CHAPTER 6

The Cult of Bone Remains in Japan

I. The Remains of the Dead

1. Between the *Man'yōshū* and the *Shōwa Man'yōshū*

The Shōwa Man'yōshū and the War Dead

In each of the twenty volumes of the *Shōwa Man'yōshū* 昭和万葉集, a collection of Japanese waka 和歌 poetry of the Shōwa era (1926-1989), a section has been provided for poems on the theme of "Love and Death." Along with the changes in the times, the various aspects of daily life, the shifts in thought and society, and the depictions of nature in each of the four seasons, a rich gathering of poems on "love and death" has been compiled. These may be said to be the love poems (*sōmonka* 相聞歌) and poems of mourning or elegies (*banka* 挽歌) of the *Shōwa Man'yōshū*, corresponding to such verse in the ancient *Man'yōshū* collection on which it was modeled.

A comparison of the original *Man'yōshū* and the *Shōwa Man'yōshū* lies beyond my concerns here. There is, however, one point that has drawn my attention. With the exception of volumes 1 and 3, in each of the twenty volumes of the *Shōwa Man'yōshū*, space is provided for a group of poems on receiving the war dead by survivors. The period of these poems extends from the beginning of the Manchurian Incident (1931) to the postwar period up to 1975. Looking over these poems, one finds that there are subgroups with such titles as "Receiving the Remains" or "The Heroic Spirit Returns," "For One Who Does Not

Return" or "Those Who Do Not Return." The "heroic spirit" refers to the remains (bones and ashes) of the dead, and included among "those who do not return" are both those who return only as ashes and those who do not return either in physical body or in the form of remains.

For some reason, in the *Shōwa Man'yōshū* none of the poems on the war dead "who do not return," whether their remains are recovered or whether they died without leaving remains, are included in the section on "Love and Death." Such poems are not placed among the elegiac verses. Rather, these poems on "Receiving the Remains" and "Those Who Do Not Return" are included inconspicuously within sections on "Society" or "Daily Life," "The Nation" or "War."

Perhaps such placement is reasonable. Death in warfare is a consequence of the actions of the nation; it holds social impact, and the daily lives of those related to it are violently shaken. Further, to understand the appropriateness of such classifications one need only recall the period when there was, from the level of the nation as a whole down to city and village communities, a generally accepted procedure and decorum for receiving the remains of the war dead. Death on the battlefield was an unavoidable result of the policies of the nation, and by this reasoning, the manner for receiving home the soldiers who fell was also necessarily uniform.

When we consider death on the battlefield not on the level of the nation, but solely from the perspective of the relatives who received the remains, we realize that profound sorrow and lamentation surged in their hearts. On greeting the "heroic spirits" or the "remains" there were deep wellings of emotion that could not be suppressed and resignation that found no solace. The poems born from this emotion, as mentioned before, are not included in the section on "Love and Death" in the *Shōwa Man'yōshū.* Although there are no doubt reasons for this, it contributes to the impression that the world of "Love and Death" represented in the *Shōwa Man'yōshū* is, on the whole, insubstantial, leaving many shadows of refraction and suppression.

This is not in itself, however, the central problem to be considered here. The poems on receiving the remains or the spirits of the war dead

are indeed elegies (*banka*) and hence properly belong in the category of "Love and Death," but here I will explore the implications of the treatment of the war dead.

The Collection of Remains (Heroic Spirits)

The practice of calling the remains of fallen soldiers "heroic spirits" (*eirei* 英霊) and the ceremonies of social mourning became established almost simultaneously with the beginning of hostilities in China. In autumn of 1937, the Ministry of Railways pasted on the center windows of cars transporting returned bodies of fallen soldiers printed signs bearing the words "heroic spirits," on white with black frames, so that people could face the cars and bow in worship.

The remains of the war dead returned as "heroic spirits" were handed to relatives in each regimental district, and those who had to go a great distance to receive the remains had their railway fares reduced by half. On the occasion of the return of such remains, ceremonies were held in front of the railway stations of the cities or villages involved, and from the station to the public hall or school that served as the funeral hall, school children and members of the women's association, youth groups, and local militia lined the road, greeted the remains with flags lowered in mourning, and bowed to them. The remains were held in a box of freshly cut wood wrapped in white cloth, and at the head of the procession, a relative in formal dress carried the box at the chest, suspended in white cloth from the shoulders. The ceremony for the repose of the spirit was a public funeral, and included either a Shinto or Buddhist service, but in April 1939, the "shrines for spirits" (*shōkonsha* 招魂社, where fallen soldiers were enshrined) in the various districts were renamed "shrines for the protection of the nation" (*gokoku jinja* 護国神社); one shrine was designated in each prefecture, and the "heroic spirits" were enshrined there.

As mentioned before, this attention given to the "heroic spirits" began with the onset of the Sino-Japanese War, but this wartime practice underwent a new development with the conclusion of World War II,

when the collection of remains began. This was the act of going to the old battlefields to gather the scattered remains of the war dead, bringing them home, and thus giving solace to the spirits. It was begun as a task of the country, for conditions of the world at that time prevented such activity from being undertaken on an individual level.

