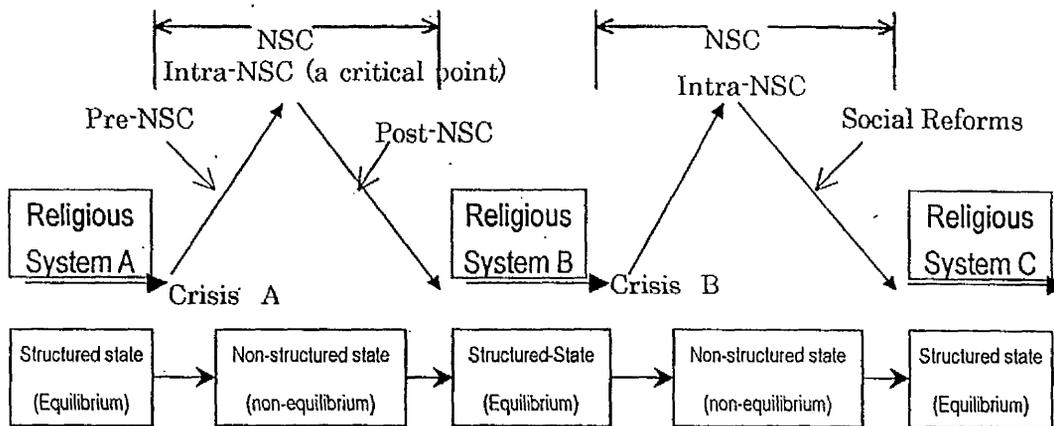


Figure 6-13 The Passage of Consciousness

The second stage is the intra-NSC phase, when unusual mystical experiences may be reported. At this critical point, physiologically, the stage of resistance takes over the initial state of shock, and endorphin levels reach their maximum, contributing to the mystical states of the NSC⁴². Cognitively, de-differentiation (realigning the conceptual set of the self-system) and altered perception may occur⁴³ in which counter-images advance. These physiological and cognitive changes may prepare the ground for the introduction of a new reality which has already been deconstructed during the pre-NSC. In the case of magnetic atoms, they balanced between magnets and non-magnetic states. The directions of the magnetic arrows are subject to tremendous fluctuations, and perched on the very edge of sudden and radical change where even a single magnet flipping over can trigger an avalanche of further flipping of almost entire magnetic arrows.

The final stage is the post-NSC when people may reincorporate their consciousness with the structured world. This is the time during which an individual or community attempts to find meaning in the experience or otherwise to establish some sort of control

⁴² Cf. Henry 1982:394-408; Prince 1982:409-423; Kalat 1992.

⁴³ Greyson argues that NDEs may contribute to de-differentiation since our normal mode of

over it. In the case of magnets, at this below the critical point, almost all the magnets may now line up with one another in a different direction from the original one, and they lie in the regime of a new order. In humankind, during this stage, various negative and positive outcomes may be observed. Physiologically, diseases of adaptation (ailments caused by prolonged stress) may occur if people enter the stage of exhaustion. The body has been exposed to the stressor for an extended period. And adaptive strategies and conditions acquired in previous stages become increasingly less effective; consequently, the body becomes exhausted and loses resistance. Cognitively, inappropriate reactions (e.g., self-blame, scapegoat, resentment) may be evident, and the rejection of the experiences during NSCs may occur. If these aversive cognitive processes are not alleviated by appropriate social support or treatment within a certain period, there may be a high risk of individuals developing psychological diseases of adaptation and of communities developing social violence or riots. However, if a synthesis between old reality and counter-reality succeeds, people may consider the experiences of the NSC as significantly valuable and may consequently change their perspectives, beliefs and their worldview. These three-stage transformations may occur repeatedly, and may therefore constitute a semi-circular loop of cognitive states in which the post-NSC stage may lead to another state of cognition that may soon enter the same cycle again.

This model implicates two important effects of NSCs that can lead an individual or community to form a different type of religious belief. On the one hand, if experiences during an NSC are successfully synthesised during the post-NSC, then it becomes possible to develop different religious systems from the previous one. This could be a possible explanation of the evolution of religion as well as of human thought. On the

thinking is subject-object differentiation. 1991.

other hand, if there is a failure to synthesise experiences, then pathological or disconnected thought patterns may arise. This process constitutes a possible explanation for developing psychological disturbances, socially delinquent behaviour, and other social problems. Given these effects, experiences of NSCs may be seen as opportunities to deconstruct old religious systems and create new ones.

Van Gennep's rites of passage, Selye's stress theory, and Kuhn's paradigm shift all attempt to explain stages of human changes (in mentality, physiology, and scientific progress). What is proposed here, however, using similar stages of change, explains how these changes are possible in relation to the functions of nonequilibrium states of consciousness. None of these theories explained the underlying processes of cognitive change, as they did not draw attention to the functions of NSCs. The significance of NSCs is that they present anomalies and create a *fluid* state of mind. NSCs also provide opportunities to test the reliability of the existing belief system. In fact, if we follow the holistic model of mutual influence, NSCs may stimulate changes not just in belief systems, but also various systems, such as ideology, social organisation, technology, and of course religious systems. Furthermore, the model even explains the cause of religious and cultural diversity as well as their uniformity, as we shall see below.

Before going any further, however, it is important to clarify the relationship between the *voluntary*-induced ASCs by religious professionals and *involuntary*-induced NSCs by the larger population during the phase transition. The qualities as well as the depth of ASCs experienced by religious professionals are quite different from those experienced by the larger population. The religious professionals intentionally induce ASCs for the so-called 'enlightenment', while the larger population in many cases accidentally induce NSCs in the wake of traumatic events. However, the significance of NSCs for the

general public lies in the fact that they create a *fluid* state of mind where all choices are open, and provide opportunity to test the reliability of the 'inertia of image' or assumptive world. Psychiatric research, for example, reveals that previous conditioning is more likely to terminate during the ASCs induced by starvation and sensory deprivation⁴⁴. Thus, famine and epidemics are more likely to generate NSCs in the mind of sufferers, and that the *fluid* state of mind during which NSCs provide an opportunity to accommodate new reality advocated by religious professionals and so lead to the acceptance of a new religious system. At this critical point, mind and behaviour of the larger population follows critical state universality. Thus, at this moment an evolutionary change in a single religious professional could trigger an avalanche of co-evolution that could affect an entire society.

Even though NSCs experienced by the larger population, unlike religious professionals, might not function as avenues to creative inspiration, the deconstruction of both previous collective and personal realities during pre-NSCs helps the larger population to realise that the 'inertial of image' or the assumptive world has already become increasingly disconnected from the reality of the changing environment. And it promotes the adoption of new teachings and practice advocated by new religious leaders, such as Himiko, Kūkai, Kūya, and many of the Kamakura New Buddhists, so as to synthesise new collective and personal realities in the new environment during the post-NSCs.

Moreover, we cannot neglect the fact that in the face of crises, pre-medieval Japanese people often engaged enthusiastically in various activities which voluntarily induced NSCs, such as shamanic dancing, *tōka*, *goryō-e*, *nenbutsu* dancing, and *nenbutsu* chanting. Many Researches on ASCs, as noted in the introduction, suggest that they

⁴⁴ Suzuki et al. 1976:245-259; Suzuki et al. 1979:307-314; Werner 1978.

function socially within religious rituals and promote group cohesion. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that their participation significantly affected the formation of a new religious system and promoted the transition from one system to another.

2.3 Implications for the Causes of Sociocultural Differences in Religions

I would like now to consider the implications of this model for explanations of sociocultural differences in religions. Figure 6-14 indicates a model for possible explanations of inducing cultural differences as well as historical events. As in the passage of consciousness model, it begins with a first stage of pre-NSC, followed by an intra-NSC. Reincorporation, however, may not occur if adequate resources such as social support and inter-cultural contact are not available during the post-NSC phase. If this happens, one of two outcomes can occur: either non-structured 'meaningful' orders (a failure to create meaningful orders) or distorted 'meaningful' orders (meaningful only to a particular society concerned) may be created from the current worldview.

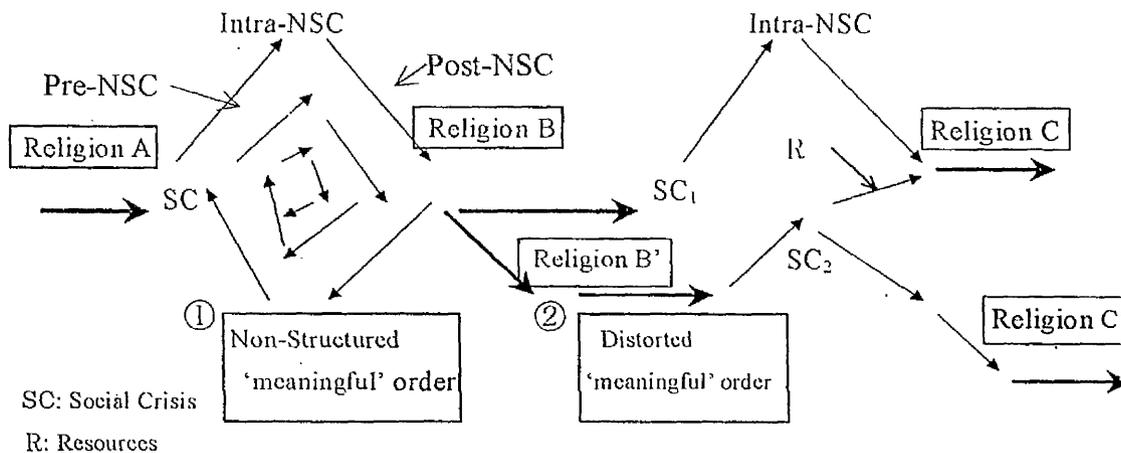


Figure 6-14 Mechanism for inducing sociocultural difference in Religions

A non-structured 'meaningful' order occurs when there is a lack of order in social order compared to the rest of the social system (① in Figure 6-14). People are disconnected from the 'real world' and conventional strategies may become increasingly less effective

as they are left longer without appropriate resources. They may experience a cycle of 'bizarreness' and NSCs that may render their order even less structured and more disconnected from the perspectives of other cultures. If an entire society falls into the realm of chaos from the precipice of order and chaos, or there is no one who can synthesise old reality with counter-reality after a critical point, this society does not function properly in its new environment. And such a society or culture might finally become extinct, just like the ancient civilisations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Indus Valley, prehistoric Greek cities of Minoan and Mycenaean, Khmer, and Classic Maya.

A distorted meaningful order, on the other hand, is exemplified by the development of different belief systems, such as religious practices and worship, just like an opening of a different path at a bifurcation point. Their 'distorted meaningful order' from the perspectives of the other 'meaningful' orders may cause various kinds of conflicts in mutual understanding, social customs, and so forth (② in Figure 6-14). However, because they are still connected to the ever-changing milieu, the cycle of structure and non-structure will prompt the next trauma. If appropriate resources, such as trading, migration, and introduction of new religious doctrines, are available this time, their 'distorted meaningful order' may merge back into the passage of mentality. However, if the resources are again not available, the severity of the 'distorted meaningful order' may become even worse, that is, cultural difference in religions will increase further. Moreover, if the resources do not become available for the following traumatic events, the people or the society may drift further away from the 'meaningful order'. Consequently, the sociocultural differences in religions are more likely to become more intense, and their complete isolation from the rest of the world will continue.

However, it is not only traumatic events that can induce types of NSCs: non-traumatic

events can too. Since the world is connected through various means such as foreign pressure, trading, cultural intercourse, migrations, invasion, and war under the ecological network of climate, population increase, and pandemics, other societies are likely to experience the same cycle of structure and non-structure accompanied by the same type of social crisis. Therefore, at moments of critical growth or crises, each society attempts to find a new niche or 'healing' method for the creation of a new ordered system out of chaos. As a result, its contact with other societies functions as a healing process to merge back into a new meaningfully ordered system from Religion B' to Religion C. In short, each society plays a role of both 'healer' and 'patient', although such contact can sometimes lead to disastrous results as in the case of Christian-Muslim or Judaist-Muslim clashes.

The model described above points to some important implications of the dynamics involved in inducing sociocultural differences and similarities in religions: it suggests that each society will seek a 'healing' method or a new type of religion, when it encounters social crisis. Yet the resources required to enable this healing probably vary in different historical contexts of each society, depending on variables such as the type of crisis and its timing in relation to a natural lifecycle of the system, the level of isolation from other societies, and the characteristics of each culture. So further investigation is needed to clarify what these variables are and whether any of them are consistent across different contexts.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this research study, I have explored the mutual interaction of pre-medieval Japanese religious systems and social crises, arguing along the way that social crises such as epidemics, famines, and racial migrations, which were generally induced by climatic fluctuations, have played a critical role in the evolution of pre-medieval Japanese religion. I have demonstrated how this evolution involved the development of new religious systems as existing ones failed to function effectively in the face of changing environments, and in doing so I have distinguished four stages in the evolution of early Japanese religion: the prototypical, archaic, monastic, and confraternal religious systems.

