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Becoming Kami? Discourse on Postmortem Ritual Deification in the Ryukyus

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Controversy over the origin of Japanese kami—whether they began as nature deities or as ancestors—has continued in religious and cultural studies both in Japan and in the West for over a hundred years. Here I contend that research data on the death rites, ancestor worship, and concept of deities found in the Ryukyus should be given more consideration in the debate. This essay deals with the recent (mainly twentieth-century) discourse on postmortem ritual deification in the Ryukyus, where the newly dead are elevated to the status of ancestors and deities. It also reexamines investigations into the nature of these ancestral deities. After reviewing different views expressed in this discourse, I conclude that the standard theory about deification of the dead in the Ryukyus is invalid. That theory proposes that the ancestral spirits who have passed through the final thirty-third-year memorial ceremony lose their personalities and become deified, and eventually they come to be worshiped at the *utaki*-type shrines in the communal agrarian rituals for the whole village or island. I argue that the ancestors deified at the last memorial service within the household ancestor worship paradigm and the deities of the village shrine worship (deities who are often called "ancestor deities") represent two different concepts. An old form of the Ryukyuan ancestor cult is more likely to be represented by such festivals as *shinugu*, *unjami*/*ungami*, *arasachi*, *shibasashi*, *dunga*, *tuurumi*, *hamaori*, *umiri*, and *uyaan*/*uyagan* or by other traditional rites that reveal the indigenous ritual elevation of the dead spirit to the status of ancestral deity.

Keywords: Ryukyus, Okinawa, kami, death rituals, tombs, double burial, senkotsu, body, "soul," ancestor worship, mortuary tablets, postmortem deification, ancestral deities, other world, utaki shrines, visiting deities

Controversy over the origin of Japanese kami—whether they began as nature deities or as ancestors—has continued in religious and cultural studies both in Japan and in the West for over a hundred years. Tsuda Sōkichi held the same opinion as W. G. Aston expressed in his *Shinto: The Way of the Gods*, published in 1905: the origin of kami worship can be traced to nature worship (Hori and Ooms 1970, p. 6). The classic hypothesis in favor of ancestor worship was formulated by Yanagita Kunio (Yanagita 1970). Recently, however, many scholars seem not to support this view. Takeshi Matsumae, in fact, believes that there is much evidence to the contrary (Matsumae 1993, pp. 336–38). As for the Ryukyuan context, Iha Fuyu used to write about a "mixed concept of divinity" in the Ryukyus[1]—"ancestral gods and those gods of the elements commingled with each other"; he also argued that "the ancestral gods of the Shō 尚 royal family became the common gods of all the islands" (Kamata 1974, p. 59). Researchers of Japanese ancestor worship point out that when it comes to identification of ancestral spirits with kami, we touch upon a "problem of an extremely complex nature" (Berentsen 1985, p. 95).

I believe that the discussion on the origin of Japanese kami and their nature would be enhanced if scholars more routinely took into account the research data on death rites, ancestor worship, and the concept of deities in the Ryukyus. Yanagita himself in his essay "About Our Ancestors" supposed that "more definite examples" can be "found on various southern islands with certain small differences which . . . would be profitable to compare" (Yanagita 1988, p. 119).

A number of important considerations about death rites, ancestor worship, and the concept of deities in the Ryukyus have appeared in Western-language publications (Beillevaire 1998; Burd 1952; Guerreiro 1995; Hagunauer 1954 [1977]; Kaneko 1964; Kokubu 1963; Kreiner 1968, 2004; Lebra 1966; Mabuchi 1976a, 1976b, 1980; Newell 1980; Noguchi 1966; Ota 1987; Ouwehand 1985; Pearson 1969; Rokkum 1998; Tanaka 1974, 1977).[2] A comprehensive treatment, however, has yet to be done. Although this article makes no claim to provide such a comprehensive treatment, it will attempt a summary of these valuable contributions to the literature, many of which are scattered in periodicals, outdated editions with a limited circulation, or unpublished doctoral theses.

Two formative essays published roughly one hundred years ago provided the starting point for modern analyses of the death ritual: Robert Hertz's "A Contribution to the Study of the Collective Representation of Death" (1907) and Arnold van Gennep's "The Rites of Passage" (1909) (van Gennep 1960; Hertz 1960). Hertz drew much of his material (e.g., double burials of the Dayak of Borneo) from Indonesia, where death rituals have much in common with other areas of Southeast and East Asia, including the Ryukyus and Japan.[3]

Research on double burials and secondary disposal of the dead clearly demonstrates the complexities of death rituals. This research has continued to be pursued in modern cross-cultural studies in the West (Rosenblatt et al. 1976; Schroeder 2001), although the Ryukyuan context is rarely treated in them.[4] The latest research on Ryukyuan death rites, ancestor worship, and the concept of deities is largely unfamiliar to non-Japanese-speaking audience because it has been conducted mainly by Japanese and local Okinawan scholars (Akamine 1989, 1991, 1996a, 1996b; Sai 2004; Heshiki 1995; Higa 1999; Nakama 1989; Nakama and Ebara 1983; Okinawa ken Chiikishi Kyōgikai 1989; Sakai 1987; Uematsu 1986, 1988, 1993). The writing in Japanese of these scholars, not to mention the contribution by

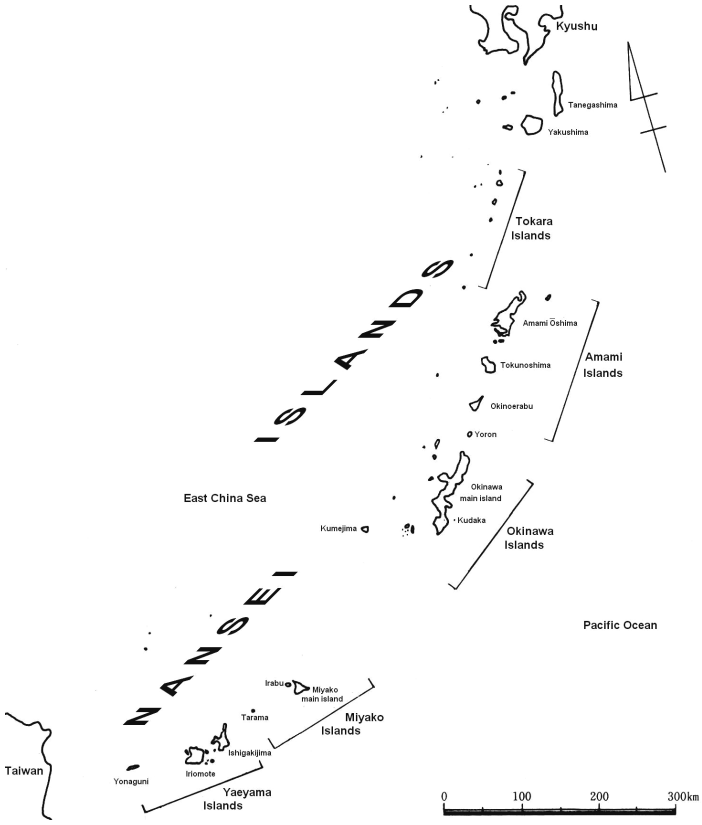

Fig 1. Map of the Ryukyuan culture area (Nansei Islands).

Katō Masaharu to the multi-volume *Okinawa daihyakka jiten* (Encyclopedia of Okinawa, published in 1983), constitutes the main body of the most important new publications on the topic. This essay aims to help fill the scholarly lacuna between those who read Japanese with ease and those who do not.

In a recent Japanese-language publication (Baksheev 2006a) as well as a paper in English (Baksheev 2006c), I have focused on the liminal period between life and death in the ritual process of deification of the dead in the Ryukyus. Those studies took the standpoint of van Gennep's and Hertz's theories on a tripartite structure of death rituals: separation (disintegration)—liminality (transition)—incorporation (synthesis). This essay deals with the recent discourse on the postmortem ritual deification in the Ryukyus (primarily in the twentieth-century), where the newly dead are elevated to the status of ancestors and deities. I also examine the nature of these ancestral deities.[5]

The Ryukyuan Death Rites within a Regional Context

Both single (*ichijisō* 一次葬), or final, and double (*nijūsō* 二重葬), or multiple, disposal (burial) methods were practiced in the Ryukyus. The single (final) disposal method included the abandonment of the corpse in a desolate place, in the jungle, on a cliff, in a cave (so-called *fūsō* 風葬, lit. "wind burial"), or in a tomb. Such practices were said to have been motivated

by an extreme fear of the dead (Kaneko 1964, p. 25).

Early Ryukyuan sources such as *omoro* おもろ (Ok. *umuru/umui*)[6] songs are "completely silent" about death and the disposal of the dead and ancestors. Shipwrecked Koreans who spent sixteen months of 1477–1478 in various islands of the Ryukyus reported that the natives disposed of their dead in a desolate area (specifically in natural caves) designated for this specific purpose near, but not in, the village. They also reported that the bodies were individually placed in wooden coffins or on boards, or were wrapped in straw mats, depending upon the regional custom. In addition, rather than being buried they were instead left to rot. The Koreans do not tell us how the people treated the bones after the flesh disintegrated, or what the natives thought about the dead (cf. Kaneko 1964, p. 28; Tanaka 1974, p. 33). Therefore, we are unable to say for sure which disposal method, single (final) or double (multiple), was observed by the Koreans.

Single (final) and double (multiple) disposal methods in the Ryukyus[7] and their origin and relation to the "two-tomb system" (*ryōbosei* 両墓制) of Japan proper have been discussed by many scholars, among them Kokubu Naochi, Kaneko Erika, Sakurai Takutarō, Harada Toshiaki, Mogami Takayoshi, Yamaori Tetsuo, and Shintani Takanori (Kaneko 1964, pp. 25, 28–29; Mogami 1980; Shintani 1991, p. 263; Suzuki 2000; Sai 2004, pp. 27–31; Sakurai 1972; Yamaori 2004), but the conclusion they reach does not constitute evidence. Some of them consider both the Ryukyus and Japan proper as recipients of repeated cultural influence from the coastal areas of South China (Kaneko 1964, p. 29). Others deny any direct relationship between the multiple disposal method (including the "bone-washing" [*senkotsu* 洗骨] ritual) in the Ryukyus and the "two-tomb system" of Japan proper (Shintani 1991, p. 263).

Exposure of the dead body as the first phase of the multiple (double) disposal method, and the deposition of the cleaned bones after the "bone-washing" ritual as constituting the second phase, were widely distributed in many regions extending from East Asia to Southeast Asia, including the Nansei Islands (see LeBar 1971–1975; Sai 2004; Baksheev 2005). According to Fujii Masao, the basic idea of this double disposal method was that the cleansing of bones had the meaning of promoting of the dead to ancestors ("ancestral spirit"); thus deposition of the cleaned bones was the last mortuary ritual. Later, both Chinese rites based on Buddhism and Confucianism and Japanese rites were imported. These numerous streams influenced the original disposal method on the Nansei Islands. As a result, the period of deification of the dead—their conversion into ancestors—gradually extended. The local variations in the disposal of the dead as seen in different regions of the Ryukyus is due to the differences in how these influences were adapted. At first, the ceremony of the forty-ninth day was established. Later, Chinese rites based on Confucian memorial services held on the hundredth day and the first and third anniversaries of death were adopted. In the sixteenth century Japanese ritual memorial services held on the seventh, thirteenth, seventeenth, twenty-fifth and thirty-third anniversaries of death were adopted and adjusted according to the construction of the tombs which developed around that time. As a result, a conception emerged that saw the interior of a tomb as a place for purifying the spirit of the dead as well a home for an ancestor spirit; there was, that is, a certain "symbolism of the space" (Fujii 1989, p. 320).

The present form of ancestor worship in the Ryukyus is supposed to have been transmitted from China together with Buddhism during the fourteenth century. It was not until

the seventeenth century, however, that ancestor worship became prevalent throughout the Ryukyus (Okinawan Government 1992).

Ryukyuan Tombs, Their Interior Structure, and Postmortem Status of the Dead

As a place of worship of the dead and ancestral spirits, the family or kin group tomb is equally as important as the ancestral household altar. Several varieties of the first phase of the multiple (double) disposal procedure are known in the Ryukyus: (1) placement of the coffin in the jungle where the danger of desecration by animals may have resulted in the erection of (2) a wooden or reed hut, (3) a stone or wooden fence, (4) a cairn, (5) a stone chamber around the coffin, or (6) its transfer into a natural or artificial cave closed off by a stone, a wooden door, or a wall of coral stones (Kaneko 1964, p. 26).

According to Nakama Gishō, originally there were two separate places of burial in the Ryukyus: a primary burial site for the natural disappearance of the soft parts of the body (Ok. *shiruhirashi/shiruhirashimee*)[8] and a permanent burial for the disposal of the cleansed bones (Jp. *nōkotsuba* 納骨場; Ok. *tooshii* 当世).[9] Later these two stages merged into one tomb either creating a single demarcated space, or two chambers placed side by side[10] (cf. Heshiki 1995, p. 58; Higa 1999, p. 214). The majority of Okinawan tombs host both primary and permanent burials, but in some localities they are performed in different tombs ("village tombs" of Kunigashira-son, and "*munchuu* clan tombs" of Itoman) (Uematsu 1988, p. 164). Burial complexes consisting of several primary tombs and one permanent tomb can be seen even today. Originally primary tombs and permanent tombs belonged to different burial methods and were termed differently.[11]

There are three general categories of tombs in the Ryukyus, differentiated by form and structure: the "turtle-back" (Ok. *kaaminakuubaka*; Jp. *kame*[*no*]*kōbaka* 亀甲墓) for the kin group interment, the "gable" (Ok. *faafuubaka*, Jp. *hafubaka* 破風墓) for household use, and the "cave" (Ok. *tuuru* or *gamabaka*; Jp. *yokoana* 横穴 or *dōketsubaka* 洞穴墓) type which is an area tunneled into a hillside (figs. 4-7). Concerning the ownership and usage of tombs at least four kinds are distinguished: (1) family tombs (*kazokubaka* 家族墓); (2) "clan tombs" (Ok. *munchuubaka*, Jp.

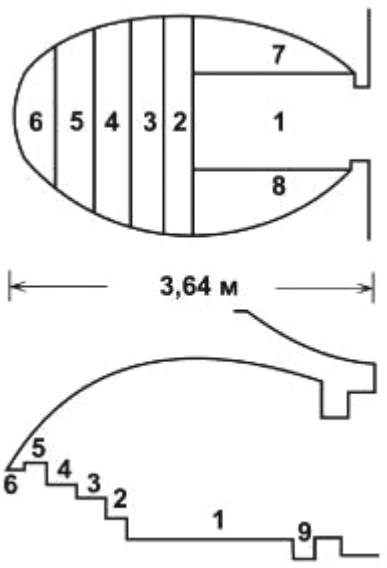

Fig 2. Standard interior structure of a Ryukyuan "turtle-back" type tomb, with a single demarcated chamber for both primary and permanent burials. (Adapted from Nakama and Ebara 1983, p. 157.)

Legend: 1. The lowest platform near the entrance of the tomb, a depository for the coffin for the natural disappearance of the soft parts of the body (Ok. *shiruhirashi*).

2-5, 7-8. Several higher ledges, on which the bone-jars with the cleansed bones are placed.

6. The highest platform at the rear of the tomb with a pit (Ok. *gushoo*, "the future life"), a general ossuary.

9. Outlet groove for the fluids from the body.

monchūbaka 門中墓); (3) "common tombs" (Ok. *muyeebaka*, Jp. *moaibaka* 模合墓); and (4). "village tombs" (*murabaka* 村墓) (Nakama and Ebara 1983, p. 132) (figs. 8-11). "*Munchuu* tombs" are used by a kin group; "common tombs" are used by several families; and "village tombs" are used by the people of one or several hamlets (Kato 2004, p. 20).

The basic interior structure of tombs was the same throughout all society, from aristocrat to commoner. The standard interior structure of a Ryukyuan tomb (with a single demarcated chamber both for primary and permanent burials) is designed in such a way that the position of the physical remains should correspond to the changes in the postmortem status of the dead (figs. 2, 12). The lowest platform near the entrance of the tomb is designed as a depository for the coffin; several higher ledges receive the bone-jars; and the highest platform at the rear of the tomb with a pit (Ok. *gushoo*, Jp. *goshō* 後生; "afterlife," "the future life")[12] serves as a general ossuary (Uematsu 1986, p. 90; Kaneko 1964, p. 25; Newell 1980, p. 30; Ouwehand 1985, p. 181). According to Fujii, "the symbolism of the space" within the tomb is seen in the development of the rituals which serve to demarcate the process of the deceased person's losing of personality, from (a) deposition of the coffin in the *shiruhirashi* place through (b) *senkotsu* ritual and reassembling of the cleansed bones into a bone-jar placed on the shelf for the laying of remains to rest (*nōkotsudana* 納骨棚; Ok. *tooshii*) to (c) joining the anonymous host of ancestral deities who have already received the thirty-third-year service (Fujii 1989, p. 320).

The Primary (Temporary) Funeral

The Ryukyuan death rites consist of the primary temporary funeral, which is carried out soon after death, and the mortuary rites, which include a long series of memorial services as well as the secondary burial of clean bones. When somebody dies, the body is usually disposed of on the very day of death or the day following (Lebra 1966, p. 196). The burial itself takes place when the tide is ebbing to diminish the impact of the death. Since the dead body is seen as a source of pollution, during the primary funeral the coffin is placed in the lowest position in the center of the tomb. One temporary memorial tablet, sandals, a staff, a hat and straw cloak or umbrella, a lantern, and food and drink are placed at the tomb door for the deceased on his long road to the other world (Uematsu 1993, p. 268) (fig. 13). In funerals on Hateruma (Yaeyama islands)[13] the deceased is addressed with the words: "So now you have become an *uya p'situ*.[14] . . . We are sending you over the great road, the wide road, the good, the easy road of the hereafter (*gushoo*) to your grave (*sinju mutu*), to the place of the *uya p'situ*" (Ouwehand 1985, p. 188). Due to all these things the primary funeral has an image of "travel," or "voyage" to the other world; this image signifies the transitional (liminal) status of the deceased during this period.

The primary funeral's purpose is to separate physically the dead from the living; a series of secondary rites following the funeral (the memorial services and the secondary burial) have the purpose of transforming the spirit of the dead person into an individual ancestor and eventually into a deified ancestor (Ota 1987, p. 129). On Ikema island (Miyako islands), it is believed that the dead become kami on the very day of death. However, at first the deceased is not a full-fledged, or "true" kami (Jp. *ma no kami* 眞の神)—achievement of that state occurs only on the ninetieth day—but rather a "divine human" (Ok. *kamsuto* 神人) (Nakamatsu 1968, p. 62).

Those who have met "unnatural death" (*ijōshi* 異常死)[15] and children younger than seven years old receive different treatment, depending on the locality. Both must be buried outside and not inside the gravesite (fig. 14). It is feared that the former will become a "wandering soul." When a person dies at a place other than his native house, his soul is thought possibly to be lost and thus in danger of becoming a ghost. A young child is not given a tablet and the memorial service is organized differently. However, after "bone washing" is completed, the urn with their bones is placed in the main grave (Ouwehand 1985, pp. 188, 190). By contrast, priestesses were not only accorded a special tomb, but in consequence of the belief that they "ascend to heaven body and soul," were also exempted from the general bone-washing ritual (Kaneko 1964, p. 27).

Memorial Services

Researchers point out that the mortuary rites in Japan and other societies in Asia "involve the reincorporation of a spirit [of the deceased] with its ancestral lineage or the rebirth of a spirit in another world" (Bremen 1998, p. 131). This is the case in the Ryukyus, where a person does not cease to exist when he dies but joins the host of deities of countless preceding generations. For many years, however, the spirit of the deceased is somewhere in between the world of the living and the world of deities. For two or three generations (usually for thirty-three years) the deceased will be worshiped, consulted, and prayed to as an individual (Burd 1952, p. 271).

After death the soul of the deceased passes through several stages until it is united with the other ancestral deities. Ouwehand, following Ooms' concept of the Japanese "double domestic life cycle," describes the memorial services in the Ryukyus as "a series of *rites de passage*, successive stages on a ritual process intended to socialize the *putugi*[16] soul, comparable to the socialization process embodied in the living within the household community." This process continues until the twenty-fifth and thirty-third anniversaries (here again comparable to the ages at which one of the living establishes a new phase of life) it reaches its climax and the *putugi* status is converted into that of the *kan*,[17] the "full-fledged ancestor" (Ouwehand 1985, p. 192).

Elaborate funerals and memorial services came to the Ryukyus in the form of Chinese Confucian ancestral rituals and Buddhism, along with the tradition of placing determined periods between the anniversaries of a death. A series of memorial services can last many years. First there is a mourning period of forty-nine days after the death, consisting of seven seventh-day ceremonies.[18] These seventh-day ceremonies are called *nankasai* 七日祭り (Jp. *nanoka matsuri*); the first of them is called *hachinanka* 初七日 (first *nanka*), *arananka* 新七日 (new *nanka*), or *pitunanka* 人七日 (*nanka* of a human being, or seventh-day ceremony of a human being) (Nakama and Ebara 1983, p. 88). The first and the seventh seventh-day ceremonies are more elaborate than others, and a special emphasis is placed on the seventh seventh-day ceremony (*shichinanka*) which is also called *shinjuukunichime* 四十九日目 (see fig. 15).