The number of dead who perished overseas in the war in the Pacific is said to be approximately 2,400,000, and most of their remains, apart from those brought back by the military, were still on the old battlefields. At length, in June of 1952, the Diet adopted a resolution to collect such remains and bring them back to Japan, and the government decided to begin such activity in areas under American control. In January 1953, with American consent, a government commission began gathering remains on Marcus, Wake, Saipan, Tenian, Guam, Peleliu, and Angaur (Palau) Islands. At the same time, in March 1955, with the cooperation of the countries involved, this activity was extended to Guadacanal, New Britain, and eastern New Guinea; in March of the following year, to Burma and India; and in August of that year, to western New Guinea and British-controlled Borneo. In short, from 1953, 11,358 remains were collected, but of course it was impossible to bring back all of them.[1]

Further, it is said that approximately 70,000 detainees died in the former Soviet Union, including Sakhalin and Kuril Islands, and that they were buried in approximately 330 locations. The former Soviet government, however, refused to recognize requests for the return of remains to Japan, with the exception of those of Konoe Fumitaka 近衛文隆. Instead, in August 1961, permission was at length granted for visits to graveyards of Japanese at Khabarovsk (297 persons) and Chita (450 persons). At this time, only thirty representatives of the bereaved families went, but since that time, seven visitations have taken place to twenty-one locations.

Reverence for Remains in Elegies

Turning once more to the *Shōwa Man'yōshū*, we find that poems about

the gathering of remains described above are first included in volume 11 (1955-56), and that poems on grave visits in the former Soviet Union first appear in volume 13 (1960-63). The tenacious and intense concern with the remains of the war dead and the places of their interment has continued unabated throughout the period of the Fifteen Year War and the period following defeat. It has attracted public attention, at times as a social phenomenon, at times as a political issue, and above all it continues to reverberate in the depths of the consciousness as an inescapable manifestation of the convictions of the Japanese people. It is precisely for this reason that the poems on the remains of the war dead appearing in the *Shōwa Man'yōshū*, for the Japanese who experienced unprecedented ravages of war, must be said to have been elegies of pain that can never be extinguished.

Quite strikingly, however, the poems of mourning in the *Shōwa Man'yōshū* transmit to us a resonance clearly different from those of the original *Man'yōshū*. This is because the elegies of the *Man'yōshū* are altogether lacking in the conception of reverence or veneration for the remains of the dead. We are made aware that the grief and lamentation for the dead are not mediated through their remains.

Why is this? What is the meaning of this gap between the original *Man'yōshū* and the *Shōwa Man'yōshū* regarding the issue of the remains of the dead? Undoubtedly a variety of underlying factors and shifts in customs and practices are closely interwoven. This chapter seeks to investigate this question, but before taking up the central question, I will begin by touching on a related issue.

2. The Views of Yanagita Kunio and Origuchi Shinobu

The Handling of Corpses in India and the United States

India belongs to a cultural sphere in which corpses are in general cremated. It possesses the earliest evidence of cremation and has influenced surrounding areas. Today, most Hindus cremate the bodies of relatives on the banks of rivers and cast the ashes and bones into the water, show-

ing no attachment to those remains. The reverence for the Ganges River is intense, and they firmly believe that by the remains being immersed in the waters of the river, the spirit will assuredly rise to the heavens.[2] The vanishing of the remains—the interfusion of ashes and water—ensures the spirit's rebirth in heaven, and the value of the remains in themselves is hardly questioned. What is at issue is the purifying power of fire in cremating the body and the purifying power of water in treating the spirit; there is little consciousness of the sanctity of the remains. In India, after Śākyamuni's death, the practice arose of enshrining relics in stupas and worshiping them there,[3] and in the case of some sages, this practice is still being applied. Such veneration of relics, however, is an exceptional phenomenon in the Indian cultural sphere and, as I will discuss later, must be considered as incorporating features belonging to a different stream of practices.

An attitude toward the remains of the dead almost the polar opposite of that seen in India may be found in the United States. There, the common practice is embalming, in which corpses are treated to delay decay. This is a kind of temporary mummification, but might perhaps better be described as a cosmetic treatment of the corpse.[4] During the Korean War, the torn and wounded bodies of American soldiers killed in action were sent to Kyushu where they were mended and restored, with cosmetic work that might create the impression that they had come back to life. They were then put in caskets and flown back to the United States where they were received by the bereaved families. This kind of treatment is not, of course, restricted to fallen soldiers. We see here a distinctive American preference for the reconstruction of the physical remains, and there is often a rather negative reaction to both the practices surrounding the cremated remains of ashes and bones seen among the Japanese and the focus on the spirit seen in India. In the faint traces of a desire for the eternal preservation of the body, it is possible to discern similarities with the culture of ancient Egypt.[5] Of course, in actuality the corpse which has been embalmed is placed in a casket and buried, and after undergoing a gradual process of decay, becomes a skeleton. It is impossible to deny, however, that in the practice of

embalming, there is an outlook that possesses features in common with classical mummy culture.

Three Phases in the Temporal and Spatial Conceptions of the Afterlife

Above, through a consideration of the customs of cremating in India and embalming in the United States, I have sketched various ways of handling the remains of the dead. When we compare such practices, the distinctive characteristics of the strong concern with the preservation of the bones of the dead in Japan become apparent as a third type. Of course, this is a particular method related to an attitude toward death, but when the question is raised regarding the degree to which it has defined and given direction to the outlook of the Japanese, there are many underlying factors that do not permit simple generalization.

As one conceptual framework for considering the temporal and spatial dimensions of death or the afterlife, I think it is possible to suggest provisionally the following three phases: time and space in which the spirit (*tamashii* 魂) only is meaningful, time and space in which the relative awareness of spirit and body emerges, and lastly, time and space in which there is consciousness of a threefold structure of spirit, body, and bones. Of course, in actuality these three levels are overlapping and in contact; nevertheless, it is typical for the functioning of one of the three elements—spirit, body, or bones—to be emphasized, and to that extent, the three levels serve as an effective guide in considering death. This is because when facing death, whether one is conscious of the changes of the spirit of the dead, or whether one turns one's attention to the conditions of the separation of spirit and body, or whether one finds meaning in the bones beyond the disintegration of spirit and body—the problem of which aspect, and how the selection is made, is an important issue that cannot be ignored in elucidating the customs and sentiments regarding death.