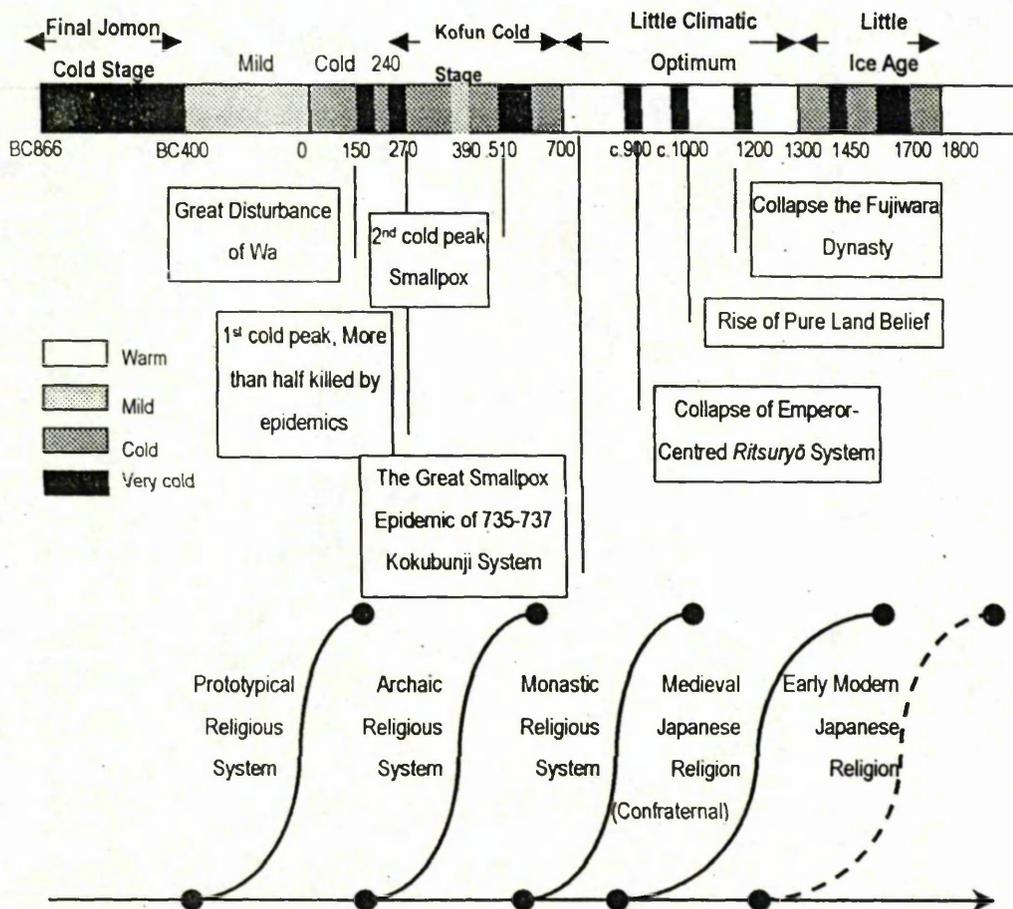
I have also argued that each religious system has its own lifecycle, in that each has possessed certain characteristics that have made it particularly suited to the socio-political niche that it has occupied. And I have suggested that when social crises have occurred that have changed the socio-political context and the systems have been unable to change sufficiently, then these same characteristics have ensured that the systems enter into a decline that eventually lead to their demise.

I have also demonstrated that social crises triggered by such events as climatic fluctuations and geo-environmental changes have significantly affected the lifecycles of the four religious systems (see Figures 6-15 & 6-16). As one social crisis has given birth to a new religious system at nonequilibrium, a second social crisis has then promoted the systematisation of this system at equilibrium. During a favourable environment, this system then grows until it reaches its maturity. After this, the system then declines due to the tremendous amounts of energy to sustain the system and the self-destructive mechanism. In addition, if a third social crisis breaks out at this time, it delivers a final

blow to the system. This final social crisis, however, also leads to the development of a subsequent religious system. Thus, the lifespan of religious systems is marked by a nonequilibrium state at the both ends of birth and death. In other words, the synergetic effect of a declining phase and an outbreak of social crisis generates the nonequilibrium state of an old system and leads to the emergence of a new system. This dual effect of social crisis during the declining phase suggests that people search for a new religious system as their living environment changes to help them cope with these changes. It is not only the introduction of new religious systems that leads to the dissolution of old, extant systems, but also the decline and collapse of old systems that leads to the adoption of new religious practices.

Figure 6-15 Climatic Fluctuations and the Lifecycles of Religious Systems

[Climatic data based on Sakaguchi 1984 & Kitagawa 1993]



Timing of Change	Final Jomon to Early Yayoi	Middle Yayoi to Late Yayoi	Middle Kofun period	From early 6 th century	Late 10 th century to early 12 th century
Geographic features	Cold Climate ⇒ Sea level ↓ & Land Area ↑ Lagoon developed	Formation of Natural Embankment and Terrace, Lagoon size ↓	Natural Embankment & Terrace ↓	Floods buried alluvial plain. Arable Land for rice fields ↑	Formation of Flood plains (dry riverbeds)
Groundwater Level	Marshy	Groundwater level became low	Groundwater level became up		Groundwater level became very low.
Alluvial Plains	Gentle Undulation		Formation of Flat lands	Further Expansion of Flat lands	Water shortage
Paddy fields	Irregular Shaped 50-60m ² of parcel size		Arable Land for rice fields ↑	Introduction of <i>Jōri</i> System (109 × 109m grid-pattern rice field)	Non-arable lands ↓ Rice fields ↓ Non-rice fields ↑
Location of Graveyard	Sandbanks	Relatively high grounds, such as Terraces, Foothill of Mountains, Active Fault Planes		Fields	Flood Plains
Confraternal Religion					
Monastic Religion					
Archaic Religion					
Prototypical Religion					

It was my contention at the beginning of this study that traditional research methods based on mechanical world paradigms or linear causal relationships would constrain our attempts to explain and understand human history. If religious evolution were a simple system, we would be able to easily envisage its overall evolution from the system's constituent parts. As we have seen throughout the chapters, however, the religious

system is an emergent property of a complex network of many interacting components that are always changing and progressing. In addition to having a large number of variables, it also consists of many feedback loops. For example, even a minor social crisis that broke out after maturity disrupts the balance of the system and could lead to a collapse of the entire system. Religious evolution is also irreducible: it cannot be decomposed into isolated subsystems without suffering an irretrievable loss of the very information that makes it a system. Thus, neglecting any part of the process or severing any of the connections linking its parts generally annihilates essential aspects of the system's behaviour or structure. However, the multiplicity of methodologies and perspectives adopted and developed in this thesis enable us to better comprehend the complex process of religious evolution and to transform qualitative interpretations of historical events into quantifiable ones, through triangulating and comparing research findings.

Moreover, in addition to exploring the social forces at play in the dynamic inter-relationships of social crises and the evolution of religion systems in Japan, this thesis also examined some of the consequences of these social forces for individuals. For I have attempted to demonstrate that the process of punctuated evolution that characterises the development of early Japanese religion has had a profound impact on individual lives, and vice versa.

When a religious system or worldview changes from one structure or state to another, it passes through the phase transition of non-structure where all choices are open. As the self-systems of individuals are embedded within this social context, when, in times of social crises, this context passes through a state of non-structure it can perturb the self-systems of individuals. What this thesis has argued is that this perturbation of the

self-system may involve the mass of the population temporarily experiencing a transitional state in which an NSC may occur. This thesis has presented a theoretical model called passage of consciousness that attempted to explain both what is taking place during this transitional state and the nature of its reciprocal relationship with the wider socio-political context, which complex theorists and other scholars such as Van Gennep, Thomas Kuhn, and Victor Turner failed to do so. This model suggests that NSCs in the wake of crisis can be seen as one of decisive elements to deconstruct old religious systems and create new ones, which may eventually contribute not only to the evolution of religion but also to the evolution of both human thought systems (the content of thought) and the ways in which people think (the processes of thought).

Obviously, all theories are limited in their use and they cannot explain everything, so we cannot construct rigid infallible mappings of religious change accounting for all features of the historical record. For example, a shift to literacy including 'visual literacy', such as individual access to imagery, like statues and hell screens, may bring about increasing differentiation in response to religious innovation between the 'literate' and the 'illiterate'. Some sections of society - the literate - now become much more open to change than others, not because of a differentiation in their states of consciousness, but because of their access to new information. Literacy may also alter the energy inputs and outputs in that ink and paper require less energy than three-dimensional objects like monasteries and *haniwa*. Therefore, it is possible that the unified system of Japanese society as a field of religious change becomes fractured by this differentiation. Nevertheless, the models developed in this thesis, which are entirely scientific, give us a new way to look at such data as we currently possess. Accordingly, an opportunity does exist for some contribution based on new understandings of change to be made, where clear case can be shown for the explanatory force of those new understandings.

We have dealt primarily with the Japanese case in this thesis. However, what physicists refer to 'universality classes' postulate that any two substances, physical or metaphysical, that fall into the same class, have exactly the same critical state organisation, notwithstanding how entirely dissimilar they may otherwise seem to be. Moreover, if we succeed in understanding the critical state in any system from one class, we can understand all systems in that class. The dynamics of religious evolution and cognitive change - just like a phase transition of magnet - involves a critical state of consciousness for every human being. Thus, it is justifiable to generalise the findings of this thesis to the evolutions of foreign religious systems, especially western Europe that was also peripheral to the central civilisation of Greek and Rome just as Japan was peripheral to China until the dawn of the modern period. For example, the teachings of the established church also fell into disrepute in the wake of the Black Death, and such hysterical excesses as the flagellant movement and dancing mania (St Vitus's Dance) spread over medieval Europe. Moreover, not only the nature but also the lifecycle of *keidai toshi* is quite similar to those of communes in medieval western Europe that acquired self-governing municipal institutions from the 11th century until the formation of 'absolutism'. This suggests that some underlying correlation exists for these similarities. If we are able to compare in more detail, it helps us better understand not only Japanese religions but also the dynamics of human history, but unfortunately, this is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, the life-dynamic model and the passage of consciousness model, as well as the interrelatedness of countries, through global climatic fluctuation, cultural contact, and migrations, suggest that the religious evolution in western Europe would exhibit similar patterns to those of Japanese religious systems, of course with some minor differences.

Based on the analyses made in this thesis, some general conclusions may be drawn here. Firstly, the recognition of cycle in historical developments is not new to social scientists (e.g., Toynbee, Kuhn, Quigley, Eisenstadt, Kennedy, Wallerstein and Frank). However, previous studies were not supported by numerical data. Thus, their lifecycles of expansion and decay tended to be arbitrary. In contrast, the lifecycle model was adopted in this study in order to investigate the relationship between social crises and religious change. Once a certain type of religious system is self-organised, or adopted at nonequilibrium setting, the lifespan of the system, at equilibrium, follows the law of natural growth. This was called a natural lifecycle. An application of this natural growth model enables us to conduct research based on reasonably sufficient numerical data, and it provides highly resourceful techniques for future comparative study. If we look at history from the standpoint of climatic change in relation to the lifecycle model, we are able to discern that some incidents, which appear unrelated to one another, are in fact organically linked by means of global climatic change. This is one of the keys to understand the dynamics of synchronic evolution of human history.

Secondly, it may be a universal rule that social crises are a good opportunity for a new type of religious system to gain influence as well as for an old religious system to lose its established power. In short, social crises and religious change are inseparably intertwined. After all, the transcendental healing powers of the new religious system play crucial role in its gaining popularity, and a failure to prove efficient remedies or explanation becomes fatal for the continuing existence of an old religious system.

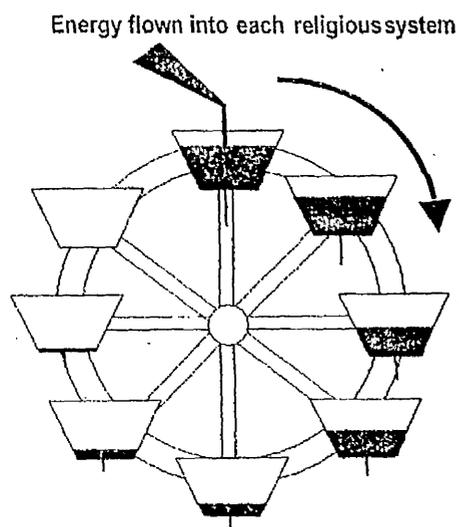
Thirdly, out of such offensive and defensive battles, new techniques for better healing evolve for the survival of religious systems. Although these transcendental healing

powers of religions appear to be based totally on magical thinking in ancient times, detailed analysis reveals that they were based on holistic thinking.

