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# The Fertility Festival at Tagata Shinto Shrine, Aichi Prefecture, Japan.

By KIICHI NUMAZAWA.

## *Introduction.*

The fertility festival of Tagata Shrine, Aichi Prefecture in central Japan, has received much popular attention as one of the most curious festivals in the country. The shrine is located near a U.S. air base at Komaki, and as many foreigners have attended the ceremonies as spectators, the festival has become all the more colourful and attracted all the more public notice. The festival has gained in fame and gaiety, and its grotesque features have been increasingly emphasized. We may see here, from the view point of history of religion, an example of changing aspects of religious practice at Shinto shrine.

The main purpose of this present paper is to identify the original form of the fertility festival of Tagata Shrine, which is often classified as a phallus cult, to clarify the fundamental concepts underlying its ceremonies, and to determine the relationships between its magical and its religious elements. I want to express my sincere thanks to Mr. M. INA, Miss M. ITO, Mr. K. NIWA, Miss C. SANO and Miss C. PURSER, whose cooperation has been indispensable in this study.

## *1. Foundation of the Shrine.*

The Tagata Jinja ("Shinto Sanctuary at Tagata") (Fig. 1) is situated in a grove, popularly known as "Agata-no-mori" ("Agata Wood"), at Moritsubo, Kuboishiki, in the Village of Ajioka, Higashi-Kasugai Province, Aichi Prefecture. The shrine is listed as one in the Province of Niwa in the ancient records of *Engishiki Shimmeichō*. The location is actually on the border between the two provinces, Higashi-Kasugai and Niwa (1), and the village belonged administratively to Niwa Province until the end of the Ashikaga period (1335-1575) (2). There are some hills in the vicinity, but the general terrain is fertile and extensively cultivated, and the sanctuary itself is surrounded by rice-fields (Fig. 2).

No written sources give the exact date of foundation of the shrine at this particular place. But an old sword excavated in 1935 at an older site of the shrine, and some potsherds discovered later and identified as parts of jars about 1,500 years old, probably used by the Imbé for brewing *saké* wine to be offered to the gods (3), attest to the age of this sanctuary.

In addition to the *Engishiki* mentioned above, other books of much later date mention this shrine. The *Owari Hongokuchō*, for example, refers to it as "Tagata Jinja, Junior Third Rank, of Niwa Gun (Province) . . ." (4) while the *Owari Kokunai Shimmeichō*, *Sankō Hongoku Shimmeichō Shūsetsu*, *Owari-no-kuni Shikisha-kō*, *Owari Chimei-kō*, and the *Shimmeichō Kōshō* have it as "Tagata Tenjin, Junior Third Rank, Order A, . . ." (5-9). The *Kokuchō Jinja-kō* gives the following information: "Tagata Tenjin, Junior Third Rank, situated at Kuboishiki Village, Ajioka, Kasugai Gun. The name Tagata comes from Ta-agata, and was originally a place-name. The Tagata Jinja of the *Shimmei-shiki*, the Tagata Tenjin, Junior Grade of the Third Court Rank, Order A, mentioned in the



Fig. 1. *Torii* ("gate") at the entrance of Tagata Shinto Sanctuary.

Joji edition of the *Kokuchō*, and the Tagata Tenjin, Senior Grade of the Fourth Court Rank, Order B, listed in the Genki edition of the same, all refer to this same divinity. The place-name has since passed into disuse, but we can still find a farmstead named "Arata" to the south of Kuboishiki Village. About 360 yards to the east of this place is a shrine called Agata-no-mori, which must certainly be dedicated to the same deity, for we find the following passage in the *Tenson Hongi* concerning Takeinadane-no-mikoto: 'This lordly prince espoused Tamahimé, daughter of Ō-arata, who became the ancestor of Agata-no-kimi, and had two sons and four daughters.' The Shrine of Ō-agata, listed in the *Shimmei-shiki*, was most probably built in honour of this divine personage . . ." (10).

Tradition holds that this is the very spot where Ō-arata-no-mikoto, the ancestor of Niwa Agata-no-kimi, maintained his abode, and his daughter, Tamahimé-no-mikoto, continued to reside in the same locality even after the death of her husband, brought up her still young children left behind him, and devoted the rest of her life to the task of developing the country (11).

## 2. *Deities Enshrined and Divine Emblems.*

Neither the name of the divinity enshrined here nor the divine emblem is documented except in later literature. The *Meisaichō* states that the name of the deity to whom this shrine is dedicated is unknown (12). Most books refer to the shrine as dedicated to "Tagata Tenjin," as we have seen above. The term "tenjin" must have been introduced as a result of the later fusion of the indigenous cult with Buddhism. The *Owari-no-kuni Shikizachi Mokuroku* mentions Tamahimé-no-mikoto, Mitoshi-no-mikoto, and Amé-no-hohi-no-mikoto as

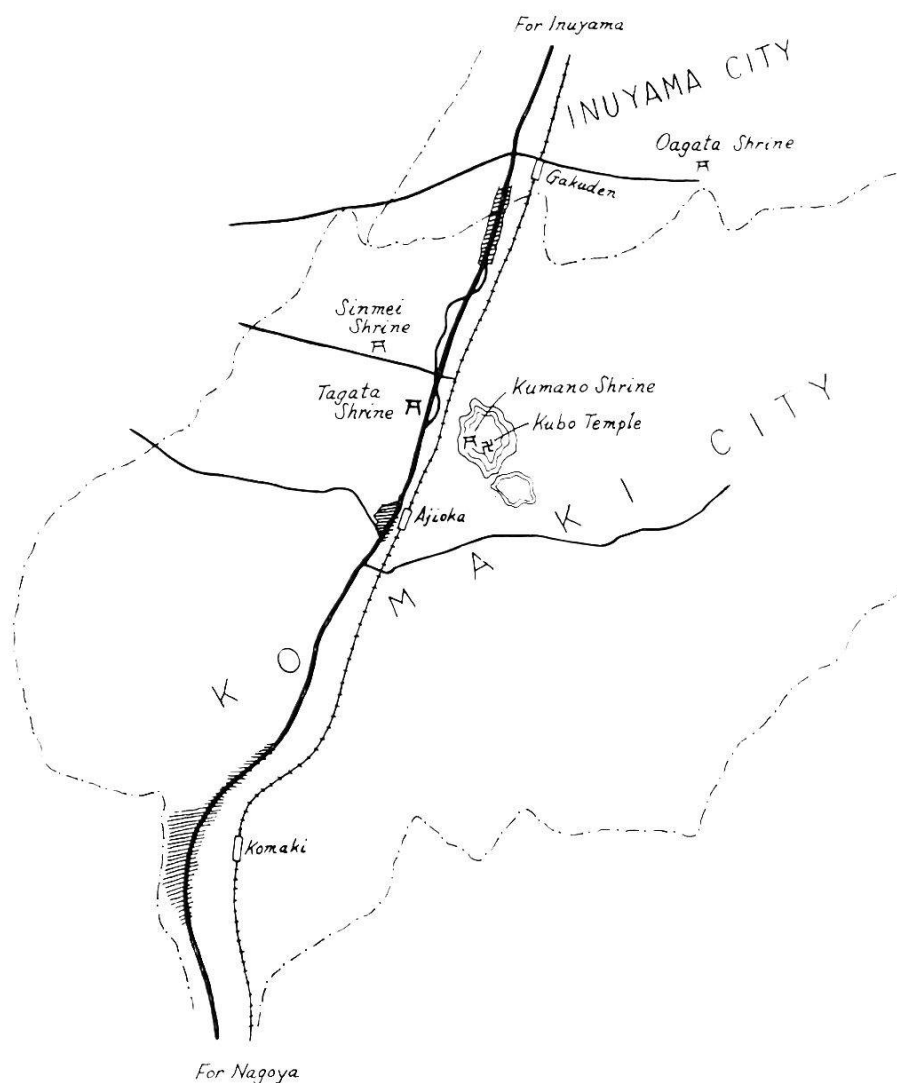


Fig. 2. Schematic Map of Komaki City.

the deities enshrined here (13). The other literature, however, specifies either Mitoshi-no-kami or Tamahimé-no-mikoto as the divinity in whose honour the shrine was founded.

a) *Mitoshi-no-kami*.