Rites of the Forty-ninth Day

A mourning period of forty nine days after the death is a liminal period[19] of uncertainty and uneasiness: the soul of the deceased has not settled down yet and is still wandering be-

tween the tomb and the house (see Table 1). Fear of the "wandering souls" will only subside after the forty-ninth day (Ouwehand 1985, p. 188). On Miyako there is also a belief that when a person dies, his soul leaves the body and goes to the underground world called *ni'ija* (Jp. *nirai*). The flesh and bones buried in a grave decay and become *punishin nikushin* ("the spirit of the bones and flesh"). Even if the soul of the deceased goes to the "afterworld," for a while, it is not aware that its owner has died. The soul of the dead wants to remain in this world to try to call on his family, relatives, and friends. As this soul moves back and forth between the afterworld and this world,[20] other souls try to steal their way into this world. The soul of the recently deceased person is in a very dangerous and polluted state called *busozu*. Such a contaminated state can last from forty-nine to one hundred days after death (Takiguchi 1984, pp. 37–78).

As for the body of the deceased, I would like to draw attention to the belief about the natural separation of the putrefying flesh from bones within the tomb before the forty-ninth day after death. This belief is found throughout the Nansei islands, but seems not to be well known among Western scholars. For example, the people of Yoron island believe that "on the forty-ninth day the flesh separates from bones, and during this period the flesh is being putrefied and the deceased is suffering greatly" (Kato 1977, p. 51). On this day, forty-nine cakes of special white *mochi* (*shiromochi* 白餅)[21] are offered at the tomb; this is explained as being because the human body is constituted from forty-nine bones. In Kaneshiro of Itoman City (the main island of Okinawa) they prepare forty-eight long *mochi* cakes ("bones") and one big round mochi cake ("a skull") (Nakama, Ebara 1983, p. 89). In Hateruma on this occasion a large dish which holds *puni mutsi* (Jp. *hone mochi* 骨餅) symbolizing the forty-nine bones and the skull is also offered in front of the household altar (Ouwehand 1985, p. 193). Several similar cases from different localities of the Ryukyus are cited by Sakai (Sakai 1987, pp. 352–53). On Tarama and Minna islands (Miyako islands), the family visits the grave with offerings on the ninth day after the death, believing that on this day the flesh has already putrefied to the stage that "a head separates from the trunk" (Ok. *fugu uchi* フグウティ、首落ち); the deceased needs care during this difficult period when he is in the process of becoming "truly dead" (Uematsu 1993, p. 263).

During the period before the forty-ninth day the decaying body is considered to be extremely polluted. Therefore, special care and intensive placation are required during this period. For the family of the deceased the pollution is said to persist, therefore members of the deceased's household visit the tomb. In this intermediate state the deceased has not yet become "truly dead" and is thus called "a new person" (Ok. *imapitu*, Jp. *ima no hito*); that is, he has still not reached the "other world" and remains "on the way to it."

The forty-ninth day marks an important phase in the series of memorial services.[22] In principle, on the forty-ninth day (but sometimes on the third, seventh, twenty-first or thirty-fifth day),[23] a rite in the Ryukyus usually called *mabui wakashi* (lit. "separation of soul") is conducted next to the tomb. According to Uematsu, on Tarama island, this rite is called *kambito bakaa* カムビトバカー, "separation of the dead (Ok. *kambito*カムビト) from the living (Ok. *ikibito*イキビト)" (Uematsu 1993, p. 247). On the main island of Miyako, this rite is also called *kampitu bakaazu* カムピトゥバカーズ, "separation of kami [that is, the dead, the ancestor] from the living" (Okamoto 1999, p. 62). On Ikema island, in Noguchi's words, the rite of the "parting of the deceased soul from its kin" called by the people "the parting of deities and men" (Ok. *kan-sutsu-bakyaai*; Jp. *kami to hito no wakare*) is conducted

on the day of the death or on the third, fifth, or another odd-numbered day after the death, "the sooner the better." This date is selected by divination, and the timing differs according to the age of the deceased (Noguchi 1966, p. 28; Noguchi 1975, p. 209).

The rite of *mabui wakashi* is carried out "to separate the dead spirit from the living souls of the family members," who are in danger of following the dead family member. Its purpose is to send the spirit of the deceased, which is still lingering in this world, to the other world, where dead spirits should stay (Akamine 1989, p. 81). The spirit of the deceased is summoned by a female shamanistic medium who talks to the spirit. On Ikema, a *munusunma* (or *munusu*; Jp. "*monoshiri*," lit. "[those who] know things," i.e., "those who possess knowledge and divination") performs "*kankakai*" (Jp. *kamigakari*) and is possessed by a spirit of the dead (Noguchi 1975, p. 209). On the main island of Miyako, the dead is told by the family: "You cannot come back to this world. You are not a member of my family any longer. Do not call on me. Go to the world of the dead" (Takiguchi 1984, p. 38). On the main island of Okinawa (Nagahama at Yomitan), a *yuta* "shaman" pronounces a magic spell that commands, "Should the living soul and the dead spirit be separated, may the dead spirit not come here again" (Nakama 1989, p. 243). The deceased utters his desires and feelings through the shaman, and finally he announces his departure to the other world (Ota 1987, p. 131; Kreiner 2003, p. 403). In the village of Karimata on the main island of Miyako, the ceremony on the forty-ninth day was performed by a local female shaman. As the author heard on many occasions, she is usually called *kamkakarya* (*kangkaaria* in Burd's transcription) by the people of Miyako.[24] In spite of the shamanistic aura of the ceremony, it is designated by the Buddhist term *kaigen* (開眼 "opening the spiritual eyes; attaining enlightenment") (cf. Burd 1952, p. 228). The *mabui wakashi* ceremony on the forty-ninth day marks a turning point; this is the day on which the final separation of the soul is celebrated. Also on the forty-ninth day, a distribution of the deceased's belongings (*katami wake*) among the relatives is carried out.

The definite transition to the status of the "real dead" (*putigi*, Jp. *hotoke*, "buddha"; *uyap'situ*; Jp. *oyahito*, "parent-person," "human parent") is made materially manifest on the same day by the burning of the temporary memorial tablet, sandals, and all the funeral paraphernalia left at the tomb door (Ouwehand 1985, p. 194; Uematsu 1988, pp. 150–51). It means that the deceased has traversed a long path and reached the other world (Ok. *gushoo*) now becoming "a human being of the other world" (Ok. *gushoon'chu* 後生人 or *gushoonumun* 後生の者) (Uematsu 1988, p. 165). From this point forward the "truly dead" will "live" in the other world until his deification. At this point the deceased does not require meal offerings everyday. From this point offerings will be brought to the tomb only on special occasions, at annual ceremonies (*nenki*) and for observances such as the *jurukunichi*, or *miisa* (*mii-gusoo* 新後生), the New Year's Day of the Dead[25] (sixteenth of the first month of the lunar calendar); the *shiimii* (Jp. *seimei*, Ch. *qingming* 清明)[26] festival on the main island of Okinawa (between the twenty second of the second lunar month and the third day of the third lunar month); Tanabata, or "Star Festival" (seventh of the seventh month of the lunar calendar); and *higan* (*p'singan*), the spring and autumn equinoxes.

Final funeral ceremonies serve as a cultural limitation on the mourning period in many societies, investigators have pointed out. Such ceremonies are a public marker of a return to normal behavior patterns for the relatives of the deceased as well as the larger social unit. In Karimata and Bora Villages on the main island of Miyako, the *kaigen* ceremony on the

forty-ninth day ends the mourning period (Jp. *imiake* 忌明け) and the family can reenter the social life of the village from which they have been excluded throughout this period (Burd 1952, p. 228; Fujii 1989, p. 315). In the Ryukyus, mourning is lifted on the forty-ninth day but memorial services and secondary rites are still continued.

The "Bone-washing" Ritual and Other Rites Several Years after Death

After the completion of the forty-nine-day mourning period, rites are basically limited to memorial services, which are usually held on the first, third, seventh, thirteenth, twenty-first, twenty-fifth and thirty-third anniversaries of death. On these occasions, visits are made to the tomb. The observances are basically similar to the rites held during the forty-nine days of mourning (Lebra 1966, p. 199), but memorial services on the twenty-first, twenty-fifth and thirty-third anniversaries are distinguished from the previous services (see below).

Three to seven years after death,[27] the secondary burial is carried out. The so-called *senkotsu* (Ok. *shinkuchi* 洗骨 "bone-washing" ritual),[28] which is related with similar practices in many parts of East Asia, Southeast Asia, and Southern China (Korean Peninsula, Indonesia, Fukien Province of China, Taiwan) is carried out (cf. Sai; Fujii 1989, p. 319). In Japan the *senkotsu* rite is mainly restricted to the Nansei islands, although it is said to have been widely practiced previously in the seashore regions of Japan proper. This includes its southern boundary in the Yaeyama islands, and the northern boundary of the Akuseki and Kikai islands (Tokara islands), although it is not observed on the islands of Tanegashima and Yaku (Shintani 1991, p. 269; Fujii 1989. p. 316).

The bone-washing ritual is conducted often on Tanabata (seventh day of the seventh month of the lunar calendar) which also marks the beginning of the *bon* festival. Before the introduction of Tanabata it was carried out during *shinugu* and *unjami/ungami* 海神 festivals (seventh month of the lunar calendar) and *arasachi/arashitsu* 新節, *shibasashi/shibazashi* 柴差し, and *dunga/donga*[29] festivals (eighth month of the lunar calendar) (Sakai 1987, pp. 64–65). During the *senkotsu* ritual the coffin is opened, the body is cleaned of any remains of the soft parts (sometimes a sickle is used), and the bones are washed in water or a local distilled liquor called *awamori* and reassembled in a bone-jar (figs. 16-18) (with the name of the deceased written on it) which is placed at the first higher ledge within the tomb and with time is elevated to the next ledges. This is, however, only one type of the secondary disposal of the body—relatively well known, perhaps, because previously it was used by the bureaucrats of the Shuri court. In an abbreviated variant of this type the cleansed bones are just piled together within the tomb. Finally, no bone-washing ritual is conducted; when another death occurs the bones of the previous deceased are pushed to the rear of the tomb (Heshiki 1995, pp. 60, 504).[30] However, as was previously mentioned, priestesses were exempted from the general bone-washing ritual as it was believed that they bodily ascended to heaven. As "kami persons" (Ok. *kamin'chu* 神人) their bodies were not thought to be a source of pollution.

The state of bones when the coffin is opened has a deep meaning. The state when the flesh did not decay properly or the body turned into a mummy is believed to indicate a curse (*tatari*) resulting from the deceased or one of his family allegedly doing something wrong. In this case, people say, "He is still in this world." On the contrary, when the body is cleaned of all remains of the soft parts and is turned into "beautiful white bones" it is taken as evidence that the dead has "ascended to the sky as a deity" due to his proper behavior during his lifetime (Nakamatsu 1968, p. 64; Nakama 1989, p. 236). In some locations of the Miyako

islands[31] the cleaning of the bones is considered necessary if the spirit is to be free to enter the world of deities. Ryukyuan terms for the *senkotsu* ritual have the meaning "to clean, to purify" (*churakunasun* チュラクナスン, Jp. *kiyoraka ni suru* 清らかにする), "to embellish" (Jp. *utsukushiku suru* 美しくする), "to lighten, to reduce, to alleviate" (*karukunasun* カルクナスン, Jp. *karuku suru* 軽くする), "to whiten" (*shirarukunasun* シラルクナスン, Jp. *shiroku suru* 白くする).

During the *senkotsu* ritual the remains are separated from "red" flesh and blood and transformed into "white" bones which are, as Uematsu Akashi argues, the symbol of the "semen" (Ok. *sani*, Jp. *sane* 実・種) inherited from the father. At this point the body is reduced to bones, which symbolize patrilineality, and thus the deceased is promoted to the status of individual ancestor (Uematsu 1986, p. 81; Uematsu 1988, pp. 140, 146, 165).

We can draw a parallel to the mortuary rites of Indonesia. In his study of the aboriginals of Indonesia, Robert Hertz argued that it is not until the body has decayed that it can pass out of the liminal state. Once the corporeal body has decayed, the final ceremony occurs. This final ceremony marks the admittance of the soul of the deceased into the land of the dead and is symbolically represented by the transfer of the bones from the location of initial storage to the place of secondary and final disposal. In the Ryukyus, as Nakamatsu argues, the dead can become "full-fledged kami" (*kanzen na kami to naru* 完全な神と成る) only when the flesh decays completely (Nakamatsu 1968, p. 64).

Rites of the Thirty-Third Year

Thirty-three years after death, the bones of the deceased are finally emptied into a general ossuary in the highest and innermost part of the tomb where all ancestral bones are mixed together and individuals are no longer recalled by name. The remains inside the tomb pass through four phases:

I. The wandering dead who has not yet reached the other world.
II. The dead who has reached the other world.
III. The dead who has been stripped of flesh and blood and turned into bones.
IV. The anonymous dead whose bones are mixed with other old bones (Uematsu 1988, p. 167).

This process corresponds to the treatment of memorial tablets at household ancestral altars (see below). Thus the deceased loses his individual identity and joining the anonymous host of ancestral deities. After the thirty-third year, the deceased is no longer singled out for special rites but is accorded the same treatment as other ancestors of the family (Lebra 1966, p. 199). The thirty-third-year service demarcates the "individual ancestor" (Ok. *uyapitu/uyap'situ*; Jp. *oyahito* 親人) and "deified ancestor" or ancestral deity (Ok. *gansu/gwansu*; Jp. *ganso* 元祖, "founding ancestor") (Ota 1987. p. 119). On Kudaka island (Okinawa islands) people say that "the spirit of the dead becomes a kami" with the thirty-third-year service" (Akamine 1996, p. 81).

Memorial services are essentially a series of rites of passage, in which the newly dead person is, "step by onerous step," separated from the living relatives and prepared for the full ancestral status of kami-hood. Thirty-three years between the death and the final anniversary

service is then a transitional, precarious period, during which every detail of ceremonies must be meticulously attended to in order not to jeopardize this delicate state (Tanaka 1977, p. 47).

Memorial services, including that for the thirteenth year, are distinguished from the next two services. Starting from the twenty-fifth- and thirty-third-year services, the local people begin to use red colored items for food offerings, instead of white ones. Red items are suitable for festive occasions. The thirty-third anniversary is explicitly described not as a mortuary service for the dead but as a festivity for deities (Ouwehand 1985, p. 193). After the thirty-third anniversary, ancestors cease to visit their natal homes during the bon festival

Table 1. Standard Ideal Pattern of the Process of Ritual Deification of the Deceased in the Ryukyus Within the Ancestor Worship Paradigm[32]

Ritual process / **Mode**	**On deathbed**	**Biological death or preliminary burial**	**Rites of the forty-ninth day**	**Secondary burial ("bone-washing") or other rites** (several years later)	**Rites of the thirty-third year**
Body	Body (in the house)	Bodily remnants (within the tomb)	Natural separation of flesh from bones (within the tomb)	Individual bones (in an urn)	Mixing of bones (in general ossuary)
Memorial tablet	—	Two temporary tablets (at household ancestral altar and near the tomb)	Permanent tablet (at household ancestral altar)	Permanent tablet (at household ancestral altar)	Without a tablet (incense burner at household ancestral altar)
Status of the soul	Rite of calling the soul	Intermediate state, or "suffering"	Spirit of the dead	Individual ancestral spirit	Depersonalized ancestral spirit
Status of the deceased	Separation from the living	Liminal period, or "on the way"	The deceased as a human	Ancestor as a human	Nonhuman —founding ancestor, or deity
Whereabouts of the soul	Departure · This world	Wandering between the tomb and the house	Tomb, or another world	Tomb, or another world	Heavens
Deification process	Initial process (from the living to ancestral spirit)				secondary process (deification)

in the Yaeyamas. But if the thirty-third-year service is not conducted, the dead is believed to preserve his personality and not to become an ancestral deity. He does not ascend into the sky, but rather continues to "live" within the tomb as "a human being of the other world" (Ok. *gushoon'chu* 後生の人) forever.

There are deviations from this standard pattern. In the old households of Shuri and Naha, for example, annual ceremonies were still performed after the thirty-third-year service, while in the royal family the ceremonies were also continued in the *bodaiji* temple after the thirty-third-year service. In cases such as these, the dead does not lose his individual identity and join the anonymous host of ancestors; rather, he is not forgotten and he does not become a deity (Akamine 1996, p. 75).

Notions of the "Other World" in the Ryukyus

Sakai Usaku argues that "in old times" there was not a clear picture of an afterlife in the Ryukyus. In other words, a concept of where the dead soul should journey did not exist (Sakai 1987, p. 296). However, the folk cosmology in the Ryukyus included notions of the "other worlds" which later developed to become diverse, complex, and even chaotic. This topic is worthy of specialized research. In that the notions of the "other worlds" are essential for understanding death rites and ancestor worship, a brief overview of this issue is provided below. Here I follow the theory of Komatsu Kazuhiko, who has reflected extensively on the concept of "another world" (*ikai* 異界) in Japanese culture (Komatsu 2001). While "other world" (*takai* 他界) is basically limited to the world of the dead, "another world" is not only the world of the dead, but also the world of deities, ancestors, "demons," and other supernatural entities.

In the Ryukyus the "other world" is designated as *gushoo/gusoo*, while "another world" is termed *nirai-kanai*, or *nirai*. There are notions of at least four kinds of "other worlds" (and both "other world" and "another world" are implied). The four are identified by different locations: the overseas world, the submarine world, the subterranean world, and the celestial world. For example, *nirai-kanai* is usually treated as an island in the eastern seas, namely, a holy land beyond the sea. "*Niiree kanee, giiree kanee*" (*nirai-kanai*), is a name found in early accounts;[33] some researchers, however, consider that it is "not a part of current belief" (Lebra 1966, p. 221). In reality, however, many beliefs and rites connected with this concept have been preserved until the present, particularly seen in the rituals of "visiting deities" (*raihōshin* 来訪神) or "stranger-deities" (*marebito* マレビト). *Nirai-kanai* is conceived to be the source of life, fertility, and prosperity, as well as the place of origin of the Ryukyuan people—a "paradise," a bright and rich land far in the east or southeast. The seeds of rice and other crops, fire, and life itself are thought to be gifts to people bestowed by the god of this "paradise," *niree nu ufunushi* (lit. "The Great Master of Nirai"). But in some of the legends, the other world beyond the sea is spoken of as "dark and dreadful"; from there the deities of sickness and pestilence come, bringing death and suffering to the people (Kreiner 1968, pp. 108–9).

Itō Mikiharu distinguishes two complexes related to the notion of *nirai-kanai*: one centers on the idea of a *nirai*-paradise beyond the sea and carried by the *noro*-priestesses in their harvest festival on the village level; the other is based on the custom of abandoning the dead at a certain taboo-place, where a path leads to *gushoo*, a dark realm underneath the earth. There live the personal souls of the dead, who can be called on by the yuta-shamans and are

worshiped within the family out of fear of their vengeance (Kreiner 1968, p. 109).

The same word (*nirai, nirai-kanai*) and its variants are employed to denote the bottom of the sea and earth in Miyako (*ni'ija/nijja/niizzya/nilla/nirra/nirrya, nizura, niraisuku*) and Yaeyama (*niira/niiru/niiro, niirasuku*), while its cognates imply the "overseas holy land" in Okinawa (*niree-kanee, niraya/niruya, miruya/jiruya*) and Amami (*neriya/niruya/niraya*), irrespective of whether or not it is located at the bottom of the sea. On the one hand, then, *nirai-kanai* is depicted as the bottom of the sea, a holy land beyond the horizon (ideally in the direction of the sunrise) or the sky, and on the other hand, it is seen in the form of the bottom of the earth a cave or hills close to the village. As Mabuchi argues, in reconstructing Ryukyuan cosmology, there is very little that has to do with the idea of the "the horizontal line versus the vertical one," but far more with an oblique or arched line along which the important figures of the community rituals—figures such as the visiting deities and the deified ancestors—move and shift the location of their "headquarters." In the ritual context of the Ryukyus, it is not that the sky is connected with the top of a mountain or a hill, even though the sky is only the passage through which the overseas deities visit the mundane world. According to the situation, such deities might come and go by either air or sea, or at least partially, by a way under the sea, even though their homeland is of one and the same place (Mabuchi 1980, pp. 5, 7).