Earlier, with regard to the topic of elegies, I noted the gap underlying the *Man'yōshū* and the *Shōwa Man'yōshū*. It is connected with the problem of the presence or absence of attachment to the bones of the

dead. Although it is impossible to determine immediately whether this gap presupposes a historical change, or whether it is no more than a simple, superficial phenomenon, I will attempt to formulate the central issues taking hints from the work of Yanagita Kunio 柳田国男 and Origuchi Shinobu 折口信夫.

Yanagita's Interest in Spirits

Yanagita Kunio wrote *Senzo no hanashi* 先祖の話 (Stories of Ancestors) during April and May 1945. While the war situation had plunged into a swamp of darkness, Yanagita, believing in the revival of the Japanese people, pondered the remote links between the ancestors who had died and the descendants who lived. In this sense, *Senzo no hanashi* occupies an important place in the work of Yanagita's late years, but it must be said to include an element that differs somewhat from other studies. This is because it comprises, simultaneously, a record of Yanagita's own subjective attitude toward ancestors and an objective account that attempts to demonstrate intellectually how the Japanese have viewed ancestors. In the mirror of this work, both Yanagita's own view of death and life and his ethnological perspective are reflected together fused into one.[6]

In the preface to *Senzo no hanashi*, Yanagita explains that he wrote the work seeking to treat the question of the world after death, which most people had feared even to speak of, that is, whether or not spirits exist.[7] Guided by this intention, the discussion develops gradually, at times going into minute detail, and is supported by broad observation. The theory that Yanagita finally puts forth is that the view of spirits held by the Japanese has four characteristics. First, even after a person dies, the spirit remains in the vicinity and does not go far off. Second, there are frequent movements between this world and the world beyond, and the custom of inviting the spirits back and being invited back is seen at ordinary times, not only during the regular festivals of spring and autumn. Third, it was believed that the wishes of a person at the point of death would unfailingly be fulfilled after death. Fourth, it was believed that a person would be reborn two or three times and continue the same

occupation.[8]

This theory was formed by capturing, in a net of ethnological study, concepts flowing deep in the thinking of the Japanese people. At the same time, however, his writing is filled with mourning for the people who died during fifteen years of war and with the wish for their repose. In the conclusion to his work, Yanagita takes up the concept of transmigration and gives a powerful discussion of the belief that spirits return to this world. Here again his sorrow and lamentation for the innumerable dead youths—the "courageous spirits" (*aramitama* 荒魂)—is present.

In this work, which might appear to be a kind of confession of faith, the author's view never ceases to be focused solely on the spirit, and beliefs regarding its destination are pursued. By contrast, no interest is taken in the problem of the remains left behind after death. Yanagita's *Senzo no hanashi* seeks to consider the fate of the Japanese people solely in the phase of the spirit and speaks not at all about the problem of the relationship between spirit and remains. It is unlikely that Yanagita was unfamiliar with the elegies composed during the fifteen years of war and recorded in the *Shōwa Man'yōshū*. It is also unlikely that the actions of families greeting the returning heroic spirits (the remains themselves) and later going out to gather remains did not enter his field of vision. In spite of this, Yanagita does not speak of it. Why is this? Was it because he could not discern the wartime practices revolving around the remains of the dead in the lives of the people in ordinary times?

Yanagita on the Okinawan Practice of Washing the Bones of the Dead

It is impossible to give an immediate answer. Yanagita, however, touches briefly on the practice of washing the remains of the dead (*senkotsu* 洗骨) in Okinawa in his article "Sōsei no enkaku ni tsuite 葬制の沿革について" (Concerning an Outline of Mortuary Practices, 1929) and discusses the theme of the worship of remains. Looking back over the various writings of Yanagita, who spoke little directly about the problem of remains, this

article may be said to be a valuable testimony.

The washing of bone remains refers to recovering and cleansing remains after the body has been buried or exposed for a time. If burial or exposure is the first funeral given the deceased, the washing of the remains corresponds to a second funeral. This custom of washing the remains has been practiced in the islands of southeast Asia, southern China, Taiwan, the Okinawan islands, and the southern Korean peninsula. Concerning the washing of remains as a second funeral, Yanagita states the following in the article mentioned above. The washing of remains signifies their transfer, that is, a second funeral. It appears to be thought that if the descendants do not actually move and take care of the remains, they cannot interact with their ancestors and hence lack the qualification for succeeding to the family name. It is for this reason that the family name is termed *kabane* 姓, which seems to be related to the word *kotsu* 骨 (bones, remains). This concept, however, later underwent change, and stone tombs came to be built as family vaults. Further, the belief arose whereby, through the power of religious rites, the spirits of the deceased possessed the stone.[9]

As we see here, Yanagita does not undertake the task of explaining the Okinawan practice of washing remains itself. He defines the custom of washing remains in general terms as a kind of second funeral, and points out the process by which, with the passage of time, it underwent change. Here also, he attributes this change to the difficulty of taking care of and preserving the remains. In this way, we see that already in the early period of 1929, Yanagita shows little interest in the problem of human remains after death. This perspective is maintained unchanged in *Senzo no hanashi* in 1945, in which the theme of the washing of remains or a second funeral is not touched upon.

