

## MIYAKO SHAMANS IN CROSS-CULTURAL CONTEXT

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Native terms used to refer to shamans suggest how the people of Miyako differentiate shamans from ordinary people. The following are words commonly used to refer to shamans: *kaminohito*<sup>(1)</sup> which, literally translated, means a person of the gods, *kamkakarya* refers to one who is possessed by gods, *kam nu m'ma* means mother in the world of gods, *sas* is a general term used for those who have religious roles (a *sas* of a village sanctuary may or may not have the ability to communicate with gods), and *munus*, a person who has wide knowledge, implies one who possesses the general characteristics of shamans.

Many shamans are excellent storytellers, folk singers and dancers, and they know a great deal about the world of gods and ancestors. Knowledge of the supernatural and the ability to have direct contact with the supernatural are requirements for individuals to be considered shamans in Miyako. However, these factors cannot distinguish shamans from shaman-apprentices. Apprentices experience more frequent and intense possession by gods and ancestors than do shamans.<sup>(2)</sup> They can also talk about gods and ancestors. My shaman-informants told me that apprentices will be shamans once they open the path to the gods (*mts aki*).

I asked my major shaman-informant, NT, and another shaman, HS, how they determine whether or not apprentices have opened the path to the gods. HS explained to me that one night her god told her that a client would come from Gusukube to ask her for divination early the following day. Indeed, a client from that village did come to HS. In NT's case, US, who is his sister and also his mother-shaman, judged from one of his dreams that he had opened the path to the gods.<sup>(3)</sup>

People sometimes mention shamans whose paths to the gods are closed. Several years ago, a famous shaman became very upset. She complained to everybody that she could not regularly catch "electric waves" from the gods. One of my client-informants referred to a middle-aged male shaman. "He was a wonderful shaman several years ago. But these days, he avoids clients. My wife met him on the street. He did not even see her. I wonder whether or not his path has been closed."

In other words, individuals in Miyako must satisfy two requirements — ability to make regular contact with gods and ancestors and constant engagement in rituals and divination for clients — to be identified as a shaman by fellow islanders.

### Divine Power

One of the defining characteristics of shamans is their ability to receive messages from the supernatural and utilize divine powers for divination and rituals. In the case of NT and US, visions, voices, dreams, and physical reactions are the main means by which messages are communicated. Shamans interpret messages, using their capacity of *n'mizan* (dream interpretation), *munezan* (intellectual ability), *kanzan* (intuition), *fudezan* (religious writing), and *jitsuzan* (practices). Some divine messages are tasks assigned to shamans by gods. Others can be related to the problems of their clients. Sometimes the messages are omens of significant incidents.

US explained that when she had a vision, she felt as if she had seen it with a third eye located in her forehead. For instance, she received several new books from the messenger of the fire god of Miyako island. The messenger told her to take some of them to the shaman born in the year of the dragon (i.e., her brother, NT). US feels that her god acknowledged her accomplishments by giving her new books. In another case, US saw her altar covered with a white veil. In a few days, she was informed of her great uncle's death.

When he heard his client's complaint that she had otitis media or inflammation of the eardrums for the first time in her life, NT saw puddles. He asked the client whether or not she had purchased fields

which used to be pools. The client affirmed his inquiry. In another case, NT was conducting a ritual at his client's house. He saw a middle-aged man who was slender with a broad forehead. He asked the client if she was familiar with the man. She answered that the man must be her son's father.

I asked NT about circumstances in which he heard the voices of gods. He explained:

I sense my body swelling. I feel dizzy, as if I were enveloped in mist. My god – he seems to be standing above the right hemisphere of my head – begins to speak to me slowly as such:

Root out evil. Combat the nightmare. Combat the disease. The day will come soon when evil must be eradicated. The day will come soon when rain destroys the island, waves destroy the island, and earthquakes destroy the island. People will realize the terror of calamities. Those who search for the truth will pray to gods. Those who do not must leave the island. ... (Interview, April 7, 1983)<sup>(4)</sup>

When US was suffering from *kamdaari* (initiation symptoms), she felt as if everything – dolls, cups, clocks, wires, etc. – had been speaking to her ceaselessly.