At the same time, however, the bottom of the earth is conceived generally as the place where the souls of the dead go, at least for some duration of time (Mabuchi 1980, p. 7). The views on this issue of three famous Japanese scholars were summarized by Sakai Usaku. Thus, Origuchi Shinobu conjectured that caves were the entrance for the dead souls, which would travel by an underwater path to the other world (*higan*), finally reaching *nirai*, the "Island of the Dead" somewhere distant in the sea. Yanagita used to believe that the dead souls go deep under the earth; he also placed *nirai*-paradise on the horizon where heaven and sea meet. In Tanigawa Ken'ichi's opinion, the dead souls go to the subterranean world called *ni'ija*, or *nizura*, but through the "bottom of the earth" they reach the other world (*meifu* 冥府), namely, the sea (Sakai 1987, p. 287).[34] Here the positions of Origuchi and Tanigawa are quite close, while Origuchi concurs with Yanagita in the opinion that the world of the afterlife is not subterranean. Sakai points out that all three theories appeal to notions of the subterranean world (*ni'ija*, or *nizura*) which are popular on Miyako. Sakai himself is doubtful whether Ryukyuan *ne no kuni* (*neera*) is subterranean and quotes a ritual song from Karimata Village about deities "who are descending from *ne no shima*" 根島 (dial. *ni suma*), consequently *neera* seems to be located in the sky (Sakai 1987, p. 287). He argues that *nirai* and the world of the dead (Jp. *goshō* 後生) belong to different cosmological concepts (Sakai 1987, p. 341).

In the Miyako islands, there is no notion of a *nirai*-paradise beyond the sea. There, in Ueno, Urabu, and Ikema, beliefs in the sea kami called *ryuugu/ruuguu* 竜宮神 are popular. These beliefs are not as old as the *nirai* concept. In Ryukyuan beliefs, *ruugu* (or *duugu*, "dragon palace"; Jp. *ryūgu* 竜宮) is the residence of the sea kami, but in China and Japan it refers to a dragon palace located on the bottom of the sea (Lebra 1966, p. 222). Yanagita advanced the view that Ryukyuan beliefs in *nirai* are similar to the Japanese "dragon palace" notion.

The celestial world in the Ryukyus is represented by such notions as *tin* (Jp. *ten* 天; the "sky," "heaven") and *obotsu-kagura* オボツカグラ. On Ikema, the celestial word (*tin*, or *ui* 上) is an abode of deities. *Obotsu-kagura* seems to be a rather obscure term. As a place located

somewhere in heaven, *obotsu-kagura* is thought to be—alongside *nirai-kanai* located beyond or under the ocean—a permanent residence of the deities worshiped at *utaki* 御嶽 (sacred places or, by extension, shrines at such places). The idea of a "heavenly paradise" (*obotsu-kagura*) in the sky is found on Amami, where it is believed that gods visit the earth by descending along high poles, trees, or rocks on mountains, to *utaki* shrines. Every Amami village has its "*obotsu*-holy grove" (*obotsu-kamiyama* オボツ神山), a sanctuary on a mountain from where the "path of the gods" (*kamimichi* 神道) leads to the places of worship at the village center. At each festival kami are invited from heaven or the *obotsu-kamiyama* and worshiped by the *noro* 祝女 priestesses (Kreiner 1968, p. 112).

Where Do the Dead "Live"? Where Do the Ancestors Go?

Ryukyuan beliefs concerning the whereabouts of the dead and deified ancestors are diverse and contradictory. In the Ryukyus, the soul of a human[35] is usually termed *mabui/maburi*, or sometimes *tamasu* (Miyako) or *tamashii* (Iriomote). The soul of the deceased is usually called *shini mabui* 死霊, while the soul of the living is termed *ichi mabui* 生霊. Some Ryukyuans believe that humans have one soul, others say that each individual has a different number of souls, ranging from one to nine (Takiguchi 1984, p. 64) or even as many as ten (Uematsu 1988, p. 140). In the Amami islands a person is thought to have seven souls (*mabui*) (Kreiner 2004, p. 402). It is believed that the loss of the most important soul, which is attached to the forehead, may result in death (Takiguchi 1984, p. 64).

The ancient Chinese concept that the dead are "returning to their place of origin" is still found in the Ryukyus. On Hateruma two temporary tablets bear the legend: "Soul tablet of XY who has returned to the origin" (*kigan* 帰元 XY *rei-i* 霊位) (Ouwehand 1985, p. 186).

As already mentioned, it was believed that before the memorial service on the forty-ninth day, the soul of the deceased had not yet settled down, but was still wandering between the tomb (as its new home, or an entrance to the other world) and the house of the bereaved (see Table 1). On Miyako, there is also a belief that when a person dies, his soul leaves the body and goes to the underground world called *ni'ija* (Jp. *nirai*). Even if the dead soul goes to the "afterworld," for a certain period it is not aware that its owner has died. People agree that the recently deceased soul tries to remain in this world as long as possible. This state lasts for forty-nine or sometimes 100 days after ones death (Takiguchi 1984, pp. 37–78). On Miyako there is also another belief that when a person dies his soul leaves the body and goes to the Uparuzu (Jp. *Ōnushi* 大主) *utaki* (fig. 19) and Adanni *utaki* at the northern island of Ikema (Baksheev 2006b, pp. 425–26, 441).

After the memorial service on the forty-ninth day the deceased is believed to reach the other world, thereby becoming "a human being of the other world" (Ok. *gushoon'chu* 後生人). Now he is "living" as "a human being" both in the tomb and in the other world. At the *bon* festival he is invited from his tomb on the first day and is seen off to it again on the last; at the *siimii* (Jp. *seimei* 清明祭) festival he is presented with a memorial feast at his tomb by the family.

In the Ryukyus, the idea that the dead spirit (Jp. *shiryō* 死霊) is residing (*yadoru* 宿る) in the tomb is very strong; the notion of a "grave soul" (Ok. *haka mabui*) supports this (Akamine 1989, p. 428). The other world where the dead spirits go is usually called *gushoo* (Jp. *goshō* 後生; "afterlife"), a relatively new word of Buddhist derivation. In some localities

the tomb is also called *gushoo*; a pit at the highest platform at the rear of the tomb which serves as a general ossuary for ancestral spirits is also called *gushoo*. The ancestral tomb is referred to in the same way as the stem family—*mutu* (lit. "origin [house]"; Jp. *moto* 元), an older word. On Miyako the tomb is also termed a "place of ancestors" (Ok. *uya dokoro* 親所) (Sakai 1987, p. 453).

As for the whereabouts of the deified ancestors after the final memorial ceremony (usually, the thirty-third anniversary), some Ryukyuans believe that the dead soul remains in the ancestral tomb forever (Lebra 1966, pp. 25-26), but the overwhelming majority of the reports from different regions of the Ryukyus clearly state that the deified ancestors ascend into the sky. On Hateruma island, after the thirty-three years of memorial services the gradual ripening process brings the soul to a point at which it can accept permanent separation and will then ascend to Heaven and become a deity. This last service has the meaning of "pushing (dial. *usagi/usagirin*; Jp. *oshiageru*) the soul up into the sky." The prayers invite the soul to rise along the tall stakes erected outside the house in front of *nibanza* "into the heavens": "Ascend now, please, to the heavens, rise to the white clouds, the moist clouds, and be pleased to become a *kami*" (Ouwehand 1985, p. 194).

On Amami, the belief that the dead soul finally ascends into the sky is very vivid. On the thirty-third anniversary of death people pray to the dead, saying "Ascend to the sky!" (*tin ni noborinshoore* 天に昇りんしょうれ). At the gravesite, a tall wooden pole about three meters in height is erected in a manner that permits climbing. It is believed that the soul will "climb" up the pole to the sky (Sakai 1987, pp. 277–78). On Tokunoshima island (Amami islands), the people erect a tall wooden pole and burn rice straw in the house-yard on the thirty-third anniversary, so that the soul of the dead will be able to ascend to the sky—up the pole and with the smoke. A similar belief and custom "seems to be prevalent rather sporadically in both Amami and Okinawa" (Mabuchi 1980, p. 8). On Yoron island (Amami islands), the thirty-third anniversary ceremony is treated as a "*kami matsuri*" (festivity for deities) and is called *ten nubui* (Jp. *ten nobori* 天登り), the time when the "kami is lifted to the skies" ("*kami o ten ni ageru*") (Kato 1977, p. 53). On Tarama island the final memorial ceremony at the thirty-third anniversary is called *kami-ushiyagi* (Jp. *oshiageru*), when "the ritual of lifting kami (the dead) into the sky" is performed (Uematsu 1993, p. 245). Newell reports that the final memorial ceremony on Tarama island takes place on the thirteenth anniversary (rather than the thirty-third), when the dead is worshiped as a deity ("god" in Newell's terms); this is termed *ubudatte*, "the raising of the dead person to godhood." Among the offerings on this occasion there is *tempura* twisted into different flying objects (e.g., *ebigatta*, in the form of a pair of wings) (Newell 1980, p. 36).

On Ikema island, there is a belief among the islanders that after death they will live in the "Beyond," which is considered to be located in Heaven. When a person dies, his soul is believed to ascend to Heaven through "the Heaven-ascending way in the northern deserted settlement" (*ii-zuma-nu-tin-kai-nyuui-ntsu*); the area surrounding this place is regarded with fear (Noguchi 1966, p. 34; Noguchi 1973, 210; Iraha 2004, pp. 45–46). Another thirty-third anniversary custom is observed on Tokunoshima, where the leaves of a certain tree are burned in the belief that the soul of the dead will ascend to the sky along with the smoke to join the ancestors in the world of *neira* (*nirai*), located far beyond the sea (in some cases, making a journey along the line of a parabola). The *hamaori* ritual (see below) also reveals that those

ancestors who died more than thirty-three years ago are supposed to live in the *neira* (*nirai*) (Yoshida 1998, pp. 169, 179).

It is not only the final memorial ceremony that has symbolic meaning, but the very first death ritual in the Ryukyus also does as it symbolizes the "ascent into the sky." A white *gusoojin* (lit. "robe of the afterlife"), a dress for the deceased which is very important for the funerary ritual, and is also called "deity's feather robe," *kambanigin* (Jp. *kami no hagoromo* 神羽衣) or *tubi ishō* which means, according to Nakama, "feather robe to ascend the sky" (Jp. *ten ni tonde iku hagoromo* 天に飛んでいく羽衣) (Nakama 1989, p. 232) is worn. On Tarama island a short white *kimono* called "celestial feather robe" (dial. *kanbiragun* 神羽衣) is put on the deceased (Uematsu 1993, p. 244). In Sawada and Sarahama Villages on Irabu island (Miyako) this dress was called *kampani* 神羽 or "celestial wings," "kami's wings" (Nevsky 2005, vol. I, p. 347), and in Hirara city (on the main island of Miyako) it is termed *kambani* カンバニ ("deity's dress"; Jp. *kami ishō* 神衣装) (Hirara-shi Shi Hensan Iinkai 1987, p. 378). The same type of short white *kimono* also called *kampani* 神羽 are still today donned by the *tsukasa* priestesses all over the Miyako islands during sacred rituals devoted to deities at the community *utaki* shrines (fig. 20).[36] Priestesses were believed to "ascend [after death] to heaven body and soul" (Kaneko 1964, p. 27). On Kudaka island people say that the spirit of the dead ascends into the sky after *senkotsu* (Akamine 1996, p. 81).

There are, it should be noted, several practices that are at odds with the "sky ascending concept." In Amami there are rituals of sending the dead after the final memorial ceremony on the thirty-third anniversary to the sea to the *neera*. On Tokunoshima, the ritual of *hamaori* ("descending on the beach") which is performed on three days after the *bon* festival to pray for a good harvest for the ancestors who died more than thirty-three years ago is called the "festival of the ancestral bones" (dial. *uyan kosi matsuri*). It is also known that in the coastal regions both of Okinawa and Japan proper, on the last day of the *bon* festival the dead souls and ancestors are seen off to the sea as well as down the river. Sakai supposes here the vague memory of the old pre-buddhist rites of sending the ancestors to the sea which later merged with the *bon* festival. However, the rite of sending the dead souls to the *nirai* "paradise" located in the sea seems to have been restricted to outstanding personalities such as *noro* priestesses and heroes (Sakai 1987, p. 245; Akamine 1996, p. 88).

To sum up, we can make three broad observations regarding these practices in the Ryukyus: (1) the souls of the departed are invited to the house from the graveyard during the *bon* festival; (2) the souls of the dead, in principle, are expected to ascend to the sky to become the deified ancestors; and (3) the deified ancestors visit the living from the overseas holy land, not from the sky.

Rites with Mortuary Tablets

In household ancestor worship, the center of religious activities is the ancestral altar with memorial ancestral tablets. These tablets[37] (Ok. *ihee/iihee*, *ifee/iifee, ipai*, *toutoumee, shinju ganashi*; Jp. *ihai* 位牌) (figs. 21-23) are held to have been introduced to the Ryukyus from China in the fifteenth century by the royal family of the Ryukyuan kingdom.[38] In the seventeenth century, rites with mortuary tablets became popular with the aristocracy, and from the second half of the seventeenth century through the ninteenth century, they gradually spread among the common people (Kiyama 1989, pp. 144, 149–150; Heshiki 1995, pp. 200–203;

Akamine 1996, p. 75). Memorial tablets of three types are still in usage in the Ryukyus, namely Okinawan type (Ok. *uchinaa iihee* 沖縄位牌), Japanese type (lit. "Yamato ancestral tablets," Ok. *yamatu iihee* 大和位牌), and Chinese type (lit. "Tang ancestral tablets," Ok. *too iihee* 唐位牌). It is thought that in even earlier times household ancestor rites made use of incense (Ok. *suukoo*, Jp. *senkō* 焼香) burners rather than mortuary tablets (Sakai 1987, p. 554; Akamine 1996, p. 75). The same situation can be observed presently at Itoman (on the main island of Okinawa) (Higa Masao, personal communication).

In the Ryukyus the household ancestral altar (figs. 24-25) is often called *buchidan* (Jp. *butsudan* 仏壇), but also *kamtana* (Jp. *kamidana* 神棚) a "shelf for deities" such as on Miyako, or *gushindan* 御神壇 and *guriijin* (Jp. *goreizen* 御霊前) in Shuri and Haha (Heshiki 1995, p. 143; Yanagita 1988, p. 119), or sometimes *tuku* 床 on Kurohama (Yaeyama). Today, the construction of the household ancestral altar is similar to the Japanese *butsudan*. The ancestral altar is a sort of alcove[39] with sliding doors about one meter from the floor. It consists of three shelves: the top shelf holds the memorial tablets, with a flower vase on each side; the middle shelf holds a censer and two cups; and the lowest shelf is reserved for offerings of food and gifts. On festivals, such as the *bon* festival, and on other ceremonial days of the year, the ancestral shrine is decorated with flowers, food, and drinks. On these occasions all members of the family gather together, burn incense, and offer prayers to the ancestral spirits. The oldest woman in the family, the wife or husband's mother, is in charge of all religious activities related to the ancestral shrine. It is her duty to watch the lunar calendar and announce upcoming religious rituals, prepare the ceremonial food and place it on the ancestral shrine, and on minor religious occasions to pray for the welfare of the family (Okinawan Government 1992).

Soon after the death two temporary memorial tablets of "white" (unpainted) wood[40] are made, upon both of which the name of the deceased is written. One of these tablets is placed at the tomb; another is installed separately on the west (left) side of the household ancestral altar in the lowest position. This is phase I—a phase of a liminal creature, "the departed." During the forty-nine day mourning period offerings of prayer, food and drink are served three times daily at the household altar. On the forty-ninth day the tablet at the tomb is burned; at the household altar the temporary "white" tablet is removed, and the permanent wooden red tablet[41] is installed with the other ancestral tablets. This is phase II—the phase of having become an individual ancestor.

Yanagita wrote that on "the main island of Okinawa . . . the thirty-third year marks the limit, after which they believe the soul becomes *O-Kami*. . . . *Goreizen* is an ancestral altar which we call *butsudan*, but in old homes there is additional altar for *O-Kami* above it, and at this ceremony the characters on the *ihai* on the *Goreizen* are scraped off and it is installed in the altar for the *O-Kami*" (Yanagita 1970, p. 119). Indeed, ideally on the thirty-third year the name of the deceased is erased from the permanent memorial tablet at the household altar (the tablet could be then transferred to the altar for deities) or the tablet itself is burned (the dead possibly joining the anonymous tablet) and replaced with an incense burner. At this stage the deceased is no longer called by his name and he himself is erased from the memory of descendants. This is phase III—the phase of becoming a depersonalized ancestral deity.

On Tarama island, after the final memorial ceremony on the thirty-third anniversary, the dead is worshiped as a deity called *ubudatte ganasi* (*ubutate ganasu*), where *-ganasi/-ganasu* is also the old Ryukyuan honorific both for the dead with memorial tablets (*sinju*[42] *ganasi,*

touto ganasu, uyagamu ganasu) and for the kami of *utaki* shrines. From this point their personality, gender and descent are annihilated and they continue on as an anonymous (lit. "invincible" *fukashi* 不可視) existence symbolized by incense. They no longer require food offerings and are only offered incense and water during worship. In addition, they are no longer invited to their natal home at the *bon* festival (Uematsu 1993, pp. 250–51). Newell reports a variant of this on Tarama island, where after the final memorial ceremony (in actuality on the thirteenth anniversary) the memorial tablet is destroyed by burning. At this ceremony the dead is worshiped as a "god" where he joins the anonymous tablet to the east (right) side of household altar which represents all *kam* (Jp. *kami*) (Newell 1980, p. 36).

The practice of removing memorial tablets from the household ancestral altar on the thirty-third anniversary of the death is not only found in the Ryukyus, but also in mainland Japan. This practice is based on the theory that the soul of the dead undergoes deification at this anniversary (cf. Smith 1968, p. 96). In the Ryukyus, this theory seems to be more deeply rooted in the folk religion of the main island of Okinawa than in the southern Ryukyu islands such as Miyako and Yaeyama. On the Miyako islands, removal of the memorial tablet seems to be less clearly associated with the deification than on the Yaeyamas, which for centuries has been subject to an "Okinawa-ization" encouraged by the Ryukyuan kingdom (Mabuchi 1976a, p. 109). Both on Miyako main island (Tomori Village) and its adjacent islands (Irabu island, Irabu Village), memorial tablets may be left in the family altar long after the thirty-third anniversary after death (author's observation) (fig. 26). Even on Kudaka island,[43] which is very close to the main island of Okinawa and was a site of a national worship that played a special role in the state cults, tablets are still found in the *butsudan* after the thirty-third anniversary and ancestral spirits are worshiped there as before (Akamine 1996, p. 83).

Deviations such as these, however, do not negate the standard pattern that developed in the Ryukyus under Chinese Buddhist influence. Ideally, rites with objects for memorializing the soul of the dead are divided into three phases, marked by use of temporary tablets, permanent tablets, and no tablets. This morphological division reflects the substantial significance of the changing status of the soul. The different stages of status are: (I) the "spirit of the dead" (Jp. *shiryō* 死霊) which has not become yet "the real dead," (II) the individual ancestral spirit (*kogo no sosenrei* 個々の祖先霊), and (III) the depersonalized ancestral spirit (*botsukoseika shita sorei* 没個性化した祖霊) (Uematsu 1988, pp. 150–51). The principal difference between phase II (recent ancestors—*shiryō* "spirit of the dead," *oyahito* "parent-human," etc.) and phase III (remote ancestors—*ganso* "founding ancestor," *oyagami* "parent-deity," *kami* "deity") is considered by some scholars to be that the rites for the individual ancestor belong to the cult of the dead of the family or kin group, while the rites for the founding ancestor are communal agrarian rituals for the whole village or island.

Most investigators agree that the notion of ancestors in the Ryukyus can be divided broadly into two types, "recent ancestors" (*shiryō* 死霊 "spirit of the dead"; Ok. *futuki/putugi*, Jp. *hotoke* "the deceased," "the newly dead"; Ok. *uyap'situ/uyapisu*, Jp. *oyahito* "parent-human"; *sorei* 祖霊 "ancestor spirits," etc.) and "remote ancestors" (Ok. *gansu/gwansu*, Jp. *ganso*, "founding ancestor"; Ok. *uyaan*, Jp. *oyagami* 親神, "parent-deity"; *shinrei*, "kami spirits"; *kami*, "deity"; etc.). The distinction between these two kinds of ancestors is directly reflected in the distribution of the altars for them and in the plan of the house. In the standard pattern, as seen on the main island of Okinawa and Ishigaki, the altar for deities and deified

ancestors ("remote ancestors") is placed in the most important "first room" (*ichibanza*) on the east (right) side[44] of the house, while the altar for the souls of the dead ("recent ancestors") is constructed in the "second room" (*nibanza*) on the west (left) side of the house (Mabuchi 1980, p. 2; Yoshida 1998, p. 179).

In the "senior families" (Jp. *sōke* 宗家), the *kamidana* "shelf for deities" is called *zaatu-ku*, or *zaa* 座, *tuku* 床, *kami utana* 神御棚 or *nchan utana* 御神御棚 (figs. 27-29). In the old households of Shuri and Naha, the deities that are enshrined there are called *ukami nu umee* 御神の御前. If they are "ancestral deities" (Jp. *soshin* 祖神), they are called *nchan faafuji* or *kami ugwansu* 神御元祖 (Heshiki 1995, p. 143). *O-kami no tana* 御神の棚, remarked upon by Yanagita (Yanagita 1970, p. 119), is a *kamidana* for the worship of a "kami of a *munchuu* patrisib" 門中の神 in the main family (*honke* 本家) of the patriclan (*munchuu*); a *kamidana* of this sort is not found in ordinary houses (Akamine 1996, p. 75). *Utana* ("altar of the [*munchuu*] descent group ancestors" in a northern Okinawan village) is found "only" in the *mutuuji* (senior house of the descent group) household and is located in the north-eastern corner of "first room" (*ichibanza*). It contains a collective tablet (Ok. *ifee*) of all ancestors of the descent group (Tanaka 1977, p. 50, Fig.3).

