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Chapter 1 : The Role of the Japanese State in Ritual and Ritualization, - PersÃ©e

The reproductive revolution at the end of the Tokugawa period / Ochiai Emiko Matsuo Taseko and the Meiji Restoration: texts of self and gender / Anne Walthall Diaries as gendered texts / Nishikawa YÅ«ko ; trans. by Anne Walthall.

The Role of the Japanese State in Ritual and Ritualization 1 35 In most cases village shrines did not have a professional priest but were served by adult men of the village on a rotating basis, or their cults were monopolized by village elites who formed a shrine guild jniyaza and other terms. While for the most part any villager might observe the festival of the village deity, actual participation was most frequently restricted in a manner mirroring the social hierarchy of the village, the most prestigious roles automatically accorded to those with the highest social standing. Each of the temporal divisions identified below is characterized by a distinctive attitude of the state toward Shinto of the Shinto priesthood toward the state, and a particular mode of involvement of the populace and of popular religious movements in Shinto Hardacre , The years to roughly were characterized by state experimentation with Shinto. Beginning in , the state unceremoniously dropped its former patronage of Buddhism and turned a blind eye when Shinto priests used the occasion to pillage Buddhist temples. When the campaign proved unable to unite the populace in support of a unified creed, however, Shinto bureaucrats fell from favor, and state support, as measured by bureaucratic rank of priests in government service or by monetary grants to shrines, fell sharply. In the heyday of the campaign, Shinto priests briefly occupied high bureaucratic office and began efforts to overcome the fragmentation and lack of unity that had characterized their history before the Meiji Restoration. The priesthood developed a conviction, still prevalent at the end of the twentieth century, that Shinto was a nonreligious or suprareligious entity with the political function of establishing the spiritual unity of the populace. A component of this attitude was a scornful, elitist view of popular religious life and a conception of themselves as teachers of the populace through ritual, rather than as religious leaders with a pastoral role. A prolonged debate ensued, with the priesthood arguing that Shinto is not a religion. This habit became ingrained in many religious movements. Popular religious life began to incorporate a national, unified ritual calendar revolving around newly created imperial ritual superimposed upon preexisting local festival calendars. This acceptance was spotty, however, and not fully achieved until around The bureaucratic offices governing Shinto affairs were ranked lower than in the preceding period. The trend in financial support for the shrines from public funds was to assign ever greater responsibility to local parishes. Priests understood that if they had to answer to local supporters they would be required to provide such religious services as rites of healing and blessing, as well as funerals, while they were concerned to preserve for themselves a distinctly non-religious status affiliated in some way with the state. The priesthood during this period saw itself as an embattled minority, misunderstood by government and seeking to reinstate the positions of prestige enjoyed briefly in the preceding period. Nevertheless, during these years many important shrines were constructed and linked in a national hierarchy. The cult of the war dead, representing major government support for the creation of ritual, began in earnest, and the populace was drawn into the cult and into shrine life generally by conscription and by an alliance at the local level between the educational system and shrine priests. Popular religious movements remained supporters of Shinto for the most part. Expansion and Increased Influence. Much of the expansion of relations between Shinto and the state that took place from the end of the Russo-Japanese War to had been set in motion much earlier and represented a widened implementation of earlier policy. For example, Shinto mythology had long been used to explain the origins of the imperial house, but the idea of its divine origins received new support in this period, and stricter sanctions applied to anyone who denied it. The Russo-Japanese War marked the beginning of many social policies, such as the shrine merger program, designed to increase social control more generally. The war, the annexation of Korea , and the colonization of Manchuria produced a heightened mood of patriotism that the priesthood enthusiastically supported. Shrines and their priests were expected to serve the nation in fostering patriotism, and the state proved willing to pay for their services. From around , a program