Only a few documents mention Tagata Shrine as the abode of Mitoshi-no-kami or Otoshi-no-kami. The *Owari Chimei-kō* (14) and the *Jingi Shiryo* (15) are among the few. Other documents merely infer that Mitoshi-no-kami is the deity of this shrine, attributing the origin of the curious custom of using a phallic symbol as a sacred object in some of the Agata Shrine festival ceremonies to similar practices in the worship of Mitoshi-no-kami as recorded in the *Kogoshui* (C.A.D. 808). Their argument runs as follows: As this curious custom is associated with Mitoshi-no-kami in the *Kogoshui*, so the shrine whose ceremonies include this or similar practice must enshrine the same god. For example, the *Tokusen Shimmeichō*: "This shrine holds its New Year Festival on the 15th day of the first month. On that occasion, a phallic symbol is carried about and finally installed in the innermost sanctuary of the shrine building. Then sacred tablets are distributed and taken to the rice-fields to be planted



there. Identical practices are recorded in the *Kogoshūi* and therefore we may presume that the tradition is of great age. Evidently the god enshrined here is Otoshi-no-kami, in spite of all the other theories" (16).

Also the *Meisaichō*: "This is a shrine listed in the *Engishiki*. Its religious ceremonies include making a huge phallus of wood as well as a straw figure of a man on the 15th of the first month. The *Kogoshūi* mentions the religious ceremonies performed for Otoshi-no-kami in which a phallic symbol as well as other objects were prepared to drive away the harmful locusts. As this deity is associated with a phallic figure used in ceremonies to supplicate for a fruitful year, the shrine must be dedicated to Ōtoshi-no-kami, and this is what has been handed down in oral tradition among the old folk" (17). Similar statements can be found in the *Jingi Shiryō* and the *Jingi-shi* (18) in the *Dainihon-shi*.

### b) *Tamahimé-no-mikoto*.

Written sources on local histories as well as popular traditions frequently associate the deity of Tagata Shrine with Tamahimé-no-mikoto. It is important to note, however, that old traditions merely recognized a "goddess of the rice-fields." The identification of this goddess with Tamahimé-no-mikoto was a product of later generations. The *Owari-shi* states: "The local inhabitants believe that this deity is a goddess who protects the fertility of the crops. They make a human figure with an exposed phallus at the beginning of every year as part of the religious ceremonies at the shrine, and have a riotous time, laughing a great deal. After the festival is over, they plant a paper-amulet in every rice-field in the village, thereby soliciting a fruitful year. About 360 yards to the west of this shrine is a place called Arata. This may possibly be the spot where Ōarata-no-mikoto, the ancestor of Niwa-no-agata-no-kimi, took up his main abode, as quoted above from the *Kujiki*. Consequently, it would be reasonable to suppose that this shrine is dedicated to his daughter, Tamahimé-no-mikoto" (19). A similar passage is found in the *Owari Meisho-zue* (20). Concerning the divinity enshrined here, the *Kokuchō-jinja-kō* goes on as follows after the paragraph already cited: "The deity at Agata, the villagers say, protects the crops and is a goddess. They make a phallic symbol and hold a gay festival to please the goddess at the beginning of every year. They also plant in every rice-field an amulet issued from this shrine, praying for abundant crops. All this reminds one of the record of similar festivals in the *Kogoshūi*. From the name Tagata, the shrine would seem to be dedicated to Tamahimé-no-mikoto, the daughter of Ō-arata-no-mikoto" (21).

According to these documents, the shrine was originally dedicated to a divinity vaguely referred to as "a goddess in charge of the fertility of the fields" or simply as "the god of the rice-fields" (22). The identification of this goddess, who was purely an object of religious adoration, with a legendary character like Tamahimé-no-mikoto was a secondary development. For that reason probably, all the above-cited documents present their suggestions concerning the identity of the enshrined deity here in the form of conjecture, e.g., "... it would be reasonable to suppose ...," "... the shrine would seem to be dedicated to Tamahimé-no-mikoto, etc." Moreover, these are all speculations of scholars and local historians of the Middle and Late Tokugawa period (1603 to 1868). The common people apparently continued to refer to the deity simply as "the god protecting the prosperity of the crops" or the "goddess of the fields" even in much later times. Masakatsu Okawara also reasons that it is likely correct to identify the goddess of Agata with Tamahimé-no-mikoto, chiefly because the local tradition holds that the shrine is dedicated to a goddess (23).

### c) *Divine Emblem.*

The information in books such as the *Owari Chimeikō* (quoted hereinafter) indicates that this shrine was under the jurisdiction of a Buddhist temple named Kubodera, during the period when Buddhism was vindicated as merely another manifestation of Shintoism, and the statue of a Buddhist divinity, *Shōgun Jizo* ("Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva in General's Uniform") was the emblem of Tagata Shrine (24). Prevailing opinion, however, leans toward a phallus or a yoni as the emblem of this shrine. It is highly probable that, even in the days when the statue of "General Bodhisattva" was officially recognized as the image of the deity at Tagata, a phallic symbol continued to be treasured as a divine emblem.

A marginal note in the *Shimmeichō Kōshō* reads: "A local inhabitant Owaki-no Michisuké maintains that the sacred emblem of this shrine is a wooden phallus. At festival times, an especially large one is manufactured and carried about . . ." (25). In 1918, Genchi Kato visited this shrine and heard from a resident aged 72 that "the divine emblem is a female figure clad in armour and commonly known as Tamahimé-sama" (26). According to Yonekichi Deguchi, the image in the form of a goddess symbolizes the "passive" cause or principle in natural phenomena, and the deity of Tagata Shrine in olden times was probably represented by a yoni (27). The very character of Tagata Jinja points to a possibility of its original emblem being a feminine principle represented by a female generative organ rather than a masculine phallus.

## 3. *The Fertility Ceremonies, Ancient and Modern.*

We shall first examine the festivals of this Shinto sanctuary as they were performed before 1868, the year of the Meiji Restoration, and then proceed to describe how they are performed today, thereby tracing the process of the changes that have taken place in the ceremonies.

### a) *Fertility Ceremonies before the Meiji Restoration.*

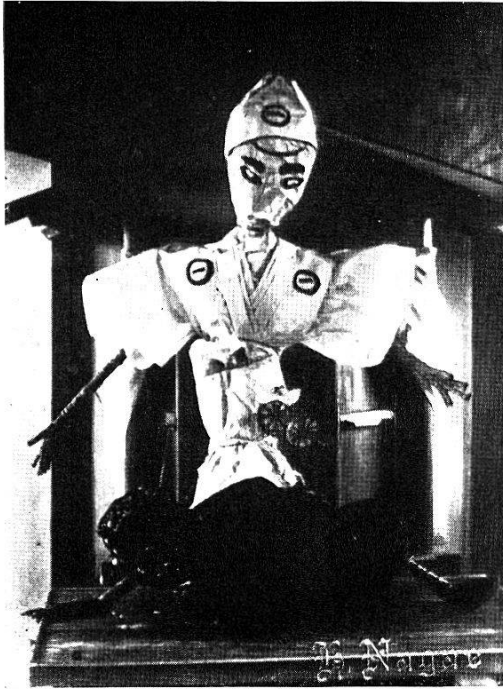
According to the *Owari Meishozue*, "Regular festival on the 15th of the First Month. The local inhabitants make a human effigy with an exposed phallus, laugh a great deal, and at the end of the festival plant a divine emblem in every rice-field in the village, praying for a good harvest" (28). Similar statements are contained in the *Shimmeichō Kōshō* and *Kokuchō Jinjakō*. The *Owari Chimeikō* gives a more detailed description, as follows:

"Spring Festival of Agata. Held on the 15th of the First Month. On the day before the festival, the nearby Buddhist temple, Kubodera, makes amulets as charms to invite good crops, and distributes them to the villagers who plant them in the rice-field to propitiate the guardian spirits of the water-gates to these fields. They also make a phallic figure as part of the sacred paraphernalia for the festival. On the morning of the fifteenth, they hold a lottery on



Fig. 3. "General Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva" or the Divine Emblem of Tagata Jinja during the period when Shintoism blended with Buddhism.

the temple grounds. Each person may draw three times, and if he is lucky enough to draw one of the papers marked 'fan', 'rice' or 'measure' he is believed to have good luck throughout the coming year. Therefore crowds flock to this spot from far and near starting on New Year's Day. After the lottery, a procession starts at about the Hour of the Serpent. It covers a distance of a little over 400 yards between this temple and the Wood of Tagata. At the head of the procession comes a Sakaki tree (*Cleyera japonica*), followed by food and drink offerings in plain-wood containers and a statue of a Buddhist deity. Incidentally, the popular theory that this statue is the emblem of this shrine is not quite accurate. After the Buddhist statue comes a straw effigy of a man clad in a formal ceremonial costume (*kamishimo*) and bearing a sword. Attached to the straw figure is a phallus about two feet long and painted in Chinese red. Two or three of the village youths carry this effigy on their shoulders, shout at the top of their voices, 'Ohohenoko! Ohohenoko of Agata Wood!', while going around the village from alley to alley in a frolicsome manner. They claim that this will please the god. It is rightly termed one of the most curious and peculiar festivals in this country. When the procession arrives at the Shrine, the 'Principal buddha' or, to be more precise, the



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Fig. 4. Human effigy representing a warrior that was carried in the procession of the Fertility Festival during the Meiji (1868-1911) and Taisho (1912-1926) eras.

Fig. 5. A photograph found at the office of the Tagata Shrine. It is not clear whether this was carried in the procession.

figure of a Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, dressed as an army general (Fig 3), is set in state in the building, and the straw figure with the huge phallus is set before it (Fig. 4). Then they bring in offerings of foods and drinks, clap their hands and pray to the deity. In a short while the foods and drinks are distributed to the villagers. The natives call this festival 'the Henoko Festival of Kuboi-shiki'" (29).

The *Shimmeichō Kōshō* and the *Kokuchō Jinjakō* both make mention of the phallus but not of the straw effigy. Masakatsu Okawara explains this as follows: "The symbol to be used at the fertility festival is the phallus. However, later years have introduced a straw figure representing a warrior and put him on the phallic symbol, the whole thing now looking like a doll with an enormous penis (Fig. 5). Furthermore this doll has come to be considered a consort to the goddess of the shrine. All this is a result of ignorance due to defective schooling in matters of antiquity" (30). According to Niwa, a young villager used to carry a phallic symbol in the procession in the ancient days. At one time in the succeeding period a human effigy was attached to the phallus, but the whole thing was still carried by one tall fellow (31).

From such statements and descriptions we may conclude that the salient features of the festival are: 1) carrying about of a huge



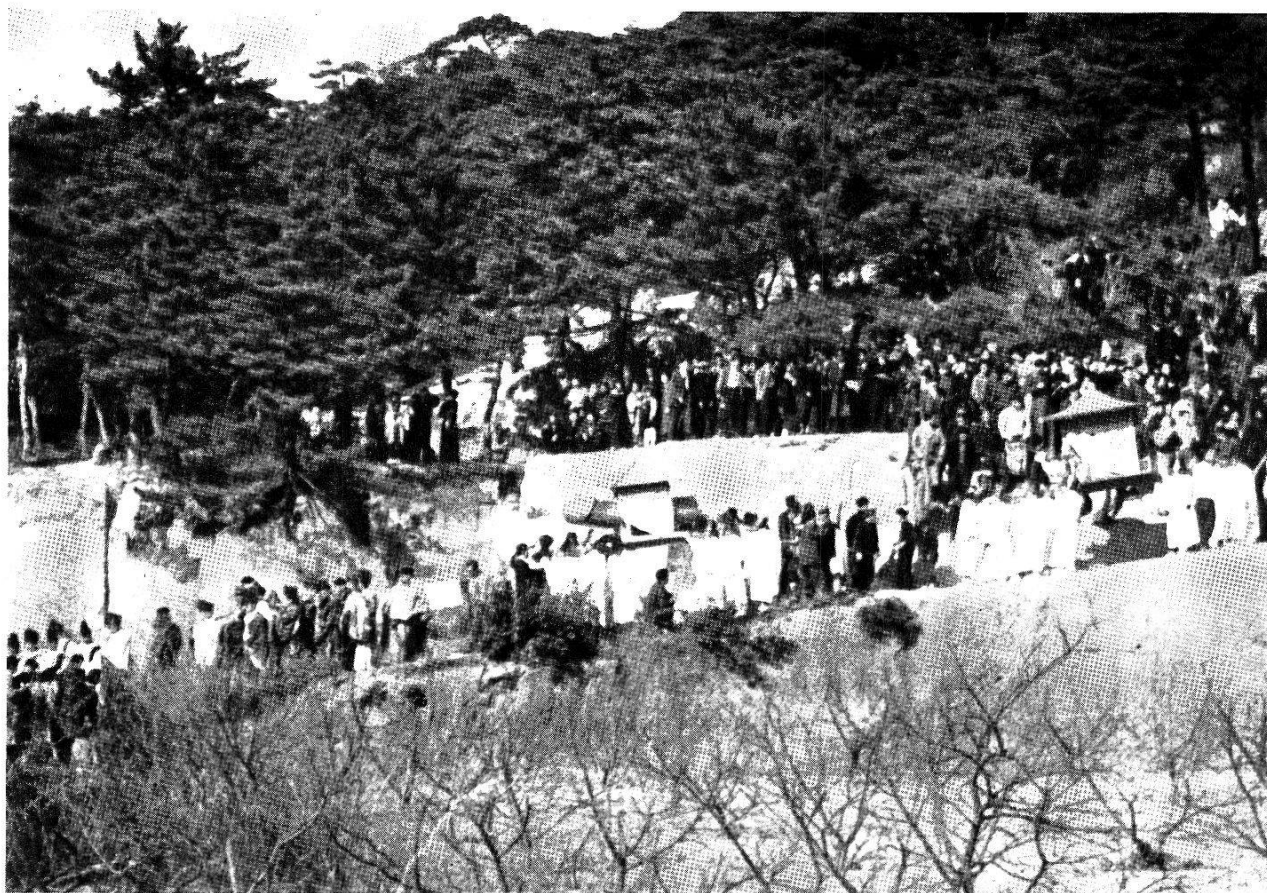


Fig. 6. Part of the procession of the Fertility Festival. At the centre is the Big Phallus, closely followed by a palanquin carrying a seated statue of Takeinadané-no-mikoto.

phallic symbol; 2) shouting of the formula “Ohohenoko of Agata Woods;” and 3) the big laugh of villagers at the sight of the procession. This last characteristic, *viz.*, laughing a great deal, is indeed an ancient feature of the fertility festival of this shrine. It may perhaps be a remnant of the ancient practice of having an orgy on such occasions. The planting of amulets in the rice-fields is also an old custom to all appearances. The festivals in this village have always centered around the farmers, their purpose being to ensure abundant crops.

#### b) *Fertility Festival Today.*

At present this festival is performed on March 15th of the solar calendar. The lottery is held at the shrine office of Tagata Jinja in the morning and in the afternoon. The “lots” are fans, measures, and abacuses. The substitution of the abacus for the rice of former days may be taken as reflecting a change in the character of the following of the shrine, i.e., the farmers and peasants who used to comprise the bulk of the adherents have been replaced by merchants of Nagoya and other cities and towns.