In the head families of the patriclan, the ancestral deities are enshrined in the *kamidana*, but other deities, including those of Buddhist origin, are worshiped, as well. In the peasant patriclans, a god of fire (Jp. *hi no kami* 火の神) is enshrined in the lower part of the *kami-dana*, while in the old aristocratic patriclans of Shuri and Naha especially there are many cases where Kannon 観音 is worshiped as a "guardian Buddha (*shugobutsu* 守護仏) of the clan"[45] (Heshiki 1995, p. 143).

On Hateruma, the altar for deities or deified ancestors in the upper right corner of the *ichibanza* is called *buzashiki*[46], *zaatuku* (*zaa* 床 or *tuku* 床) (Ouwehand 1985, p. 32). In various regions of the main island of Okinawa, deified ancestors are worshiped in the altar (*tuku* 床) located on the *ichibanza* and which is basically used for the worship of the deities. The deified ancestors are divided into at least three categories: the founding ancestor of the *munchuu*, the following ancestors and ancestors who lived on that territory (Uematsu 1988, p. 151). Parallel with the altars in the first and second rooms of a household, the altar in the village shrine or of some other cultic group is situated in the north central part of the building which usually faces the south (Mabuchi 1968, p. 123).

The basic pattern of the memorial tablet distribution within the household has some local variations. On the distant islands of the Yaeyamas sometimes the niche of a *tokonoma* (Ok. *tuku, zaatuku*) in the *ichibanza* is divided into two parts: deities and deified ancestors are enshrined in the right part of it, while the altar for the souls of the dead (*butsudan*) is placed in the left part (Uematsu 1988, p. 154). On Irabu island (Miyako) the *butsudan*-type altar with memorial tablets for the souls of the dead is often called *kamtana/kantana* (Jp. *kamidana*), but is located in the *nibanza* (author's observation). On the Miyako islands the houses do not usually include an altar in the *ichibanza*. Both the "souls of the dead" and the "deified ancestors" are worshiped on the *kantana* altar in the *nibanza* (fig. 30). "Ritual apparatuses" for celebrating various deties are kept on the right, i.e., the east side of the altar or on the upper right. This is in a way reminiscent of the altar in the *ichibanza* on other the islands of the Ryukyus (Mabuchi 1968, p. 125). Newell and Uematsu both report that on the island of Tarama, *butsudan*-type altars for ancestral tablets (Jp. *senzodana* 先祖棚) are also called

kamtana and are located in the *nibanza*, where at least two incense holders are placed below the tablets. The "central" (left) incense holder to the west is for the named ("recent") ancestors. The right incense holder called *ubutate* to the east is allocated to the "gods in general" including unidentifiable ("remote") ancestors who have already received the final memorial ceremony and who no longer have an independent tablet. The whole memorial ritual process can be regarded as a shift to the east, the direction of "gods in general" (Newell 1980, pp. 34, 36; Uematsu 1988, pp. 151). The location of the altars for the dead ("recent ancestors") and deified ancestors ("remote ancestors" and kami) clearly reveals the notions of their separation and the superior place accorded to the latter. Tanaka may be right claiming that *futuki* (recent ancestors) and the kami of the household (deified ancestors) are "mutually exclusive" (Tanaka 1977, p. 52).

According to Ouwehand, on Hateruma the intercourse between the living and the dead is "extremely intense" during the first thirty-three years after death. The dead are very much alive in the *nibanza*; communication with the dead and dialog with them occurs in this parlor. This is entirely consistent with the relatively profane character of the *nibanza* and contrasts sharply with the "pious diffidence" shown in the *ichibanza*, where the prayers and wishes accompanying offerings made to the *uyaan* (Jp. *oyagami* 親神 lit. "parent-deities"; "ancestor spirits,"[47] or "ancestor-deities"[48]) in front of the *buzashiki* shelf (the altar for deities or deified ancestors) takes the form of a monologue. Thus, the altar for the souls of the dead ("recent ancestors") and the altar for deities or deified ancestors ("remote ancestors") are "strictly" separated both "spatially and conceptually." However, it is not certain that this was always the case in the past. It is quite possible that the separation between the *nibanza* and the *ichibanza* was once less sharp or even did not exist at all. The exception to the rule was when the *uyap'situ* and *buzashiki* occurred side by side, with the tablets for the dead arranged such that the one belonging to the longest-deceased individual, who was therefore closest to the transition to the ancestor state, stood at the east end and thus closest to the *buzashiki* (Ouwehand 1985, pp. 33–34).

On Hateruma, after the thirty-third-year ceremony, only a small incense burner stands on the east side of the *uyap'situ* altar which, as a "rather modern custom," is intended to preserve the memory of "all" of the "former *uyap'situ*" (*mee uyap'situ*; Jp. *mae oyahito*, "former parent-human") of the collective ancestors of the house (Ok. *uya buzi*). They will be commemorated on *jurukunichi* during festive gatherings at the graves, and at home during the *bon* festival. From *putugi* (the dead) they have now been transformed into *kan* (Jp. *kami*), but "this does not mean that they will eventually be accorded the status of *uyaan*" ("parent-deity"), deities of the *utaki* shrines (Ouwehand 1985, p. 194). In Ouwehand's opinion, ancestors deified at the final thirty-third-year ceremony within the framework of household ancestor worship and "ancestor-deities" (Ok. *uyaan*) of the village shrine worship constitute two different continuums.

Ancestor Worship and Social Organization

Ryukyuan, specifically Okinawan society is segmented into extended families organized on a patrilineal principle for worship of common ancestors. The largest aggregate of households recognizing a common blood tie and sharing a common ritual life is the patrisib termed *munchuu*, or *munchu* (Jp. *monchū* 門中) in the case of commoners, *uji* or *uji munchu* in the

case of the upper classes. The *munchuu*[49] system is particularly prevalent on the main island of Okinawa. The underlying principle of the family system here is to maintain the family's continuity through an unbroken succession of the patrilineal line so that later generations will exist to perform rites for the ancestors (Lebra 1966, p. 223). A *munchuu*, or *ichimon*, is a patrilineage, patrilineal group, or patriclan, an "agamous patrisib" [50] which is an "ancestor cult group par excellence." Such a *munchuu* group serves as a unit for the performance of rituals since the ancestor worship maintains a common burial ground.[51] Thus, *munchuu* is concerned mainly with the ancestor cult, while other cult activities are conducted by the village as a whole, with *utaki* shrines as the focus of such activities (Mabuchi 1980, p. 12).

Rituals with the memorial tablets placed on the household ancestral altar before the thirty-third anniversary are found in ordinary households. On the other hand, on the main island of Okinawa at the so-called *mutu-ya* 元家 ("house of the stem family"; lit. "origin house"),[52] within various levels of the patrikin group (*munchuu*), a specific altar is installed for the "apical ancestors" of a *munchuu*'s segment. These "apical ancestors" represent the "remote ancestors." This type of altar is placed on the right side (to the east) of the family altar with memorial tablets for the souls of the dead. At the highest level of the *munchuu*, a special hall is often built in the southeastern part of the houseyard to worship the deified founder of the *munchuu* group.[53] The ancestor cult operates at various levels of these patrikin groups under the leadership of a priestess called *ukudi* who is often a "shamaness" as well (Mabuchi 1976a, p. 107). The *ukudi*, or *ukudii* ("*munchuu* priestesses") bear the responsibility of praying for the welfare of the whole group and controlling ritual matters of the *munchuu*. They are oriented in this function primarily towards the kami and "remote ancestors" who have attained kami status (Lebra 1966, p. 164). Rituals for the ancestral gods of the villages or hamlets are performed by a class of local priestesses called *nigami* (Jp. *negami*, lit. "root deity")[54] (Kamata 1974, p. 59).

According to Higa Masao's field research in the southern part of Okinawa's main island, the Fuka-atai *munchuu* of Tamagusuku Village is divided into seven sub-groups called *chuchoodee* 一兄弟, each of them is a unity around a stem family called *naka-mutu*. The *chuchoodee* is a group centering on a patrilineal descent called *shiji*, or *sani*. In old times there were several graves owned by each of the *chuchoodee* sub-groups, but later they were unified into a *munchuubaka*, a single grave for the common use of the Fuka-atai *munchuu*, by the ruling power of a certain *naka-mutu* stem family called *tooshimutu* which plays a leading part in the actual life of the *munchuu*. Further, one of the *naka-mutu* stem families of the Fuka-atai *munchuu* called *kami-mutu* or "stem family of the deity," which has a connection with the foundation of the Tamagusuku Village, is a center of ritual ceremonies for the distant ancestor of the *munchuu* as well as the cult practices of the whole village. This *kami-mutu* has a religious function concerning the distant ancestors, while the *tooshimutu* stem family plays a large role in everyday life. In each *naka-mutu* there is also an altar enshrining the spirit of the ancestors, with censers devoted to the ancestor's grave (called *ajishii*) of each village. These censers are worshiped by a priest called *kudingwa*, who is selected from *chuchoodee* on the basis of *naka-mutu* (Suzuki and Muratake 1971, p. 357).

In contrast with Okinawa main island, in the southern Ryukyus[55] (Miyako and Yaeyama) several cult groups composing a village or hamlet are independent of each other in the performance of their various rituals. Each cult group has its stem family (*mutu-yaa, mutu*)

of which the implication is the same as on the main island of Okinawa. But in the southern Ryukyus the *mutu-ya* is not a specialized place to perform the rituals for the "remote ancestors." In fact, the cult group has usually very little to do with ancestor worship. The cult group members are often skeptical about whether they are of common ancestry. Thus, the cult group of the southern Ryukyus displays a dissimilarity with the patrikin group (*munchuu*) found on the main island of Okinawa in which ancestor worship is well systematized (Mabuchi 1976a, pp. 106, 108).

Folk religion on Ikema island[56] can be characterized by a lack of connection with the Buddhist temples, thereby resulting in the "rapid loss of identity for the individual dead spirit (and a loss of promotion to an anonymous ancestral deity)," and "an extremely vague idea about unilineal ancestor worship," as compared with that of Japan proper. The burial system on Ikema is based on the co-existence of lineal blood and lateral marriage relationships, which do not exclude but rather complement each other (Noguchi 1966, p. 34).

In the southern Ryukyus the people lack a mechanism by which the remote ancestors ascending along the male line can be systematically worshiped as occurs in the *munchuu* organization on the main island of Okinawa. In the southern Ryukyus the ritual superiority accorded to the stem family can be seen in contrast to the branch families in whose houses only the tablets for the relatively recent dead are placed on the altar. The outcome is at best a "quasi-patrilineage" that goes back a few generations, and that has a constantly fluctuating boundary. As a result, in the southern Ryukyus after a few generations the deified ancestors tend to be rather easily forgotten and come to be assimilated with other deities of non-human derivation, a situation different from that on the main island of Okinawa (Mabuchi 1976a, p. 108).

In general, on the main island of Okinawa the souls of the dead or "ancestors" have their natal family of descendants whom they visit on such ritual occasions as the *bon* festival. The family branches out with time to produce branch families at different levels, while the original family continues to remain as the "stem family" along the primogenital male line. The "house of stem family" (Ok. *mutu-yaa*) is the place where "remote ancestors" are invited to come at such ritual occasions as *bon* (Mabuchi 1980, p. 12).

Mabuchi also draws our attention to the fact that irrespective of whether the ancestors are deified or not, the ancestor cult flourishes involving a number of ascending generations in the case when the kinship framework is clear-cut and solid (as it is often found along with the unilineal institution or the like). The ritual hierarchy centering on the "stem family" (as in the northwestern part of the main island of Okinawa and Uruka Village in southern Miyako) is effective in this regard. While the deified ancestors are classified into the earlier and the later and are parallel with the distinctions between the stem family and the branch families, the hierarchical order of the ritual repeated every year paves the way for a systematized memory of ancestors on the one hand, and also serves to reinforce the ties among the kinsmen on the other. This not the case with the bilateral institution in which the kinship relations are quite dispersed and it is hard to develop an ancestor cult involving a number of ascending generations (Mabuchi 1980, p. 15).

Patterns of Postmortem Deification in the Ryukyus

The elevation of the mortuary tablet at the household ancestral altar as well as the

shifting of the body remains within the tomb corresponds to the changes in the postmortem status of the dead. As can be seen in Table 1, in all modes ("body/bones," "mortuary tablet," "postmortem status of the dead"), the deceased ideally passes through three phases, from newly dead to individual ancestor and finally to depersonalized ancestral deity.

There is a common belief in the Ryukyus that after a certain period of purification the dead spirit finally becomes a kami (deity) (Akamine 1989, p. 427). If several initial conditions are met, one will eventually become a kami. The deceased must (1) have reached the age of seven; (2) have died a normal death; and (3) have relatives to take care of his memorial tablet. According to Tanaka, who carried out her field research on the main island of Okinawa, in order for the transformation from the dead to a kami to take place, the deceased must successfully undergo the following procedures and ceremonies: (1) a full public funeral (Ok. *sooshichi* 葬式 or *dabi* 荼毘); (2) a series of public memorial services until the forty-ninth day after the death (Ok. *nanka-suukoo*, lit. "the seventh day incense burning" 七日線香); (3) a full public memorial service on the sixteenth of the first month of the year following his death; (4) a series of anniversary services (Ok. *ninki-suukoo* 年忌線香)[57] until the thirty-third anniversary; and (5) the "bone washing ceremony" (between the third and the thirteenth anniversary) (Tanaka 1977, pp. 45–46). On different Ryukyuan islands, however, the patterns of postmortem deification are quite diverse. This diversity seems to reflect the historical and geographical forms which emerged through various factors and were preserved until recent times. Here I would like to propose five patterns of postmortem deification in the Ryukyus.

1) Deification soon after the primary funeral without other rites

This pattern seems to be the most archaic. On the island of Ikema the circumstance of postmortem deification differs slightly in that it is performed soon after death. It is the belief that the dead become kami on the very day of death. On their way back home after the burial the participants purify themselves with *susuki* (miscanthus) and say to the dead: "You have become a kami. So, protect us from demons" (*anata wa kami to narareta, yotte kono hitotachi o akuma kara omamori kudasai* 貴方は神となられた、よってこの人たちを悪魔からお守りください) (Nakamatsu 1968, p. 72).

Prior to the Taisho era there were no memorial tablets on Ikema; the graves were not visited after the funerals. It was only on the ninth day after death that a ceremony was carried out at home, which included only close relatives. After that there were no further ceremonies for the individual ancestor. Sometimes even the bone-washing ritual was not performed. This was based on the belief that an already deified spirit required no further rituals. This notion of the dead as it is found on Ikema is considered to be the most primitive in the Ryukyus (Nakamatsu 1968, pp. 62–64). The rite referred to by the people of this island as "the parting of deities and men" was conducted on the day of the death, on the third, fifth or another odd day after the death; or in other words, "the sooner the better." After that, the individual soul becomes an unspecified ancestral deity, losing its individuality (Noguchi 1966, p. 28; Noguchi 1975, p. 209). On the hundredth day a rite called "three months deity making prayer" (Ok. *mitsutsu-ga-kan-nai-yuui* 三ヵ月目の神になった祝の意) was conducted in the house of the deceased (Noguchi 1973, p. 210). On Amami Ōshima the dead is told during his encoffining "From now go to the Celestial Island" (*kyō kara ten no shima o sagashite ikinasai* 今日から天のシマを探して行きなさい) (Sakai 1987, p. 277).

2) Deification when the appearance of the deceased is changed

This pattern is related to the belief about the natural separation of flesh from the bones on the forty-ninth day after death. Previously on Kudaka, before the introduction of the thirty-third anniversary service from the main island of Okinawa, memorial ceremonies were carried out only until the forty-ninth day (Akamine 1991, p. 348).

3) Deification when the body is stripped of any remains of the soft parts

This pattern is related to the "bone-washing" ritual. As was mentioned above, primary burial tombs and tombs for the disposal of the cleansed bones after the bone-washing ritual are termed differently: "the other world" and "ancestors" (Ok. *shinju*; Jp. *senzo*) consequently.

4) Deification on the thirty-third year after death

This pattern developed under Buddhist influences. Mabuchi writes that the theory concerning the deification of the souls of the dead on the thirty-third anniversary would have been originally "too artificial" for the local people. The extent to which such a theory has penetrated into the folk beliefs would vary according to the island or the locality, resulting in a discrepancy between the practice and belief among the local people (Mabuchi 1976a, p. 109). On Kudaka, memorial tablets are still worshiped in the *butsudan* after the thirty-third anniversary while the "ancestral spirits" worshiped before and after the thirty-third anniversary are not separated (Akamine 1991b, p. 360; Akamine 1996, p. 83).

5) Deification after seven generations

This pattern is related to the popular local beliefs. It was recorded by such researchers as Kishaba Eijun, Origuchi Shinobu, and Higa Shuncho (Akamine 1996, p. 74). As a variant, on the island of Tarama, the dead becomes fully identified with the collective "gods" after three generations (Newell 1980, p. 35).

The Dead/Deities, Worship of the Dead/"Ancestor Worship"

In native terms, Ryukyuans and specifically Okinawans define their ancestor worship as the act of *ugan* (Jp. *ogamu* 拝む; honor and homage given to any supernatural entity in a culturally established ceremonial procedure) rendered to the "grandparents" (Ok. *uyafaafuji* 親祖父母) by the "offspring" (Ok. *kwaamaaga* 子孫).[58] Ancestor worship may then tentatively be defined as "reverent honor and homage rendered to the dead 'forebears' by the living 'offspring' according to culturally established ceremonial procedures" (Tanaka 1977, p. 44).

Some scholars maintain that while it is theoretically important to distinguish "ancestor worship" from "worship of the dead," the actual situation in the Ryukyus is too subtle to permit drawing a clear line of demarcation. Mabuchi notes two terms in the Ryukyuan dialect: "soul" (*mabui, tamasu*) of both the living and the dead on the one hand and "deities" (*kan*, or *kam*) of both human and non-human derivation on the other. Such a concept as "ancestral spirits" (*sorei*) would be terminologically classified in the category of either the "soul" or the "deities" according to the context of the situation (Mabuchi 1976a, p. 109).

According to Masako Tanaka, "terminologically" there are three kinds of ancestor: *futuki*, *gwansu*, and kami. Every person upon his death automatically becomes a *futuki*, which

is used synonymously with *sooroo* (Jp. *shōryō* 精霊; "dead soul," "spirit of the dead") and *gusoon'chu* ("people of the other world"). A *futuki* who can satisfy the certain initial conditions will eventually graduate into a kami (Tanaka 1977, p. 45). Tanaka also distinguishes three kinds of kami deities within the boundary of ancestor worship: the kami enshrined in the household altar (Ok. *gwansu*元祖); the kami of the descent group (*munchuu-gami*); and the kami associated with the sacred grove of the village (*utaki nu u-kami-ganashii*) (Tanaka 1977, p. 47). While the *futuki* are the dead who are going through all the individualized memorial services in order to attain to full ancestral status, the kami of the household are all "forebears" of the household from the time of its establishment who have successfully passed through all these services. *Futuki* and the kami of the household together make up the "household ancestors" (*gwansu*) (Tanaka 1977, p. 52). A distinctive feature of the memorial services for a futuki is that the ceremonies are performed for a particular individual "forebear" and him alone, while in all other ancestral ceremonies it is the "collective ancestors of one kind or another" who are worshiped. Another distinctive feature common to all these ceremonies is that they are performed for the benefit of the particular ancestor, and not for the benefit of the worshipers (Tanaka 1977, p. 46). In Tanaka's view, ancestor worship in the Ryukyus may be classified into two types. The first is a series of memorial services performed for the benefit of a specific "recently deceased person" (*futuki*), who is said to require such ceremonies in order to achieve the "real ancestral status of the kami." The second kind of ancestor worship is primarily concerned with the "full-fledged ancestors" (*kami*) whose protection and guidance is sought for the living patrilineal descendants. Both the patrilineal relatives and non-patrilineally related kin of the deceased must participate in the first type of ceremony, while the second type of ceremony primarily concerns patrilineal descendants (Tanaka 1977, p. 48).