for the training of Shinto priests was underwritten by the state, and its appropriations increased steadily. National budgetary appropriations for shrines rose in absolute terms, though their share of the total annual budget fluctuated considerably. The priesthood increased its influence in public life during this period through an increased presence in the educational system. Priests were more numerous and better trained, thanks largely to the expanded program of government support. Graduates of Shinto schools such as Kokugakuin and Kogakkan Universities, as well as those holding even a second-grade rank as a priest, were automatically qualified, without further normal school training, to teach in the public schools, which many did to supplement their meager income as priests. Priests were a great asset in universalizing such practices as formal veneration of the imperial portrait and the Imperial Rescript on Education, as well as periodic visits to shrines by school pupils for labor or formal worship. Created in , this association was fully operational by the end of this period, publicizing its activities in each prefecture through a national publication. The Russo-Japanese War produced many apotheosized "glorious war dead", and the death of so many in war, followed by their public worship, both at the Yasukuni Shrine and in its prefectural branches, the Nation-Protecting Shrines, brought state-sponsored shrine rites into popular consciousness in a new and deeper way. Observance of shrine rites began to take on a semiobligatory character, and local administrations routinely assessed residents for shrine support. Popular religious life was also influenced by state intimidation, which itself utilized Shinto elements. The years to saw a major expansion of shrine administration, culminating in the establishment of the Board of Rites Jingiin in , to the gratification of all priests. Priests continued to occupy positions of prestige in local administrations and in the educational system. These trends represented the expansion and continuation of trends established earlier. Dissent of any kind was suppressed, and political opposition of any kind was so intimidated that those players left in the ring, including the priesthood, could operate with great freedom and without fear of contradiction. In , for example, national outrage followed when Christian students from Sophia University refused to pay tribute at the Yasukuni Shrine. Their refusal to bow before the national shrine for the war dead confirmed suspicions that Christians were unpatriotic and Christianity incompatible with Japanese sensibilities. During this period the Influence of Shinto upon popular religious life increased as more households enshrined talismans of the Ise Shrines, more school trips to the Ise Shrines and other shrines were carried out, and as the general populace traveled to Ise on pilgrinage by the millions. In a branch of the Nichiren sect of Buddhism was suppressed for its calligraphic mandala, used as an object of worship, in which Buddhist figures were ranked higher than Shinto divinities. In the Seventh-Day Adventists were outlawed for preaching the second coming. Passage of the Religious Organizations Law in gave the state sweeping powers to regulate all religious activities. This section provides a brief overview of such rites, starting with the annual. Prior to the Meiji Restoration, communal life revolved around the agricultural calendar and the festivals of local shrines and temples, plus rites of the New Year and the midsummer ancestral festival, obon. Shinto priests sometimes officiated at some of these rites, but that was by no means always the case, nor did Shinto priests before Meiji routinely perform rites of marriage or death. The national calendar introduced and gradually spread by had as its aim the supersession of traditional, communally focused rites by a national ritual calendar that would unite the populace in worship centering on the nation. Much imperial ritual had the character of ancestor worship: While it goes without saying that each of these rites embodied different symbols and conveyed different meanings, the liturgies shared a common structure derived from traditional shrine rites. Lay persons assumed an attitude of obeisance during the reading of the prayer, and, depending on the character of the rite, they might afterwards make an offering of a sakaki twig festooned with paper streamers, symbolizing an offering of cloth. In some cases priests purified congregants by waving over them a large wand of paper streamers. The rite itself concluded, the food and drink offerings were removed, and these might be consumed by the priests and lay people at a concluding meal naorai Hardacre , Rites conducted in the schools frequently included a ceremonial reading of the Imperial Rescript on Education after its promulgation in 1 It was distributed to all public elementary and middle schools, and all schoolchildren were required to memorize it from the second grade. A paean to loyalty and filial piety, its supercharged symbolic