Both NT and US dream frequently. When they interpret a dream, they seem to be very concerned with fixed themes in the dream, as well as with the circumstances under which the individual dreamed it. When she conceived her first child, US had a dream in which she saw many eggs on the stone wall around her family grave. She threw rotten ones and picked up only fresh ones. After that, her morning sickness began. US told me that such vegetables and fruits as cucumbers and bananas mean that a pregnant woman will bear a boy. Something round – apples, oranges, cabbages, eggs, and so on – tells that she will deliver a girl.

NT had the following dream:

I walked toward the hillside. I came to a narrow lane. On its two sides was a row of trees. I saw a sanctuary on the left side. I took the lane. I found a microphone on the road. It was an elastic one

and also a telescope. I picked it up. . . . (Journal, November, 1979)

He interpreted the dream to mean that the sanctuary in his dream was that of Nobarudake. The microphone or telescope signified the axis of the island. In another incident, NT was supposed to go to a client's house to perform a purification ritual. He planned to begin the ritual around five o'clock in the evening. I arrived at his house at 5:30. He was sleeping, and I woke him up. He became angry with me and said that he had been dreaming and that, in the dream, his god had indicated the manner in which he should conduct the purification ritual. I interrupted his communication with his god! His dream was as follows:

NT cleaned the ditch beside the client's house and threw filthy stuff into the ditch. (Interview, October 15, 1983)

Physical reactions are also important means through which communication takes place. One day I was having dinner with NT at a restaurant. He said suddenly that his god had come to him; his heart and pulse started to beat rapidly. After having meditated for a while, he told me that he should go home. "I think I must remove the candles from the altar. One client gave me those candles, but I suspect she was a worshiper of Mirokugan."<sup>(5)</sup>

Such physical symptoms as headache, nausea, and stomachache occur whenever shamans come directly or indirectly in touch with taboo states (e.g., death, birth). I passed by a house in which a death had taken place recently. I did not feel like going home to purify myself simply because I had walked by a polluted house, so I went on to NT's house. As soon as I stepped in, he told me that I must have passed by the contaminated house. He said he felt sick.

Many shamans also "carry a burden" of their clients. For example, a young male client called on the shaman YS. No sooner had he entered YS' house than YS was attacked by an intense pain in her leg. She told the client that his uncle, born in the year of the dog, had suffered from pains in his leg. His dead uncle indeed was afflicted with intense pains

in his leg. In another example, NT had had a strong pain in his eyes and head before he started a ritual at his client's house. He tried to begin the ritual, but intense pain prevented him from doing anything. He asked me to place offerings in the alcove. He described his physical symptoms to the client and asked her whether or not she and/or members of her family had pain in their eyes. The client replied that her husband and her son-in-law had quarreled about the scroll hanging in the alcove. Her son-in-law struck her husband; her husband was injured in his eyes.

Body shaking indicates that shamans are possessed by gods. NT's father told me that NT, in the sitting posture, leaped up high from the *tatami* floor during the period of his *kamdaari*. However, shamans can control body shaking. For instance, NT's head starts to swing when he sings revelations. The movement of his head becomes very rapid, and his legs begin to shake. But his body will not jump as it did in his *kamdaari* days. When the *yukumigam* (divine lion) possesses NT, his head moves violently. He stands up, dances, and blows his breath.