It is widely held among researchers that it is difficult to ascertain exactly where the boundary lies between "worship of the dead" and "ancestor worship" in regard to those who are represented by the ancestral tablets on the family altar. It is said that the deification of the deceased commences on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the death. Part of the ceremony on this occasion includes an offering of red-colored food—the deceased are not completely deified, however, until the thirty-third anniversary. It should be noted here that "the deification" does not constitute a definitive demarcation line between "ancestors" and "the dead": those represented by the memorial tablets may be considered simply as "the dead" or as "ancestors" according to the situation (Mabuchi 1976a, p. 110). As previously observed, ancestors are held to lose their personal identity on the thirty-third anniversary of death, after which they are no longer regularly worshiped at the family altar. This is not to say, however, that each ancestral figure thereupon suddenly disappears from the memory of the living. It is believed possible for the people to communicate with individual ancestors through the agency of a local "shaman." Ancestral spirits are destined to eventually be forgotten, although they are usually remembered for a few generations. Incidents of crisis or disaster, however, are often attributed to the deeds of the vengeful ancestor, at which time attempts at appeasement are made. Such a scenario is more likely to be found in the Southern Ryukyus where one's affiliation in the cult-group is often ascribed to the interference of certain ancestors, irrespective of whether their tablets are still placed on the family altar or already removed. In such case people are not overly concerned whether such "ancestors are deified or not" (Mabuchi 1976a,

p. 111).

Although it is now deeply rooted throughout local Ryukyuan cultures, the concept of the dead losing their personal identity at the thirty-third anniversary seems to have been introduced to the islands from elsewhere, and is not of great antiquity there. A "dimly conceived distinction" between the dead who remain vivid in memory and those who died long ago, Mabuchi says, seems still to be prevalent among the Ryukyuans. In such a case, the thirty-third anniversary is akin to a "businesslike procedure" in which a primarily gradual and relative distinction is disposed of. At the *bon* festival perhaps it is natural that "no clear distinction is drawn" between the "souls of the dead" and the "deified ancestors." On the other hand, Mabuchi postulates a "vaguely defined distinction" between the earlier and later deified ancestors (Mabuchi 1980, p. 15).

Some observers have remarked that not every deceased individual who has successfully undergone all memorial services becomes a kami. On the island of Kurohama, commoners are unable to become kami. The kami status is attained only by the creators of *utaki* shrines, i.e., the founding ancestors of the head family (*sōke no kaiso* 宗家の開祖). They are worshiped at "divine tombs" (*shinbo* 神墓 lit. "deities' graves") and at special "deities' memorial tablets" (*kami no ihai* 神の位牌). On Yonaguni (Yaeyama islands), the dead who received the last thirty-third anniversary service become ancestor (Ok. *uyapudi* 祖先), but not kami. Ancestors are separated from deities by priestesses who pray to the deities at the *utaki* shrines (Akamine 1996, pp. 75–76).

Discourse on the Nature of Ryukyuan Ancestral Deities

In mainland Japan, a dead person is generally believed to become a *hotoke* or "a buddha" and eventually (after thirty-three, fifty, or one-hundred years) ascend to the status of kami. Robert Smith writes about "evidence of the widespread occurrence of practices that clearly mark the transition from buddha to god" (*kami*). He cites Naoe Hiroji and Mogami Takayoshi who offer many examples of analogous practices, including a case in which the tablet itself was transferred directly from the Buddhist altar to the shrine of the tutelary deity (*ujigami* 氏神). In such a case the soul or ancestral spirit is said to have become a tutelary deity (Smith 1974, p. 96).

In the Ryukyus, the dead are also believed to become a "kami" ("deity"),[59] even sometimes very soon after death. On Miyako, deities are called "*kan*" or "*kam*" (Jp. *kami*). The dead or his spirit is also called "*kan*," "*kam*" (*kami*), "*kambito*"/"*kampitu*" 神人 or "*sungam*" スンガム 死神 (lit. "the dead kami") (Uematsu 1986, p. 77); "*kan nariniyaan*" (Jp. "*kami ni naru*") means "to die" (Hirara-shi Shi Hensan Iinkai 1987, p. 377). In Miyako, as well as in the Yaeyamas, when somebody dies, people often say "*kan narioori*" (Jp. "*kami ni narareta*")—"One has become a deity." Nakama Gishō asserts that this phrase is a perfect expression of Ryukyuan views on death (Nakama 1989, p. 227). A belief that "the spirit of the dead becomes kami" is also preserved on Kudaka (Akamine 1996, p. 81). On Kudaka the "dead spirits" before their thirty-third anniversary and "ancestral spirits" after their thirty-third anniversary are not separated in household *butsudan* (Akamine 1991, p. 360).

William Lebra groups all Ryukyuan kami into five categories; one of them contains ancestral spirits (*futuki*), who are viewed as "kami of low rank." The *futuki* provide an important link between the living descendants and the supernatural (Lebra 1966, p. 22). *Futuki*[60]

is the Okinawan pronunciation of a word of Japanese-Buddhist origin, "*hotoke*." The older Okinawan term for ancestors is *fafuji* or *uyafafuji*, but whereas this term implies all ancestors, *futuki* specifically denotes those in the male line and their wives (Lebra 1966, p. 24).

Although in Miyako the same term "kami" is used to refer to both deities and ancestors, people make a clear distinction between the two. Ancestors are much less powerful and lower in rank than deities. Many ancestors do not have the power to protect their descendants, even when "they wish to." Ancestors are inflicted with punishment for their behavior during life. Suffering ancestors must depend on their descendants; the descendants appease their souls, asking the gods to release them from suffering. When the ancestors' souls are appeased, they turn into protective ancestors (Takiguchi 1984, p. 37). As was mentioned, Tanaka distinguishes as many as three kinds of kami within the boundary of ancestor worship: the kami enshrined in the household altar; the kami of the descent group; and the kami associated with the sacred grove of the village (Tanaka 1980, p. 47).

Almost all researchers agree that the dead are deified in the Ryukyus; the only point of dispute centers around the nature of these ancestral deities and their relation to the community deities of *utaki* shrines. Burd states that the belief that the deceased become "kami" antedates the introduction of Buddhism. Nonetheless, ancestor worship differs from other rituals at *utaki* village shrines. Ancestral "kami" only concern their living descendants and not the community as a whole. The motivation of their worship is the preservation and maintenance of the well-being of the individual family. When a person dies he joins a group of ancestral "kami," who retain a strong interest in their living descendants. By honoring them one gains their help in preserving the continuity of the family (Burd 1954, p. 232).

The standard theory about deification of the dead is found in *Okinawa daihyakka jiten*. Indigenous beliefs in the Okinawa and Amami groups of islands center around ancestor worship (Jp. *sosen sūhai* 祖先崇拝) which is comprised of a two-layer structure: (I) ancestral spirits who have passed through the last memorial service, lost their personality and have become deified; and (II) ancestral spirits (*reii* 霊位) prior to the process of deification. This includes ancestral spirits of the household (*kazoku* 家族) level who have passed through the last memorial service and at the level of kin group (*shinzoku* 親族) join the ancestral spirits of the patriclan (*ichizoku* 一族)—such as the patrilineal group (Ok. *munchuu*), including the founding ancestor (*Okinawa daihyakka jiten* 1983, vol. 2, p. 828).

A sharp critique of the theory about deification of the dead that is represented in *Okinawa daihyakka jiten* is offered by Akamine Masanobu, who analyzed the process of ritual deification of the dead in articles on ancestor worship (Akamine 1991 and Akamine 1996). Akamine calls this standard theory "the Okinawan edition of the concept of the ancestor worship of mainland Japan by Kunio Yanagita in his late years," and continues, "if you replace Japanese *dōzoku* with the Okinawan *munchuu* and *jinja* with *utaki*, it is reminiscent of Kunio Yanagita's theory about Japanese religion" (Akamine 1996, p. 72). He agrees that people throughout the Ryukyus used to believe that "the dead become kami" (Akamine 1996, p. 73). However, citing the view of ancestors on Kudaka, which preserves the old native traditions, he argues that "these are only words" and ancestral spirits that should have become kami still preserve their negative character and are not in fact represented in the kami-oriented rituals, either at the level of a family and *mutu* (stem family) or at the village level (Akamine 1996, pp. 86, 89). He cites many earlier investigators of Ryukyuan religion who asserted that

"rites devoted to a founding ancestor do not represent the old Ryukyan tradition, but rather developed under influence of Chinese culture in early modern times (*kinsei*)." In addition, he observes that in *Omoro sōshi* ideas related to ancestor worship "are very scarce." Even Nakamatsu Yashū holds that although "kami" in the Ryukyus means "kami of the *utaki*," i.e., "ancestral deity" (Jp. *soreishin* 祖霊神), ancestor worship itself constitutes a "new religion" (Akamine 1996, p. 94). Origuchi Shinobu also wrote that "ancestor worship which is very strong in the religious thought of the Ryukyu cannot be seen as a fountainhead of Ryukyu Shinto" (Akamine 1996, p. 95). [61] Akamine concludes that taking into consideration the fact that the adoption of Confucianism and Buddhism by the royal court of Shuri influenced the ancestor rituals of the ordinary people, ancestor worship in the Ryukyus should be studied from a historical perspective (Akamine1996, p. 95).

On the other hand, interpreting Ouwehand's data on Hateruma, Akamine argues that "ancestor-deities" (*uyaan*) who are worshiped in the tokonoma are "[individual] deified ancestor spirits" (*shinka shita sorei* 神化した祖霊), but not "collective deified ancestor spirits" (*shinka shita sorei no shūgōtai* 神化した祖霊の集合体) within the paradigm of ancestor worship. In other words, "ancestor-deities" are ancestors with characteristics of "cultural heroes." Appealing to the views of Ouwehand, Heshiki, Itō, Kasahara and other field researchers, Akamine claims that though the nature of the dead spirits change on the thirty-third anniversary service or bone-washing ritual, this should not be understood as the deification of the dead spirits (Akamine 1996, p. 76).

According to Ouwehand himself, on Hateruma the dead are "of course ancestors as well," but the "respectful-intimate" relationship between the dead and the living, which is expressed in the mortuary services and which persists after the thirty-third anniversary in rituals such as *bon*, is "completely different" in nature to the rigidly patterened, strongly ritualized worship of the *uyaan* as "the divine, the high ones," according to the ritual texts (Ouwehand 1985, p. 160). Worship of the dead (of the *uyap'situ*) in Hateruma is distinguished from the worship of "ancestor-deities" connected with the rituals of the agricultural cycle. In the "shrine system" (worship of *uyaan*) the main focus of the rituals is on the living, while in the "grave system" (worship of the dead) the focus is on the dead. There is another distinction between these two categories in that the "shrine system" (worship of *uyaan*) is foremost the concern of the village and the island community, whereas the "grave system" (worship of the dead) is primarily a matter for individual houses or groups of related houses (Ouwehand 1985, p. 117).

The "structural polarity" between "*uyaan* worship" (with southern orientation) on the one hand, and the "cult of the dead" (with north and northwest orientation) on the other, is central to the religious system of Hateruma and is implicitly expressed in ritual texts (Ok. *pan*) as well. Nevertheless, in these ritual texts *uyaan* can be also called "the divine *hotoke*, the high *hotoke*" (*kan putugi-n-ganasi ui putugi-n-ganasi*) (Ouwehand 1985, pp. 142–43, 158), where "*hotoke*" is a common appellation for the dead or ancestor. In certain families of Hateruma, however, the transition from the state of an ancestor who had long ago become *kan* (Jp. *kami*) to the *uyaan* status can be traced on the basis of the transition from reverence of the dead in the rituals such as *bon* (including the *jurukunichi* ritual) to *uyaan* worship within the system of agricultural rituals and festivities of the lunar New Year. For the legendary hero as ancestor of the Geetu family, this transition must have occurred "very long ago," whereas in

case of two sisters P'suta and Kabiree the transition occurred only in the first half of the twentieth century. A similar case concerns the Peetu ancestor interred within the grounds of the Arantu shrine. However, the grave of the Yamada Bupamee is revered as "*kami ohaka*" or "the honorable grave of a deity," but she has not yet been granted the *uyaan* status. Thus, a primary condition for an ancestor's acquiring the *uyaan* status seems to be the ancient memory of that ancestor's having been a mythical-legendary hero or heroine. The people of Hateruma seem to see the *uyaan* as "distant ancestors" who crossed over to the island and lived there. These predecessors opened up the island and continue to keep watch over it. They became mythical, legendary and cultural heroes; they need not always be forebears of the present population but are also found among the once-powerful officialdom. They are, according to ritual texts, the "*uyaan* keeping prosperity for a thousand years." In Ouwehand's opinion, special attention should be given to the invocation of the *uyaan* considered to be present within the grounds of the village shrines, which occurs in many ritual texts.[62] It is these *uyaan* that are present there permanently, and are considered by Nakamatsu Yashū to be "inner deities" (*kusati kami* 腰当神 [cf. the Japanese idiom *koshi o ateru* 腰を当てる, "to place the hands in front of," to support "at the back"]; Jp. *naibu no kami* 内部の神), that is, deities that protect the village. With respect to the possibility that certain *uyaan* could be village tutelary deities, Ouwehand makes reference to founders graves and the presence of human bones within the grounds of the village shrines (see below) (Ouwehand 1985, pp. 161–62). Kreiner observed the same phenomenon for the Amami group (northen Ryukyus) and pointed out that there, too, the most important function of *uyaan*-like deities that are present in the village throughout the year is protection of the village and its people. In Amami the "village ancestor-deities" do not appear to be conceived of in a personal manner but more as the "common ancestors of the village" (Kreiner1968, pp. 114–16).

Akamine is critical of the *Okinawa daihyakka jiten* representation of the relationship of ancestors and community deities: "On the village level the ancestral spirits of the patriclan (*ichizoku* 一族) join the ancestral spirits of a community (*shima*), which are symbolized by the kami of the *utaki* [shrines]" (*Okinawa daihyakka jiten* 1983, p. 828). He is also skeptical of Nakamatsu, who claimed that ancestors are becoming the deities of *nirai-kanai* and stay in the *utaki*. Akamine draws from both his own field research and that of other researchers of Miyako and Yaeyama to demonstrate that the kami of the *utaki* are not only "ancestral spirits," but also include cultural heroes, occupational deities (blacksmiths, etc.), and deity-founders of the village (Jp. *shimadate kami* 島立て神) (Akamine 1996, p. 80). Based on my experience in fieldwork in the *utaki* shrines of Miyako and Yaeyama, I agree with Akamine's criticism. His data on Kudaka includes the finding that among *mutu kami* who are worshiped in the *mutu* (元), or old houses involved in the religious affairs, the majority are the deities of *nirai-kanai* derivation which are "unrelated to ancestors." Only a few ancestral deities are worshiped in the *mutu*, and when they are worshiped, in reality they are founding ancestors of the *mutu* and cultural hero-type ancestors, not an "anonymous host of ancestral spirits." Akamine concludes that the passage in *Okinawa dai hyakka jiten* that describes these ancestral deities as "individual ancestral spirits who have passed through the last thirty-third anniversary memorial service [and] are absorbed—at the level of the patriclan (*ichizoku* 一族)—into the *kamidana* of *munchuu* 門中 (patrilineal group)" is "absolutely unapplicable" to Kudaka (Akamine 1996, p. 88). He argues that "ancestral spirits which are supposed to be deified"

or their anonymous host are "clearly separated," at least on Kudaka, from the "old ancestral spirits," mythical founding ancestral deities or cultural hero-type ancestral deities. Deities of the *utaki* shrines are not ancestral deities of a certain family or lineage group, but are very special "female ancestral spirit-deities" (*josei no soreishin* 女性の祖霊神). The abode of the dead is opposite to the abode of the kami deities (Akamine 1991, p. 368).

There are remarkable differences in the treatment of the ancestors in the Ryukyus depending on the region. Toichi Mabuchi points out that remote ancestors fall sooner into oblivion and negligence in the southern Ryukyus (the Miyako and Yaeyama islands) than in the main island of Okinawa where these ancestors are worshiped individually by the stem family on the various levels of patrikin organization, even though they have lost their personal identity after the thirty-third anniversary. Because an institutional mechanism by which to systematize ancestor worship is lacking, "remote ancestors in the southern Ryukyus tend more easily to intermingle with the deities of the sacred grove or shrine of the cult group" (Mabuchi 1976a, p. 113).

The Bon Festival and Other Rituals Related to the Dead, "Remote Ancestors" and Visiting Deities

To clarify the nature of ancestral deities, I would like to offer an overview of some collective rituals related to the dead, "remote ancestors" and so-called visiting deities. In the Ryukyus several festivals of Buddhist origin held throughout the year are centered on the souls of the dead and ancestors: the *bon* festival (Ok. *bun/bung* 盆, *shichigachi/hichigwachi* 七月, *sooroo/sooron* 精霊) (fig. 32); the *seimei* 清明 (Ok. *siimii*) festival (fig. 33) on the main island of Okinawa (held on the second month of the lunar calendar) when family members visit the tomb with offerings and pray to their ancestral spirits; the New Year's Day of the Dead (Ok. *jurukunichi*; the sixteenth of the first month of the lunar calendar); and Tanabata, or the "Star Festival" (seventh day of the seventh month of the lunar calendar).

Among a number of old folk rites in Okinawa and Amami which are directed to the "remote ancestors" some are related only partially to the Buddhist-type rituals and others are absolutely unrelated to Buddhism. It is believed that the prototypes of these folk rites were practiced before the introduction of Buddhism. In a few villages in the northern extremity of the Miyako islands (on Ikema), the *bon* festival was not held and the people had neither ancestral tablets nor a *kamidana* until the twentieth century. They did have, however, their own annual celebration ritual for their ancestors (Mabuchi 1976a, p. 109). In some localities of northwestern Okinawa (main island) the members of the patrilineage or patriclan visit the house of their "stem family" on the tenth day of the eighth lunar month to make an offering to their remote ancestors. It is also around this date that the ghosts and goblins come to prowl and the people try to exorcise them, a situation reminiscent of the *bon* festival (Mabuchi 1980, p. 12). At some stem houses in Uruka, or Sunakawa Village (Miyako) an extended form of the *bon* ritual has been performed. At night the ritual was conducted in the same way as in other households, but during the daytime a special *bon* ritual for the remote ancestors, which had been deified long ago, was carried out. To these remote ancestors the stem house members offered wine specially brewed of millet and rice and sang a ritual song with a rhythmic clapping of hands. Such offerings and singing are usually for the deities of the sacred grove or shrine, not for the dead. Members of the same cult group attend these

rituals. The atmosphere is quite reminiscent of the ritual of a kinship group centering on a common ancestor (Mabuchi 1976b, p. 96).

On the Nansei islands , as in Japan, the souls of the departed are invited into the house from the graveyard during the *bon* festival on the seventh lunar month. According to Kreiner, on Amami a small hut made of leaves with offerings is erected and tablets are installed in front of the living room of the main house. Later the souls are seen off at the seashore, where the offerings are thrown into the sea. In the eighth lunar month the *arasachi* festival marks the beginning of the folk New Year; six days later at the *shibasashi* festival the "souls of the dead" are welcomed again. This time, burning coals are put on the bundles of grass and straw in between the main entrance into the compound. This is said to be done because "the ancestors are coming from over the sea" and "their legs have grown cold and wet" (on a later day in the same month the *dunga* festival is commemorated; here the bone-washing is practiced) (Kreiner 2004, p. 403).

Yoshida is more accurate when he reports that the day of *shibasashi* on Amami Oshima is a day when people receive "ancestors of old" (Ok. *koosoganashi/kosuganashi* 考祖様) who are "undoubtedly" ancestors who died more than thirty-three years previously. On this occasion the ancestral tablets are moved from their usual place to a room on the east side of the house, i.e., in the direction of deities and deified ancestors. On this day straw and grass are burnt so as to make the smoke by which the ancestors are supposed "to come down from the sky." However, the ancestors are said "initially" to have come from the *neira*, far beyond the sea. The *shibasashi* festival is also performed on Kikaijima (Amami islands) on the eighth lunar month. This involves ancestor worship in which flowers are placed on the tombstones while *susuki* is placed all over the house and the yard for the purpose of expelling evil spirits (Yoshida 1998, p. 175).

The ritual of *hamaori* ("descending on the beach") which is performed once a year (on three days after the *bon* festival) on Tokunoshima attracted the attention of several researchers (Mabuchi 1980; Yoshida 1998). On Tokunoshima, at the *bon* festival the people annually worship ancestors who died within a thirty-three year period. The ritual of *hamaori* ("descending on the beach") is performed once a year (three days after *bon*) for the purpose of praying for a good harvest to the ancestors who died more than thirty-three years ago (Yoshida 1998, p. 167–68). The people of each hamlet come down to the seashore where there are fixed sites for stone hearths (*kama*) allocated respectively to various groups of "those descended from a common ancestor" (along the male line), i.e., groups of patrilineally related families. People prepare the feast on the stone hearths to welcome the ancestors and "the deities coming from the sea." The newly born children should touch the sand with their bare feet so that they are introduced to the ancestors and deities who would bless them. Among the people of the island's west coast more emphasis seems to be laid on the fertility of crops, while the people of the east and south coast emphasize the implication of the ancestor cult as an important aspect of the ritual. They say that the "overseas deities" together with the "deified ancestors" come from "the overseas holy land" to celebrate the prosperity of the crops and of the living. They tend even to identify "overseas deities" with the deified ancestors. Mabuchi concludes that since the ritual is held respectively by such groups as "those descended from a common ancestor" it is suggested that an ancestor cult is involved (Mabuchi 1980, p. 13). According to Yoshida, the ritual of *hamaori* is directed towards the ancestors who would come from *neira*, or *neriya* (*nirai*), the other world of abundance, in order to secure a good harvest

for the following year, and to express gratitude to the god of the sea conceived to be the god of rice, as well as to the gods of *neira*. Praying in front of the three U-shaped stone hearths is directed also to the god of fire (Ok. *fii nu kan*) (Yoshida 1998, p. 168).