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*Fig. 7. Shimmei Shinto Sanctuary: a starting-place for the ceremonial palanquin in the Fertility Festival.*

*Fig. 8. Kumano Shinto Sanctuary: another starting-place for the palanquin.*

The festival still centers around the procession (Fig. 6). Before 1868, the procession used to start from a Buddhist temple, but since the Meiji government required the separation of the Shinto faith from Buddhism, from that time on the procession had to start from one or the other of the two Shinto shrines in the neighbourhood, Shimmei-sha (Fig. 7) and Kumano Jinja (Fig. 8), in alternate years.

At the head of the procession goes a "herald" whose duty it is to keep the path clear and ritually clean. The herald is followed by a standard-bearer, who carries a tall banner, about 3 feet wide and 7 feet long, on which is painted in colour a huge phallus (Fig. 9). This banner is one of the 20-odd presented to the shrine about 50 years ago. Then follow several leaders of the village, each carrying a green bamboo cane. Next come the musicians in white ceremonial costumes, playing ancient tunes as they proceed, and followed by four or five priests and representatives of the adherents who carry food and drink offerings. After them come two villagers who carry between them a long Chinese chest covered with a white cloth (Fig. 10). The chest contains, besides some food offerings, a natural stone in the form of a phallus about 6 inches long placed on a cushion of a Chinese red. This stone is ordinarily enshrined in the neighbouring Shimmei Shrine, together with the





*Fig. 9.* A scene in the Shrine Building of Tagata Jinja, immediately after the procession is over. The phallus (right), the seated figure of Takeinadané-no-mikoto (centre), and the banner placed in state.

*Fig. 10.* Part of the procession: Chinese Chest (left) and the Phallus.

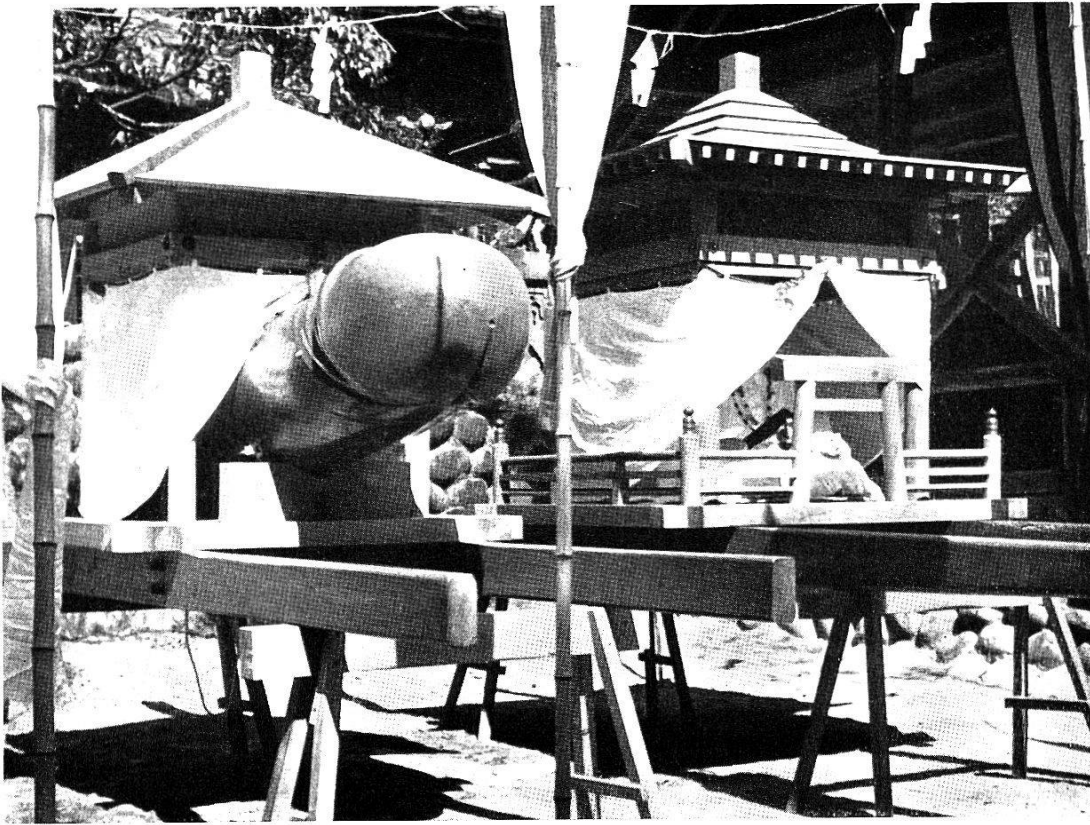


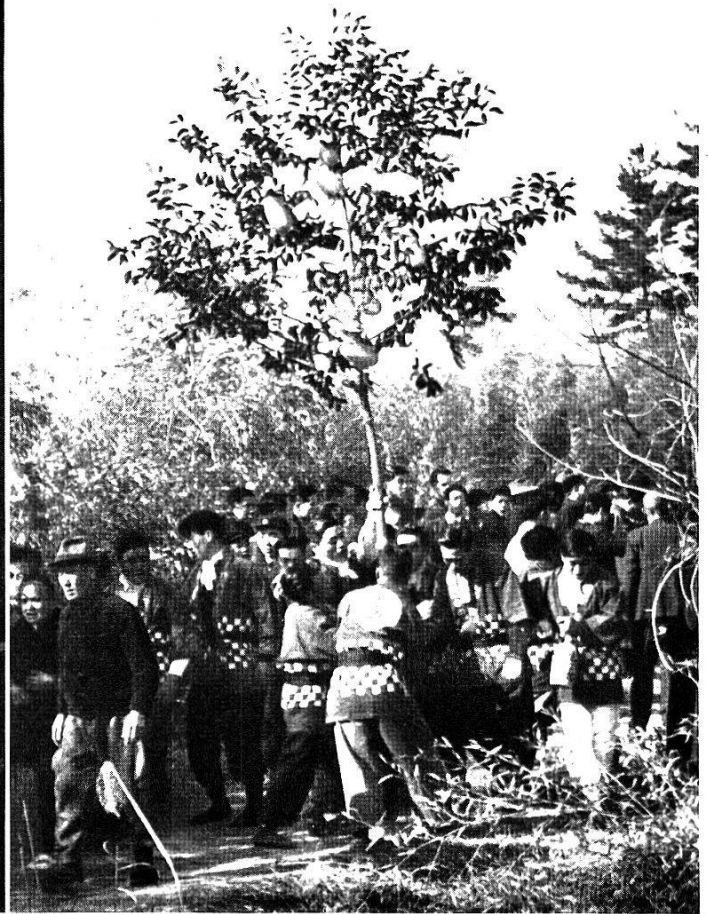
Fig. 11. Before the procession starts. The Phallus and the figure of Takeinadané-no-mikoto installed in the front-yard of the "starting-shrine".

divine image of the latter (Fig. 22). This phallus has never been photographed before. It was even forbidden to look at it. Finally, after the chest comes the very centre of this procession, *viz.*, a huge phallus made of *hinoki* (Japanese cypress) wood and painted in Chinese red, about 2 m. long and one-half m. in diameter. Its two extremities stick out in front and back of a palanquin in which it is being carried. The *chaise* is draped with white curtains on all four sides and carried on the shoulders of about 12 young men all clad in white.

Following the palanquin comes in the procession a seated statue of a warrior to whom the preceding phallus is considered to belong (Figs. 11 and 12). After this statue goes on horseback the chief priest in charge of the festival. Other functionaries of the occasion follow the chief priest. The tail end of the procession consists of a troupe of men escorting several Sakaki trees (Fig. 13). In former times a single large tree was escorted at the head of the procession, but nowadays more than ten of them are carried to the shrine at the very end. These trees are donated from the 8 communes of the village, and the members of the youth corps in each commune are expected to escort them. The trees are about 15 feet in height. In the branches of each tree is attached secretly an amulet



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Fig. 12. Seated Figure of Takeinadané-no-mikoto.