US and NT are endowed with the power of "multiplication," "addition," "subtraction," and "division." NT's strong point is that of division, and US's is that of multiplication. The power of addition is used for *musubi* (i.e., to establish a path through which divine energy is transmitted from one sanctuary to another or from a sanctuary to one's *koro*, vessel in which incense sticks are burned). The power of subtraction is applied to *parai* (i.e., to throw out the polluted). The power of division makes it possible for shamans to look through people and the world. The power of multiplication is required to magnify shaman's powers. A shaman visits many sanctuaries. By ritual manipulations, a path is built between each sanctuary and the shaman's *koro*, and divine energy is then transferred through the path (i.e., *musubi*). By the power of multiplication, interactions produce greater powers than the sum of the power of each sanctuary. When shamans conduct divination, some shamans limit the time span to the near future and the present. One shaman, YS, has a good reputation in divining what will happen in the near future and what has happened in the recent past. NT and US extend the time span to the distant past, to the *nakanuyū* (1600-1200 A.D.) and

the *usachiyu* (before 1200 A.D.). For example, NT is able to retrace a client's ancestry for more than fifteen generations. In practice, he usually goes back four generations.

Miyako shamans' trances, as described above, include neither magical flight (journey of the shaman's soul to the other world) nor mastery of the spirit, both of which some scholars consider to be essential, defining elements.<sup>(6)</sup> Eliade, for example, argues that the shaman can be differentiated from other magicians or medicine men by his specialization in magical flight, "during which his soul is believed to leave his body and ascend to the sky or descend to the underworld" (1964: 5). Firth (1959: 141) and Shirokogoroff (1935: 271) maintain that mastery over the spirit is essential for one to be considered a shaman. However, a cross-cultural examination of reports of shamans' trances indicates that neither of the above is a defining characteristic. Peters and Price-Williams examined shamanism in forty-two societies and concluded that a universal defining factor is the shaman's control of his or her trance rather than magical flight or mastery over the spirit (1980: 398-399). Therefore, Miyako shamans' trances are not idiosyncratic, but conform to those of shamans in other societies.

### The Shaman's Role in Society

Shamans utilize their power in a positive way to identify causes of trouble (e.g., sickness, divorce, barrenness, business failure), to suggest remedies, to remove the causes of troubles, and to ask gods for their support.

The most highlighted role of shamans in other cultures is that of healers (e.g., Eliade 1964; Landy 1974; Murphy 1964; Peters 1981; Sharon 1976; Torrey 1972). At present, the people of Miyako (including shamans) resort to modern medicine for most physical diseases. Clients who suffer themselves or whose family members suffer from illnesses which cannot be cured or identified by means of modern medicine do sometimes ask for divine aid, but most clients consult shamans principally for domestic problems. Thus, healing is not highlighted in Miyako, although it is still sometimes a function of the Miyako shamans.

However, their role corresponds most closely to that of family therapists in the United States and *mudang* in Korea (see Harvey 1976).

Park (1938:10) considers that witchcraft is one of the significant functions of shamanism. Harner (1973: 19-23) presents the case of Jivaro shamans who specialize in bewitching. The Miyako people sometimes mention shamans who put curses (*noroi*) on people for their own or their clients' sake. One shaman told me that she saw three trees in her dream: twelve incense sticks and matches were tied on four corners of the trunk of each tree. She suspected that a woman, being assisted by her mother shaman, had put a curse on her. The same shaman became seriously ill several years ago. She saw the door of the family tomb open and her soul almost going into the tomb. She attributed her sickness to a curse put on her by another shaman. Another shaman, all of a sudden, lost much weight. She saw in a dream that her rival shaman engaged in a cursing ritual at the pier. The following day, she went to the pier and found evidence of the ritual. However, US said that the gods will not listen to curses of people and that it is the devil who makes the curses effective.<sup>(7)</sup> Once a victim becomes aware of a curse put on him or her, the victim can return the curse to the aggressor.

I have observed neither actual occurrences of curse rituals nor traces of the rituals. In general, Miyako shamans do not project negative images of witches or black magicians, even if they are considered to be "social failures." Their primary function is to "save" people and to make known the teachings of gods. People of Miyako are not preoccupied with curses either.