Mabuchi also compares the ritual of *hamaori* of Tokunoshima with the shinugu ritual of northern Okinawa. On Iheya Island the ritual concerning the overseas deities is held on the seventeenth day of the seventh lunar month (two days after the finale of the *bon* ritual). Here too, the deified ancestors are classified with the overseas deities who come from somewhere far in the east. In this ritual an emphasis is laid on seeing off the deities who have already visited the living at the *bon* festival, along with the souls of the dead which come from the graveyard (Mabuchi 1980, p. 13).

As Mabuchi points out, as a later introduction to the Ryukyus, the *bon* festival with its definite date of its performance (from the thirteenth to the fifteenth days of the seventh lunar month), would have inserted itself among a series of preexisting rituals, bisecting the latter into the pre-*bon* rituals and post-*bon* ones. The *bon* festival could not remain exempt from such partial fusion of the deified ancestors and the visiting deities, although the *bon* festival would have been primarily a ritual for the dead. In the Ryukyus the visiting deities accompanied by the deified ancestors, appear approximately within the two weeks before or after the *bon* festival, during the sixth and the eighth through the tenth lunar months in Yaeyama, and during the eighth through the tenth lunar months in Miyako (Mabuchi 1980, pp. 10–11, 16–17). In this season ancestral spirits and the deities are invited to feasts held at either the kinship or village level. Various kinds of kinship rituals are held for the worship of the souls of the dead and the deified ancestors. On the other hand, the village is more concerned with the the deities or the "remotest ancestors" such as the founders of the village (Mabuchi 1968, p. 128). Mabuchi suggests that such a variance of dates (sixth through the tenth lunar months) might represent an "overmanipulation" of the lunar calendar among the local intellectuals, leading to the considerable degree of deviation from both the agrarian and ritual cycle inherent to the Ryukyuan culture. For example, some "sophisticated elites" of Ishigaki insisted that the seventh lunar month, the time when the *bon* ritual is held, is the month for the dead and therefore community rituals for the deities of the *utaki* shrines should not be performed. However, beings as the deified ancestors and the visiting deities make frequent appearances during this month and even on the days of the *bon* ritual, although in different forms and "with a different degree of emphasis" (Mabuchi 1980, pp. 10–11, 16–17).

Moreover, Mabuchi postulates that (1) the sixth, the seventh, and the early eighth lunar months were the season for welcoming the souls of the dead and the deities who came to partake of the newly harvested rice, and (2) toward the end of this season after a series of rituals relevant to the harvest, the folk New Year's Day was celebrated to secure the fertility and prosperity for the coming year. This was achieved by appealing to the visiting deities and partially to the deified ancestors, rather than to the souls of the dead whom people still had yet to appease than to appeal to. Thus, the *bon* festival would have been charged, as a result, with the task of controlling the traffic of such beings, though in Mabuchi's opinion, it would have been "rather unsuccessful" (Mabuchi 1980, pp. 16–17).

Visiting Deities of the Ryukyus

Here I would like to observe briefly some rituals for visiting deities relevant to our study.

In many villages or communities of the Ryukyus, it is believed that deities would visit from *nirai-kanai* once a year to give their blessings and then return to their world. As *nirai-kanai* and their gods are believed to be the origin of all forms of life in the Ryukyus, through the blessings of the visiting deities, fertility (*yuu* 世) is enhanced. On the main island of Okinawa, deities visiting from *nirai-kanai* are usually invisible and often possess priestesses when they arrive in this world. On Miyako and other islands, priestesses perform the "beckoning of fertility" ritual (Ok. *yuukui* 世乞い) (fig. 34). By contrast, in the Yaeyama and Miyako islands it is believed that gods from *nirai-kanai* take on tangible forms and are visible. These deities are incarnated by the young community members who wear masks and costumes and who often operate as a secret male society.

The first type of rituals for visiting deities includes the *ungami*, or *unjami* 海神 festival (fig. 35) in the northern part of the main island of Okinawa and the Amami islands, *nafka* of Miyako (fig. 36), and *nirantaufuyan* of Kabira (Ishigaki), etc. At the *ungami* ritual (for example at the Shioya district of Ogimi Village), which is performed soon after the *bon* festival (in some other localities once every two years alternatively with the *shinugu* ritual), priestesses welcome the deities of the sea and deities from *nirai-kanai* and pray for fertility while deities descend upon them.[63] A secret *yaan*, or *uyagan* (Jp. *oyagami* 親神) ancestral deities ritual was also performed on Miyako, on the island of Ōgami (sixth through the tenth lunar months), and in Karimata and Shimajiri (tenth through the twelfth lunar months) when priestesses were possessed by the spirits of these "ancestral deities."

Among the "visible" visiting deities or stranger-deities of the Ryukyuan cultural sphere, I would like to mention *mayunganashi, akamata-kuromata, angama, miruku***,** *fusamaraa, oohoho*, etc., of the Yaeyama islands; *paantu* of the Miyako islands; and the male deities of the *shinugu* festival in the northern part of Okinawa's main island. "Visible" visiting deities are often treated as a rather homogenous group (Mabuchi, Kreiner). I suppose that they may be tentatively divided into at least three groups: (1) *akamata-kuromata, paantu, fusamaraa, shinugu***; (2)** *mayunganashi*; and (3) *angama, miruku***,** *oohoho*.[64] *Akamata-kuromata* seems to be the most primordial of deities while *angama, miruku*, and *oohoho* are rather new personalities; *angama* and *miruku* are clearly of Buddhist derivation.

In Shimajiri Village (Miyako), *paantu* observance is performed in the ninth month of the lunar calendar. *Paantu*, meaning "ghosts" or "evil gods," are incarnated by three young community members wearing coats of leaves, grass, and vines. They are completely covered with smelly mud from the "sacred well." Donning masks preserved at three areas where the community was believed to have originated (*mutu*), *paantu* wander throughout the village to dispel evil spirits and bring luck. Local people treat *paantu* like impersonated ancestors and deities arrived from *nirai-kanai* (fig. 37).

On Hateruma island, the harvest festival has completely merged with the *bon* festival. The procession of the *Miruku*[65] (fig. 38) fertility deity (originally *Miroku bosatsu*) is held together with the *bon* festival on the fourteenth of the seventh month of the lunar calendar. *Miruku* as visiting deity from the world far across the sea was easily linked with the idea of visiting ancestors who left the other world (Jp. *ano yo* 彼の世) temporarily at the time of the *soorun* (dial. from Jp. *shōryō*) (the *bon* festival). Villagers offer prayers of repose to their ancestors, recite prayers for a rich harvest, and pray for the safety of the village.

On Yaeyama islands *angama*, or *anggama* festivities are performed during three nights of

the *bon* festival. In Ishigaki City the *angama*,[66] a costumed group of young people—chanting dancers and musicians—is invited by households as envoys from the world of the dead (Jp. *ano yo*) to conduct a service in front of a household altar in the memory of the ancestors. They are headed by two masked figures, representing a wizened, but merry old man (*ushumai*) and a woman (*unmee*), who dance their way from one house to the next, engaging spectators in a lively dialogue carried out in a local dialect (fig. 39). *Ushumai* and *unmee* are considered as "remote ancestors" and "parents" of *faama*, or "children" ("recent ancestors").

Angama also appear on Iriomote at the *shichi* (Jp. *setsu* 節) festival, whose name means "turn of the year," indicating the end and beginning of the agricultural cycle (ninth through the tenth lunar months). These *shichi angama* belong to the harvest festival and differ from *bon angama*; we can suppose that the latter (ancestral type of visiting deities) were modeled after the former (agricultural type visiting deities).

Numerous scholars advance the theory that masked visiting deities "clearly" reveal their character as ancestor-deities. Origuchi has particularly stressed this aspect (cf. Kreiner 1968, p. 108 and Heshiki 1995, p. 15). Some masked deities also show characteristics of souls of the dead (Kreiner 1968, p. 108). Nakamatsu Yashū argues that "kami of the *utaki*" are ancestral deities and that they stay in nirai-kanai (Nakamatsu 1968, p. 101). The cosmological basis of the community religion centering on *utaki* shrines is of the same nature as that of the masked deities (Kreiner 1968, p. 110). On the other hand, some other scholars such as Komatsu Kazuhiko stress the principal difference between ancestors and visiting deities.

"Graves and Groves": *Utaki* Shrines as Ancient Graveyards

It is usual in the Ryukyus that the old ancestral tombs are treated as places of worship. On the Okinawan main island the "ancestral founder's tomb" (*ajibaka, ajishiibaka*, or *ajishii*)[67] constitutes one of the major points of homage in *munchuu* worship. This tomb is usually rather small and not is used any more for burial, being frequented only as a ritual site. In the case of commoner *munchuu*, the ancestral founder's tomb is found in the village where its senior lineage resides. Among the upper classes, each family possesses its own tomb, and there is no common burial; however, the tomb of the "lineage founder" and often of the "first ancestor" in Shuri constitute secondary places of homage after the *ajishiibaka* (Lebra 1966, p. 165).

On Tarama and Minna the same types of graves—collective tombs (Ok. *mueebaka*, Jp. *moaibaka* 模合墓) and "stone tombs" (Jp. *ishizumibaka* 石積墓)—are used as (1) places for the natural disappearance of the soft parts of the body, (2) places for the storage of the cleansed bones, and (3) sites of the rituals for the ancestors of the local people (*hitobito no sosen saishijō* 人々の祖先祭祀場). Uematsu also remarks that the bones stockpiled at the rear of the tombs do not represent common ancestors (*kyōtsū no sosen* 共通の祖先) but preserve personality (Uematsu 1993, p. 260). A number of tombs of [quasi-]historical personalities on the Miyako islands are converted into shrines or treated as *utaki*. Megalithic tombs (*myaaka*) (fig. 40-42) of local rulers (ca fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries) are worshiped and one can observe offerings placed beside them (author's observation).

The relationship between *utaki* shrines ("sacred groves") and graves in the Ryukyus deserves close examination. On Tarama, for example, graves are often very close to some of the most sacred *utaki* shrines. As Newell says, "Unlike in Japanese Shinto where graves are

impure relative to shrines and never associated together, there seems to be no conflict between the two" (Newell 1980, p. 28–29). This is characteristic not only of Tarama but also of some other islands of the Miyako group also. Nakamatsu Yashū, who surveyed *utaki* shrine sites throughout the Ryukyuan archipelago over many years, notes that the burial site of the earliest ancestors of a village, particularly the ancestors of the founder family (*mura no sōke* 村の宗家), was called the "place for the wind burial" (*fūsōsho* 風葬処). Over many generations its function underwent changes and it ultimately evolved into a shrine for the worship of the kami and thus became the center of a village community's religious worship. Nakamatsu argues that "almost every" *utaki* shrine in the Ryukyus contains in its precinct an area where a sizable number of human bones were stored. He hypothesizes that the entire precinct of the sacred grove was once the common graveyard of the community, and that the most sacred *ibi* area (the "altar" of the *utaki* shrine) was the depository of the cleaned bones. In Ryukyuan villages the household of the founding family was located next to such *utaki* shrines where the burial of ancestors was performed. In addition, there were also graves within the household lot[68] (Nakamatsu 1968, pp. 61–62, 70–75).

Masako Tanaka finds that several facts corroborate Nakamatsu's hypothesis, namely: it has been proven that most of the sacred groves do indeed contain human bones in their *ibi* area; according to Iha Fuyu, "*ibi*" can mean "ancestral spirit"; and people still remember their elders saying that the sacred groves contain "the divine bone" (Ok. *funi-shin* 骨神). Since some ancestral bones are today also called *funi-shin*, it is possible that *funi-shin* (in the sense of "ancestral bones")[69] became *funi-shin* (in the sense of "divine bone"). Another reason advanced by Tanaka is that the relationship between the general precinct of the sacred grove and the *ibi* area is consistent with the mortuary customs which survived until quite recently. As a specialist on Okinawan kinship, Tanaka surmises "some sort of relationship" between the sacred groves and ancestor worship in the past. That some form of ancestor worship existed before the introduction of Buddhism seems likely from the fact that "the house of the first settler" (Ok. *nii, nii-yaa* 根家) was distinguished from other households, and the offices of the "big man" (Ok. *ufukoro/ohokoro*, or "leader of the community") and the kami (Ok. *nigami*, Jp. *negami* 根神, or "major priestess of the community") were transmitted patrilineally from the sister-brother pair of the house from one generation to the next (Tanaka 1974, pp. 34–35).

There are also other reasons for the inclusion of the kami of the sacred grove (*utaki nu u-kami-ganashii*) in the category of ancestors. All villagers are believed to be his agnatic offspring; they consider themselves to be "the children" (Ok. *kwaamaagwa* 子孫) of the deity of the *utaki* shrine. In some villages of Okinawa the kami of the *utaki* is definitely conceptualized as the founding couple of the oldest descent group of the village, whose bones are enshrined in the precincts of the sacred grove. Tanaka argues that the congregation of kami is not a residential category, but rather a descent category, since only those who were begotten by male villagers belong to this group. In Tanaka's opinion, all this makes it more likely that the kami of the *utaki* may be ancestors of the villagers not just metaphorically, but genealogically as well. On the other hand, the kami of the sacred grove is so vaguely anthropomorphized and personified that people are not sure whether the kami is the first ancestor of the village or includes all remote ancestors. Okinawan ancestors may be addressed as "parents" (*uya*) with various honorifics (e.g., *mi-uya, uya-ganashii, uya-ganashii-mee, mi-uya-ganashii-mee* 御親様前). No other deities may be addressed or referred to in this manner, while living

parents may be referred to, but not addressed, as *uya-ganashii*, or *uya-ganashii-mee*. Another distinctive feature of the kami of the sacred grove, which sets this kami apart from all other ancestors, is that the kami is approachable only through female ritual specialists (Tanaka 1977, pp. 45, 48–49).

Nakamatsu's hypothesis involves not only *utaki* shrines but also stone-walled enclosures called *gusuku*, or *gushiku* 城 (Ryukyuan "castles") (fig. 43). The dispute regarding the origin and nature of the *gusuku* took place in the Okinawan academic world in the 1970s. Among three theories which were discussed at that time one is relevant to our study: *gusuku* were sacred areas including tombs and having the same characteristics as *utaki*. Akamine agrees with Nakamatsu that in many localities in the Ryukyus bones of ancestors called *funi-shin* are worshiped in *utaki* shrines. But *utaki* as sacred spaces are separated from graveyards which are used today for burials. Thus, ancestral bones worshiped in *utaki* represent not the spirits of the dead as they are, but ancestral deities into whom these dead spirits have been deified (Jp. *kami ka shita soreishin* カミ化した祖霊神). Akamine appeals to archeologist Kokubu Naoichi, who holds the same opinion as Nakamatsu about *gusuku*, which are held to have been previously the graveyards of the ancestors, as were *utaki* shrines. But Akamine imposes a certain limitation: the site where deities reside is not the place of the primary burial (*dai ichiji bosho* 第一次の墓所), but the place of the secondary (*dai ni ji ni* 第二次に) or even ternary (*dai san ji ni shunōshita tokoro* 第三次に収納した所) deposition of the cleansed bones (Akamine 1989, p. 426).

As for the graves within the house yard (*yashikinaibaka* 屋敷内墓), there are three households with shrines (*haisho* 拝所) that are called *shiijin ganashi* ("honorable ancestors," Jp. *o-senzo-sama* 御先祖様) and are said to be the type of graves that were confirmed on Kudaka. There is no evidence of the preliminary burial of the dead body in these shrines, although there is the possibility that the secondary burial of clean bones were moved here after the *senkotsu* ritual. The old people say that "after *senkotsu* the dead becomes *shiijin* and ascend the sky." Thus, *shiijin ganashi* are not the spirits of the dead but deified ancestral spirits (Akamine 1989, p. 426).

On Hateruma some *utaki* shrines (called *waa*) have burials within their precincts. Mi-shuku-*waa*, the village shrine, has remnants of an old grave mound within its ground (Ouwehand 1985, p. 42, Fig. 10). The grave of Aramari-nu-pa, the legendary ancestress of the human race on Hateruma is still worshiped by the Futamuri family and food is offered at the grave. The priestess from the Futamuri family presides over certain rituals several times a year (Ouwehand 1985, pp. 47–48, Fig. 12). On the shrine ground of the Arantu-*waa* a stone mound marks the place where one of the ancestors (*uyaan*, Jp. *oyagami*) of the Petu house, allegedly the founder of the Arantu shrine complex, is supposed to be buried (fig. 44). This grave is worshiped, especially during the harvest festival by the heads of Petu and other houses. For Hateruma this old Petu ancestor grave is the only clearly demonstrable case of a grave site on the grounds of a village shrine that is closely related to it in legend. As such, according to Ouwehand, it offers support for Nakamatsu's hypothesis. That this also holds true for places lacking such visible signs and formal veneration was repeatedly confirmed by the information the researchers received from the priestesses, "that bones and skulls lay buried at such and such places within the shrine grounds." Bones of local rulers, "chieftains" (Ok. *ushi* 大人) are said to be buried at several spots in these shrine grounds; on ritual occasions water

is offered at these spots (Ouwehand 1985, pp. 41–42, Fig. 9; 149).

On Kakeroma and Amami Ōshima in the center of each village, near the sanctuaries called *kami-ashagi* (from *kami ashiage* 神足上げ) for visiting deities and *tuneya/toneya* 神殿 (a house of a *noro* priestess) for ancestors and the fire deity lies a small mound called *ibe* 威部. This *ibe* of Amami is comparable both to the *ibe*, or *ibi*, "altar," the central place of worship in the *utaki* shrines of Okinawa and the Southern Ryukyus (Miyako, Yaeyama), and to the sanctuaries of Southern Kyushu such as *moidon* (Jp. *moridono* 森殿; holy groves with old graves as sanctuaries of *dōzoku* 同族-type patrilineages *kado* 門) and memorials of the village-founder *kiiakedon* (Jp. *kiriakedono* 切り開け殿) (Kreiner 1966, pp. 114–115).

On the Miyako islands a number of *utaki* shrines contain burial caves and stone mounds within their precincts (fig. 45). Some of these mounds are located directly next to the *ibi* "altars" of the *utaki* while others are regarded to be the *ibi* itself. These mounds are said to be the graves of the people who are worshiped there as kami of the *utaki*. At Ikema island more than half (nine of fifteen) of the village *utaki* and *sato utaki*[70] fall into this category: Nakamanii, Muikusu, Nauvva, Muddumai, Sukimma, Tanui, Majyayama, Mahainasumiga, Tunuganasu (fig. 46) (author's observation).[71] In important documents of the eighteenth century, *Utaki yuraiki* 御嶽由来記, (Records on the Origin of *Utaki* [Shrines]), 1705, and *Ryūkyūkoku yuraiki* 琉球国由来記, (Records on the Origin of Ryukyu State, 1713) twenty-nine *utaki* of Miyako are recorded. Akata Mitsuo reports that there are five "graveyard-type *utaki* shrines" (*bochi gata utaki*墓地型御嶽) among them (Akata 1995, pp. 615–16, 643–49). Local ethnographers (e.g., Motonaga Kiyoshi, Sadoyama Anko, Iraha Morio) who support Nakamatsu's hypothesis at least partially confirm that mounds within the precincts of the *utaki* shrines are supposed to be graves of persons who are worshiped there as kami. I was informed that about thirty to forty years previously the priestesses reburied bones from the precincts of the sacred groves in proper graves. In some other *utaki*-shrines ancestral deities are worshiped (fig. 47) and memorial tablets are installed (fig. 48).

The "graves and groves" phenomenon is not restricted to the Ryukyus. *Utaki*-type shrines of the Ryukyus are supposed to join the so-called culture of "sacred groves" (*mori* 森, 杜, or *moriyama* 森山) or worship of "sacred groves" (*mori no shinkō* 森の信仰) common to all Japan. This culture embraces local cults of different regions: *morigami* 森神, or *morisama* 森様 (San'in), *niso no mori* ニソの杜 (Fukui prefecture, Wakasa Bay), *kōjin no mori* 荒神の森 (Chūgoku region), *shige* しげ(Tsushima), *moidon* (Satsuma peninsular, Southern Kyushu), *moiyama* (Jp. *moriyama*) (Ōsumi peninsula, Southern Kyushu), *garōyama* (Tanegashima), *muiyama* (Jp. *moriyama*)**,** *kamiyama* 神山 (Tokara islands), *muriyama/muiyama* (Jp. *moriyama*)**,** *obotsuyama* オボツ山*, kamiyama***,** *ugan'yama* (Jp. *ogamiyama* 拝み山)*, terayama* テラ山, *gongin'yama/gungin'yama* (Jp. *gongen'yama* 権現山) (Amami). Many of these local cults are related to ancestor worship and even burials.