Fourthly, not only new techniques for better healing but also new worldview evolve during the phase transition induced by social crisis, in turn, the new worldview facilitates the emergence of new religious system. This new religious system contains within itself the self-destructive mechanism that would create another social crisis and eventually lead to its own demise. At the beginning of this thesis, I have suggested that these mutual relationships constitute a semi-circular loop of endless change in an expanding helical form (see Figure 1 in Introduction). This research, however, requires slight modification to this proposition. The overall evolution of religious systems is much more complex and beautiful than that.

If we compare it to a virtual waterwheel, this will be more evident. A metaphor for the religious system is found in this physical simulation. Imagine a waterwheel consists of eight leaking buckets on the rim of a larger wheel as shown in the diagram below. Water flows from the waterspout at the top, each bucket leaks from the bottom. In this thought experiment, the waterwheel, the buckets, and the leak represent respectively a religious system, individual religious institutions, and the energy consumed at the institutions. The wheel's rotational speed, accelerated velocity, and rotative directions are determined by the variables; the volume of water poured into each bucket, the size of a hole in the bucket, and the damping ratio (friction between a shaft of the wheel and a shaft bearing). Likewise, the religious system's degrees of dominance in the society, growth rate, and vicissitudes are determined by the amount of devotion, the efficiency of the system, and the entropy created by the growth of the system.

When water flows into the buckets faster than they can empty, the waterwheel will begin to revolve in one direction at a constant speed. However, if one of the variables is changed, the behaviour of the waterwheel begins to show chaos, apparently random and unpredictable behaviour in the system despite seemingly simplicity and the fact that the forces involved are governed by a well-understood mathematical equation. As we decrease the outpouring of water, for example, the waterwheel will spin in one direction as before, and then suddenly jerk about and spin in other direction, with unstable but patterned order of accelerated velocities. As we decrease further, the waterwheel will spin again in one direction smoothly but at much slower speeds, and eventually stop. Likewise, when enough amounts of energy are devoted to a certain type of religious institutions, they begin to organise a new religious system. However, if the amounts of energy devoted to the system decrease due to the social crises, or if the efficiency of the religious system drops due to the entropy created by the further growth of the system, it begins to show chaos.

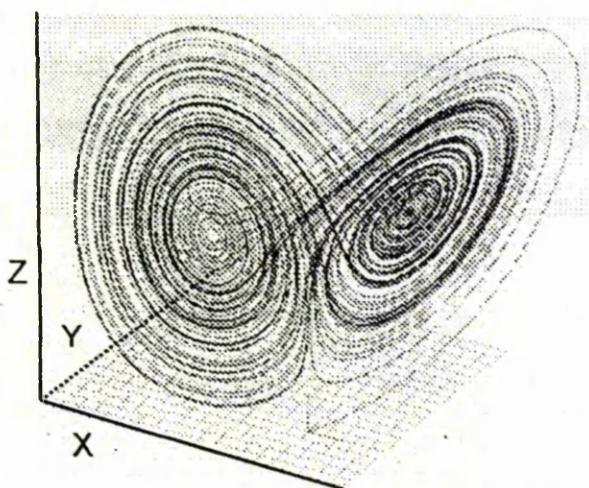


Each part of the waterwheel represents the actual world:

- 1) Waterwheel — religious system
- 2) Architectural design of the waterwheel — worldview
- 3) Leaking buckets — religious institutions
- 4) Leaks — cost of maintaining the institutions
- 5) Rotational speeds — the degrees of success in the society
- 6) Accelerated velocities — the growth rate of the system
- 7) rotative directions — vicissitudes of the system
- 7) Gravitational force of water — energy devoted by people (the fitness of the system)
- 8) Damping ratio — the self-destructive mechanism (entropy created by the growth of the system)
- 9) Change in the volume of water — social crisis & people's interest

If we plot the iteration of the waterwheel rotation (i.e., the overall religious system) by computer simulations, their trajectories exhibit a fractal or self-similar structure known

as strange attractor, as shown in the diagram below. In other words, each nonlinear equation solution curves tends to the same area know as the attractor area, and cycles around randomly without any particular set of number of times, never crossing itself, staying in the same phase space, and displaying self-similarity at any scale. This can be confirmed by the iteration of similar types of religious system in actual history, but the same religious system never emerge again. In fact, the strange attractor of the waterwheel and religious system became same as the strange attractor created by the behaviour of the climatic system in the natural environment known as Lorenz's attractor⁴⁵.



Schematic Diagram of Religious Evolution based on thought experiment

The X-, Y-, and Z-axes correspond to components of the religious systems, while the graph indicates feasible religious patterns. The evolution of the overall religious system, like other complex systems, makes up the clockwise (on the right) and counter-clockwise trajectories (on the left) in the topological space. These trajectories oscillate between the two different planes. Circular motions and oscillations from one plane to the other correspond to the lifecycles of particular religious systems and transitional phases, respectively.

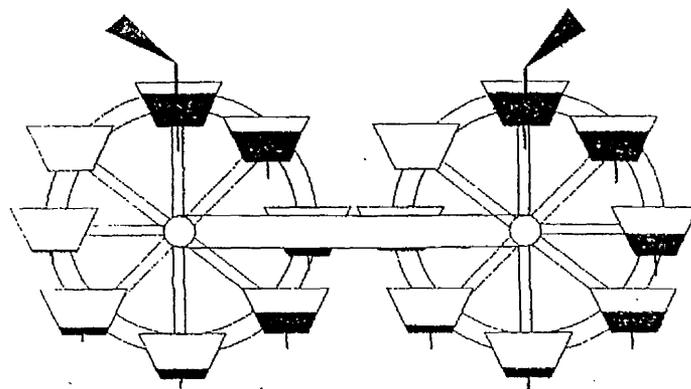
⁴⁵ To be more precise, a virtual waterwheel is different from the religious and climatic systems in two aspects. First, the number of 'leaking buckets' (e.g., monasteries and confraternal associations) are much more numerous in the latter. As the religious system grows, the number of religious institutions also increases further. Second, the size of leaking buckets as well as the size of the hole at the bottom remains constant in the former, but they change in the latter. Because of these differences, the strange attractor of the waterwheel becomes two-dimensional and looks slightly different from that of the religious system and climatic system (For the strange attractor of the virtual waterwheel, see Naitō 1997:18-52). Moreover, if the amount of energy is increased further and further, the waterwheel will start rotating again at constant speeds. In the case of the religious and climatic systems, however, chaos continues because both the number and the size of

As all these systems involve with chaos, this is not surprising. What is really extraordinary, however, is that the strange attractor of the overall religious system based on this thought experiment indicates that a triadic fractal structure of worldviews, religious systems, and social crises are embedded into one another, and they are essentially inter-dependent and coevolving in a complete harmony. They are inter-correlated long before we see them involved in direct interaction. In other words, the behaviour of a system is controlled by the totality of specific components' individual and synergistic properties within the arrangement by which they constitute the system rather than the reduction of phenomena to individual components or linear influence of its environment. This lead us to the conclusion similar to the Garland doctrine of 'net of Indra's treasure-gems' or the theory of causation by *dharma-dhātu* (the realm of the ultimate reality), - i.e., that all of the elements arise simultaneously, that the manifestation are mutually identical, that the whole of things creates itself, and that ultimate principles and concrete manifestations are interfused. In short, everything relates to everything and the universe is self-creating.

The reduction of phenomena to individual components based on the mechanical world paradigm is deeply ingrained in our thinking, but it is applicable only if the objects of study are simple systems. Complex systems, on the other hand, are a perfect unity with all existences in it penetrating each other and fusing together, and nothing exist independently. Since every religious system and many other historical phenomena are in fact complex systems, and self-organising forces are both cause and effect of one and the same vortical chaotic dynamics, traditional causational analysis collapses, or it is nothing more than rough estimation of the real world. Cause and effect are inseparably

'leaking buckets' change as the amount of energy changes.

intertwined in a complex system. The rebuilding of one portion of the network necessitates changes in inter-correlated elements, and thus a change in a single element could trigger an avalanche of coevolution that could affect an entire system. It is, then, if we are to pursue the real human history, we ought to explore it in terms of the autocatalytic network of nonlinear mutual interaction or interprocesses, but not in terms of lifeless existences or an out-of-dated relic of the 19th century science. By so doing, we can reintegrate valuable historical findings in our hands and rectify the distortion of images on human history.



Synchronic movement of two chaos waterwheels

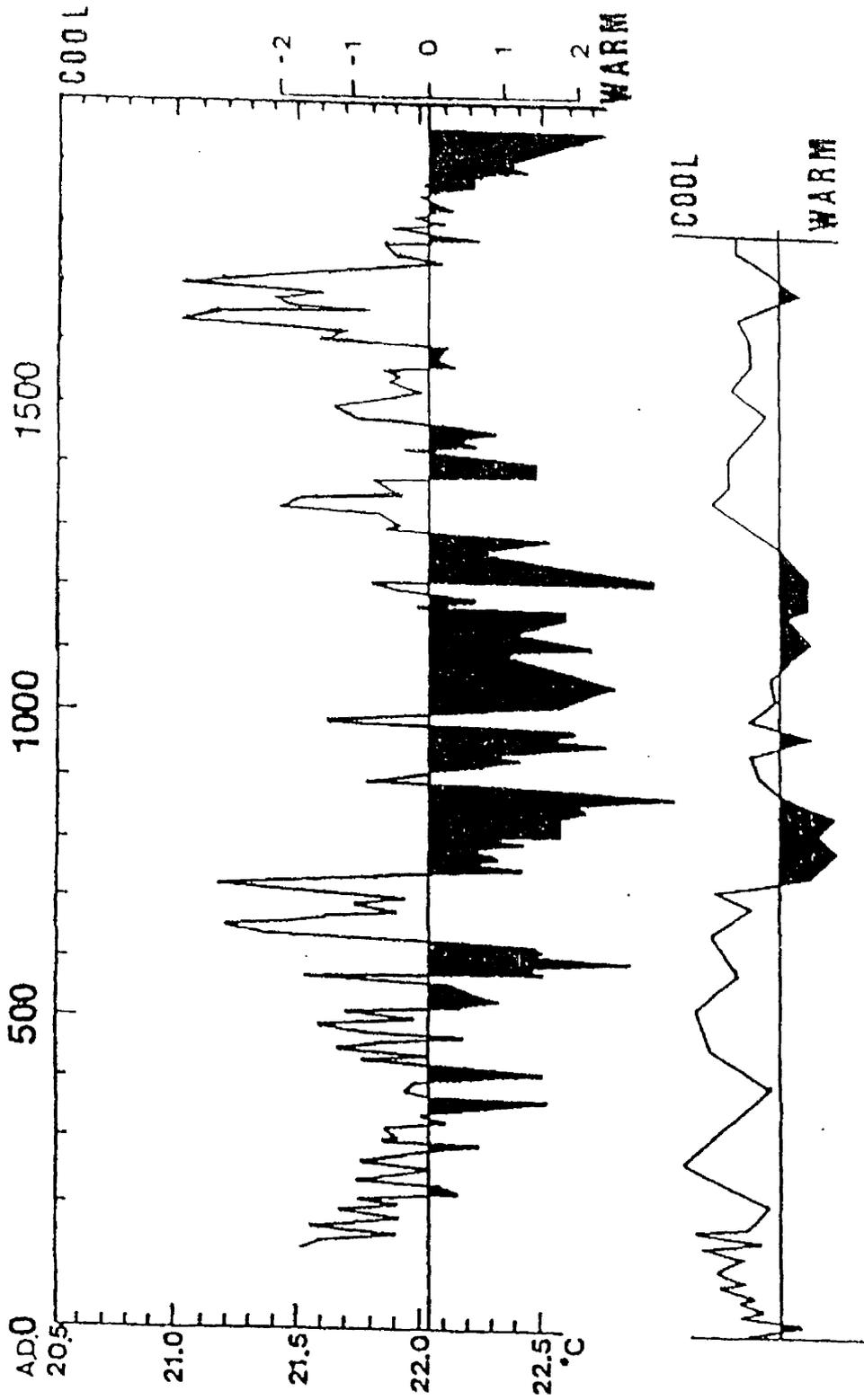
The fifth and final general conclusion is that the synchronic rise of new religions at a global level is related to the inter-connectedness of complex systems. For example, if two chaos waterwheels are connected by a viscous coupling device in computer simulations as shown above, the movement of the waterwheels will soon synchronise despite the facts that the variables, such as the amounts of water, the size of leaks, and the damping ratio, are different. This happens because of the interprocess communication of the complex systems that allows processes to feedback each other. The weaker the degree of connectedness, the longer it will take the synchronisation to occur. To put it differently, if we compared the synchronicity of any systems, we can tell the strength of inter-connectedness between the two or more systems. As for religious

systems, the medium or the coupling devices for synchronicity are epidemics, migrants, trade, political and cultural intercourse, and of course social crises. And these are not only inter-correlated with global climatic change, but also make up the complexity enfolded into the every moment of human history, and such a complex adaptive system is continuously changing.