Many scholars distinguish shamans from priests (e.g., Lowie 1965; Park 1938; Peters 1981). According to Peters (1981), one of the factors which differentiate shamans from priests is that the shamans are part-time practitioners, while the priests are full-time specialists. Okinawan people generally make a distinction between the two: the priestesses operate on community level, while the shamans engage in domestic rituals (Lebra 1964; K. Sasaki 1983; Sakurai 1973, 1979).<sup>(8)</sup> However, this is not the case in Miyako (Kamata 1965, 1971; Omoto 1983; S. Sasaki 1983). Many shamans are full-time practitioners. NT told me that

his god did not allow him to engage in other occupations.

I owned a bar for a few years. But my god did not allow me to manage the bar, so I handed it over to my brother. I ran a store of ritual paraphernalia, and I failed. I needed a few more credits to obtain my B.A. I went back to school and became sick. (Interview, 1983)

One Shaman, YS, is also the head of a nursery school, which is owned by her husband. She told me that she wanted to concentrate on the religious world. To my knowledge, TH is the only shaman who is satisfied with running a store and at the same time working as a part-time shaman. From an economic viewpoint, fees clients pay for divination and rituals make it possible for shamans to engage full-time in religious activities. Shamans charge U.S.\$9.00 per a thirty-minute divination and \$45-130 for one ritual performance. Being a shaman appears to be monetarily rewarding. However, this is not always true. Being a shaman in Miyako is almost comparable to being a therapist in the United States. Shamans must see clients in distress, patiently listen to their complaints, and suggest some realistic ways to solve their problems, in addition to conducting divination and rituals. Their work is very demanding.

Some shamans have religious positions at community sanctuaries. The shaman HS is one of the *yuzas* priestesses of the Atsumama *Utaki*.<sup>(9)</sup> Holding an office at the sanctuary may be considered to be prestigious. However, there is no substantial reward for community service.

### Emic Typology

Students of Miyako shamanism (Omoto 1983; S. Sasaki 1983) agree that there are two fundamental types of Miyako shamans -- those who have their basis in the *ting nu zaa* or *ui nu zaa* (universe) and those who handle *gusoo* or *stazaa* (the world of the dead). The former conduct divination and rituals related to gods and/or distant ancestors. Death is strictly a taboo state for the first type. For instance, YS and HS perform rituals directed to gods. Although they can discover ancestor-caused troubles through divination, they never carry out rituals for ancestors.



Both shamans state that they conduct rituals which are pure, clean, and auspicious for families in which a death has not occurred for three years. NT and US can conduct rituals for both gods and ancestors, provided that a few years have passed since the ancestors' death. However, US thinks that she can use her full power only in rituals dedicated to the gods. Recently (January, 1984), NT reluctantly performed a ritual for a family in which a member had died only a year ago. He told me, "I am exhausted, and I feel dizzy. My energy was 'drained' by that ritual."

Shamans who conduct death-related rituals are called *gusoozas* or *sungam kakarya*. They have the ability to be possessed by the recently deceased. The shamans who have their basis in the universe tend to look down on *gusoozas*, saying that they engage in dirty and polluted rituals. *Gusoozas*, on the other hand, consider that ordinary shamans do not have the power to deal with the recently deceased. *Gusoozas* also claim that they can conduct the rituals, in addition to their own, handled by ordinary shamans.

Shamans in Miyako can also be classified in another way. Some shamans specialize in either divination or rituals; others engage in both divination and rituals. Those who open the road to the gods appear to begin with divination. Beginner-shamans assist other shamans in rituals and learn ritual procedures; they also conduct divination for clients. For instance, NT mainly performed divination for the first six years. His active engagement in rituals began only recently. Shamans who perform only rituals are regarded as second-rate or less powerful. Clients sometimes categorize shamans according to their special talents: one shaman shows his or her strong point in finding the lost, another is good at predicting the results of examinations, a third is an expert in foretelling future events, and so on.