Fig. 13. The Sacred Tree (*Cleyera japonica*) ready to be carried in the procession.

of the shrine, which is actually a white paper square, 6"  $\times$  6", with the name of the shrine printed on it. Small sacks containing the five kinds of grain, *i.e.* rice, wheat, barley, millet, and barnyard grass, are also tied to the branches of the trees (Fig. 14), in addition to one or more phallic symbols per tree (Fig. 15). Six or seven young men escort each tree, carrying around their waists, sometimes rather surreptitiously, phallic symbols about 6 inches long and painted in Chinese red (Fig. 16). To each of these phallic symbols dried palm-leaves are tied with a coarse strip of rice straw. The young men say that these symbols are their charms (lit. "protectors"). A few of the men were observed on the street, flourishing these symbols in their hands and flirting with the girls who were passing by. Most of them were considerably drunk. Generally speaking, the gaiety and frolicsome spirit that invariably attend this festival remind one strongly of the orgies.

When the procession arrives at the shrine of Tagata, both palanquins are duly installed in the main building, foods and drinks are offered to the deity, and Norito prayers are recited soli-





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*Fig. 14.* On to the branches of the Sacred Tree is attached the largesize paper-amulet by means of straw-strips.

*Fig. 15.* Wooden phalli of various sizes attached to the branches of the Sacred Tree.

citing both a plenteous harvest and peace and security in the country. The rear guard escorting the Sakaki trees waits at the gate for a signal to enter which is sounded on the drum placed on a raised platform at the entrance to the shrine compounds. As soon as the first tree passes through the gate, the eagerly awaiting crowds literally jump upon it, trying to take the phallic symbol and the amulets and tearing off the leaves and branches to take home with them as good luck charms. The charms thus violently secured are placed at the water-gate to the rice nursery to induce fertility of the rice-fields, the papers or leaves being tied to a sacred branch or inserted in a split bamboo. This performance is repeated for all the trees of the procession, one after another, and is called "the battle for divine tablets." Just about the time when the last of the procession pulls up, rice-cakes of pink and white are scattered to the crowds from temporary scaffolds in front of the shrine, symbolizing propagation of good luck (Fig. 17).

Compared with today's processions, those of the Meiji (1868 to 1912) and even Taisho (1912-1926) periods were much simpler and less imposing. According to M. Inada, who attended the festival

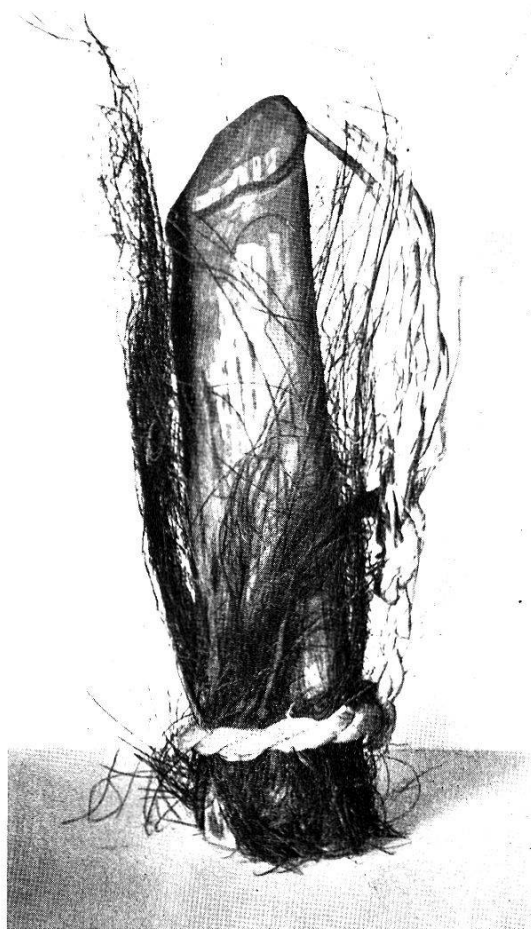


Fig. 16. Each young man who escorts the Sacred Trees carries a phallus of painted wood, about 6 inches in length, hanging from his waist; some carry them in their pockets.

in 1921, all the fundamental characteristics of today's festival were already clearly there. The human effigy, however, was a simple straw puppet about 1½ feet high and about one foot across the shoulders, clad in a *kamishimo* (ceremonial dress for a feudal warrior) of white cotton and bearing a sword. He was seated, as if riding a horse, upon a wooden, red-painted phallus (32). The June 1923 number of the *Kyōdo Shumi* carried on its cover a picture entitled "Procession of Tagata Festival, Kuboishiki, Owari". It showed only one palanquin, following immediately the heraldic pennon and followed in its turn by a Sakaki tree. The total number of people in the procession was less than 20. The single palanquin appearing in the picture must have contained the effigy and a phallus together.

Kinji Niwa relates that around the days of the Meiji Restoration, i.e., circa 1868, the straw man was made to sit astride the phallus. Only once, in 1885, when the Emperor was scheduled to visit this vicinity to inspect military exercises, the human effigy and the phallic symbol were separated, for the custom was considered rather immodest.

Both the straw figure and the phallus used to be made anew at each festival, and the phallus was planted at the water-gate to the



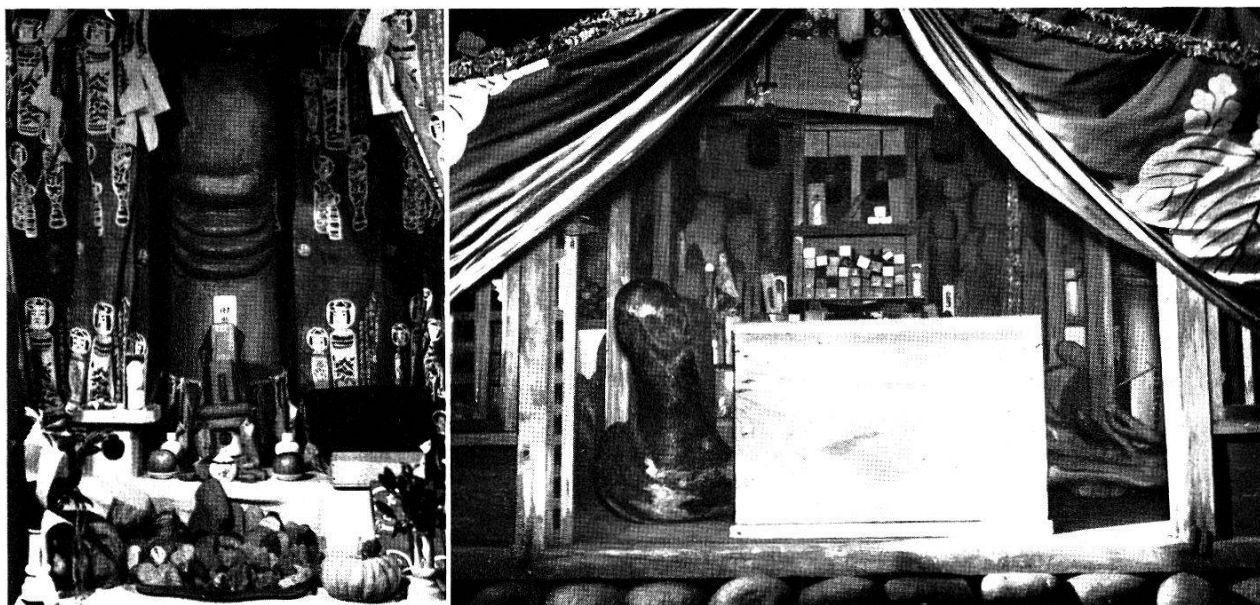
*Fig. 17.* After the procession, rice-cakes symbolizing good luck are scattered to the crowds from the scaffold in front of the shrine building.

village rice-fields. Villages took turns receiving it, village A this year, village B next year, and so on. In those days the rice nursery was common village property. At one time, however, both the effigy and the phallic symbol were thrown out after the festival and left to rot in a heap in the eastern corner of the shrine precincts. Nowadays the phallus is sold as a rule to a private home, an inn or a restaurant. The family who buy the symbol make a special altar to install and adore it, praying for prosperous business (Fig. 18). Here we have another instance of the change in ceremonial details introduced by the change in proportion of the occupational groups among the venerators. Incidentally, it has been observed during the past few years that the phallic symbol grows bigger and more grotesque year by year, and that correspondingly less and less religious zeal is manifested in the ceremonies, many of the spectators flocking to the festival grounds out of sheer curiosity. The human effigy used to be made out of rice straw and vaguely referred to as "the Warrior," but recent years have seen the identification of it with the figure of Take-inadane-no-mikoto, until at last a permanent chalk statue has been made representing the deity in a sitting position.