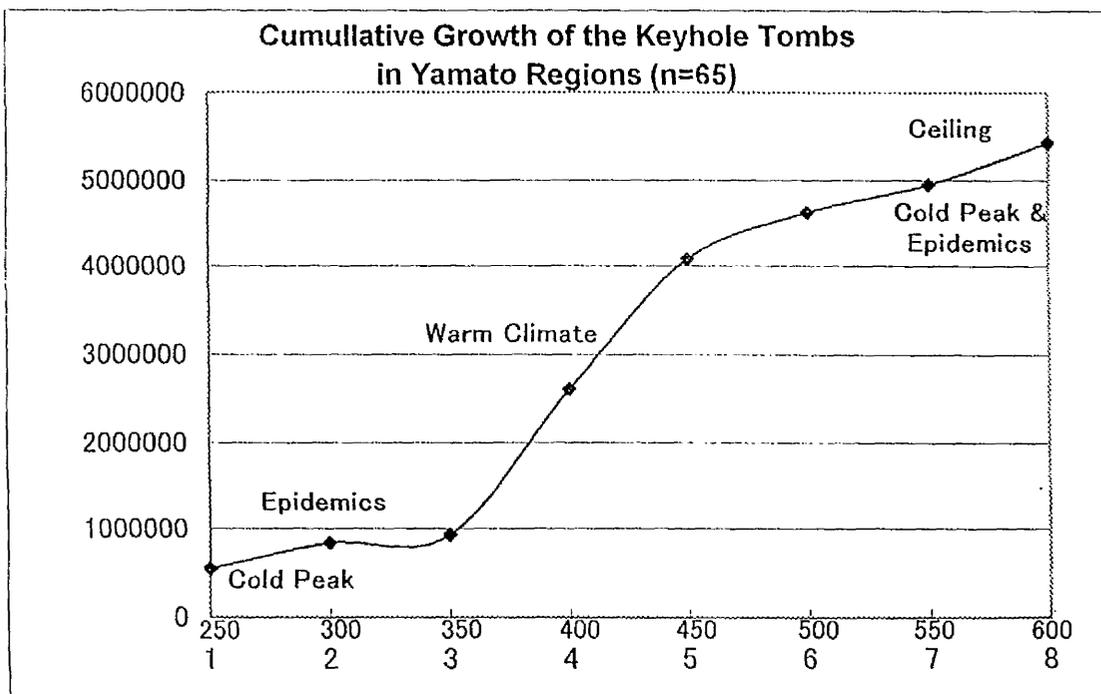
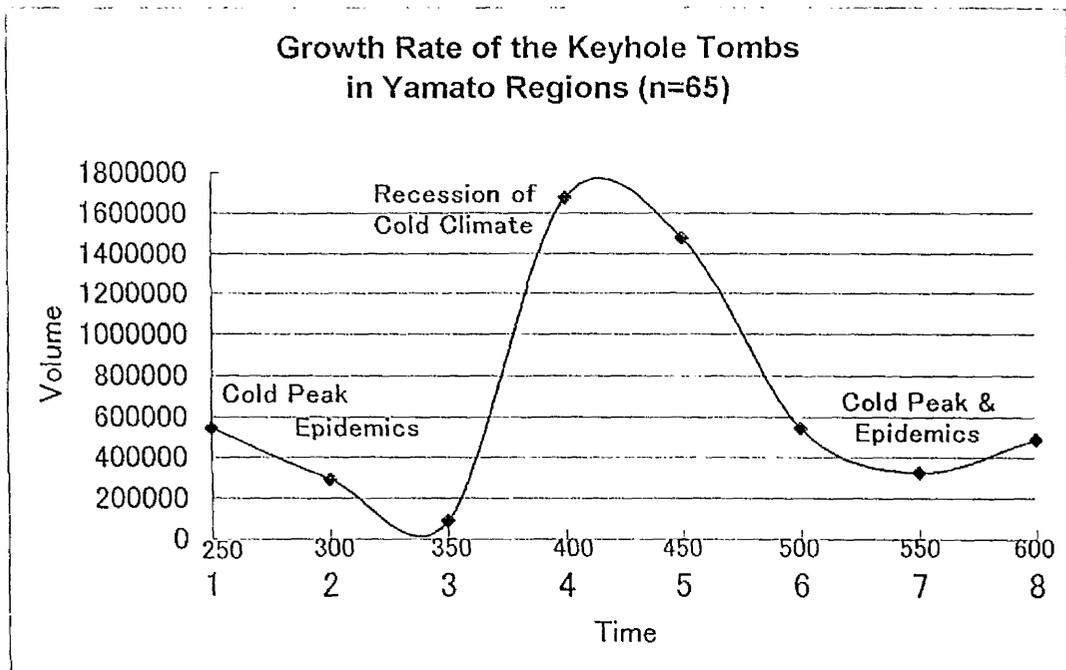
Together these factors make up complex that is continuously changing in itself and in its relationship to the other complex systems. In this way, both social crises and religion evolve in unison through a combination of the non-linear effects of changing environments and the consequent human responses to these ever-changing environments. Without social crises, there would be no religious change.

Climatic Fluctuation of Past 2000 Years

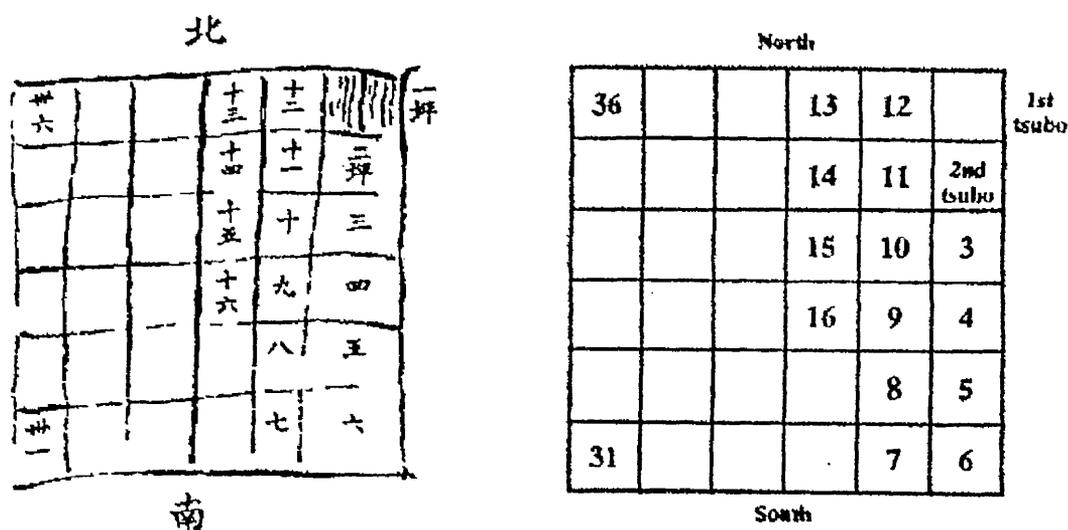
[Kitagawa 1993 (above) & Sakaguchi1084 (below)]



Appendix I



Appendix II



An Illustration from the *Daijō-in Jisha Zōjiki* and its interpretation (right)
 (By Noboru Ogata, Nara Women's University)

The above illustration and interpretation give the synopsis of the so-called *jōri* system – the land partitioning and indication system in ancient and medieval Japan.

- 1) The size of one *ri* (village) was 6 *chō* square while one *tsubo* (land parcel) was 1 *chō* (109 metres) square.
- 2) The lateral arrays of *ris* were called *jōs*, which were numbered from north to south.
- 3) In one *jō*, *ris* were numbered from Shimotsu-Michi either to the west or to the east.
- 4) In one *ri*, *tsubos* were numbered from the northwest corner to the northeast corner in the eastern counties, and from the northeast corner in the western counties.

Appendix III

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Glossary

- Abe 阿倍内親王 Princess Abe
Ainōshō 盞籠鈔
ajari 阿闍梨 (the Shingon priests)
Ajātaśatru 阿闍世
Akaiko 赤猪子
Aki 安芸
akunin shōki 惡人正機説 (Shinran's theory that an evil person was the chief object of Amida's compassion)
ama no mihashira 天御柱
ama no mura-kumo no tsurugi 天叢雲劍 (the sword of the gathering clouds of Heaven)
ama no uki-hashī 天浮橋 ('the Heavenly Floating Bridge')
Amaterasu 天照大神
amatsu-kami 天津神
Amoghavajra 不空
Angen no Taika 安元大火 (the great fire of 1177)
An-hsi 安息
An-pan shou-I ching 安般守意經 (Sutra of Ānāpāna Meditation)
Anrakushū 安樂集 (*Collection of Passages Concerning Birth in the Pure Land*)
An Shih-kao 安世高
Aoyakamijichi site 青谷上寺地遺跡
Arakan 阿羅漢
aramitama 荒魂
arano 荒野 (wastelands)
Arima 有馬皇子 Imperial Prince Arima
aruhon 或本
asashi 浅し
Ashihara no Nakatsukuni 葦原中国
ashura 阿修羅 (asuras)
Asukadera 飛鳥寺(Hōkō-ji 法興寺)
Asuka Kiyomihara Rei 飛鳥淨御原令 Asuka Kiyomihara Code
atashikuni no Kami 蕃神 (deity worshiped by foreigners)
Ate 安殿親王(i.e., Emperor Heizei 平城天皇)
Awagagun-jō 吾川郡条
azechi 按察使 ('inspector')
Azumi clan 阿曇氏
bakuhān 幕藩体制
be 部
Ben-kenmitsu-nikyō-ron 弁頭密二教論 (*Differences between Exoteric and Esoteric Buddhism*)
betsuji nembutsu 別時念仏

bettō 別当
 Bidatsu 敏達
bōkon 亡魂 (the vengefull spirits of the dead)
bokukotsu 卜骨 (oracle bones)
bokusho doki 墨書土器 (charcoal-marked pottery)
Bungo no Kuni Fudoki 豊後国風土記
bonpu 凡夫 ('sinful ordinary men')
Bonmō-kyō 梵網經
bonnō 煩惱 (afflictions)
bonshō funi 凡聖不二 (or *bonshō ichinyō* 凡聖一如)
bosatsujō 菩薩乘 (sages who practiced the 'bodhisattva vehicle')
buke 武家 (the warrior class)
buke seiken 武家政權 (warrior government)
buppō 仏法 (Buddhist law)
buppō-ōbō sōiron 仏法相依論 ('Buddhist law' and 'imperial law')
 Buretsu 武烈
Bushidan 武士団 (military bands)
Butchō Sonshō Daranikyō 仏頂尊勝陀羅尼經
butsudō 仏道
butsudō 仏堂 (small Buddhist halls such as *Rokkakudō* 六角堂, *Kawadō* 草堂, and *Inabadō* 因幡堂)
butsumyō congregations 仏名会
 Byōdōin 平等院
 Changsu 長壽王
 Chan-jan's 湛然
 Chêng 鄭
chen-yen 真言
 Che-tung 浙東 (modern Chekiang province 浙江省)
 Chōgen 重源
chōjin 鳥人
Chōkyō Hokekyō Kōbunryaku Ganmon 長講法華經後分略願文
ch'ongun 天君
chōrei shinkō 鳥靈信仰 (*chōrei* cult)
Chou li 周礼
 Chien-ch'u-ssū 建初寺
 Chien-K'ang 建康 (the capital of Wu)
chih 微
 Chih-i 智顛
 Chijung 智證
 Chikei 智憬
 Chikō 智光
chinkaiseki eika 鎮懷石詠歌
chimata 衢