### Age and Sex Distribution

I do not have detailed statistical data, but my impression is that most shamans in Miyako, as in Okinawa, are women (cf. Lebra 1964, 1966; Sakurai 1973, 1979; K. Sasaki 1983). In Miyako, these women tend to

be past middle-age, although their age seems to be more widely distributed in Okinawa (see Lebra 1964: 94). I know of only four active male shamans. These male shamans project feminine images — gentle, soft, and seemingly affectionate. One of them is a famous dancer of Japanese classic dance. When he is dancing a female role, he looks more feminine than many women. He is single and tends to associate with males. I do not have any evidence, however, to conclude that he is either a homosexual or a transvestite. One of his friends asked him a straight question, "Are you gay?" The shaman denied it emphatically. NT attributed his own feminine characteristics to two factors: First, he is sometimes possessed by goddesses (although I did not have a chance to observe this). Second, he had two elder sisters who were his playmates during his childhood. NT's sister told me that NT liked to dress like a girl and to play with girls' toys. However, he has a heterosexual identity and has fathered three children. As was true for Lebra (1966), I did not find any evidence that male shamans tend to be either transvestites or homosexuals.<sup>60</sup>

### **Blood Relationships among/between Shamans**

The frequency with which shamans in Miyako are blood relatives is notable.<sup>61</sup> NT and US are brother and sister; their father's grandfather and uncle were also shamans. I am also familiar with three cases of sister shamans, two cases of mother-daughter shamans, one of mother-son shamans, and one of uncle, aunt and nephew shamans. Miyako beliefs explain this frequent occurrence of blood relationships among the shamans as follows. An ancestor shaman did not achieve what he or she was supposed to do during his or her lifetime. The ancestor asked the gods that his or her soul be transmigrated into one of his or her descendants; The descendant is then born as the ancestor's *mmarikaadzu* to accomplish the ancestor's wish. NT states that he was born as his great-grandfather's *mmarikaadzu*. His great-grandfather, Toganishu, was very preoccupied with religious activities directed at the gods of the universe and sea. He left the task of appeasing the souls of divine heroes and sending them to the universe to NT. This frequent occurrence of

blood relationships among shamans is known in other societies, such as the Tamang (Peters 1981), the Buryats (Krader 1967), and the Gold (Sternberg 1924).

### Intelligence Level and Formal Education

In many societies, shamans are characterized as intelligent or verbally articulate (e.g., Howells 1948; Murphy 1964; Sharon 1976). Miyako, as well as Okinawan, shamans also show this trait (Lebra 1966; K. Sasaki 1978). Shamans must be able to explain to clients the causes of their troubles, the remedies, necessary rituals, and their effects. For example, a shaman will tell a client whose son has a marital problem that the client's son's great-grandfather had an unhappy married life. After he died, the great-grandfather regretted his miserable family life and has been asking his descendants to pacify his soul. His request is manifested in his great-grandson's marital problem. If the client appeases his soul, the ancestor will become happy and protect his descendants' home. The shaman's explanation must be very convincing so that client believes in this "invisible" cause and thinks that it is worthwhile to spend \$200 to have one ritual performed.

However, the Miyako shamans (cf. Lebra 1966; K. Sasaki 1978) are less formally educated than their lay fellows. According to the statistics of Hirara city (*Hirara-shi Tokeisho* 1982), more than 80% of the people above the age of fifty completed an elementary school education, while most of the middle-aged and old shamans received only two or three years of formal education. They were almost illiterate. One shaman, TH, in her fifties, did not go to school because of her sickness and her family's poverty. Another shaman, HS, sixty-five years old, went to school for only a few years; the rest of the time, she worked as a maid servant for wealthy families. The dancer-shaman, mentioned above, started to serve his master-dancer in Tokyo after he had finished elementary school. US graduated from senior high school, and NT completed sixteen years of schooling. Another shaman, YS, has a certificate to teach in kindergarten. Among my research population, these three are the only shamans who completed formal schooling above the oblig-

atory level (nine years).