Origuchi on the Prevention of Spirits' Return to Life

The problem of remains, which Yanagita Kunio did not face squarely in his ethnological considerations, was pursued from another angle by Origuchi Shinobu. In the article "Gakiami soseitan 餓鬼阿弥蘇生譚"

(The Rebirth of Gakiami) published in 1926, he presents a view that is highly relevant to our concerns here.[10] This article is an analysis of the tale of the Magistrate Oguri 小栗判官 and Princess Terute 照手姫, which appears in the medieval sermon (*sekkyōbushi* 説経節) "Oguri," but underlying the tale is the theme of the saving of a leper by a follower of the Pure Land Buddhist Ji school, said to have taken place at Kumano 熊野. Oguri, who had been murdered with poisoned wine, was reborn from hell in the form of a leper, but he was given the Buddhist name Gakiamidabutsu 餓鬼阿弥陀仏 (Gakiami) by a wandering holy man of Fujisawa 藤沢上人 and led to the Yunomine 湯の峰 hot springs at Kumano. There, on entering the waters, he was revived in his original form.

Origuchi notes the physical abnormality of Oguri, who returns from hell in the form of a leper. At that time, he is deaf, blind, mute, and unconscious. Origuchi conjectures that Gakiami's physical incapacities, which make him seem even non-human, resulted from the incompleteness (*fuzoroi* 不揃い) of Oguri's corpse when he was revived from hell. Because the corpse has been partly destroyed or partly dismembered, Oguri's spirit cannot revert completely to the original corpse. Hence, even though revived, Oguri's body shows signs of abnormality.

According to Origuchi, the legend of Ch'ih-yu 蚩尤 (Jp. Shiyū), a heroic god of Chinese mythology who was defeated in battle with the legendary Yellow Emperor (Jp. Kōtei 黄帝), includes the motif of the breaking up of the corpses of giants as a means of preventing their return to life. In ancient Japan, the corpse of Totoribe no Yorozu 捕鳥部万 was split up and he was exposed, and the treatment of Taira no Masakado 平将門 after death also follows this pattern. In short, in cases in which the spirit might come back to life, the corpse at times was dismembered, or at times burned, to prevent return. In this respect, burial and cremation probably originally included the concept of the disposition of the corpse in order to prevent the return of the departed spirit.

This concept may be seen in a number of poems in the *Man'yōshū*.

When someone mentions

Akizu moor,
I think of you,
your ashes scattered that morning,
and my sorrow is endless.

Akizuno o / hito no kakureba / asa makishi
kimi ga omōete / nageki wa yamazu

My wife, of the jeweled bough,
was perhaps herself a jewel.
On the pristine hillside
that wearies the feet,
I scatter her remains, and they vanish.

tamazusa no / imo wa tama ka mo / ashibiki no
kiyoki yamabe ni / makeba chirinuru

Origuchi conjectures that these two poems refer to the actual scattering of remains and not to simple exposure.

You, whom I looked upon
as on a precious mirror,
I take up
as jewels of the flowering orange
on Aba moor.

kagami nasu / waga mishi kimi o / Aba no no no
hanatachibana no / tama ni hiroitsu

This poem does not refer merely to the gathering of cremated remains, but rather includes the disintegration of the corpse and the gathering of bones. Here, the period of the disintegration and the gathering of bones corresponds to the period of *mogari* 殯 (temporary interment). In the act of gathering the bones in the final stage of *mogari*,

Origuchi finds a key to the practice of the washing of remains. He goes on to develop his discussion by stating that the practice of washing remains observed today in the southern islands is undoubtedly a means for preventing the revival of spirits.

II. Reverence for Remains and the Cult of Laying Remains to Rest

1. The Second Treatment of Remains and *Mogari*

The Rise and Spread of the Second Treatment of Remains

As we have seen, Yanagita Kunio, in his discussion of the practice of washing bone remains in Okinawa, puts forward the theory that it developed as a means of maintaining a relationship with one's ancestors. His discussion of afterlife, however, is limited to the phase of the spirit alone. Origuchi, in his discussion, takes up the problem of the treatment of corpses and proposes that ultimately such treatment had the aim of preventing the spirit's return to life. He does not go on to investigate the particular meaning of the remains themselves. Consequently, these two views do not suffice for setting forth the meaning of the worship of remains maintained by the Japanese people. Moreover, even when the two are considered together, we find that Yanagita's notion of solidifying a relationship with the ancestors through the management of remains and Origuchi's idea of the prevention of the return of spirits through the treatment of remains belong to different dimensions. The former involves a person's consciousness of one's ancestral lineage mediated by remains, while the latter involves the view of the dead in their relation to their own remains. Further, these views are not necessarily effective as means for elucidating the problem of the discrepancy underlying the *Man'yōshū* and the *Shōwa Man'yōshū* discussed at the beginning of this chapter. How, then, can we achieve a breakthrough with regard to this problem?

In general, the remains of the dead became problematic in the

practical life of people in prehistoric and ancient times when a second treatment of the dead, in other words, a second funeral, was performed. At the time of death, the corpse begins a process of decay, gradually decomposing and changing into a skeleton. Disintegration and putrefaction are the first transformation occurring with death, and the emergence of hard, white calcium forms a second crystallization of death. Living persons, through entering the process of this change from the first phase to the second, come to recognize the irreversible changes that are occurring, and at the same time, recover a relationship with the dead person, who has undergone a crisis of transformation. Further, the involvement in worship with the form of crystallization is a second treatment of the dead and may be called a second funeral. This second treatment may be said to include the function of mediating the invisible spiritual existence of the afterlife through the existing, visible remains (bones).