Ching-ch'u sui-shih-chi 荆楚歲時記
chingo kokka 鎮護国家
 Chinu no agata 茅渟県 (old name of Izumi 和泉国)
chioz 角
chishiki 知識 (corporate patronage of unauthorised monks and commoners)
chisōkan 地相觀 ('Earth-phase contemplation')
chiteki shūgi 地的宗儀
chō 調
 Ch'u 楚
chūgoku 中国 (the third-class provinces under the ritsuryō system. See *taikoku*)
chūkō-doki 注口土器 (spouted vessel)
 Chu-ko Liang 諸葛亮
 Chūnagon, Takechi Maro of Ōmiwa no Ason 中納言大三輪朝臣高市麻呂 (a descendant of Ōta-ta-neko at Mt. Miwa)
Ch'un ch'iu 春秋 ('Spring and Autumn')
chūō-kōzōsen 中央構造線 (the Median Tectonic Line running from Yatsushiro in Kumamoto across Shikoku, Kii Peninsula, Yoshino, Ise, and to the south banks of Lake Suwa)
chūsen-sekai 中千世界 (the Medium One-Thousand World)
Daibenzaitenyohon 大弁才天女品
Daibibasharon 大毘婆沙論
daibutsuyō 大仏様 ('great Buddha style')
daigo 醍醐 (the taste of the ghee which cures all diseases in a miraculous way)
daigokuden 大極殿 ('Imperial Throne Hall')
Daihannya-kyō 大般若經
 Dainichi Nyorai 大日如来 (Mahāvairocana)
Dajōdaijin Zenji 太政大臣禪師 (a powerful Priest-Premier)
daijō hōō 太上法皇 (a formal title given to retired emperors who became Buddhist priests)
daijō kaidan'in 大乘戒壇院 (the Mahayana-precept platform)
daijōkan 太政官 (Bureau of State Affairs)
dajō Kanpu 太政官符
Daijōkishin-ron 大乘起信論 (*Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*)
daijōsai 大嘗祭 (Grand Ritual of Thanksgiving)
 Daisenji 大山寺
 Daisen Kofun 大仙古墳 (Nintoku Tennōryō 仁德天皇陵)
daishikō 大師講
daisōjō 大僧正 (the highest position in the Prelates' Office)
dai-sōzu 大僧都
daitoku 大德 (the great virtue)
dai Tsuhōkō-bō 大通方広法 (a penitential service)
dankyū-gai 段丘崖
danna 旦那
dengaku 田楽

dhāraṇī 陀羅尼 (consists in mystic spells and phrases)
 Dazaifu 大宰府
 Dōgen 道元
dogū 土偶 (clay figurines)
dogū keiyōki 土偶形容器 (a clay figurine for cinerary urns)
 Dōji 道慈
dokikan 土器棺 (deep clay bowls)
dokuju 読誦 (chanting the sutra)
dokyō 読經 (sutra-chanting)
 Dōkyō 道鏡
dosei kamen 土製仮面 (clay masks)
 Dōshō 道証
dōtaku saishi 銅鐸祭祀
 Eben 惠便
 Ebisu 夷/蝦夷
edo 穢土 ('defiled land')
Eiga Monogatari 榮花物語
Eiheijikō 永平寺講
 Eisai 榮西
 Eizon 叡尊
 Eji 慧慈
ekijin 疫神 (the deities of pestilence)
Ekijin-sai 疫神祭 (the observance conducted to enshrine the deities of pestilence)
ekiki 疫氣 (miasma)
 Emi no Oshikatsu 惠美押勝の乱
 Enchin 円珍
enpun 円墳 (circular-shaped mounded tomb; round mound)
Engakuyō 円覚經 (*Perfect Enlightenment Sutra*)
Engishikii 延喜式 (a compilation of laws detailing imperial court ceremonies and etiquette, penal measures, local administration, and so on.)
Engi Tōgoku no Ran 延喜東国の乱
enkon 冤魂 (the vengeful spirits of the dead)
 Ennin 円仁
 En no Ozuka 役小角
enretsu misshō 円劣密勝
 Enryakuji Monastery 延暦寺
 Esō 慧聡
 Fa-chao 法照
feng-ch'an-shu 封禪書
 Fan Hsing-chun's 范行準
feng-shui 風水 (wind-water)
 Five Dynasties and the Ten Kingdoms 五代十国
 four Han commanderies 朝鮮四郡

gekoku 下国 (the lowest-ranked provinces under the *ritsuryō* system. See *taikoku*.)
gego 外護 (an 'outside patron and protector')
ge-goma 外護摩 (external fire-ceremony)
 Genbō 玄昉
genja 驗者 (the great practitioner)
genriki 驗力 (the esoteric power)
gense shugi 現世主義 (the worldly belief)
 Genshin 源信
genze riyaku 現世利益 (worldly merits)
gō 業 (*karma*)
 Gobunritsu 五分律
goe-nembutsu 五会念仏 (the *nembutsu* in five cadences)
goganji 御願寺 ('august prayer-offering temple')
gohei 御幣
go-hō 五宝 (supplementary drugs named the 'five treasures')
gojisō 護持僧 (esoteric priests pray for the safe delivery of a baby boy and for subduing their rivals)
gojuku akuse 五濁惡世 (evil world with the *five* defilements)
goki-shichidō 五畿七道 (Five Central Provinces and Seven Ways)
go-kō 五香 (aromatic substances)
gokoku bukkyō 護国仏教 (the state-protecting Buddhism)
gokoku kyōten 護国經典
goma-dō 護摩堂 (a hall for the external fire-ceremony)
goma-hō 護摩法 (or *kaji* 加持 - esoteric rituals)
 Gonzō 勤操
gongu jōdo 欣求淨土 (seek rebirth in the Pure Land)
goryō 御靈 (august spirits)
 Goryōe 御靈会
 Gosaie 御齋会 (the solemn Buddhist service)
Goshichinichi no mishiho 後七日御修法 (an esoteric service)
goshōgyō 五正行 ('*five* right practices')
go-yaku 五藥 (a variety of drugs)
 Guang-wu 光武帝
gyōja 行者
 Gyōki 行基
 Gyokuyō 玉葉
hachidai-jigoku 八大地獄
 Hachiman Taisha 八幡大社
 Hachioka Temple 蜂岡寺
Hakatatsu tōbō 博多津唐房 (Chinese traders' settlement)
hakkaku-fun 八角墳
hakkudoku suisōkan 八功德水相觀 ('Eight-Virtuous-Waters-Phase contemplation')
 Hakozaki Shrine 筥崎八幡宮

hakusōrei 薄葬令
 Han 韓
 Hanami 花見(cherry-blossom viewing)
 Hanson 漢城
Harae/harai 祓
 Haraibe doki 祓部土器
harau 払う, ハラフ
Harima no Kuni Fudoki 播磨国風土記
 Hasedera 長谷寺
hashiramatsu 柱松
Hatsukunishirasu Sumeramikoto 御肇国天皇
 Hatsuse river 初瀬川
hebi-mukoiri 蛇婿入
hekija 辟邪
henjō kōmyō 遍照光明 (the 'Boundless Light')
 Hieda no Are 稗田阿礼
 Hieizan Shikan Hokke-in 比叡山止観法華院 (the formal name of the Enryakuji Monastery)
 Higaida Ōtsua Kofun 東田大塚古墳
hijiri 聖
 Hiko Hohodemi no Mikoto 彦火火出見尊/火遠理命 (the diety of grains)
hime-hiko-sei 姫彦制
Himitsushu 秘密趣 (deep and secret sermons)
himorogi 神籬 (divine hedge)
hinin 非人 (untouchables)
hiraka 平瓮
 Hirohira 広平親王 (Imperial Prince Hirohira)
 Hirose 広瀬
hiruko 水蛭子/蛭児
hisōkan 日相観 ('Sunset-phase contemplation')
Hitachi Fudoki 常陸風土記
hōe 法会
hōfun 方墳
Hogen no Shinsei 保元の新制 ('New System of Government in Hogen Era')
hōhei/mitegura 奉幣
 Hōjōji 法成寺
Hōjōki 方丈記
Hōkei shūkōbo 方形周溝墓 (the square moated burial precinct)
 Hokke 北家 (Fujiwara northern branch)
 Hōki 伯耆
honzon 本尊 (principal object of worship)
hō-ō 法王 (a 'King of the Dharma')
 Hōren 法連

Hossō sect 法相宗
Hou Han shu 後漢書 (the Chinese official chronicles of the Later Han)
Hou han shu 後漢書東夷伝 (Account of the Wa people in the History of the Latter Han Dynasty)
Hou han shu dealing with the people of Wa 後漢書倭伝
Hoke-kyō 法華經
 Hokenoyama Kofun ホケノ山古墳
 Hōki 宝亀
Hokke Chōkō Ganmon 法華長講願文
Hokkekō 法華講
Hokke shūku 法華秀句
 Hōkō-ji 法興寺
 Homusubi 火産靈神 (the fire deity)
 Ho-nan 河南
 Hōnen 法然
hongaku shisō 本学思想 (original enlightenment)
hon'u hongaku 本有本覚 ('inherently existing original enlightenment')
Hōonkō 報恩講
hōrin 宝輪 (a wheel)
 Hōryūji Kondō 法隆寺金堂 (the Golden Hall of Hōryū Monastery)
hōshu 宝珠
 Hossō 法相
hoto 富登
hōtō 法頭
 Hsiung-nu 匈奴
 Hsu-fu 徐福
Huai-nan-tzu 淮南子
 Huai-ti 桓帝
 Huang Ch'ao 黄巢
 Huan-ti 桓帝
hu-dou 虜瘡 (barbarian pox)
 Hui-suu 慧思
 Hui-yüan 慧遠
 Hwangnyong-sa monastery 皇龍寺 (Yellow and Imperial Dragon Temple)
hyakuō shisō 百王思想 (a belief that the reign of emperors would terminate after 100th generations)
ichijō-setsu 一乘説 (the doctrine of the 'Single Vehicle' of the *Lotus Sutra*)
I-ching 易行
ichi-no-miya 一宮 (First Shrines)
igyōdō 易行道 ('way of easy practice')
 Ikaga Shikoo 伊香色雄
 Iketsu Hime 池津媛
ikiryō 生靈 (the vengeful spirit of the living known)

ikkō ikki 一向一揆 (large-scale uprisings in the late 15th and 16th centuries by adherents of the Jōdo Shin sect of Buddhism)
 Ikutama-yoribime 活玉依毘売
 Ikutama Yori Hime 活玉依姫
I-li 儀礼
Inarikō 稻荷講
Indara-mō 因陀羅網 (net of Indra's treasure-gems)
 Inoe 井上内親王 (Imperial Princess Inoe)
Insei 院政
 Ioki-be no Muraji Takehiko 廬城部連武彦
 Ippen 一遍
Isekō 伊勢講
 Ise Saigū ruins 伊勢齋宮跡
 Isoasobi 磯遊 (beach play)
Isshin-kaimon 一心戒文
itan-ha 異端派 (the heterodox group)
 Itogun 伊都郡
 Ito-koku 伊都国
 Itsukushima Island 厳島
iwakura 磐座 (sacred stones)
 Iwashimizu (hachimangū) 石清水八幡宮
 IyoShinnō 伊予親王 (Imperial Prince Iyo)
Iyo Shinnō no Hen 伊予親王の変
 Izawanomiya 伊雑宮
jigokue 地獄絵
jike kenmon 寺家権門 (the religious establishments)
jimon 寺門
jimon-ha 地門派
 Jingo Kokuso Shingonji 神護国祚真言寺
jinnin/ji'nin 神人(or *yoryūdo* 寄人)
 Jinmu 神武
Jinmyōchō 神名帳
 Jinzen 尋禪
jiriki-mon 自力門
jisai 持衰('mourning keeper')
jisha seiryoku 寺社勢力
 JitōTennō 持統天皇 (Empress Jitō)
jometsu 除滅(elimination)
jōbutsu 成仏 (to attain buddhahood)
jōchūsuru-Kami 常駐する神
jōdo goso 浄土五祖 (the five Pure Land masters)
Jōdomon 浄土門 ('Pure Land gate')
Jōdoron 浄土論 (Discourse on the Pure Land)