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value exceeded by far the prestige of anything short of the emperor himself. In this case school administrators officiated, and Shinto priests were not necessarily present. In addition, school children were taken on pilgrimage to shrines, and they were also enlisted to help clean the precincts of local shrines Hardacre ,. A national cult of the war dead was centered at the Yasukuni Shrine, the subject of a paper by Richard Gardner in this conference. Assuming that the Yasukuni Shrine is to be addressed in that essay, I turn to the subject of the provincial outposts and branches of the Yasukuni Shrine in the many war memorials springing up around the country after the Russo-Japanese War, and in the shrines erected for the same purpose, the Nation-Protecting Shrines gokoku jinja. A national ranking system of shrines set the Ise Shrines at the top. From the support of the Ise Shrines was entirely underwritten by the state. A single priestly hierarchy replaced former divisions between the Inner and the Outer Shrines. This new priestly order was charged to distribute talismans annually to all the shrines of the nation, and to all their parishioners, which is to say, to the entire Japanese populace. Diaries of shrine priests show that annual distribution of talismans was the occasion for considerable interaction between priests and local politicians and between priests and BEFEO84 Recipients of the talismans paid a fee for them, and they were to be enshrined in a domestic altar to the karmi, and the people were to bow before them daily. Actually, the principle that people were free to receive or not receive them had been established in , but uncertainty lingered much longer, illustrating the character of pre- Shinto as above religion and therfore not covered by constitutional protections on freedom of religious belief , and belonging to the sphere of civic duties and therefore participation in its various observances could be required Hardacre , The overall effect of such ritualization was to focus popular life more on the nation than on local-level or kin-based loyalties than previously, and to give symbolic expression to the idea of nation as no preceding liturgical order had. Furthermore, through the discourse holding that Shinto was not religious, but suprareligious, it was possible to enact the state liturgical order without reference to the sphere of religion, now constructed as composed of Buddhism, the new religions, and Christianity. Whereas the sphere of religion increasingly became aligned with the private sphere and with the feminine, Shinto was progressively masculinized through its association with the state and the ejection of female ritualists from authoritative positions at shrines. These changes were accompanied by the de-ritualization of reproductive life, by stigmatizing midwives and their sex-specific corpus of knowledge as superstitious and irrational, and by instituting a bureaucratized, medicalized midwifery independent from local communities. Twentieth-century State De-ritualization of Pregnancy and Childbirth The new Meiji state reiterated previous prohibitions on abortion and infanticide. Significantly, infanticide was made punishable on the same terms as homicide as of legal codes Articles and With these exceptions, however, the state did not directly become involved in the practices surrounding contraception, pregnancy, abortion, and childbirth until the early twentieth century. Following a period of instruction and certification, licensed midwives then operated within the state bureaucracy for public health, delivering the majority of births, as physicians before did not routinely attend births unless there were complications requiring surgical intervention. The licensed midwives served to promulgate authorized sanitation practices as well as government policy regarding pregnancy and childbirth, including, during the years to , an aggressive policy of pronatalism. During a transitional period that lasted until , licensed and unlicensed midwives practiced side-by-side, but the state-authorized status of the licensed midwives assisted them gradually to undermine their predecessors and to gain a preeminent position Yoshimura ; Matsuoka Oral histories of licensed midwives from before show that they perceived a great difference between themselves and traditional midwives. For one thing, they were younger as a group, mainly certified following a course of education completed before they had had children themselves. They practiced in a "scientific", which is to say medicalized, bureaucratized, and professionalized context. Uniforms, bicycles, telephones, and use of rickshaws also were conspicuous markers of bourgeois class status. They instructed women to give birth in a prone position, a departure from the former, universal practice of a squatting posture. They taught women how to calculate the day of birth, and they conducted prenatal physical examinations, as well as using rolls of waxed paper, white cotton cloth, and disinfectant at the birth itself.