Kokubu Naoichi 国分直一 has discussed the conditions that give rise to "second funerals" and their spread among the Japanese people, and as a preface, puts forward the theory that may be called a rough methodological sketch delineating the relationship between the living and the dead. According to Kokubu, in this relationship, the following three patterns may be considered.[11]

In the first, seen particularly in fishing and cultivating areas such as sea islands, the living neither visit graves nor touch bodily remains out of fear that the dead become evil spirits. Examples may be seen in such evil spirits as Anito and Kanito in the Philippines and the islands of the Bashi Channel.

In the second pattern, seen among forest dwelling hunters and cultivators and among nomadic peoples, the dead, through being given funerals, are sent off to the world of the afterlife, and gradually the spirits of the dead are elevated to ancestral spirits that dwell in trees and forests. In this case, invisible spirits who have their haunts in trees and forests are worshipped. A typical example of this tendency may be seen in the ancestral spirit rites of the Manchurian peoples.

In the third pattern, seen particularly in the agricultural and

cultivating world, the relationship with the dead at first includes feelings of dread, but with the passage of time it returns to one of familiarity. This relationship of familiarity is manifested through a second treatment or management of the remains. This second treatment, however, is not necessarily permanent, and in some cases ends after a period. This framework is seen chiefly in southeast Asia, including southern China and Taiwan.

This typology based on cultural areas may tend toward oversimplification because of limited evidence from the different areas. Nevertheless, in its consideration of shifts and developments in conceptions of the dead based on cultural differences, it is rich in implications. We should note that the third framework is indicated by a renewed treatment of the remains. Needless to say, the conception of the dead of the Japanese belongs to this type, which is identified with the cultural sphere of southeast Asia.

If this is the case, what was the character of the custom of repeated or second treatment of the remains of the dead in Japan in prehistoric and ancient times? To summarize Kokubu's article, the practice of second funerals may be seen already in the Jōmon period, particularly in its latter and final phases. Examples of the use of coffin urns (*kamekan* 甕棺) in the special cases of infants have long been known; examples are also known not merely of the body being kept, but of bones being collected and kept in urns and jars. There are examples, in other words, of keeping fragments of the teeth, skull, and long bones of a newborn infant inside a hollow clay figurine,[12] or of putting the bones of an infant in a deep jar buried in the floor of the dwelling.[13] Such examples of placing the remains of infants in urns in the middle and late Jōmon periods have been discovered over a broad area. Moreover, this kind of second funereal treatment of remains was not confined to infants, but is seen also in cases of adults and of group collections of bones.[14] At the same time, examples of skulls alone receiving a second funeral have also been discovered.[15] We should note, therefore, that the concern to preserve remains and special consideration of skulls were already widespread from the Jōmon period.

In the Yayoi period, methods of handling corpses involving wooden coffins, boxlike stone coffins, and dolmens were added to the use of funereal vessels, and increasing numbers of examples indicating the gathering of remains and second funerals, that is, a second treatment of the remains, have been discovered in and around the Kantō 関東 region.[16] Further, the mortuary practice of *mogari* appears to have taken form during the time from the end of the Yayoi period to the early Kofun period. In this custom of placing the body in a location for a determined period of time and later burying it, we see the development of the second treatment of remains into a refined ritual.[17] This was first performed in the case of funerals for political leaders and gradually spread to other classes, but declined by the close of the Kofun period.

Mogari Rites and Their Interpretation

Various attempts have been made to interpret the custom of *mogari*. It has been proposed, for example, that it was a rite for inviting the spirit of the deceased to return during the *mogari* period (Origuchi Shinobu), or that it was a preventative measure to suppress the spirit's wandering and bring about its repose (Gorai Shigeru 五来重). However, since the length of *mogari* varies in extant records from the ancient period, it is impossible to determine a single interpretation.[18] For example, among the cases of emperors, the *mogari* period for Emperor Bitatsu 敏達 was six years and eight months, and for Emperor Tenmu 天武 it was two years and two months. After the capital was moved to Heijō 平城 in 710, during the reign of Empress Genmei 元明, the *mogari* period was suddenly and radically shortened. In the case of Genmei herself, it was a mere seven days. Even in these few examples, we see that political factors influenced the determination of the *mogari* period. On this basis, Kubo Tetsuzō 久保哲三 has proposed the idea of the significance of *mogari* as determined from three perspectives: (1) as rites for the deceased's return to life, (2) as the transmission of ruling authority, and (3) as rites for the repose of the spirit of the deceased.[19] Further, Saigō Nobutsuna 西郷信綱 also has interpreted *mogari* as serving as a means of calling to the spirit and, in the

case of the death of the sovereign, as the period for settling the problem of succession.[20] These may be said to add a political element to the theories of Origuchi and Gorai. Even if this is the case, however, we are still faced with the problem that the rite of *mogari*, which presupposes a second treatment of the dead, did not necessarily have as its primary purpose the gathering of bones.[21]

If, according to Origuchi's theory of recalling the spirit (revival of the deceased), *mogari* begins from a stage before the determination of death, then in Gorai's theory of expulsion (repose of the spirit), it takes place after death has been ascertained. Thus, the former fits cases of a shorter *mogari* period, while the latter theory is suited to a longer period. As mentioned before, from the length of the *mogari* period, either theory appears supportable. What we must note here, however, is that in either case, it is assumed that the spirit leaves the body (or surrogate corpse). When we focus on the phenomenon of the separated spirit, both theories are in agreement.[22]

Earlier, I took up Kokubu's theory of three types and noted the idea that in the agricultural sphere, the second treatment of remains or some type of management of bones is performed. I stated that giving importance to this kind of second treatment of the dead indicates a strong concern with the realm of visible remains, that is, the bones of the dead. Concerning this point, I cited several examples regarding the collection and management of remains, noting evidence of the practice of second funerals in the Jōmon and Yayoi periods.