Jōdoron-chū 淨土論註 (*Annotation of the Discourse of the Pure Land*)
 Jōdoshin sect 淨土真宗
jōgakuji 定額寺 (a temple sanctioned and supported by the government)
jogō 助業 (the ‘auxiliary acts’)
Jōhei Nankaizoku 承平南海賊
Jōhei Tengyō no Ran 承平天慶の乱 (the revolts of the Jōhei and Tengyō eras)
jōkoku 上国 (the second-class provinces under the *ritsuryō* system. See *taikoku*)
jōrisei 条里制
josai 除災 (eliminating calamity)
 Jōyo 定養 (a Shingon priest at Mt Kōya – also known as Kishin shōnin 祈親上人)
jōza 上座
jukai 受戒
 Junna Tennō 淳和天皇 (786-840)
junmitsu 純密 (Pure Esoteric Buddhism)
jūshi 十師
jūshichijō no kenpō 十七條憲法
jū-zenji 十禪師 (Ten Meditation Masters)
 Jibushō 治部省
jiden 寺田
jifū 寺封 (donation of sustenance households to temples)
Jingikan 神祇官 (Bureau of Worship)
jingi sūhai 神祇崇拜 (the worship of *Kami*)
jingū-ji 神宮寺 (shrine-temple)
jinushi no Kami 地主神 (guardian deity)
 Ji sect 時宗
jishu 寺主
 Jivaca 耆婆
jōgyō 淨業 (‘pure practice’)
jufu mokkan 呪符木簡 (wooden tablets)
Jūjūshinron 十住心論
juso 呪詛
jusōkan 樹相觀 (‘Tree-phase contemplation’)
juyaku senyoku-hō 呪藥洗浴法 (offering prayers after performing purification rite)
jōgyō 淨業 (‘pure practice’)
jōzenkan 定善觀
Jūjūbibasharon 十住毘婆沙論 (*Illumination of the Ten Levels Treatise*)
kabu 歌舞 (dancing and singing)
kaeriten 返点
kagami 蘿摩
kagami 蛇身
kagami saishi 鏡祭祀
kagashi/anzanshi 案山子
 Kage Hime 影媛

kagemi 影見 (to look at shadow)
 Kagutsuchi 軻遇突智神/迦具土神 (the fire deity)
 Kaika 開化
kaihō-gyō 回峰行 (Ascetic mountain training of making ones rounds through the terrain of Mt. Hiei for a thousand day in order to take in the power of nature, to heighten spiritual power, and to assimilate with nature. This training was pioneered by a Tendai priest, Sōō 相應 in early Heian period)
kairitsu-ha 戒律派 (the fraction of restoration of the so-called Kamakura Old Buddhism which attached greater importance to new precepts)
kaji-kitō 加持祈禱 (esoteric incantations and prayers)
kaji kōzui no gi 加持香水の儀
 Kakuban 覺鑿
Kanmuryōju-kyōso 觀無量壽經疏 (*Commentary on the Meditation Sutra*)
kebutsu 化仏 (transformed bodhisattvas)
kuai-li luan-shen 怪力乱神 *kairō* 回廊
Kamekan 甕棺
Kami 神
 Kamijima Island 神島 (Gods Island)
Kami no mono akatsu hito 神班物者
 Kamo (Jinja) 賀茂神社
 Kamo no Chōmei 鴨長明
Kamo-setsuwa 賀茂說話
 Kamu-asaji 神淺茅原
 Kanasaka shrine 金鑽神社
kanbyō zenji 看病禪師 (healing-contemplation masters)
kan'i jūnikai 冠位十二階
kanji 官寺
Kanjō Dōjō 灌頂道場 (or Tōdaiji Shingo-in 東大寺真言院 - a Shingon altar)
kanjō sanmaya 灌頂三昧耶 (esoteric service of *kanjō* for conferring the precepts and mystic teachings of Esoteric Buddhism)
Kangakue 勸学会 (nenbutsu society)
kangō shūraku 環濠集落 (moated settlements)
Kanpeisha 官弊社 (Imperial shrines that received offerings from the *Jingi-kan*)
kanro 甘露 (the sweetness of the nectar which wards off age and death)
kansatsushi 監察使 ('investigator')
 Kansan 桓算
Kanzakigun-jō 神崎郡条
kanzatsu 觀察 (meditating on Amida and his land)
Kanzeon-kyō 觀世音經
 Kanzeon Monastery 觀世音寺
 Kashō 嘉祥
 K'ang Sēng-hui 康僧
kanjin 勸進 (fundraising)
 Kanmu 桓武天皇 Emperor Kanmu

kannushi 神主
kansha 官社
kansō 官僧
karamon 唐門 (Chinese Gate at Nikkō Tōshōgū)
karashishi 唐獅子 (an artistic portrait of a lion which became popular from the Momoyama period)
kariroku 訶梨勒 (a dried astringent fruit from East India)
kashiage 借上 (usury organisation)
kasō 家僧 (house priests)
 Kasuga Taisha 春日大社
katari-be 語部
 Katsuragi Ōchō 葛城王朝
 Katsuyama Kofun 勝山古墳
kawara 河原 (dry riverbeds)
 Kawara Monastery 川原寺
kawaramono 河原者 ('dry riverbed people')
 Kaya 加耶 (Mimana 任那)
 Kazuragi Temple 葛木寺
kechidan 結壇 (the setting of an altar)
kegare 穢 (ritual impurity or defilement)
Kegon-kyō 華嚴經
keidai toshi 境内都市 ('temple cities' developed during the medieval period, different from temple town 門前町 of early modern)
keiraku 經絡 (tracts)
keishiki shugi 形式主義 (attach importance to an empty formalism)
ke-yi Bukkyō 格義仏教 (Buddhism of *ke-yi* - 'matching the meaning')
 Keitai 繼体
kekai 結界
kenmitsu Buddhism 顯密仏教 (the orthodox groups)
kenmitsu-taisei 顯密体制 (exoteric-esoteric system)
kenmon-taisei 權門体制
 Kenzō 顯宗
kenzoku-shin 眷族神 (demi-god)
keshin 化身 (a transformed body)
Keyhole Tomb System 前方後円墳体制
 Khitan 契丹
 Khitan Liao dynasty 東丹国
kiboku 龜卜
kihei 龜幣
kikōhō 氣功法
kiku dōtaku 聞く銅鐸
kin 斤
 Kinai 畿内

King Kaero 蓋鹵王
 King Muryon 武寧王
 King Song 聖王
 Kinmei 欽明
kizoku bukkyō 貴族仏教 (‘aristocratic Buddhism’)
kizokuka 貴族化 (aristocratisation)
 Kizugawa 木津川 (the River Kizu)
kō 講 (confraternities)
Kōbō Daishi nyūjō shinkō 弘法大師留身入定説
 Kōdachi 広達
kodai shuchōsei shakai 古代首長制社会 (the ancient chiefdoms-society)
kōdō 講堂(a lecture hall)
 Kōen 広円
 Kōfukuji 興福寺
Kofun cold stage 古墳寒冷期
 Kōgōin 皇后院(‘House of Empress’)
 Kogryō 高句麗
 Koguryō King Sosurim 小獸林王
 Kogugwōn 故国原王
 Ko Hung 葛洪
kōji/kōshi 講師 (a priestly official sent by the central government to a provincial office
 to superintend monks and nuns to give lectures on Buddhist texts)
Kojidan 古事談
 Kōken 孝謙天皇 (Empress Kōken)
kokka 国華 (the flowers of the country)
kōkoku-shikan 皇国史観
Kokon Chomonjū 古今著聞集
kokoro no mihashira 心の御柱 (pillar of the spirit)
 Kōkō Tennō 光孝天皇 Emperor Kōkō
kokubunji 国分寺
 kokubunjisei 国分寺制
kokubunmiji 国分尼寺
kokufū bunka 国風文化 (a ‘truly’ nativised culture - *ōchō bunka* 王朝文化 or Fujiwara
 culture 藤原文化)
kokugaryō 国衙領 (publicly administered land)
kokuheisha 国弊社 (provincial shrines that received offerings from provincial
 governors)
Kokushi Sōsho 国史叢書
komochi-magatama 子持勾玉
Kōmyō Henjō 光明遍照 (Boundless Light)
 Kōmyō Kōgō 光明皇后 (Queen Kōmyō)
 Kondayama Kofun 營田山古墳 (Ōjin Tennōryō 応神天皇陵)
kondō 金堂

Kōnin Tennō 光仁天皇 Emperor Kōnin
Konjaku Monogatari 今昔物語
Konkōmyō-kyō 金光明經
 Koreharu no Azamaro 伊治磐麻呂
 Kōrokan 鴻臚館 (the international reception hall)
 Koryō 高麗
koshōgatsu 小正月
kotaiishi 弧帶石
kotodama 言靈
 Kōtoku Tennō 孝德天皇
kotsuboku 骨卜 (the pyro-scapulimancy)
Kōya hijiri 高野聖
 Kōyakei Shingonshū 高野系真言宗
kōyaku 香藥 (spices and drugs)
 Kōya Myōjin 高野明神
kozō 小僧 (novice)
kuai-li luan-shen 怪力乱神
 Kuang-wuti 光武帝
kuan-ting 灌頂
Kudara Hongi 百濟本記
 Kudara no Zenji 百濟禪師
 Kuebiko 久延毘古/久氏比古
kuei 鬼 (the concept of demons)
kuei-shên-tao, kishindō 鬼神道
kuei-shên, kishin/onigami 鬼神
kuei-tao, kidō 鬼道
kuge kenmon 公家権門 ('Imperial family and aristocracy')
kuhon no gyōgō 九品行業 (the nine grades' trainings to Amida's Pure land)
 Kujō Kanezane 九条兼実
 Kūkai 空海
Kumanokō 熊野講
 Kumārajīva (Chiu-mo-lo-shên) 鳩魔羅什
kunado 久那斗 protects against *kegare* and calamity
kundoku-kanbun 訓讀漢文 (the *kana* syllabaries used for Chinese texts as in the form
 of 'translated Chinese')
kung 宮
 Kung-sun house 光孫氏
 Kuni 恭仁
kuni no miyatsuko-sei 国造制 (royal vassals)
kunitsu-Kami 国津神/国神 (national deities)
 Kuraokami 關淤加美
Kurōdodokoro 藏人所 (Chamberlain's Office)
 Kurozuka Kofun 黒塚古墳

kusanagi no tsurugi 草薙劍
Kusharon 俱舍論
 Kushinada-hime 奇妙稻田姬 - 'Queen of Mysterious Rice-fields' or 櫛名田姬 -
 'Queen of Good Rice-fields named Kushi'
Kusuko no Hen 藥子の變
Kūya 空也
kyōdan shūkyō 教団宗教 (the Confraternal Religious System)
kyokusui no en 曲水宴
Kyomik 謙益
kyoraisuru-kami 去來する神
kyōshitō 薑豉湯 (a compound of ginger)
kyōzō enyū 鏡造円融
kyōzutsu 經筒 (cylindrical sutra)
Liang shu 梁書
 Liao-tung 遼東郡
 Ling-ti 靈帝
 Ling-yen monastery 靈巖寺
 Liu Yüan 劉淵
 Lo-lang 洛陽郡
lü-ling 律令
maga-tama 勾玉 (curved-jewel)
Mahāvairocana 大日如來 (great illumination of the sun)
Makashikan 摩訶止觀 ('Discourse on Mahayana Meditation and Contemplation').
 Makimuku Ishizuka Kofun 纏向石塚古墳
 Makimuku keyhole-shaped tombs 纏向古墳群
 Mangan Zenji 滿願禪師
Manyōshū 万葉集
mappō 末法 (age of the latter days of the law)
mappō-ji 末法時 ('last Dharma' or 'decadent Dharma')
marahito-gami 客神 (guest deity)
maripkan 麻立干 (ridge or elevation)
 Matsuno'o Taisha 松尾大社
mei-kai 迷界 (the realm of sentient beings)
 Meizan 明算
michiae no matsuri 道饗祭
mihaka 御墓 (honourable tomb)
mikkyō shuhō 密教修法 (the esoteric rituals)
 Minamoto no Tamenori 源為憲
 Minamoto no Yoritomo 源賴朝
 Mimaki-iri Hiko no Mikoto 御間城入彦尊
 Mimana 任那
mine 御哭 (crying aloud)
miru dōtaku 見る銅鐸

mi-sama 巳様
Misasagi 山陵 (tomb of emperors or of empresses)
misogi 身殺ぎ (shaving off slivers of a body)
misusugi 水濯ぎ (to cleanse in water or to bathe in water)
mitegura 幣帛
 Mitsudera site 三ツ寺遺跡
miwa 三勾 (three rolls of yarn)
miwa 水曲/水輪 (curved water/water-ring)
 Miwa Shinto 三輪神道
miyake-sei 屯倉制 (royal estate)
mogari 殯
mon 門
Monjōshū 聞書集
 Monju bosatsu 文殊菩薩
 Monmu Tennō 文武天皇
mono 鬼神 (fierce spirit)
mono no aware 物の哀れ (ephemeral nature of all living things)
 Mono-no-be 鬼神部
 Mononobe no Arakai 物部麁鹿
 Mononobe no Ujinaga 物部氏永
 Mononobe site 物部遺跡 (Shiga Pref.)
mononoke 物怪 (the vengeful spirits of the dead)
monzeki 門跡 (temples inhabited by an ordained ex-emperor, prince or princess)
 Moto-Ise 元伊勢
 Mt. Ehiko 英彦山
 Mt. Futakami 二上山
 Mt. Horisaka 堀坂山
 Mt. Kinpu 禁峯山
 Mt. Kinpu 金峯山 (in Yoshino)
 Mt. Lu 廬山
 Mt. Mitsubo 三坪山
 Mt. Miwa 三輪山
 Mt. Ōmine 大峰山
 Mt. Paektu 白頭山
 Mt. Sumeru 須弥山
 Mt. Takachiho 高千穂峰
 Mt. Yoki 与喜山
 Mukuhara 向原
mudra (*inzō* 印相/*ingei* 印契, making a manual sign)
mumyō 無明 ('darkness of mind')
 Munakata Shrine 宗像神社
 Murakami 村上天皇 (Emperor Murakami)
 Muryōjiin 無量寿院