#### *4. Meaning of the Fertility Festival.*

We have already observed that the fertility ceremonies at Tagata Shrine of only 100 years ago were quite different from those of today. The change, however, is mainly a transition from





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*Fig. 18.* The Big Phallus carried in the procession is afterwards sold to an inn or a restaurant, where it is duly installed and worshipped.

*Fig. 19.* The small structure situated to the left of the main building of Tagata Jinja, where phalli of various sizes are ritually stored.

primitive simplicity to modern complexity and colour. The essential features of the festival have remained the same. We shall now examine the fundamental significance of the festival proper as distinct from the complex matrix of ceremonies which inevitably include non-essential elements.

#### a) *Phallus Cult.*

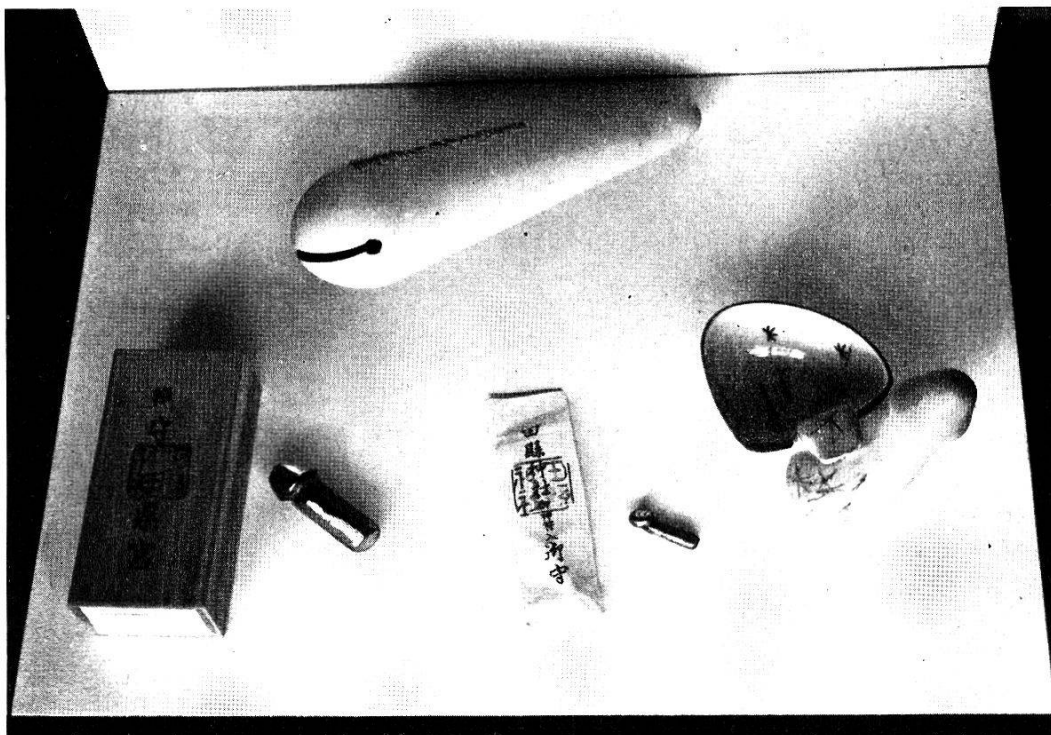
One unique characteristic of the fertility rites of Tagata Shrine has always been the enormous phallus made of Japanese cypress wood. It is the central figure in the procession which is headed by a streamer on which also a huge phallus is painted. A natural stone in the form of a phallus which is ordinarily kept at another shrine in the neighbourhood, is also carried about in the procession. Phallic symbols are tied to the sacred trees in the procession and hang from the belts of the boys who escort the trees.

These and other features of the festival provide ample evidence of a phallic cult. The Tagata ceremony strikingly resembles the Dionysian procession in the countryside of ancient Greece. In the Dionysian festival also one or more phallic symbols were carried about with many acts of rustic joy and festivity (33).

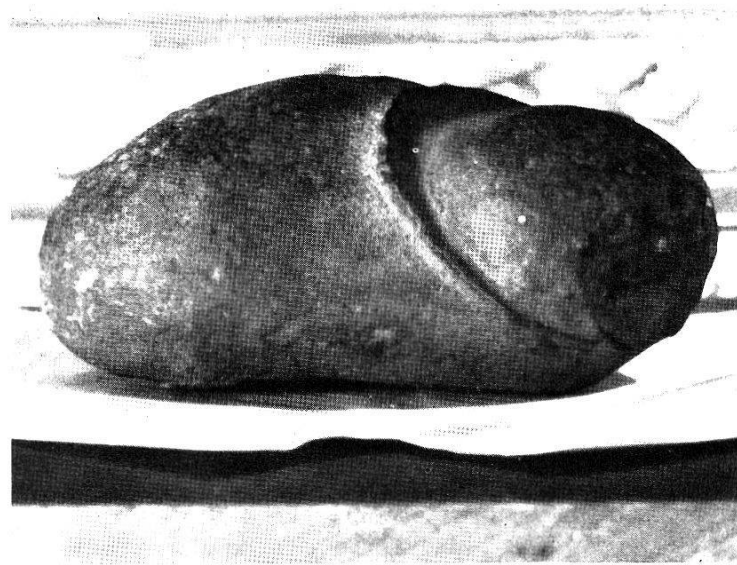
To the majority of the people who pay visits to the Tagata Shrine today, one of the smaller buildings at the back of the shrine is more important than the main building itself. In this small



*Fig. 20.* The pine-tree on the precinct boundary. Between the double trunk growing out of one root is placed a natural stone in the form of a phallus. It is believed that a woman wishing for a child may pass between these trunks and have her wish granted.



*Fig. 21.* Small bell (above), amulet (lower left), and a rice-wine cup.



*Fig. 22.* A natural stone in the form of phallus to be carried in the Chinese Chest in the procession. For the rest of the time, it is enshrined in the building of the Shimmei Shrine together with the divine emblem.

shrine are all sorts and sizes of phallic symbols, made of wood, stone, porcelain, or metal (Fig. 19). They used to be left on the ground before the small shrine was built to house them. These objects are both offerings to the deity and fetishes and objects of veneration. As votive offerings they can be bought at the shrine store. As soon as they are placed in the shrine beside the ones already there, they are transformed into objects of worship. Moreover, as they lie around in the sacred precincts they are believed to absorb the mysterious atmosphere and turn into fetishes with supernatural powers. Therefore they are loaned out to cure diseases or to obtain a long-wished-for child. When they have produced the desired result, they are returned to the shrine together with a new phallic symbol as a token of gratitude. Here we find clear evidence of transition from simple tokens of gratitude to sacrifices to fetishes and finally to divine emblems (SHINTAI). The lines between these categories are fluid and never fixed. The line between magic and religion is equally mobile.

On the way to this small shrine stand some flags with pictures of a big phallus on them. Beside the path stands also an old pine tree, from whose root stems a double trunk. The people consider this double trunk as husband and wife. Between the two trunks they have placed a stone, which has the natural form of a phallus. If a woman, who would like to have a child, walks over this stone, she will have a child, the people believe (Figs. 20, 21).