Given the small number of examples of second funerals from the Jōmon and Yayoi periods and their geographical concentrations, it is not easy to derive a concept of reverence for remains during this period. In addition, the present state of research is such that there is neither a generally accepted view nor even a dominant theory concerning the conception of afterlife of the Jōmon and Yayoi people. Accordingly, the significance of the second treatment of remains—the practice of the collection and management of bones—with regard to the conception of the spirit of the dead is uncertain. This is why it is impossible to conjecture directly, from evidence indicating the preservation of remains

(second funeral practices), about the worship of them.

Nevertheless, one cannot deny that from the late Yayoi to the Kofun period, a great change or dislocation in funeral practices took place, with the burial mound of the political leader as its center. This was the development of the *mogari* rite. The *mogari* rite was, as we have seen, the first systematic example of second funerals, and it developed in Japan in the ancient period. Nevertheless, examples of *mogari* do not necessarily indicate a conception of reverence for remains. Even though the second treatment that is seen included consideration and concern for the remains, it does not directly indicate feelings of worship for the remains themselves. As we have seen, it is thought that the *mogari* rite was above all an act seeking to affect the fate of the spirit of the deceased through the acknowledgment of death. We should note that with both Origuchi's theory of recalling the spirit and Gorai's theory of expulsion of the spirit, it is the wandering spirit[23] that has left the body which is the focal concern, not the remains that have been left behind.

If this is the case, then in the *mogari* rite from the latter part of the Yayoi to the Kofun period, the urgent focal point of concern lay in the acknowledgment of death and the spirit's rising to heaven, that is, with the realm of the existence of the invisible spirit. The material remains left behind by the spirit and belonging to the realm of the visible were regarded as a mere skeleton and of secondary concern.

Weak Attachment to Bones

Earlier, I cited poems in *Man'yōshū* in which we find examples of the practice of the scattering of remains. Origuchi interpreted this ritual act as signifying the disposal of the bodily remains in order that the spirit not return to life. Scattering the bones in the green hills had the spirit as its central concern. In the same way, the following story transmitted in "The Record of Kenzō" (*Kenzōki* 顕宗紀) in *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 serves as a means of measuring the degree of interest in bones.[24]

King Ichinobe 市辺王, the father Emperor Kenzō 顕宗 (Okenosumera Mikoto), was murdered together with a retainer, Saekibe no

Nakachiko 佐伯部仲子, by Emperor Yūryaku 雄略. Young Okenosumera Mikoto, on hearing the news, immediately fled, taking up a life of wandering. Without knowing anything of the site of his father's death or the condition of his burial, he spent long years in foreign places. While searching for his father's bones after own his accession, Okenosumera Mikoto learned the place of burial from an old woman in Ōmi 近江 province (Shiga prefecture). On digging, he found the limbs and bones of his father and his retainer buried together, with no way to separate them. There he made two burial mounds as if they were a single grave.[25]

Because the long sought bones were commingled with others, the two sets of remains were buried together without distinction in a single grave. This example suggests that the degree of attachment to a person's individual remains was not particularly strong. The important point for us, in other words, is that the direct purpose in making a burial mound was not to treat the bones by distinguishing them.

2. The Spread of Cremation and the Establishment of the Practice of Preserving Remains

The Custom of Cremation and the Worship of Relics

Up to this point, we have considered the development of the rite of *mogari* during the Kofun period. Evidence has been discovered that Buddhist funeral services were already being held by the close of this period.[26] Further, at about the same time, cremation came to be widely practiced, and tombs for cremated remains came to be made. Of course, cremation itself as a method of treating corpses is seen before this, and it was not necessarily limited to Buddhist practices. There is no question, however, that simultaneously with the influx of Buddhism, the number of vaults for cremated remains gradually increased, replacing the burial mounds that presupposed the practice of *mogari*. The general practice of cremation began in the Kinai 畿内 region near the capital and slowly spread to the outlying areas.[27]

The existence of vessels for cremated remains excavated in the

various areas allows us to conjecture about the actual practice of cremation. Among urns for remains in the Nara period, when cremation began to be practiced, there are many splendid pieces, and into later ages, a considerable number of examples survive. Nevertheless, as has often been pointed out, many aspects of the practice of cremation in the Heian period are still unclear;[28] moreover, research is not progressing adequately at present. It is difficult to construct with any certainty an image of the concepts and beliefs regarding the remains obtained through cremation. Further, even though the practice of cremation gradually came to pervade all of ancient society, we cannot ignore the fact that the practice of burial continued to be transmitted at the same time. Thus, there are still a large number of unresolved problems concerning the place in history of cremation and cremated remains during this period.

The topic of cremation and cremated remains calls to mind the issue of worship of relics (specifically, relics of the Buddha) that spread with the introduction of Buddhism. There is an article concerning the enshrinement of relics already in the thirteenth year of "The Record of Bitatsu" 敏達紀 (584) in *Nihon shoki*,[29] and an entry for the third month, first year of "The Record of Sushun" 崇峻紀 (588), records that relics of the Buddha were received from the king of Paekche.[30] Further, in the seventh month of the thirty-first year of "The Record of Suiko" 推古記" (623)—this is the year following Prince Shōtoku's death—Silla 新羅 dispatched an envoy with a set of Buddhist statues together with a golden stupa, relics, and Buddhist implements.[31] The Buddhist statue was enshrined at Kōryūji 広隆寺 temple in the Uzumasa 太秦 area of Kyoto, and the relics and stupa were placed in Shitennōji 四天王寺 temple in Naniwa (Osaka).[32] Further, in *Fusō shari shū* 扶桑舎利集 quoted in *Taishi-den kokin mokuroku shō* 太子伝古今目録抄, the story is recorded that Prince Shōtoku, in the spring when he was two years old, turned to the east and uttered, "Reverence to Buddha!" (*namu butsu* 南無仏). Upon doing so, a relic fell from his palms.[33] There are a number of articles indicating a connection between Prince Shōtoku and Buddha relics.The body of *Jōgū Shōtoku hōōtei setsu* 上宮聖徳法王帝説 includes no mention

of relics, but in the postscript (*uragaki* 裏書), there is an entry stating that eight fragments of relics were placed in the central pillar of the tower of Yamadadera 山田寺 temple.[34]