musa sanjin 無作三身
Mutsuwaki 陸奥話記
Myōe 明惠
Myōjin 明神 (Great deities)
Myōjin-sha 明神社 (Great-Deity shrines)
Na 奴国 (*Nu*)
Nagaochi 長尾市
nai-dōjō 内道場 (the Buddhist hall of the Imperial palace)
Naizenshi 内膳司 (an office building to provide for the emperor's table)
Nakakaidō site 中海道遺跡
Nakako 班子 (Empress Nakako)
Nandaimon 南大門 (the South Gate)
nangyōdo 難行道 ('way of difficult practice')
Nan-in 南院 ('Southern Temple')
Naniwa 難波内親王 (Imperial Princess Naniwa)
Nan Liang dynasty 南梁
Nanto Rokushū 南都六宗 (the Six Buddhist sects)
Narutaki site 鳴滝遺跡
Nenbundo sei 年分度制
nenbundo sha 年分度者 (ordain two annual quota priests)
nenbutsu 念仏
nenbutsu kessha 念仏結社
nenbutsu-odori 念仏踊
nenbutsu-shōmyō (*nenbutu-shōmyō-ha* 念仏称名派)
nenbutsu zanmai 念仏三昧 (*nembutsu* meditational exercises)
Nichiren 日蓮
Nichiren sect 日蓮宗
Niinamesai 新嘗祭 (Annual Rite of Thanksgiving)
Nihon Ōjō Gokurakuki 日本往生極樂記 (*Records of Pure Land Rebirth in Japan*)
Nihon Kōsō-den Yōmonshō 日本高僧伝要文抄
Nihon Ryōiki 日本靈異記
nijūnisha 二十二社 (the Twenty-Two Shrines)
nikimitama 和魂
Ninchū 仁忠
Ning-po 寧波
Ninigi no Mikoto 瓊瓊杵尊
Ninken 仁賢
Ninmyō 仁明天皇 (Emperor Ninmyō)
Nimmōe 仁王会 (the annual service to secure good harvest and to ward off epidemics)
Nimmō-kyō 仁王經
Nintoku 仁德
Nintoku Ōchō 仁德王朝
ninuriya 丹塗矢

Niu-shi/Nyū-shi 丹生氏
 Niutsu Hime no Kami 丹生都比売命神 (or Niu Myōjin 丹生明神)
 Niutsu Hime Shrine 丹生都比売神社 (Myōjin Taisha, one of the central Nyū shrines,
 also known as Amano Taisha 天野大社)
noh plays 能
nōkotsu reijōsetsu 納骨靈場説 (the idea of the holy charnel place)
norito 祝詞 (addresses to the gods)
moi-yama 森山
noyaki 野焼き
 Nunaki-iri-bime no Mikoto 湊名城入姫命
nyoihōshu 如意宝珠 (a wish-fulfilling gem)
 Nyū/Niu 丹生 (cinnabar-production)
ōbō 王法 (imperial law)
ōchō bungaku 王朝文学
ōchō kokka 王朝国家
 Ōda 大田
odamasa 苧環
odori-nenbutsu 踊念佛
 Ofuwo 大魚
 Ōgetsu-hime's 大氣津比売/大宜津比売
Ōharae 大祓 (Exorcism and Purification Ritual)
 Ōharano 大原野
 Ohatsuse no Wakasagi no Mikoto 小泊瀬稚鷦鷯尊 (later known as Sovereign
 Buretsu)
 Ōjin 応神
Ōjōyōshū 往生要集 (the *Essentials of Pure Land Rebirth*)
 Okurai no Fukuru 憶礼福留
 Ōmiwa no Ōkami 意富美和大神 (the deity of Ōmiwa)
 Ōmiwa Shrine 大神神社
 Ōnamochi 大己貴命 (i.e., Ōkuninushi 大国主神)
onbashira 御柱
onigami/kijin 鬼神 (the ox-headed vengeful deities who take the life of people)
 Onjō Monastery 園城寺
on-kai-nyū 陰界入 (*on-nyū-kai* 陰入界)
onke 怨家 (vengeful acts)
onmyōdō 陰陽道 (the Way of Yin-Yang)
onmyōji 陰陽師 (the court's master of Yin and Yang)
 Ōnojō 大野城
 Ōno Yasumaro 太安麻呂
onryō 怨靈 (vengeful spirits of the dead)
onri edo 厭離穢土 (the desire to leave the defiled world)
onsha 恩赦 (*onsha* 恩赦)
 ōmi 大臣

Osabe 他戸王 (Prince Osabe)
osamurutukasa 理官
oshi system 御師制度
 Ō Shrine 多神社 [Ō-Ni'imasumi-Shirituhiko Jinja/ 多坐弥志理都比古神社]
 Ō-tata-neko 大田田根子/意富多々泥古
 Otokuni Temple 乙訓寺
 Ōtsu Ōji 大津皇子 (Imperial Prince Ōtsu)
Owari no Kuni Fudoki Itsubun 尾張国風土記逸文
 Ōyamatsumi no Kami 大山津見神 (or popularly known as 'Mountain King' *Sammō* 山王)
 Paekche 百濟
Pao-pu-tzu 抱朴子
Pao-p'u-tzu Nei-p'ien 抱朴子內篇
P'eng-lai 蓬萊
P'eng-lai-shan 蓬萊山
 Po-hai 渤海
preta 餓鬼 (hungry ghosts)
 Puyō 夫餘
P'yongyang 平壤
raihai 礼拝 (worshiping Amida)
 Reizei 冷泉天皇 (Emperor Reizei)
renge daiza 蓮華台座 (a lotus seat)
rengzō sekai 蓮華藏世界 (the lotus-repository world)
 Richū 履中
rinji-hōhei 臨時奉幣 (the special offerings)
rinji-sai 臨時祭 (special festivals)
 Rinzai Sect 臨濟宗
risshi 律師
rittaishi 立太子 (the Crown Prince)
ritsuryō 律令
ritsuryō kokka 律令国家
ritsuryō temmō-sei kokka 律令天皇制国家
rōkaku 樓閣
Rokudai 六大(the six great elements)
rokudōe 六道繪
rokujintsū 六神通
rōzan-gyō 籠山行 (ascetic training of confining oneself in a mountain or a chapel for extensive periods of time)
rugakushō 留学生
Ruijū Kokushi 類聚国史
Ruiju Sandaikyaku 類聚三代格
Rushana-butsumi 盧遮那仏 (Buddha Vairocana) Nara no Daibutsu 奈良大仏
 ryō 兩

Ryōbu Shinto 兩部神道
 Ryō no gige 令義解
 sachi 幸 ('hunting implements' 'luck')
 Saga 嵯峨天皇 (Emperor Saga)
 Sagami-no-kuni-no-uta 相模国歌
 Saichō 最澄
 Saidaiji 西大寺
 Saigyō 西行
 Saihō Shinanshō 西方指南抄
 Saimei 齊明天皇
 saiō system 齋王制
 saitō 西塔 (the West Pagoda)
 sakuhō system 冊封体制
 Samguk sagi 三国史記
 san 讚
 sanbō 三宝
 san-chiao (sanshō) 三焦
 Sandai Jitsuroku 三代實錄
 sandai mushukō 三大無数劫 (three infinite expanse of time)
 sandan kuyō 贊嘆供養 (praising and making offerings to Amida)
 sangai 三界 (three realms of the world of transmigration)
 sangaku tosō 山岳抖擻 (mountain asceticism)
 sange-no-hō 懺悔法 (rites of repentance)
 sangō 三綱
 San'indō 山陰道
 sanjō-setsu 三乘說 (the doctrine of the 'Three Vehicles')
 sanji-setsu 三時說 (a tripartite schema)
 Sanjō Tennō 三条天皇 (Emperor Sanjō)
 sankakubuchi-shinjūkyō 三角縁神獸鏡
 San-kuo chih Wei chih, the Eastern Barbarians section 三国志魏書東夷伝
 Sanmitsu-kaji 三密加持 (three ritual mysteries of the body, speech, and mind)
 sanmon 山門
 sanmon-ha 山門派
 San'nō Ichijitsu Shinto 山王一実神道
 sansai 三才 ('Trinity of Heaven, earth and man')
 Sanshu no jingi 三種神器 (The Three Sacred Treasures)
 Sanzen-daisen-sekai 三千大千世界 (the Triple-Thousand Great One-Thousand Worlds)
 satsugyū-saishin 殺牛祭神 (a cult of sacrificing oxen or horses)
 Sawara 早良親王 (Crown Prince Sawara)
 Segyō 施暎
 seikō 生口 (slaves)
 Seiryōden 清涼殿 (living quarters of Emperor)
 sesō 世相

senjaku no ronri 選択の論理 (the doctrine of exclusion)
senju nenbutsu 専修念仏(exclusive practice of the *nenbutsu* 念仏)
Senryakushu 浅略趣 (shallow and abridged sermons)
senso 踐祚
Setsudoshi 節度使 (the reconnaissance officers)
shaden 社殿
Shaka sanzō 釈迦三尊 (statues of a Shakyamuni Buddha flanked by two bodhisattvas)
shakōki dogū 遮光器土偶 (the grotesque anthropomorphic clay figurines)
Shaku-makaenron 釈摩訶衍論 (Commentary on the *Daijōkishin-ron*)
Shaku Nihongi 釈日本紀
shakyō 写經 (sutra-copying)
shang 商
 Shan-tao 善導
shan-ti 上帝
 Shun-ti 舜帝
Shasekishū 沙石集
shen-hsien 神仙 (Taoist hermit-wizard, the cult of physical immortality)
 Shen-jui 神叡
shên-tao, shinto 神道
 Shibi no Omi 志毘臣
Shichidaiji Nenpyō 七大寺年表 (*Chronological Table of the Seven Great Temples of Nara*)
sichihōshoku 七宝色 (the seven treasure-colors)
shidai 四大 (earth, water, fire, and wind elements)
shide 垂
 shidera 私寺
shido seido 試度制度 (an examination system)
shidosō 私度僧 (private monks)
shieiden ryōshu 私營田領主 (private estate proprietors)
shigaku 始覺 (incipient enlightenment)
 Shihi no Fukubu 四比福夫
 Shih huang-ti 始皇帝 (the first emperor of China)
Shih-liu kuo 十六国
shikan 止觀(contemplation)
 Shikike 式家
shikidai 識大 (subjective consciousness)
Shikinaisha 式内社 (official shrines)
shimenawa 注連繩
shinden-style residence 寢殿造
shinkō 新皇 ('New Emperor'),
shingon 真言(mantras)
Shingon darani 真言陀羅尼
Shingon goma no hai 真言護摩の灰 (the mixture of *go-yaku* and ash)