Shimono Toshimi's field research on Okinoerabu seems to give a clue to the historical development (from stage I as the oldest to stage III as the latest) of the relationship between different burial systems, ancestor rituals (*sosensai* 祖先祭) and sacred groves.

I. (a) Abandonment of the corpse in the jungle, namely in sacred groves called *ujichiyama*, on the cliffs or in natural caves.
(b) *Umiri* (*umi ori*, lit. "descent to the sea") *matsuri* as ritual for "distant ancestors" (*ensorei matsuri* 遠祖霊祭).

II. (a) Disposal of the corpse in natural or artificial caves, called *tuurubaka*.
(b) *Tuurumi* (lit. "to see *tuuru* [graves]") as ritual for "middle ancestors" (*chūsorei matsuri* 中祖霊祭).

III. (a) Graveyard.
(b) *Uyafuji* (Ok. for ancestor) *matsuri* as ritual for "recent ancestors" (*kinsorei matsuri* 近祖霊祭).

The *umiri* (*umi ori*) *matsuri* is similar to the *hamaori* ritual and performed in the ninth or tenth lunar month on the beach. Graves are not visited on this occasion. Rather, people do not welcome ancestors whom they formerly knew, but remote ancestors from the overseas other world, i.e., *nirai-kanai*. During the *tuurumi* ritual in the ninth lunar month reburial and the bone-washing rite are conducted. *Uyafuji matsuri* is performed from the seventh to the tenth lunar month during which "recent ancestors" are invited from the graveyard to the house where they stay for a week and are sent back to their tombs (Shimono 1991, pp. 51–59).

Household Deities and Deified Ancestors

The "fire god" (Ok. *hinukan*, *finukan*, *fii nu kang, fii nu kami*; Jp. *hi no kami* 火の神), or the "hearth deity" (Ok. *ukamanukami* 御釜神, Jp. *kamado no kami* 御竈の神) was worshiped as a guardian god at the kitchen hearth, which consisted of three stones (fig. 49), in every Ryukyuan home.[72] Together with the ancestral shrine, the kitchen hearth was an important center of religious activity within the household. Many scholars of Okinawan religion believe that worship of the fire god precedes worship of ancestral spirits. Even today, at important religions functions, prayers are first offered to the fire god, followed by prayers at the ancestral shrine. Rituals at the hearth to the fire god who is believed to be female are conducted by the oldest woman in the house. Some scholars argue that the deified ancestral spirits are worshiped after the last memorial service as the fire god (*Okinawa daihyakka jiten* 1983, vol. 2, p. 628). Akamine is critical of this opinion (Akamine 1996, p. 77).

Investigators of Ryukyuan and Japanese cultures also hint at *yashiki-gami* as the deified ancestor. *Yashiki-gami* (Ok. *yasichi-gami* 屋敷神, *tukurunukan* 所の神, Miyako *tukurugan/tukurugam, tukurunushi* 所主, Hateruma *yasikinkan*), or the deity of the household lot (fig. 50), used to be worshiped in every house and was believed to be a "household protector" (Takiguchi 1984, p. 376). Sometimes tombs within the house yard were worshiped as symbols of *yashiki-gami* (Zamami 2006, pp. 184–86).[73] Sakai Usaku gathered a number of such cases in his fieldwork (Sakai 1987, pp. 120–33). Some students of Japanese ancestor worship have argued that "it is beyond doubt" that certain of the kami have a more obvious connection with ancestral spirits than others, for example the *ujigami* and the *yashiki-gami* and their equivalents. Regarding the latter, many concrete examples may be given of ancestors who after the final memorial service (*tomuraiage* 弔い上げ) have been identified as *yashiki-gami* (Berentsen 1985, p. 95).

It may be supposed that the Ryukyuan worship of *tukurunukan* (also *jiichinukami* 土地の神, *chichinukami* 土の神) would lend itself to comparative analysis with the highly developed concept of *yashiki-gami* (also *uchigami/utsugan* 内神, *chijin/jigami* 地神, *jinushi* 地主, *kōjin* 荒神) of Japan proper. This is particularly the case where the mode of worship

in mainland Japan is related to ancestor worship where *yashiki-gami*, or the "deity of the household lot" (also *ji no kami* 地の神) is worshiped as the deified ancestor. In a more distant age, Japanese believed that souls of the dead purified from the pestilence of death became *yashiki-gami*. In the second half of the twentieth century the tombs of the "founding ancestors" within or near the house lots were still worshiped as *yashiki-gami*. Researchers discovered that the the shrines of ancestor deities gradually moved over time from distant locations (in the forest or at the base of mountains) to the house lot. *Niso no mori* of Wakasa Bay is held as an example of the original form of *yashiki-gami* (cf. Naoe 1980, pp. 198–214).

I would like to stress that *yashiki-gami* of the main family in the Japanese village (Ok. *mutu,* or *mutuyaa*) can become the guardian deity (*chinju no kami* 鎮守の神) of the kin group or of the whole village. Moreover, *yashiki-gami* can develop into a field deity (*ta no kami*). Rituals for *yashiki-gami* in Japan are carried out at the time of the festivals for the field (*ta no kami*) and the mountain deities (*yama no kami*) on the second, tenth, and eleventh months of the lunar calendar, consequently during the festivals for the beckoning of the next year's harvest (*yoshuku*予祝-type rituals) and harvest thanksgiving festivals (*hōnensai* 豊年祭-type rituals) which are common both to Japan and the Ryukyus.

Flesh/Bones, Feminine/Masculine

Two natural substances, blood (Ok. *chii*; Jp. *chi* 血) and semen (Ok. *sani*, Jp. *sane* 実 or 種), are believed to play significant roles in defining two different kinds of "parent-child" relationships in the Ryukyus; specifically in Okinawa. The relationship through blood (Ok. *gweeshichi*, non-agnatic kin relationship) is bilaterally symmetrical: the person is related to both the genitor and genitrix in blood. In this sense, it sharply contrasts with the "agnatic"[74] (Ok. *shiji* 筋) relationship which is thought to be based on semen (*sani*): agnatic status derives solely from the genitor. *Shiji* (筋) as the "paternal relation," or "patrilineage" stands for the genealogical line of succession, being a kind of spiritual power passed on to the individual through the patriline. Thus agnatic status comes with semen (*sani*) and is transmitted only through the male. The principle of *shiji* (agnation) is relevant to the indigenous Ryukyuan concept of "citizenship" in the village community. A concrete expression of this principle is a strict male primogeniture in inheritance and succession (Tanaka 1974, pp. 112, 118, 164; Tanaka 1977, pp. 37–38).

In *omoro* songs as well as in the modern folk ideology another *shiji*[75] appears (*seji* in the "Omoro Sōshi"), which was an impersonal supernatural power believed to control ultimately everything in the world, transforming female into sacred persons (i.e., priestesses) and groves into *utaki* shrines. According to Tanaka, it is "not accidental" that both "patrification" and "supernatural power" are called *shiji*, although these were regarded as two separate and homophonous words (Tanaka 1974, pp. 248–249). Indeed, Lebra defines *shiji* also as "the spirit in a male line"[76] (Lebra 1966, p. 222). On Hateruma "all manifestations" of the *uyaan* (*oyagami*) or ancestral deities possess this *shiji* power; elsewhere in the Yaeyamas the idea of *shiji* persists in the concept of fertility (*yu/yuu* (世) (Ouwehand 1985, p. 165).

According to the popular somatological beliefs in the Ryukyus—very much like those in Korea, Southeast China or in Southeast Asia—flesh, blood and bones constitute the human body. Flesh and blood are inherited from the mother while bones are the symbol of se-

men received from the father. As was already mentioned, at the *senkotsu* bone-washing ritual the remains of the dead are separated from "red" flesh and blood and are transformed into "white" bones which are, as Akashi Uematsu argues, the symbol of the semen inherited from the father. After the bone-washing ritual the body is reduced to bones which are the symbol of patrilineality; thus the deceased is promoted to the status of an individual ancestor (Uematsu 1986, p. 81; Uematsu 1988, pp. 140, 146, 165).

Saion[77] wrote in his *Gokyōjō* (Instructions 1733) that "since the *ichimun* (Jp. *ichimon* 一門) is composed of the descendants of the single founding ancestor (Ok. *gwansu* 元祖), the members of the *ichimun* share the same bone and flesh." These instructions also show that the ruling warrior class tried to instill agnatic principles in the people's minds (Tanaka 1974, p. 45). The Ryukyuan concept of "blood/flesh" and "semen/bones" is quite similar to the popular ideas in Southeast Asia and Southern China (Fukien, Canton, and Taiwan). Two-stage burials with reburial and bone-washing rites were supposedly imported to the Ryukyus from Southern China along with the introduction of the concepts of blood and semen (cf. Tanaka 1974, p. 340). As held in a local Cantonese village, flesh is inherited from the mother and is thereby of the *yin* 陰 essence; bones, on the other hand, are passed patrilineally and are primarily *yang* 陽 (Watson 1990, p. 113). Here, as in the Ryukyus, bones as "ancestral stuff" and "agnatic matter" are retained within the family and descent line, for they are exhumed and put into an ossuary for preservation. Local people say that "only bones are regarded as important. Flesh rots away, but bones are part of your ancestors, so you cannot throw them away." Furthermore, in China bones are explicitly associated with semen. In the words of the informants, "Bones are connected directly to your ancestors through your father's semen" (Thompson 1990, p. 93). In Okinawa the "uncompromising ideology of patrification (*shiji*)" based on the concept of semen is the core of the munchu descent group (Tanaka 1974, pp. 226, 238). An Okinawan informant explained to William Lebra: "*Shiji* does not mean "blood" when referring to male ancestors; it means that you have their spirit. Your father gives his *shiji* to you and your siblings" (Lebra 1966, p. 27).

The pollution of death emanates from the decaying flesh, not from bones. The objective of Cantonese mortuary rites is to progress as smoothly and efficiently as possible to the stage when it is possible to exhume the bones and cleanse them of the last corrupting remnants of flesh (Watson 1990, p. 113). The focus of the funeral ritual is to remove the dangerous and polluting corpse from contact with the living and reduce it to clean, long-lasting bones. The goal is to remove the fleshly *yin* elements of the deceased and separate them from the living while enhancing the vital *yang* elements contained in the bones (Martin 1990, p. 167).

The preservation of bones and the disappearance of flesh reflect the Cantonese conception of the patrilineage as a corporate group of males that, irrespective of death, continue to exist through time. The realm of ancestors is thus exclusively male, or *yang*, in total absence of women, or female essence (Watson 1990, p. 114). In Okinawan ancestor-oriented ideology the male is also superior to the female (Tanaka 1974, p. 113). During the last several centuries the institution of the patrilineal descent group and its concomitant agnatic descent principles are thought to have been introduced from Southern China and superimposed upon the basically bilateral system of the Ryukyus[78] (Tanaka 1977, p. 62). Thus, the "androcentric ideology of the ancestral cult" (J. L.Watson) of China was grafted onto Ryukyuan culture which

is characterized by gender balance and the ritual superiority of women who were and still are responsible for the majority of rituals.[79]

While in Southern China (Canton) the reburial procedure (equivalent to the Ryukyuan bone-washing ritual) is conducted by male professional ritual specialists (funeral priests), in the Ryukyus the *senkotsu* ritual is carried out by the women of the family.[80] However, in Canton it is the women and not the men who handle corpses and attend to funerals. Cantonese village men avoid any physical contact with the corpse because it is thought to affect adversely their *yang*, or male essence. Women are not affected in the same way given that they are primarily of *yin* essence (Watson 1990, p. 113). They can take into themselves the pollution of death, as in the vivid example of women sweeping their unbound hair along the coffin in order to absorb the corpse's pollution (Martin 1990, p. 167). In the same way we can interpret the Ryukyuan example (Hateruma) when after the thirty-third anniversary women erase the name of their relatives from the memorial tablet with their hair (Masao Higa, personal communication).

In the view of the Cantonese example, bones are "male (*yang*) in essence," and "flesh is female (*yin*)" (Rawski 1990, p. 24). Although *yin-yang* dualism does not pervade Ryukyuan culture to the extent it does in Chinese, researchers point out "the binary opposition of agnatic/non-agnatic relationship" (s*hiji/gweeshichi***,** *sane/chii*, semen/blood) in Okinawa (Tanaka 1974, p. 324). This imported binary opposition overlapped with the indigenous dichotomy between the domain of the female (sacred) and the male (profane) (Tanaka 1974, p. 244).

Death rituals are recognized as the crystallization of cultural values and symbolism. Evaluating Hertz's contribution, Metcalf and Huntington wrote that "societies that practice secondary bone treatment demonstrate by this activity a greater cognitive concern with the bones." Hertz contended that the corpse and human osseous remains manipulated in reburials are used to symbolically represent the cultural system, the beliefs, and values of a society that practices such rituals (Metcalf and Huntington 1991). Ryukyuan rites highlight the symbolism of the ancestor's bones. The body and bones come to embody the social identity of the person. Within mortuary rites and ancestor worship flesh is the symbol of "the feminine" and "pollution," while bones are the symbol of "the masculine" and "sacred."

By way of conclusion, let us summarize the different views in the discourse on the postmortem ritual deification in the Ryukyus. Ancestral spirits are viewed as kami of low rank. The belief that the deceased becomes a kami seems to antedate the introduction of Buddhism. On the contrary, the concept of the deification of the souls of the dead at the thirty-third anniversary is of a later introduction to the Ryukyus, although it is now widely and deeply rooted in local culture. There seems to be prevalent among the Ryukyuans a vague distinction between the dead whose memory is still vivid and those who died long ago, even though the thirty-third anniversary is nothing but a "businesslike procedure" by which to discard of a distinction that was primarily gradual and relative. Within ancestor worship, deified ancestral spirits or their anonymous hosts are separated from the deities of the *utaki* shrines who are not ancestral deities of a certain family or lineage group, but are old ancestral spirits, mythical founding ancestral deities, cultural hero-type ancestral deities, or very special female ancestral spirit-deities.

"Ancestor-deities" (*uyaan/oyagami*) who are worshiped in the *tokonoma* and the *utaki* shrines are "individual deified ancestor spirits" but not "collective deified ancestor spirits" within ancestor worship. Ancestors deified at the final thirty-third-year ceremony within the framework of ancestor worship, and the deities of the village shrine worship such as *uyaan* represent two different concepts. No clear distinction is drawn between the "souls of the dead" and the "deified ancestors" at the *bon* festival, although the deified ancestors are classified into the earlier and the latter, in parallel relationship with the distinctions between the stem family and the branch families. The process by which an ancestor transitions from a kami to the status of "ancestor-deities" can be traced to a similar phenomenon seen in the transition from reverence of the dead in rituals such as *bon* to *uyaan* worship within the system of agricultural rituals.

That some form of ancestor worship existed before the introduction of Buddhism seems likely, since "the house of the first settler" (*nii-yaa*) was distinguished from other households, and the offices of the leader of the community and the major priestess of the community (*nigami*) were transmitted patrilineally from the sister-brother pair of the house of one generation to the next. Some places where the earliest ancestors of a village were buried ultimately became *utaki* shrines for the worship of the kami and thus the centers of the religious worship of a village community. Ancestral bones (*funi-shin*) worshiped in *utaki* represent the deified ancestral deities. Some deified ancestors after the final thirty-third memorial service also have been identified as the deity of the household lot (*yashiki-gami*).

Prior to the introduction of Tanabata, the bone-washing ritual was carried out during the *shinugu* or *unjami/ungami* festivals (during the seventh month of the lunar calendar), *arasachi*, *shibasashi*, and *dunga* festivals (eighth month in the lunar calendar), and the *tuurumi* ritual (ninth lunar month). These festivals as well as the rituals of *hamaori* ("descending on the beach") and *umiri* are performed once a year (roughly around the time of *bon*) for the purpose of receiving the "souls of the dead" and praying to the distant ancestors (those who died more than thirty-three years ago—those coming from over the sea, or *nirai-kanai*) for a good harvest. These festivals represent an old form of the Ryukyuan ancestor cult that reveals the indigenous ritual elevation of the dead spirit to the status of ancestral deity.

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NOTES

1 In this research note, the term “the Ryukyus” refers to “the Ryukyuan culture area” (Ryūkyū *bunka ken* 琉球文化圏), embracing the Nansei islands (Nansei shotō 南西諸島) (fig. 1), inclusive of the following island groups: Yaeyama, Miyako, Okinawa, Amami, and Tokara (here named in south-to-north order).

2 Among these publications there are only few short special articles on different aspects of Ryukyuan death rituals and ancestor worship (Haguenauer 1954 [1977]; Kaneko 1964; Kreiner 2004; Mabuchi 1976a; Noguchi 1966; Tanaka 1977). There is not a single work on the postmortem ritual deification.

3 The commonality is found in the basic structure of mortuary rites which involve double funerals: (1) the primary temporary burial of the dead body; and (2) the secondary treatment including the burial of clean bones (Sai 2004; Yamaori 2004; Baksheev 2005).

4 There are a few exceptions as seen in the comparative study, “Ancestors” (Newell 1976), and a special article on Ryukyuan death rituals (Haguenauer 1954, 1977) which were written over thirty years earlier.

5 The object of this paper is the process of the deification of the dead and the nature of the ancestral deities, *not* the whole complex of diverse rituals and concepts relating to mortuary and postmortem practices throughout the Ryukyus; the latter will be considered in the following publications.

6 *Omoro* are traditional religious songs, ritual chants, and the prayers of priestesses of the northern group of Okinawan and Amami islands. The *Omoro sōshi* おもろ草紙, recorded in 1531–1623, is considered the Ryukyu’s greatest collection of songs.

7 For a discussion in English on single (final) and double (multiple) disposal methods in the Ryukyus, see Kaneko 1964, p. 25.

8 “Fluid-reducer” (Kaneko 1964, p. 25), “bone-drying place” (Lebra 1966, p. 166).

9 It means that these graves are used “now.”

10 The latter is of a “gable” type. When a primary burial tomb and a permanent burial tomb of this type are merged in one tomb, *shiruhirashi* is a right-hand (western) chamber of a tomb, used for the temporary interment prior to bone washing (cf. Lebra 1966, p. 223). It is represented by the famous royal tomb Tamaudun 玉御殿 (or 玉陵; fig. 3); however, Tamaudun has one (central) *shiruhirashi* chamber and two (right and left) chambers for the laying of remains to rest. The interior structure of the tomb with a single demarcated space is analyzed below. It is often of a “turtle-back” type.

11 Primary tombs are termed in the Ryukyus *gushoo*, or *gusoo* (Jp. *goshō* 後生) or *shiruhirashi/shiruharashidukuma*; permanent tombs *shinju* (Jp. *senzo* 先祖) or just *paka*. There are numerous general terms for a tomb in different locations of the Nansei Islands: *haka/paka/faka, paa* (墓), *gushoo*, *shinju/shinzu* (Jp. *senzo*), *muto/mutu/mudu* (Jp. *moto* 元, i.e., “origin”), *haru* (lit. “field” 原・野), *haruyaa/paruyaa* (lit. “field house” 野の家), *fukayaa* (lit. “outdoors house” 外の家), *tsukaju/chikaju* 塚所, *muuju* (lit. “mourning place” 喪所), etc. (Nakama and Ebara 1983, p. 130).