### Personality

I saw great variety in the character of Miyako shamans. NT is sociable, likeable, and outgoing. He enjoys making friends with many people and being treated as the leader of a group. He was elected president of the student association when he was a junior, and he held the office of president of the youth association for four years (1978-1982). He is also a versatile man. He is a good cook, painter, folk dancer, storyteller, and toastmaster. He is charismatic and charming. These characteristics make him a good "folk therapist." He tends to smile at everybody. In August, 1983, for example, his friend asked NT to take care of a college student from Tokyo who was interested in shamanism and wanted to stay at NT's house for one month. NT's friend said that the student would offer domestic service in exchange for room and board. NT had been having problems as a result of his wife's return to her family and did not want any to learn of his personal problems, but he could not refuse his friend's request. So NT agreed to accommodate the student.

NT's sister, US, is introverted, steady, conscientious, and other-worldly. All day long, she stays in her house, receives her clients, and talks about the world of the gods. She prefers meditating on the gods, interpreting her religious experiences, and constructing a religious ideology to going out and interacting with people. She is a wonderful religious ideologist.

The shaman HS is kind and non-avaricious. She is willing to conduct rituals for a small amount of money. When I was conducting my field research, she cared about my well-being, supported my research by taking me to meet other shamans, and sometimes brought me meals.<sup>02</sup> She is open-minded about other religious sects and believes that the gods of various religions are essentially identical. She pays respect to both the Christian God and Buddhist deities. However, she complains a great deal. When she has worries, she immediately consults her friends. For instance, she dreamed that the *ibi* (the residence of the god) of Amaimine was removed, after she had officiated at a community ritual at the

Atsumama *Utaki*. She felt very restless. Instead of contemplating the meanings of the dream at home, she visited shamans for divination and disclosed her worries to her friends. The shaman YS is kind, sensitive, and nervous. She is well-dressed and polite, but cautious. The shaman TH is rational and well-adjusted to society. She thinks that striking a balance between her religious activities and her domestic duties is very important. She said:

If my husband becomes fickle, I would blame myself for having neglected him and having been concerned too much with my gods. My family is important. I clean the house, do laundry, and cook dinner for my children. Otherwise they will resent their mother's being a shaman. I also think that shamans should be willing to be utilized not only by gods, but also by clients. Without clients, what can shamans do? (Interview, April 6, 1983)

Her rationality is extended to a taboo state of death.

Some shamans worry too much about death. They become sick because they come near the house at which a death has occurred. But I think this is a matter of how you look at things. Those shamans would feel sick even when they glance at a person dressed in black. How can they save "dying" patients? (Interview, February 24, 1983)

### Family Life

Okinawan shamans tend to have unhappy or trouble-ridden domestic lives (Lebra 1964, 1966; Sakurai 1973). This is also generally true of the Miyako shamans.

Many shamans were born and brought up in poor families (cf. K. Sasaki 1978). The parents of NT and US were poor; so were the parents of the shaman TH. The shaman HS told me:

My father was a heavy drinker and did not work. My mother used to gather potatoes and vegetables from other people's fields and feed them to me. I worked very hard as a maid servant. I could not take a day off, even on New Year's Day. (Interview, January

12, 1983)

After shamans start their homes, they tend to have domestic problems. US had an unhappy married life and has been divorced twice. At present, she lives with her boyfriend. NT, although he is only thirty-one years old, has been divorced twice. In both marriages, he had constant disputes with his wife. His marital problems interfered with his religious activities and drove him into depressive states. The shaman TH has been divorced once, and one famous shaman's husband committed suicide.

One of my client-informants speculates that shamans' relationships with their gods may be the reason for their marital troubles.

Those shamans have sexual intercourse with their gods. If they are males, beautiful young females appear in their dreams. Young good-looking males will date female shamans. One male shaman in his sixties told me that he had sexual intercourse with a young woman: beside the woman, his wife was sleeping without knowing anything. (Interview, January 25, 1983)

The shaman HS said to me:

My god visited me at night and slept with me. He scolded me because I smelled of the urine of my children. (Interview, January 12, 1983)

NT told me that his sexual acts with various goddesses are much more satisfying than actual ones. His sexual dreams are omens that he will "beget" a *ffa* (child). When a client (a potential shaman or a lay client) wants to receive his or her *mau* (a group of deities who protect an individual), he or she asks a shaman to perform rituals. The shaman becomes the client's *m'ma* (mother) and the client, the shaman's *ffa*.