Moreover, in 754, Chien-chen 鑑真 (Jp. Ganjin) arrived with three thousand fragments of Buddha relics. Later, Kūkai 空海 sought and brought back eighty fragments of Buddha relics, and Ennin brought back three fragments of bodhisattva relics and two fragments of pratyekabuddha (*byakushibutsu* 辟支仏) relics. Eventually, relic services came to be held at Tōshōdaiji, Tōji, Enryakuji, Hōryūji, and other temples, and relic towers came to be constructed as part of temple compounds.[35]

In the Buddhism of India and China, distinctions were made between whole body relics (burial) and broken body relics (cremation), or between bodily relics and dharma relics; further, we see methods for using temples (*shōja* 精舎) for enshrining the Buddha's tooth, or Buddha's cranial bones (Hokken-den 法顕伝), or Buddha's eyeteeth (Daitōsaiikiki 大唐西域記). Of course, the term "relic" in principle refers to relics of the Buddha, but there are also examples of use for the remains of disciples of the Buddha and eminent monks.[36]

The Destruction and Preservation of Remains: The Multiple Layers of Buddhist Customs

As mentioned before, cremation and worship of relics (or worship of remains) were special characteristics seen already in the Buddhism of India. According to Leo Frobenius,[37] however, the practice of cremation and the scattering of bones and ashes that has been practiced from ancient times in India, and the worship of the Buddha's relics in which remains are preserved, are fundamentally contradictory and probably stem from different cultural roots. Cremation was born from the practice of the destruction of the corpse in northern culture, and worship of remains is related to the preservation of the corpse in southern culture. Thus, the fusion of cremation and worship of remains born in Indian Buddhism was formed through a coupling of disparate cultural elements.

Ōbayashi Taryō 大林太良, in his study *Sōsei no kigen* 葬制の起源, presents Frobenius's theory and expresses his agreement.[38] The idea that the rise of worship of remains that appeared together with Buddhism stems from the southern tradition of the "preservation of the corpse" is illuminating. This view was, of course, conceived with the contrasting practices of abandonment of the corpse or destruction of the corpse in the northern plateau and desert regions in mind; hence, it tends towards oversimplification. Further, although it speaks of a southern lineage, it is necessary to recognize (smaller) regional differences. Nevertheless, taking a broad perspective, I find that this dichotomy is reasonably supported. Further, in the two-phase practice of cremation followed by the gathering of bones, it is possible to find simultaneously included a double-structured conception, not merely of a second treatment of remains, but of both destruction and preservation, the unnecessary element of destruction and the essential element of preservation.

We must note, however, that this worship of remains was not necessarily generally practiced in Japan in the ancient period. The worship of relics associated with Buddhism, as mentioned before, was first adopted by the upper classes and gradually became pervasive, but it remained always the relics of the charismatic Buddha, and therefore must be considered an exceptional case of worship of remains.

Indications of the Reverence for Remains among the Nobility

Earlier, I noted that there were many points in the practice of cremation in the Heian period that remain unclear. Concerning this, an important issue has been raised by Tanaka Hisao 田中久夫.[39] He conjectures that during the eleventh century period centering on Fujiwara Michinaga 藤原道長, a change occurred, primarily in the funerals of the nobility, involving the conception of cremation and cremated bones—a change from minimal concern for bone remains to reverence for them. Further, following on the heels of that change, the practice of placing cremated remains on Mt. Kōya 高野山 gradually spread. The broad diffusion of the aristocratic practices of reverence for bone remains and the custom of

laying them to rest on Mt. Kōya took place in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

The argument in Tanaka's article may be summarized in the following two points. First, the area of Kohata 木幡 (Uji city, Kyoto-fu), which served as a graveyard for the Fujiwara clan, was originally a desolate place for burial with only a small number of stone markers (*sotoba* 卒塔婆), and was rarely a place either relatives or others would visit. This is clearly described, for example, in *Eiga monogatari* 栄花物語.[40] Further, Fujiwara Yukinari 藤原行成, in 1011, re-performed a funeral for his maternal grandfather and mother, burning their bones with resin and oil, turning them into ash, and casting them into the currents of the Kamo river 鴨川.[41] In short, the area of Kohata in early times was one of "old graves in heaps, secluded and still,"[42] and corpses that were not buried were cast into the Kamo river or Shirakawa river 白川.