12 Also *ike* 池, *sichiki* 設備), *tooni* (槽) (Fujii 1989, p. 317).
13 On first reference to an individual island, I give the name of the island and (in parentheses) the name of the group of islands to which that individual island belongs. In subsequent references, I omit the parenthetical identification of the island group.
14 Jp. *oya hito* 親人 ("the dead," lit. "parent-human").
15 Suicide, murder, drowning, burning, accident, and some kinds of disease are regarded by Okinawans as "abnormal deaths" (*ijōshi*). In such cases, as with the death of a child under seven, postmortem rites greatly differ from the standard pattern.
16 Jp. *hotoke* 仏, "the [newly] dead."
17 Jp. *kami*.
18 See the description of the seventh-day ceremonies in English: for the main island of Okinawa, see (Tanaka 1977, p. 46); for Hateruma island (Ouwehand 1985, pp. 191–92); for Kurohama island (Ota 1987, pp. 130–32); for Tarama island (Newell 1980, p. 35); for Miyako island, Karimata Village (Burd 1952, p. 228).
19 This period corresponds to the Buddhist "intermediate shade" (*chūin* 中陰) or "intermediate existence" (*chū'u* 中有), a forty-nine day period between someone's death and the rebirth.
20 In Amami the dead soul is believed to move back and forth between the afterworld and this world for seven days after death.
21 On the symbolism of "forty-nine" in funerary matters, see Ouwehand 1985, p. 183.
22 For Miyako (Karimata Village) see Burd 1952, p. 228; for Kurohama, see Ota 1987, p. 131, but the *mabui wakashi* ritual on Kurohama is performed on the twenty-first day (ibid.).
23 The timing of the *mabui wakashi* ritual differed greatly from locality to locality: third day (Tonaki, Henza, Teima, Kabira, and Nagahama), twenty-seventh day (Kiyan, Tomori), thirty-seventh day (Atsuta), forty-ninth day (Ou, Itokazu, Oku, Izena, Aguni, Uruka, Sonai, etc.), hundredth day (Zamami) (Fujii 1989, p. 315).
24 *Kamkakarya* ("*kam-kakar'a*" [Nevsky 2005, V.I, p. 343]; カンムカカリャ [Yonaha 2003, p. 137]; some Western scholars prefer "*kankakaria*" or "*kangkakaria*") is *kamigakari* in standard Japanese, and means "possessed by a *kami* spirit" and is commonly translated as "shaman." One may consider, however, the word "shaman" questionable as regards the Ryukyuan context. However, local ethnologists of Miyako who contributed to the *Minzoku, kayō* volume of *Hirara-shi shi* treat local folklore and ethnology in a chapter entitled "Shaman" シャーマン (Hirara-shi Shi Hensan Iinkai 1987, pp. 338–362). They consistently use the words "shaman" and "shamanism" シャーマニズム (ibid., pp. 338–40, 345–49, 352–54, 356, 358, 359–60).
25 *Bon* is primarily a domestic rite while the "New Year's Day of the Dead," *shiimii* and *higan* center on tomb visitations. *Higan* is no longer celebrated by all families. The "New Year's Day of the Dead" is a rite for those who died during the past year.
26 *Shiimii* is the major sib and family rite of the year, observed at the tombs (Lebra 1966, p. 222). *Kami ushiimii*—an annual rite for the founder of a sib—occurs during the same period as *shiimii* (Lebra 1966, p. 219). Takiguchi treats *shiimii* at Miyako as a "New Year celebration for the ancestors" (Takiguchi 1984, p. 375).
27 The bone-washing rite may also take place on the occasion of a later funeral to make room for another corpse (Lebra 1966, p. 200). On Kudaka bone-washing was carried out once every twelve years.
28 For a description of "bone-washing rites" on the main island of Okinawa, see (Lebra 1966, p. 200); for Hateruma (Ouwehand 1985, pp. 189–90); for Taiwan (Tsu 2001).
29 For these festivals, see below.
30 This type of disposal was observed on Miyako.
31 On the Miyako islands the *senkotsu* ritual was practiced at Hirara City, Ikema island and Tarama

island; it was not observed in Gusukube, Shimajiri, Ōura, Ōgami island and Minna island. This rite is thought to have been introduced to Miyako from Shuri about 500 years before and was practiced initially among the local nobility; lately it was adopted also by ordinary people in some localities (Masaji Nakasone, personal communication). Also see (Sakurai 1972).

32 For the schemes of the local variations of the process of deification of the dead in the Ryukyus, see Fujii 1989, p. 314, Fig. 1 (Gusukube and Bora [Miyako] and Katsuren-son [Okinawa main island]); Uematsu 1993, p. 273 (Tarama island [Miyako]).

33 *Omoro Sōshi* (1532–1623), *Ryūkyū shintō-ki* (1609), *Ryūkyū koku-kyūki* (1731).

34 See also Tanigawa 2006, pp. 278–80.

35 For the concept of the soul in Japan, see Matsudaira 1980.

36 See photo by the author of praying Irabu *tsukasa* in *kampani* robes (fig. 20).

37 For a description of Okinawan ancestral tablets, see Tanaka 1977, p. 53.

38 Ancestral tablets were introduced to mainland Japan from China by Zen monks in the fourteenth century.

39 For a look into the construction of a household ancestral altar on Okinawa's main island, see Lebra 1966, pp. 182–83, and for the island of Tamara (Miyako), see Newell 1980, p. 34.

40 This is also the case in Japan, although temporary memorial tablets are made of white paper in China. Ouwehand discusses the temporary paper tablets on Hateruma (Ouwehand 1985, p. 186).

41 In Southern China the temporary tablet is replaced by the permanent one about a year after death (Ahern 1973, p. 94).

42 Jp. *senzo* 先祖.

43 During the *jurukunichi* and *siimii* (Jp. *seimei*) festivals when family members visit the tomb with offerings and pray to their ancestral spirits, the feast in the tomb yard is not observed on Kudaka island. Local people visit tombs only on the occasion of a burial or a bone-washing ritual. Akamine attributes this to the extreme fear of graves (Akamine 1996, p. 83).

44 The ritual superiority of the East over the West in the Ryukyus can be widely observed in other rites (Mabuchi 1980, p. 4).

45 In a northern Okinawan village in *ichibanza*, on the left side of an *utana* an alcove called *u-tuku* is situated. This is found in every household, but only in the *mutuuji* household (元氏 the "senior house") does it contain the scroll called *u-kwannun* (Jp. *o-Kannon*) depicting tree deities (Tanaka 1977, p. 50, Fig. 3).

46 *Buzashiki* is a shelf with cultic objects such as incense burners and flower vases.

47 Ouwehand 1985, p. 30.

48 Ibid., p. 162.

49 *Munchuu* is a patrilineal descent group which may be regarded as a kind of non-exogamous patrilineage; the *munchuu* system is a complex of patrilineal kin groups. The *munchuu* system may be considered a result of a relatively recent centralization under the Ryukyuan dynasty (Suzuki and Muratake 1971, pp. 348, 351). The munchuu is organized around a "stem family" (Ok. *mutu-yaa/muutu-yaa* 元家, *mutu/muutu* 元, *mutudukuru/muutudukuru* 元所, *ufuyaa* 大家); the "stem family" of a *munchuu*, regarded as lineal descendants of the *munchuu*'s original founder, plays a leading role in the ceremonial practices for the ancestor. The larger *munchuu* are segmented to form subgroups of various grades. Within the several levels of segmentation, each segment has its own "stem family house," or *mutu-yaa*, whose family line is usually continued along the primogenital male line. Thus there are several kinds of "stem houses": the "stem house of origin" and "stem houses" of middle (Ok. *naka mutu*中元) and lower grades. The older the family line, the greater is the generational depth of the ancestors involved (Mabuchi 1976a, p. 106; Mabuchi 1980, p. 12). Among several *munchuu*s in a hamlet, a certain one is always accorded higher social prestige and ritual dignity over the others due to the belief that the

munchuu's first ancestor was the original founder of the hamlet. The stem family (Ok. *mutuuji* 元氏, the senior house) of such a distinguished *munchuu* group is especially designated as "root house" or "house of origin" (*nii/niiya* 根家), "root place" (*niidukuru/niidokoro* 根所), "big house," "main house" (*ufuya*), "place of origin" (*mutudukuru*), or "country's origin" (*kuni-mutu* 国元) of the hamlet or village (Suzuki and Muratake 1971, p. 351; Tanaka 1974, pp. 21–22). The *nii/niiyaa, niigang-yaa* 根神家 is designated as the "root house," "the house of the first settler," "founding house of a community" or "the house of a *niigami*" (Lebra 1966, p. 221; Tanaka 1974, p. 32).

50 An agamous patrisib places no restrictions on members regarding whom they are permitted to marry.

51 While the lower-class *munchuu* forms a common burial group and possess a single permanent tomb used by all members, the members of an upper class *uji* usually bury their dead individually on a household basis (Lebra 1966, p. 155).

52 *Mutu-yaa* refers to any parent house within the patrilineage or patrisib; Lebra 1966, p. 221. *Ufu muutu* 大元 and *suu muutu* 総元 may be rendered as "great origin," or "head (chief) origin house," to express the founding house of a patrisib (Lebra 1966, pp. 223–24).

53 A shrine containing altars and a hearth belonging to a community and/or patrikin group is termed *tunchi-yaa* 殿内家, *tung* 殿, *tung-yaa* 殿家, or *mee ashagi* 前足上げ (Lebra 1966, p. 223).

54 *Nigami* is a priestess-in-chief of the whole community (village or hamlet). The status of community priestesses is in most cases inherited from aunt to niece along the male line of the stem family (*mutu-ya*) of a given *munchuu*. A nigami is a hereditary position within the stem family (*niiya*) of the predominant *munchuu* of the hamlet; she is expected to be a member of the *niiya* family (Suzuki and Muratake 1971, p. 351). According to Lebra, on the main island of Okinawa *niigami, niigang*, or "root *kami*," is the second-ranking community priestess, usually the eldest daughter of the founding house of the community (Lebra 1966, p. 221).

55 In the southern Ryukyus (Miyako and Yaeyama) a village contains several cult groups with a similar function, each of which has an *utaki* shrine. In Miyako, in Karimata, Shimajiri and Ōura Villages, the functions of the *utaki* ritual group and the *mutu* organization overlap, and *utaki* and *mutu* are worshiped as one. Here the priestess is selected from a certain *mutu* which indicates an older stage of social structure. Ikema island has its own unique style of worship as seen when the *mutu* is essentially separated from the *utaki* shrine. There are also instances of kinship groups being regarded as ritual units for *utaki* worship in the village of Irabu. Here the *utaki* are worshiped by the kinship units (Noguchi 1966, p. 31; Noguchi 1971, p. 359). The cult group of the southern Ryukyus parallels the village on the main island of Okinawa in that both are mainly charged with performing the rituals at the *utaki* shrine (Mabuchi 1976a, p. 108).

56 There are four *mutu* on Ikema. Kin belong to the same *mutu* "ritual organization" and worship the same *mutu* deity together (fig. 31). Everyone must belong to one of these *mutu* (Noguchi 1966, p. 34).

57 Also 焼香.

58 *Kwaa-maaga*, or *kwa-nmaga*; Ok. *kwaa,* or *kkwa,* Jp. *ko*子.

59 Among numerous kinds of Ryukyuan *kami* there are nature and local deities, occupational *kami,* ancestral deities, and living priestesses of all ranks. All Ryukyuan women are virtually *kami, wunai-gami* (Jp. *onari-gami* "sister-deity"). For the concept of Ryukyuan deities, also see Uematsu 1986.

60 Also *putugi, putuki, futuke, fotoki, hotoki*. See Nevsky 2005, vol. 2, p. 117.

61 Ryukyu Shinto refers to indigenous Ryukyuan community religion

62 In the invocation of the *uyaan* at Hateruma, which occurs in many ritual texts, they are considered to be present not only "at all the divine places" (Ok. *kami nu tukuru tukuru ooru uyaan*), but also "at the great place of origin, the great birth place" and "at the origin house" (Ok. *mutu nu hii* 元の家), "at the

root house" (Ok. *ni nu hii* 根の家) (Ouwehand 1985, pp. 146–7, 148–49, 159).

63 By way of contrast, in the *shinugu* ritual it is the men who transform themselves into deities.

64 I have observed rituals for *akamata-kuromata* (in Aragusuku, Kohama, Komi), *paantu, angama, miruku*, *fusamaraa* in 2005–2007. In addition, at the second Moscow International Visual Anthropology Film Festival (MIVAFF; Moscow, May 2004), I translated and commented on a film by Kazuo Okada, "*Mayunganashi* of Ishigaki Island" (1980).

65 *Miruku* appears on different islands of Yaeyama (Ishigaki, Kuroshima, Kohama, Hateruma and Yonaguni).

66 See Baksheev 2006b. The field research video "*Angama* of Ishigaki Island, Okinawa" (Russian Institute for Cultural Research, Moscow, 2006; 38 min., with English subtitles) was filmed by the author on 18 August 2005 at Aza Tonoshiro and on 19 August 2005 at Aza Ōkawa of Ishigaki City, Ishigaki island, Yaeyama islands, Southern Ryukyus. This video was presented in the program of a Japanese Seminar on Visual Anthropology entitled "Another Japan: Local Cultures of Japan" at the third MIVAFF and conference, "Mediating Camera" (Russia, Moscow, M. V. Lomonosov Moscow State University, 8–13 October 2006) and at the panel "Media Presentation and a Roundtable discussion 'Other Materialities: Angama Mask Performances of the Southern Ryukyus'" (panel organizer E. Baksheev) at the 18th Conference of Japan Anthropology Workshop (JAWS; Oslo, 14–17 March 2007). It is deposited at the Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo, Norway.

67 *Aji*, or *anji* 按司, a territorial lord in the premodern Ryukyus.

68 This was also proof, in Nakamatsu's opinion, that during earlier periods in the Ryukyus there was no fear of the dead (Nakamatsu 1968, p. 72).

69 On Miyako *punishin* is the "spirit of the bones of the dead" (Takiguchi 1984, p. 375).

70 In Miyako, a *sato* 里 (dial. *satu*) is a subdivision of a village or a hamlet.

71 See photos of Ikema's *utaki* by the author; also (Baksheev 2003).

72 However, nowadays the primitive hearth remained only in shrines or residences of the priestesses; in common houses it is replaced by a gas stove, and there are only an incense burner and a vase placed near it or in the corner of the kitchen.

73 In old Okinawan a tomb is also termed *tukuru* (Jp. *tokoro* 所).

74 "Agnates" are those who are patrilineally related to Ego.

75 *Shiji* (Jp. *seji* 世持) (cf. Ouwehand 1985, p. 165) refers to the *kami* spirit, the spirit power of the *kami* (*shinrei* 神霊), or spirit force or power (*reiryoku* 霊力). It is a vague concept with possible animatistic characteristics, describing a force detachable from the *kami* (Lebra 1966, pp. 26–27, p. 222).

76 *Shiji* [*nu*] *kata* 筋[の]方 is a *shiji* line or side, the male line (*fukei no kettō* 父系の血統) or side, while *futuki* (Jp. *hotoke*) is ancestor or ancestral spirit (in the male line) (Lebra 1966, p. 218, p. 223).

77 Saion, prime minister (Ok. *sanshikwan* 三司官, 1728–1753) of the Ryukyu Kingdom.

78 Masako Tanaka argues for the uniqueness of the patrilineal stem system of the Ryukyus, specifically of Okinawa as opposed to the classic patrilineal system of Chinese society (Tanaka 1974, p. 63). She is inclined to think that "a very strong patrilineal bias" has existed in Ryukyuan society from the "very earliest times," with particular emphasis on the principles of primogeniture (Tanaka 1974, p. 340).

79 However, male rituals are not unknown in the Ryukyus, to mention only *shinigu* of North Okinawa, *myakuzutsu* of Nishihara Village and *sutsu upunaka* of Tarama island (Miyako), numerous rituals of *raihōshin* visiting deities of Southern Ryukyus (*paantu* of Miyako, *akamata-kuromata* and *mayunganashi* of Yaeyama).

80 On Hateruma an important rite in the bone-washing ritual is played by the semiprofessional "priest" *saishi* 祭司 or *ninbucha* (Jp. *nenbutsusha* 念仏者) (Ouwehand 1985, p. 186).

Fig. 3. Tamaudun royal tomb (Shuri).

Fig. 4. Burial cave (Hirara, Miyako).

Fig. 5. A grave tunneled into a hillside with an enclosure (Hirara, Miyako).

Fig. 6. A "turtle-back"-type tomb (Hirara, Miyako).

Fig. 7. Another traditional category of Ryuykyuan tombs—"stone mound" (ishizumi)-type tomb (Hateruma, Yayeyama).

Fig. 8. Newly built modern family tomb (a "house" type) (Ueno, Miyako).

Fig. 9. Old “clan tomb” (Ok. munchuu baka) (a “turtle-back” type) (Kijoka, the main island of Okinawa).

Fig. 10. “Village tomb” (a “gable” type) (Kijoka, the main island of Okinawa).

Fig. 11. Aji-baka, “ancestral founder’s tomb”, a tomb of a sib founder (the main island of Okinawa).

Fig. 12. Interior of a tomb: the shiruhirashi place with the remains of the coffin and higher ledges (Hirara, Miyako).

Fig. 13. Offerings at the tomb for the newly dead (Sarahama, Miyako).

Fig. 14. A tomb of a child (Gusukube, Miyako).

Fig. 15. A modern memorial service on the 49th day performed by a Buddhist priest (Sinzato, Miyako).

Fig. 16. Jar-type ossuary (Hirara, Miyako).

Fig. 17. Ossuaries within a grave (Hirara, Miyako).

Fig. 18. "Palace"-type ossuaries (Ishigaki, Yayeyama).

Fig. 19. Uparuzu utaki (Ikema, Miyako).

Fig. 20. Praying priestesses in kampani robes (Irabu, Miyako).

Fig. 21. Memorial tablet of Okinawan type (Shioya, the main island of Okinawa).

Fig. 22. Memorial tablet of Chinese type (Miyako).

Fig. 23. Memorial tablet of Japanese type (Tomori, Miyako).

Fig. 24. Household ancestral altar (Shioya, the main island of Okinawa).

Fig. 25. Household ancestral altar decorated for the bon festivities (Ishigaki, Yayeyama).

Fig. 26. Ancestral altar and memorial tablet of Irabu Village (Irabu, Miyako).

Fig. 27. The kamiya ("sacred room") in the house of Kudaka priestess (noro): an incense holder of the "fire deity" (left) and tokonoma with an incense holder of the "deity of the house" (toko no kami) and the scroll of shichifukujin (Kudaka).

Fig. 28. A kamidana "shelf for deities" in the Hokamaden, shrine for the communal rites of Hokama hamlet: an incense holder of the "fire deity" (left below) and tokonoma (right) with an incense holder of the "deity of the house" and the scroll of shichifukujin; other incense holders are for the various deities including two ancestral deities of the Hokama "root house," Fukama niiyaa (Kudaka)..

Fig. 29. A "shelf for deities" in the noro dunchi (shrine-residence of a priestess): ancestral deities (left) and Miruku deity (right) (Tanabaru, the main island of Okinawa).

Fig. 30. A shelf for "recent" (left) and "distant ancestors" (right) (Ōura, Miyako).

Fig. 31. The altar of the Agimasu mutu deity (Ikema, Miyako).

Fig. 32. Angama dance at the bon festival (Ishigaki, Yayeyama).

Fig. 33. The Seimei Festival (Katsuren, the main island of Okinawa).

Fig. 34. Yuukui (Ok.), the "beckoning of fertility" ritual (Irabu, Miyako).

Fig. 35. Ungami Festival (Shioya, the main island of Okinawa).

Fig. 36. Nafka Ritual (Miyaguni, Miyako).

Fig. 37. Paantu blessing a new house (Shimajiri, Miyako).

Fig. 38. The procession of the Miruku at the bon festival (Hateruma, Yayeyama).

Fig. 39. Unmee "old woman," the Angama (Ishigaki, Yayeyama).

Fig. 40. Matsubara myaaka megalithic tomb (Hisamatsu, Miyako).

Fig. 41. Susabi myaaka megalithic tomb (Irabu, Miyako).

Fig. 42. Nakasone tuyumya tomb, a synthesis of local myaaka megalithic tomb and tunnel tomb on the main island of Okinawa (Hirara, Miyako).

Fig. 43. Utaki shrine within a gusuku enclosure (Katsuren-jo gusuku, the main island of Okinawa).

Fig. 44. Stone mound (grave) in the Arantu shrine (Hateruma, Yayeyama).

Fig. 45. The grave of the legendary Uni no shu within an utaki shrine (Shinzato, Miyako) .

Fig. 46. Tunuganasu utaki hosting a grave (Ikema, Miyako).

Fig. 47. Mainmi utaki shrine for ancestral deities (Irabu, Miyako).

Fig. 48. Utaki shrine with an "ancestral" tablet (Hirara, Miyako).

Fig. 49. The "fire god" (Tanabaru, the main island of Okinawa).

Fig. 50. Yashiki-gami (Miyako).

要旨

死霊は神になるか
―琉球圏における死後の神格化にかんする言説―

エフゲーニー・S・バクシェエフ

日本の神々の起源は自然神にあるのかそれとも祖霊神にあるのかという論争は、日本国内外の宗教学者・文化研究者の間で百年以上続いてきた。その論争でとりあげられてきた琉球圏の死霊祭祀や祖先崇拝や神の観念についての研究資料はもっと真剣に検討されるべきものであろう。本稿では、死者の霊が祖霊や祖霊神に昇格される祭祀や儀礼に関しての（主に二十世紀における）最近の言説を取り上げる。また祖霊神の性質に関する議論にも注目する。これらの議論における様々な見解を再検討した上で、琉球圏において三十三回忌を経た祖霊は没個性化し、神化し、最終的には御嶽（うたき）型聖地・拝所ですべての共同体のための農業儀礼で祭られる祖霊神になるという死霊神格化の定説は無効なのではないかと論ずる。また、家庭祖先祭祀の枠内で三十三回忌を契機に神化する祖霊と、村落レベルにおいて御嶽型拝所の儀礼に祭られている神々（よく「祖霊神」とよばれる神々）とは二つの別の概念に属するものであると述べて、琉球の祖先祭祀の古形は、シヌグ、海神（ウンジャミ・ウンガミ）、新節（アラサチ・アラシチ）、柴差し（シバサシ・シバザシ）、ドンガ・ドゥンガ、浜降り（ハマウリ）、トゥールミ、ウミリ、親神（ウヤーン・ウヤガン）などの伝統儀礼に代表される、死霊から祖霊神への神化でも土着的なパターンをあらわすものの中にこそ見いだすことができると論ずる。