Some shamans definitely refute the client's hypothesis that shamans' sexual dreams cause their marital conflicts. The shaman YS states:

Shamans engage in sexual acts with deities. But this occurs in

dreams or in the world of gods. Some shamans cannot differentiate the dream world from the real one. They indulge in sex in their dreams. Their human weakness makes them look for substitutes for their partners in the dream. (Interview, August 4, 1983)

The shaman TH thinks that sexual dreams are sent by the gods to test shaman's integrity.

My god has tested me many times. My god appeared with another man and told me to sleep with the man. Otherwise, my god said, he would not teach me anything. Sometimes he threatened my life, holding a knife in his hand. "Sleep with this man; otherwise I will tear you to pieces." I always told him that I had husband. My god told me not to worry because he would hide me behind him. Sometimes the man disrobed me, and his penis touched my thigh. I refused him, crying. Then the man turned to another god. The gods said to me that I endured their test. They used to stamp the word "passed" on my hands. If shamans cannot bear this test, they will begin affairs with other men. Eventually their homelife will deteriorate. (Interview, March 5, 1983)

Sternberg reports that Siberian shamans also have sexual intercourse with their spirits (1924). One of his Yakut informants attributes Yakut shamans' family problems to their sexual relationships with spirit-lovers.

If an *abassy* [spirit] girl excites a married man, he becomes impotent, whenever he wants to love his wife. Husband and wife then grow indifferent to one another, jealousy is born, and quarrels and fights begin. ... (1924: 82)

However, I do not think shamans' sexual relationships with their gods is the sole cause of their domestic problems. When I was conducting my field research, I became aware of NT's marital problems which resulted in his second divorce. His wife left him in January and divorced him in September. Many factors — personalities of the couple, financial status, NT's relationship with his sister, his idiosyncrasy of being a shaman, and so on — worked together to create tension between NT

and his wife, which finally led to the dissolution of their marriage.

People raise their eyebrows when they see shamans repeatedly married and divorced. Many people think that most shamans live a life below their ethical standards. These people say, "I cannot bear the thought of their loose private lives." However, only a small portion of society actually reproaches shamans. Most people simply express indifference to shamans. But many shamans sense that society treats them as deviants. The shaman HS always complained to me that her clients, once their troubles are over, look down on her as if she were a beggar. US regrets that the people of Miyako are not capable of understanding her religious world and accomplishments. She also resents the fact that many *ffa*-clients slighted her in spite of the fact that she dedicated herself to have them initiated into shamanhood. The shaman TH regards her fellow shamans who are involved in domestic troubles as social failures. TH thinks that she is different from "that kind of" shaman.

Living with NT's non-shaman sister, I also watched sibling rivalry among NT, US and that sister. The rivalry seems to be intensified by the fact that NT and US are shamans and the sister is not. The discussion of conflict between shamans, their families, and society is beyond the scope of this paper and will be treated in another occasion.

### Acknowledgements

I conducted fourteen months of fieldwork (November, 1982-November, 1983 and July-August, 1984) on Miyako Island, Okinawa for my dissertation research. I used participant observation and interview techniques to gather data on shamans' life histories and cosmologies, and shaman-client interactions. In addition, I used journals which my main shaman-informant, NT, kept during and after his initiation days (1974-1979) and which contains detailed descriptions of daily events, religious experiences, revelations, and so on. I am grateful to all of my informants who kindly allowed me to take part in their lives. I also thanks Dr.