Shingon-in 真言院
 Shingon-ritsu sect 真言律宗
 Shingyō 信行
shinjin ridatsu 神身離脱 (departure from the body of Kami)
shinjū 神獸
shinka 神火 ('mysterious fires')
shinkan 神宮
shinkai 神階
shinkō 新皇
shinkō ryōhō 信仰療法 (faith healing)
shin no mihashira 心御柱 (sacred pillars)
shin'nyo 真如 (True Thusness)
shinobigoto 誄 (condolence)
shinrabanshō 森羅万象 (all things in the universe)
 Shinran 親鸞
 Shinrenbō 心蓮房
 Shinsen'en 神泉苑 ('Garden of the Divine Well')
shinsen shisō 神仙思想
shinso 心礎
shintai 神体
 Shin-Yakushiji 新薬師寺 (Yakushiji having 'Miraculous Effects')
 Shinzen 真然
 Shiohigari 潮干狩(shell-gathering picnic)
shiohiki no tama 塩乾珠 (the tide-ebbing jewel)
shiomichi no tama 塩盈珠 (the tide-raising jewel)
 Shioyaki 塩焼王 (Prince Shioyaki)
shi-shōken 四正見
Shishu-mandara 四種曼荼羅 (four kinds of mandalas),
shishu-zanmai 四種三昧 ('the four kinds of spiritual contemplation')
Shitennō 四天王
 Shitennōji 四天王寺
 Shitori Shrine 倭文神社
shizen-chiyuryoku 自然治癒力
shōbō-ji 正法時 ('true Dharma')
shōdōmon 聖道門 ('holy way gate')
shōen 莊園 (private estates)
 Shōgu 勝悟
shōjōgō 正定業 (the 'foremost act')
Shoku Nihongi 続日本紀
shoki gunshū-fun 初期群集墳
shōmetu 消滅 (extinction)
Shōmonki, 将門記
 Shōmu 聖武天皇

shōmyō 称名 (reciting the nembutsu)
shōmyō nenbutsu 称名念仏
Shōrai Mokuroku 請来目錄 (the *Catalogue of Newly Imported Sutras and Other Items*)
shoryō 所領 (acquisition of landed estates)
Shōryōshū 性靈集
shōsen-sekai 小千世界 (the Small One-Thousand World)
shōsha 小社 (minor shrine)
 Shōsoin repository 正倉院宝物倉
shō-sōzu 少僧都 (Minor Secondary Prelate)
 Shōtoku 称徳天皇 (Empress Shōtoku)
 Shōtoku Taishi 聖徳太子 (Prince Shotoku)
shōukyō no hō 請雨經法 (inviting rain)
shōzei 正税 (tax rice levied by the government and stored in provincial granaries under the *ritsuryō* system)
shuchōrei 首長靈
shūdan-bo 集團墓 (group burial pits)
 Shuen 修円
Shugendō 修験道
shugenja 修験者
shūgō 周濠
 Shu-Han 蜀漢
shūha-shikan 宗派史観 (scholarly view of sectarian and doctrinal purists in religious studies)
shuhō 修法
shujō-kai 衆生界 (the realm of sentient beings)
 Shun-hsia 順曉和上
 Sim-pyong 審祥
so 租
sōbō 僧坊 (the resident priest's quarters)
sodo 蘇塗
 Soga no Iname 蘇我稻目
 Soga no Umako 蘇我馬子
sōgō 僧綱
Sōgō Bunin 僧綱補任
sōhei 僧兵 (warrior-monks)
sōjō 僧正
sōkansō 総観相 ('Whole-phase contemplation')
sokusai goma-hō 息災護摩法 (the esoteric ritual for stopping illness)
sokusai zōyaku-hō 息災增益法 (esoteric rituals aimed to stop calamities and to increase benefits)
Sokushin Jōbutsu-gi 即身成仏義
sōni-ryō 僧尼令
sōron 総論

sōryō-sei 惣領制
sōsha 総社 (Combined Shrines)
Soshitsujikara-kyō 蘇悉地羯羅經
 Sōtō sect 曹洞宗
sōzu 僧都
 Ssu-ma Yen 司馬炎
Ssu-shen 四神
Subaru 昴
 Subhākarasimha 善無畏
 Sudō 崇道天皇 (a posthumous title of Crown Prince Sawara)
 Sue 陶邑/陶
 Sue ware 須惠器
 Suetsu mimi 陶津耳
 Suiko 推古
suisōkan 水相觀 ('Water-phase contemplation')
 Sujaku Gate 朱雀門
 Sujin 崇神
 Sujin Ōchō 崇神王朝
sūku 藁狗 (straw dogs)
 Sukuna Bikona no Kami 少名毘古那神
sukuyō hihō 宿曜秘法 (the *Planet Sutra*)
 Sung 宋
 Suō 周防
 Susanō 素戔嗚尊/須佐之男命
 Sushun 崇峻
 Suwa Shrine 諏訪大社
 symbolic correlations of the universe 五行色体表
 Tachibana no Hayanari 橘逸勢
 Tachibana no Moroe 橘諸兄
 Tachibana no Naramaro 橘奈良麻呂の乱
Tadodaijin 多度大神
Tado Jingū-ji Garan Engi narabini Shizaichō 多度神宮寺伽藍縁起并資材帳
 Taihō Ritsuryō 大宝律令 Taihō Code
 Taika no Kaishin 大化改新 Taika Reform
taikoku 大国 (the highest-ranked provinces) Every province was ranked in the order of its population and size under the *ritsuryō* system; *taikoku*, *jōkoku* 上国, *chūgoku* 中国, and *gekoku* 下国. The *Engishiki* nominates 16 provinces as the highest (e.g. Kawachi, Ise, and Ōmi), another 16 provinces as the second (e.g. Suruga, Izu, and Echizen), 11 provinces as the third (e.g. Noto, Sado, and Satsuma), and 9 provinces as the lowest (e.g. Izumi, Izu, Awaji, Iki, and Tsushima).
t'ai chi 太極 ('the great polarity')
 Taichō 泰澄
t'ai-i 太一 ('the centre of the myriad things')

t'aii-hsing 太一星
 T'ai-pai 泰伯 in the *Analects of Confucius* and 太伯 in the *Shih-chi* (卷三一吳太伯世家),
taimitsu 台密 (the esoteric teachings of the Tendai sect)
T'ai-p'ing tao 太平經
 Taira no Kiyomori 平清盛
 Taira no Masakado 平將門
 Taira no Shigehira 平重衡
Taisha 大社 (major shrine)
Taishaku-mō 帝釈網 (net of Indra's treasure-gems)
 Taishakuten 帝釈天 (one of the Four Heavenly Kings)
Taiyō no michi 太陽の道
 Taizōkai mandala 胎倉界曼荼羅
 Takamimusubi no Kami 高御産巢日神/高皇産靈神
 Takaosanji 高雄山寺 (now known as Jingoji 神護寺)
takoku no Kami 他国神 (foreign deity)
tama 玉 (orbs)
tama 靈/魂
tama 珠
tamafuri タマフリ
Tamasuri-be 玉作部 (the jewel-workers' Be)
 Tamayori Hime 玉依姫/玉依毘売 (princess in which the deity dwells)
tanbi shugi 耽美主義 (indulged in aestheticism)
Tango Fudoki 丹後風土記
 T'an-lua 曇鸞
 Tan Yang-ni 段揚爾
tao 道
 Tao-an 道安
 Tao-ch'o 道綽
 Tao-hsün 道璿
 Tao-luan 曇鸞
 Tashiraka 手白香
 Tasuna of the Kuratsukuri-be 鞍部多須奈
tatari 祟り (curses)
 Tatsuta 竜田
 Takamagahara 高天原
 Takaoka Shinnō 高丘親王 (Crown Prince Takaoka)
 Takemikazuchi 建御雷
 Takuhata no Himemiko 栲幡皇女
tanden 丹田 (the point of the abdomen located about 2 inches below the umbilicus.)
 Tan Yang-ni 段揚爾
tariki-mon 他力門
teate-ryōhō 手当療法 (hand healing)
Teibi no eki 丁未の役

Teishin Kōki 貞信公記
tenchi 天地 (the universe)
Tendai zasu 天台座主 (the head priest of the Enryakuji)
tengu 天狗
tenjikuyō 天竺様(the 'Indian style').
 TenmuTennō 天武天皇 (Emperor Tenmu)
tenson kōrin 天孫降臨
tenteki shūgi 天的宗儀
teruteru bōzu 照照坊主
t'ien 天
t'ien-huang ta-ti 天皇大帝
t'ien-kuan-shu 天官書
T'ien-shih Tao 太平道
tō 塔
 Tōdaiji Kondō 東大寺金堂 Tōdai Monastery
Tōdaiji Yōroku 東大寺要錄 (*Records of Tōdaiji Monastery*)
Tōdaiji Zōritsu Kuyōki 東大寺造立供養記
 Tōitsu Ōchō 統一王朝
tōka 踏歌 ('stamping songs')
 Tōki village 陶器庄
Tokoyonokuni 常世の国 (an oceanic paradise of immortality and fertility)
tokudo 得度 (officially sanctioned initiation)
Tokudo system 得度制度
 Tokuitsu 徳一
Tokushu-kidai 特殊器台
 Tongmyōng Wang 東明王
tonseisō 遁世僧 (those who withdrew from the officially recognised temples)
toraikei Yayoi 渡来系弥生人
 Toriba site 鳥羽遺跡
torii 鳥居
toshigami 歳神
Toshigoi no matsuri 祈年祭 (Imperial offerings at an annual festival for good crops)
 Tosotsu-ten 兜率天
 Tōtōmi 遠江
Toyo Ashihara no Mizuho no Kuni 豊葦原瑞穂国 ('the Land of the Plentiful Reed
 Plains and of the Fresh Rice-ears')
 Toyotama Hiko 海神豊玉彦/綿津見神 (a father of Toyotama and Tamayori)
 Toyotama Hime 豊玉姫/豊玉毘売
Tsubogata-doki 壺型土器
tsubokan 壺棺 (smaller burial jars)
 Tsude Hiroshi 都出比呂志
tsuina 都維那
 Tsukushi 筑紫

Tsukuyomi 月讀尊/月讀命/月夜見命
tsumi 罪 (sin)
ubasoku 優婆塞
 Uda 宇陀
Udaijin 右大臣(Minister of Right)
 Uda no agata 菟田県
ujidera 氏寺
uji-kabane seido. 氏姓制度 *uji-kabane system*
 Umi-sachi-hiko 海幸彦
urabe 卜部
 Usa Hachimangū 宇佐八幡宮
utagaki 歌垣
 Vajrabodhi 金剛智
 Vasubandhu 世親
Wa 倭 (*Wo*)
 Wake no Kiyomaro 和氣清麻呂
wang 王
wani 鱈
 Watari Island 渡島
watari tsutsumi 渡り堤
 Watatsu no Kami no Miya 海神宮 (the Palace of the Sea-deity)
 Wei 魏
Wei chih 魏書 (the *Annals of the state of Wei*)
 Weiman/Wiman Choson 衛滿朝鮮
Wei shih which deal with the Han people 魏書東夷伝韓条
Wei shih dealing with the Wo people 魏書東夷伝倭条
 Woke no Mikoto 袁祁命 (later known as Sovereign Kenzō)
 Wu 吳
wu 巫 (A group of shamanlike practitioners)
 Wu-t'ai Mountains 五大山
 Wu-ti 武帝
Wu-tou-mi Tao 五斗米道
wuxing 五行 (five elements)
yake 宅
yakudoshi 厄年
yakusa no kabane 八色の姓
Yakushi-keka 薬師悔過 (Rites of Repentance in worship of the Buddha Yakushi-nyorai)
 Yamabe 山部親王 (Imperial Prince Yamabe)
 Yama-sachi-hiko 山幸彦
Yamashiro Fudoki 山城風土記, 賀茂説話
yamata no orochi 八岐大蛇 (the eight-tailed dragon)
 Yamatai 邪馬臺/耶馬臺
yamato-e 大和絵

Yamato Ōken 倭/大和王権
 Yamato Suigin Kōzan 大和水銀鉾山
 Yamato Tenjinyama Kofun 大和天神山古墳
 yang energy 陽氣
 yaoyorozu no kami 八百万神
 yarimizu 遣水
 yasakami no magatama 八坂瓊曲玉
 yashiro 社
 yasobiraka 八十平瓮
 yata no kagami 八咫鏡
 Yatsushiro 八代
 Yazuka Kofun 矢塚古墳
 Yakushi Monastery (ji) 藥師寺 (also known as Moto-Yakushiji 元藥師寺)
 Yakushi no Hō 藥師法 (the rite of Yakushi)
 Yakushi Nyorai-zō 藥師如来像 (Medicine-Master Buddha)
 yō 庸
 yōbyō 羊病
 yokoana-shiki sekishitsu 横穴式石室
 yomi 黄泉('Hades')
 Yoshishige no Yasutane 慶滋保胤
 Yōwa 養和
 yu 羽
 yue 湯人
 Yüeh 越
 yugyōsō 遊行僧 (itinerant monk)
 Yu-wang 幽王
 yūwa no ronri 宥和の論理/融和の論理(the principle of appeasement or harmony)
 za 座 (enshrined deities)
 zaichō kanjin 在庁官人 (local resident officials)
 Zen 禪
 Zen-ha 禪派 (the fraction of Zen meditation)
 zeni noyama 錢病
 zenpō-kōenfun 前方後円墳 (the keyhole-shaped tomb mounds)
 Zenshi Kōtatsu 禪師広達 (Meditation Master Kōtatsu)
 zetsu 舌
 zōbō-ji 像法時 ('semblance Dharma')
 zōbutsu 造仏 (making Buddha images)
 Zoku-Kojidan 続古事談
 zōmitsu 雜密
 zōyō 雜徭
 zuien shinmyō 隨緣真如 ('absolute conforms to causation')
 zuryō 受領 (resident provincial administrator/deputy governors)
 zushi 豆豉 (fermented soybeans)