Whereas the toriagebaasan were expected to handle the effluvia of afterbirth, wash blood-stained bed linens, and generally clean up after a birth, the licensed midwives seem in general to have regarded these menial tasks as beneath them. Unlike the ritualization of pregnancy overseen by toriaigebaasan, the licensed midwife was not a ritualist, and she formed no on-going relation with either mother or child. As these midwives themselves frequently lacked roots in the communities they served, their services could not conduct women in a rite of passage into the company of the fully adult women, and because they were concerned to transmit public knowledge exoterically, they did not initiate women any longer into sexe-segregated gnosis. Thus the meaning of childbirth for women conducted by licensed midwives differed radically from earlier practice, and its supervision by state-authorized personnel lent credence to militarist rhetoric to the effect that giving birth was a patriotic contribution to the state. The licensed midwives effectively de-ritualized pregnancy and childbirth, therefore, even before the institutionalization of hospital birth Shima ; Ueno ; Ochiai ; Fujime Further, while some licensed midwives offered instruction to women on contraception, and while some also practiced abortion, neither practice was considered properly part of midwifery. Not only that, from about until , contraception and abortion were greatly stigmatized through repeated state prohibition and regulatory vigilance. The popular press treated incidents of abortion as scandals and greatly magnified the sense of guilt and shame surrounding it. The treatment of abortion in such a public forum, combined with state prohibitions upon it, contributed to its assumption of a public character, whereas previously it had been relegated to the realm of the private and domestic Fujime ; Ishizaki ; Ichibangase , chapters , In spite of the growing public stigmatization of abortion, many progressive midwives became staunch advocates of both legalized birth control and abortion through the experience of being charged by the state to act as promoters of pronatalist policy, especially after This experience seems to have radicalized many who entered the profession with the intention of instructing women in the requirements of the state upon them see Fujime The sole exception to this generalization lies in those new religions which began to assume a mass character during these years. Numerous new religions founded outside the Buddhist line denied older ideas about the pollution of women and childbirth. Initially, in the Edo period, these practices were pervasively ritualized in a sex-segregated way and their ritual monopolized by female ritualists midwives. A transmission of esoteric because concealed from men knowledge provided the ideological component of first childbirth as a rite of passage conducting women into the higher status of motherhood, which was equivalent to fully adult status for women.

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In a shogunate was established by a warrior, Tokugawa Ieyasu, in the city of Edo present Tokyo. The period thence to the year â€"the Tokugawa, or Edo, eraâ€"constitutes the later feudal period in Japan. This era, though also dominated by warriors, differedâ€¦ As part of the systematic plan to maintain stability, the social order was officially frozen, and mobility between the four classes i. Numerous members of the warrior class, or samurai q. Peasants, who made up 80 percent of the population, were forbidden to engage in non-agricultural activities so as to insure a stable and continuing source of income for those in positions of authority. Another aspect of the Tokugawa concern with political stability was fear of foreign ideas and military intervention. Cognizant that the colonial expansion of Spain and Portugal in Asia had been made possible by the work of Catholic missionaries, the Tokugawa shoguns came to view the missionaries as a threat to their rule. Measures to expel them from the country culminated in the promulgation of three exclusion decrees in the s, which effected a complete ban on Christianity. Moreover, in issuing these orders, the Tokugawa shogunate officially adopted a policy of national seclusion. From onward Japanese subjects were forbidden to travel abroad or to return from overseas, and foreign contact was limited to a few Chinese and Dutch merchants still allowed to trade through the southern port of Nagasaki. The national economy expanded rapidly from the s to the early s. The emphasis placed on agricultural production by the Tokugawa shogunate encouraged considerable growth in that economic sector. The production of fine silk and cotton fabrics, manufacture of paper and porcelain, and sake brewing flourished in the cities and towns, as did trading in these commodities. This increase in mercantile activity gave rise to wholesalers and exchange brokers, and the ever-widening use of currency and credit produced powerful financiers. The emergence of this well-to-do merchant class brought with it a dynamic urban culture that found expression in new literary and art forms see Genroku period. While merchants and to a lesser extent tradesmen continued to prosper well into the 18th century, the daimyo and samurai began to experience financial difficulties. Their primary source of income was a fixed stipend tied to agricultural production, which had not kept pace with other sectors of the national economy. Several attempts at fiscal reform were made by the government during the late 18th and 19th centuries, but the financial strain on the warrior class increased as the period progressed. During its final 30 years in power the Tokugawa shogunate had to contend with peasant uprisings and samurai unrest as well as with financial problems. These factors, combined with the growing threat of Western encroachment, brought into serious question the continued existence of the regime, and by the s many demanded the restoration of direct Imperial rule as a means of unifying the country and solving the prevailing problems. Less than a year later the Meiji emperor was restored to supreme power see Meiji Restoration. Learn More in these related Britannica articles:

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