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### Notes

- (1) Indigenous terms are transliterated as I heard them. Concerning some native terms, my major informants (NT and US) used Japanized forms (e.g. *kaminohito*), and I followed my informants' usages.
- (2) Those who are interested in apprentices' intense religious experiences should consult Ohashi (1980), Sakurai (1973), K. Sasaki (1978, 1983), and Takiguchi (1984).
- (3) The term "mother-shaman" refers to a teacher shaman vis-à-vis an apprentice. According to Lebra (1966) and Sakurai (1973), the teacher-apprentice relationship does not exist in Okinawa. On Miyako Island, it does exist although shamans tend to emphasize that they are self-initiated (cf. Lebra 1966; Ohashi 1980).
- (4) The quotations cited here are excerpts either from interviews or NT's journal. The word interview in parenthesis refers to those from interviews, and the word Journal to those from NT's journal which he kept during and after his initiation (1974-1979). Translation of excerpts from Japanese to English is mine.
- (5) Mirokugan is a shamanistic cult, which was reported in Miyata (1971a, 1971b). The cult members are preoccupied with regaining the lost paradise, the primordial world in which naked humans lived happily.
- (6) Some shamans experience visiting the other world. For instance, US once ascended to the universe. A shaman presented in K. Sasaki (1978) was taken to heaven, where she saw a tall mountain. However, this kind of visit does not occur regularly among the Miyako shamans.
- (7) Here the word devil refers to a supernatural being which represents evil things.
- (8) Tsuha maintains that on the level of ideology, a clear demarcation between the two exists in Okinawa. But in many areas of the Ryukyus, the shaman cannot in reality be easily distinguished from the priestess (1983).
- (9) Sakurai notes that in the Sakishima area (i.e., the Miyako and the Yaeyama), shamans also function as low-ranking priestesses (1979). The *yuzas* is lower than the *tskasa* in rank, but cannot be con-

- sidered to be low in rank.
- (10) Lebra states that the characteristic commonly discerned among the male shamans is a physical disability (1966). However, this trait is not found in my research population.
- (11) Ohashi (1980) and K. Sasaki (1983) also report the frequent occurrence of blood relationships between/among shamans, the former in the northern part of Okinawa and the latter in Okinawa and Miyako.
- (12) HS 'treated me as if I were her daughter.

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## 比較文化的文脈における宮古シャーマン

### 〈要 約〉

滝 口 直 子

本論文の目的は、他文化のシャーマンと比較のうえ宮古シャーマンを特徴づけることである。宮古島においてはシャーマンを定義する際以下の基準が用いられる。(1)神や先祖と随意に連絡がとれること。(2)クライアントがいて儀式や占いに従事していること。これらの基準は他文化で用いられているものと対応する。最初の定義要因はシャーマンの霊的能力に関連する。彼らが神や先祖からメッセージを受けるとき、主な媒介手段となるのは「視覚」「聴覚」「夢」及び「身体反応」である。そしてメッセージは「んみ算」(夢判断)、「胸算」(知的能力)、「感算」(直感)、「筆算」(神の言葉を書く能力)及び「実算」(儀式や占いに携わる実際的能力)により解釈される。更にシャーマンは「たす」「ひく」「かける」「わる」という能力も授けられている。「たす」「かける」とは文字通り力をたし合わせ倍増させる能力のことである。「ひく」能力は「祓い」に使われる。「わる」とは世の中や人の心を見通す能力である。

第二の定義要因はシャーマンの社会的役割に関連する。他文化においては治療的側面が重視される。しかし宮古シャーマンは治療者としてのみ活動しているわけではない。日常生活における様々なトラブル(離婚、子供の非行、事業の失敗等)を扱うという点において彼らはアメリカにおける family therapist や韓国における ムーダンに類似している。また他文化にみられるシャーマンとプリーストの区別はここでは明確ではない。

宮古シャーマンは2つの基本型に分けられる。神や遠い先祖を対象と

した儀式を行うタイプと死亡してまもない先祖を対象とした儀式を行うタイプとにである。他の顕著な特徴は女性が多いこと、血縁関係が頻繁にみられること、学歴は低いが知的水準は平均より高く、特に表現力に優れていること、パーソナリティは様々であるが、家庭的には一般に不幸であること等である。これらの特性の幾つかは他文化のシャーマンにも認められる。