Under the pretext of rectifying public custom, the phallic symbols have several times been collected and dumped into the pond

at the back of the shrine. Those who participated in the business, however, were all attacked by strange illnesses one after another, until at last to ward off divine punishment the fetishes were retrieved from the pond and installed in their former place. Many stories of this kind are still current among the country folk, and we may trace in them the kind of fear associated with spirit-worship. Animistic elements, however, are extremely weak in the phallus cult of Tagata Shrine which is strongly tinged with magic. The shrine office sells amulets called "Talismans containing the divine emblem of the Tagata Shrine," which are actually small phallic symbols of brass, about 2.5 cm. long. These symbols are not so much worshipped as spirits as revered as fetishes with impersonal magical properties.

In fine, the central feature of the fertility festival procession, and the object of veneration by ordinary people at Tagata Shrine, is a phallus, and the cult of this shrine is essentially a phallus cult after all. In individual cases, the phalli are as much undisguised magic charms as religious objects.

b) *Cult of Mother Earth.*

One of the most stable features in both ancient and modern Tagata festivals is its object of ensuring a plentiful harvest for the coming year. As we have observed above, the festival in recent years has been attended by an increasing number of merchants, resulting in more and more prayers offered for prosperity in business. The subsidiary elements in the ceremonies also appear to be developing in the same direction. Up to the end of the Tokugawa period, however, the festivals were closely related to agricultural activities. Prayers for finding desired spouses, begetting of children, and the cure of V. D., were probably introduced from the natural association of the ideas of fertility of the fields and the fecundity of women. Nevertheless the primary purpose of the fertility ceremonies at Tagata Shrine was the promotion of the fruitfulness of the farm land. The sacred rites performed for this purpose originally solicited the favour of the goddess of the rice-field.

Mitoshi-no-kami and Ō-toshi-no-kami are also associated with agricultural products in general, and rice, barley, wheat, and millet in particular. But most of the villagers stick to the ancient tradition that the deity of their shrine is neither Mitoshi-no-kami nor Ōtoshi-no-kami but a goddess who protects the fertility of the cultivated fields. Some country folk follow the lead of the scholars of the end of the Tokugawa Period who attempted to identify this



“goddess of the rice-field” with Tamahimé-no-mikoto, the daughter of Ō-arata, who contributed to the development of the country. They say that the festival is held to please this widowed goddess, and that a procession with a seated statue of her deceased husband, Takeinadane, and a phallus are intended for her pleasure. The tradition pictures Tamahimé-no-mikoto as a lonesome widow with all the human weaknesses of the widow, and deserving pity and sympathy. But this story, which makes of the goddess a very human person, is of relatively late date, and cannot hide the original character of the goddess. The deity of Tagata is more than a human female; she is the “goddess of the rice-field,” and very much like the well-known “Muttergöttin” or “grosse Mutter” (34).

The union of the goddess of the rice-field with a male god, Takeinadane, whose name suggests a close relationship with the rice-plant (35), takes place at the beginning of every spring, thus giving birth to a new generation of rice crops. There is reason to believe that the name of a historical character, Takeinadane, was a later association with an early vague concept of a male god that had something to do with the fertilization of the land. The phallus symbolized this vague concept of a male god who is taken to the abode of a goddess in a procession. Yonekichi Deguchi maintains that the festival of Tagata Shrine is a survival of the ancient and universal cult of agricultural fertility, which was to be promoted by a mythical union between a male and a female. He further propounds that the shrine was originally dedicated to a female deity, representing a “passive” principle, while the other shrine, Shimmei-sha at Arata, enshrined a male deity, representing an “active” principle. The relations between the two divinities, therefore, are those of husband and wife rather than of father and daughter. The divine emblem of the deity at Tagata may have been a yoni at one period in antiquity (36).

##### *5. Mythological Origin of the Fertility Festival.*

Extrinsically the fertility festival of Tagata Shrine is clearly a type of phallicism. Intrinsically, however, it is centered in the worship of the goddess of the rice-field. If we consider the origin of a festival involving those two elements three possibilities present themselves: 1) Phallus cult based on imitative magic; 2) worship of the goddess of the rice-field, later incorporating a phallus cult; 3) both elements existing from the very outset.

Ancient Japanese believed and explained by measures of myths that, just as children are begotten of a union between man and

woman, so everything in the universe is produced of a union between Izanagi, the sky-father, and Izanami, the earth-mother. Underlying the idea that abundant crops were obtained by the union of a goddess of the earth and a male god represented by a phallic figure was most probably something like the belief about Earth Mother and Sky Father.

Among the ancient people of the world, it seems that the idea was first entertained that the mother earth conceived by herself. The concept of Heaven, who impregnates the earth with crops was also developed fairly early. Myths of this sort are quite common among the relatively primitive, and usually matriarchal, horticulturists (37). A phallus is thus introduced in their rituals and magical rites as a symbol of the fertilizing power and subsequently as something representing the all-inclusive life principles (38). The primary concept, however, was the idea of a self-conceiving and self-generating Mother Earth, and the concept of a father-sky who fertilizes the earth came into being at a somewhat later age.

To sum up, the centre of the procession in the fertility ceremonies of Tagata Shrine is a phallic symbol, but the centre of the festival as a whole is the goddess of the rice-field. In this sense, the centre of the cult cannot be the phallus itself, but the adoration of the earth as a goddess, without whom the phallus loses its significance. At Tagata Shrine especially, the phallus is actually brought from another place to the sanctuary of the goddess, who remains the centre of the whole festival herself. In other words, a male god comes and visits a female deity. Herein we may observe a trace of the ancient custom of visiting marriage. The use of a phallus as a symbol for the Paternal Sky may not have originated in any magical rite or practice, but may represent a degeneration of religious concepts and/or a development of playfulness.

### *Conclusion—Relationships Between the Religious and Magical Elements in the Fertility Ceremonies.*

The phallic symbol at Tagata Shrine, it is true, is used on some occasions as an object of magical rites. However, it was originally introduced as a part of the worship of the goddess of the rice-fields, in whose honour the shrine seems to have been founded. She is the one for whose sake the festivals are performed, for she presides over the fertile fields. The phallus cult was developed exclusively for her, and its incorporation in the fertility ceremonies is explained properly only in association with myth and religious belief. When the phallic symbol is separated from the fertility festival proper, and is expected to serve certain utilitarian purposes, it has degenerated into a sheer fetish.

Likewise the ancient episode of Mitoshi-no-kami as recorded in the *Kogo-*



*shūi* must be interpreted as having functional values from the totality of mythological and/or religious systems.

### *Résumé.*

Le culte du phallus est fréquemment considéré comme une simple pratique magique jusque dans les cercles scientifiques. Au Japon, toutefois, il existe des cérémonies phalliques qu'on ne peut juger aussi sommairement. La cérémonie de fécondité du sanctuaire Tagata-Shinto près de Nagoya en est un exemple. De par sa nature grotesque, elle est connue depuis longtemps déjà.

La partie principale de cette cérémonie consiste en une procession dans laquelle un gros phallus en bois ainsi que d'autres figures phalliques sont portés de façon plus ou moins ostensible. Ces figures phalliques jouent d'ailleurs un rôle important tout au long de l'année dans ce sanctuaire Shinto. Le sens original de cette cérémonie ne devient clair que lorsqu'on examine de près la nature des dieux auxquels le sanctuaire est dédié et qui y sont vénérés.

Quelques documents mentionnent Otoshi, respectivement Mitoshi, comme divinités principales. Ils sont en général considérés comme étant une seule et même personne et représentent la divinité des céréales et de l'alimentation. Selon d'autres sources et, en particulier, d'après la tradition populaire de cette région, la première divinité de ce sanctuaire était une déesse nommée Tamahime. Elle passe pour être l'ancêtre des habitants de la région et la première femme qui ait cultivé la terre. Quelques anciens documents et traditions ne mentionnent aucun nom propre et se bornent à l'appeler « la déesse des champs » ou « la déesse protectrice des terres ». Le peuple entend par là la déesse protectrice des terres arables ou de la terre en général. Elle est en quelque sorte la divinisation de la terre même et de sa fécondité. En elle, on peut reconnaître notre Terre-Mère. Ce dernier caractère apparaît surtout dans l'interprétation populaire.

La procession phallique, décrite ici, part d'un sanctuaire Shinto voisin pour se rendre au sanctuaire Tagata. La figure symbolique du phallus, transportée à cette occasion, est représentée sous les traits d'un dieu mâle allant rendre visite à la déesse du sanctuaire Tagata. D'après certaines sources, ce dieu porte le nom de Takeinadane, selon d'autres plus anciennes, il n'est pas nommé. Il n'habite généralement pas avec son épouse dans le sanctuaire Tagata, mais lui rend visite une fois, l'an toujours au printemps. Cette visite est représentée symboliquement par la procession. Lorsque la procession atteint le sanctuaire Tagata, le peuple ainsi que les prêtres prient et offrent des sacrifices en demandant une bonne récolte. Ceci est l'idée principale sur laquelle repose la cérémonie. Elle est mythico-religieuse.

D'autre part, on ne saurait nier que le peuple se livre à toutes sortes de pratiques magiques avec les objets phalliques, et ceci en rapport avec la cérémonie. Le gros phallus porté dans la procession est remis aux paysans après la fête. Ceux-ci le déposent à l'entrée des eaux arrosant les champs de riz, dans l'intention d'en éloigner les insectes nuisibles. Ces dernières années, le phallus a souvent été vendu à un hôtel ou à une maison de geishas. Placé sur l'autel de la maison en question, on le prie pour le succès des affaires. D'autres figures phalliques sont également distribuées aux adorateurs. Ceux-ci les portent comme amulettes ou les déposent au sanctuaire en ex-voto. A l'aide de ces amulettes, les femmes espèrent avoir des enfants et les gens souffrant de maladies vénériennes comptent sur une guérison. On croit aussi que ces figures protègent des malheurs en général.

La plupart des gens ne s'adonnent à ces pratiques magiques que lorsque les objets phalliques ne sont plus en relation directe avec la cérémonie principale.

Ils sont alors considérés comme des objets possédant des vertus magiques en eux-mêmes. Ceci explique que le peuple seul s'adonne à ces pratiques magiques, non pas lors de la procession, mais les jours suivants, et non pas dans l'enceinte du sanctuaire, mais au dehors.

La vénération d'une déesse de la terre et le mythe de son mariage avec un dieu mâle constituent donc la base de la cérémonie de fécondité du sanctuaire Tagata-Shinto. Il est très possible que ce mythe découle du mythe plus universel d'un couple primordial, géniteur de l'humanité, qui figure également dans l'ancienne mythologie japonaise. Le phallus n'est apparu qu'ensuite comme symbole de fécondité et n'a été utilisé comme objet magique que plus tard encore.

### *Zusammenfassung.*

Der Phalluskult wird nicht selten auch in wissenschaftlichen Kreisen einfach als eine Zauberpraktik behandelt. In Japan aber finden wir phallische Zeremonien, die nicht so einfach gedeutet werden können. Ein Beispiel von dieser Art ist die Fruchtbarkeitszeremonie vom *Tagata*-Shinto-Heiligtum bei Nagoya. Sie ist wegen ihrer grotesken Art schon früher weithin bekannt geworden.

Der wesentliche Teil dieser Zeremonie besteht in einer Prozession, in welcher ein großer Phallus aus Holz und andere Phallusfiguren öffentlich oder auch verborgen getragen werden. Auch sonst noch spielen in diesem Shinto-Heiligtum phallische Figuren verschiedener Art das ganze Jahr hindurch eine wichtige Rolle. Der ursprüngliche Sinn der Zeremonie wird erst klar, wenn man die Natur der Gottheiten feststellt, die hier besonders verehrt werden und denen das Heiligtum geweiht ist.

In einigen Urkunden werden *Otoshi* bzw. *Mitoshi* als Hauptgottheiten angegeben. Sie werden gewöhnlich als identisch angesehen und gelten als Getreide- und Nahrungsgottheiten. Nach anderen Urkunden, besonders aber nach der alten Volksüberlieferung dieser Gegend ist eine Göttin namens *Tamahime* die ursprüngliche Gottheit dieses Heiligtums. Sie gilt als die erste Ahnfrau der Sippe dieser Gegend und als die erste, die das Land hier bebaut hat. In einigen alten Dokumenten und Traditionen wird auch überhaupt kein persönlicher Name erwähnt und einfach «die Göttin der Felder» oder «die Göttin, die das Ackerland beschützt» genannt. Damit meint das Volk die Schutzgöttin des Ackerlandes oder der Erde überhaupt. Sie ist gewissermaßen eine Vergöttlichung der Erde selbst und ihrer Fruchtbarkeit. Wir können in ihr den Charakter einer Erdmutter erkennen. Dies kommt besonders in der volkstümlichen Deutung zum Vorschein.

Die besagte Phallusprozession bewegt sich von einem benachbarten Shinto-Heiligtum nach dem *Tagata*-Heiligtum. Die Phallusfigur, die dabei getragen wird, repräsentiert einen männlichen Gott, der die Göttin im *Tagata*-Heiligtum besucht. In einigen Quellen heißt er *Takeinadane*, in anderen älteren Quellen wird kein Name genannt. Er wohnt gewöhnlich nicht mit seiner Gattin in deren *Tagata*-Heiligtum zusammen, sondern besucht sie einmal im Jahre, und zwar im Frühling. Dieser Besuch wird in der Prozessionszeremonie symbolisch dargestellt. Wenn die Prozession am *Tagata*-Heiligtum ankommt, betet das Volk mit den Priestern zusammen und bringt Opfer dar mit der Bitte um eine gute Ernte. Dies ist die eigentliche Idee, welche dieser Zeremonie zugrunde liegt. Sie ist mythologisch-religiös.

Andererseits ist aber auch nicht zu bezweifeln, daß in dieser Zeremonie und im Zusammenhang mit ihr das Volk mit den phallischen Gegenständen mancherlei Zauberpraktiken treibt. Der große Phallus, der in der Prozession getragen wird, wird nach der Feier dem Bauernvolk gegeben, welches ihn dann

am Wassereingang der Reisfelder aufstellt mit der Intention, schädliche Insekten von den Feldern fernzuhalten. In den letzten Jahren wird der Phallus oft auch an Gast- oder Geishahäuser verkauft. Man stellt ihn dort auf einem Hausaltar auf und betet um Gedeihen des Geschäftes usw. Phallusfiguren von verschiedenen Formen werden auch an die Verehrer verteilt. Man trägt sie als Amulette bei sich oder hinterläßt sie als Votivgaben dem Heiligtum. Mit Hilfe solcher Amulette hoffen die Frauen auf Kindersegen und Leute, die an Geschlechtskrankheiten leiden, auf Heilung. Man glaubt auch, daß solche Figuren im allgemeinen vor Unglück bewahren.

Diese magischen Praktiken werden jedoch meistens erst vorgenommen, nachdem die Phallusgegenstände wenigstens ideell vom Zusammenhang mit der eigentlichen Hauptzeremonie losgelöst worden sind. Sie gelten dann als selbständige Zaubermittel mit selbständig wirkenden Kräften. Daraus erklärt sich, daß solche magische Praktiken meist nicht während der Prozession, sondern an anderen Tagen, auch nicht im Heiligtum selbst, sondern außerhalb desselben und nur vom Volk vorgenommen werden.

Die Verehrung einer Erdgöttin und die Mythe von ihrer Ehe mit einem männlichen Gotte bieten also die Grundlage der Fruchtbarkeitszeremonie vom *Tagata*-Shinto-Heiligtum. Es scheint durchaus möglich, daß diese Mythe sich herleitet von der universaleren Mythe des Weltelternpaares, welche wir auch in der alten japanischen Mythologie besitzen. Der Phallus wurde als Symbol der Fruchtbarkeit wohl sekundär in diese Zeremonie aufgenommen. Noch später wurde er dann als Zaubermittel verwendet.

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