The second point is that, from about the time of Michinaga, this condition began to change little by little, and the concept of reverence for remains gradually strengthened. This is seen, for example, from the fact that, on the nineteenth day of the tenth month in 1005, Michinaga held services for the construction of Jōmyōji 浄妙寺 temple at Kohata in order that the spirits of deceased Fujiwara clan members be guided to supreme enlightenment and the Land of Bliss.[43] This means that a *bodaiji* 菩提寺 temple was built in the graveyard, and that Michinaga himself attended.[44] After his own death, his body was laid to rest at Kohata, and his son Yorimichi made a grave site visit on the twenty-ninth day, eighth month of 1062.[45] Further, Emperor Ichijō 一条 died on the twenty-second day of the sixth month, 1011, and his cremated bone remains were enshrined in Enjōji 円成寺 temple.[46] In the case of Emperor Horikawa 堀河 also, his remains were enshrined in Kōryūji 香隆寺 in 1107, and many went to pay their respects at the "site of the remains" (*okotsusho* 御骨所).[47] The practices of holding funeral services for cremated remains and enshrining them had grown in strength.[48]

Thus, on the basis of the above two points, Tanaka conjectures that with the eleventh century as the dividing line, there appear signs of a

change in the manner of funerals of the nobility involving the emergence of reverence for remains. Nevertheless, this change was, of course, restricted to the imperial family and segments of the nobility, and does not necessarily indicate general practices among the populace. Even though it manifests signs of a modulation from a minimal concern with remains to reverence for them, it does not give evidence for the broad establishment of worship of remains.

The Spread of Laying Remains to Rest on Mt. Kōya and Its Background

Nevertheless, it cannot be said that the signs of change discussed above were merely temporary phenomena. The concept of preservation of and reverence for remains was already gradually being accepted, and the most symbolic indication of this tendency was the establishment of the practice of laying remains to rest on Mt. Kōya. Mt. Kōya, the center of Shingon 真言 esoteric practice, is also a sacred site of mountain worship where birth in the Pure Land in the next life is regarded as assured.

Early examples of the placing of remains on Mt. Kōya are pointed out by Tanaka Hisao.[49] From written records, as seen in the cases of Kakuhō Hosshinnō 覚法法親王, whose remains were laid to rest on the eighth day of the twelfth month, 1153,[50] and Bifukumon'in 美福門院, who died in 1161,[51] it is conjectured to have taken place about the mid-twelfth century. Further, the practice of placing hair of the deceased as well as bone remains to rest on Mt. Kōya is also old; it was called "raising bones" (*kotsu-age*) and "bones going up [the mountain]" (*kotsu-noboshi* 骨登し), and was spread throughout the country.[52] This is an example of taking hair to be "*kotsu*" (literally, bone), and shows that originally the laying of bones to rest included hair as well. In this case, the concept of "*kotsu*"includes remains that serve for recollecting the deceased. In other words, in serving as a perpetual and enduring memorial of the dead person, hair and white bones are the same. The earliest example of the custom of sending hair to Mt. Kōya is seen at the death of Emperor Horikawa,[53] and gradually the practice of laying cremated remains to rest there spread and became quite common.

As we have seen, the custom of placing hair and bone remains on Mt. Kōya is first seen among emperors and the nobility, but gradually, through the influential propagation (*kanjin* 勧進) activity of Kōya *hijiri* 高野聖, it rapidly spread among the ordinary people. Kōya *hijiri* were typical wandering monks of the period who lived on Mt. Kōya. They traveled throughout Japan in order to spread the teaching and collect donations, and urged ordinary people to form bonds (*kechien* 結縁) with Mt. Kōya. The focus of their propagation activities was Pure Land faith and the practice of uttering the nenbutsu, and they preached the laying to rest of bone remains on Mt. Kōya in order that the deceased attain birth in the Pure Land. They placed whitened bones they found in the wilds during their travels and the remains that the faithful entrusted to them in their backpacks and carried them back to Mt. Kōya.[54]

Mt. Kōya was a sacred site of esoteric Buddhism, but in the latter part of the Heian period it was pervaded by Pure Land Buddhist beliefs, which came to be strongly reflected in its doctrine and rites. The source of this Pure Land teaching was the Tendai school 天台宗 on Mt. Hiei 比叡山, particularly the Pure Land teaching of the stream of Genshin 源信, author of *Essential for Birth in the Pure Land* (*Ōjōyōshū* 往生要集). The Shingon-stream of nenbutsu gained popularity, and belief that Mt. Kōya itself was the Pure Land came to be established. The Pure Land thought of Genshin's stream was actively adopted on Mt. Kōya, and a unique form of nenbutsu faith was created by the Shingon monk Kakuban 覚鑁, but the spread of this belief was in large part due to the wandering monks of Mt. Kōya.[55]

From what we have seen above, it is clear, first of all, that with the eleventh century as a boundary line, especially among the nobility, there was a change in conception and attitude toward cremated remains, and this, coupled with the spread of laying remains to rest on Mt. Kōya among the ordinary people during the twelfth century, gradually gave birth to the notion of the preservation of bone remains, and further, of reverence for those remains. Second, a major role was played in advancing the general spread of these notions by the diffusion of Pure Land teachings and the permeation of belief in the next life.[56]

The Turn Away from Hypersensitivity to Death Pollution

Here, we must note that preservation of remains and reverence for them do not necessarily have the same significance. The concept of reverence for remains is related to their enshrinement; by contrast, preservation does not necessarily involve enshrinement. Further, although we speak of the preservation of or reverence for remains, there is in principle a level of bone remains as a surrogate for the spirit, and a level of worship of the remains themselves, in which a bone fetishism is emphasized. In addition, we must take into consideration the fact that the consciousness of death as pollution or defilement (*shie* 死穢) seen among the nobility during the Heian period was related to the custom of laying bones to rest that spread rapidly from the end of the Heian period to the Kamakura period and was undergoing great change.[57] This is made clear by the existence of numerous funereal vessels placed in Gokurakubō 極楽坊 hall of Gangōji temple 元興寺.

These funereal vessels were discovered in 1951 when the main hall was dismantled. They indicate that Gangōji, which had been the giant among the seven great Nara temples, was transformed in the medieval period into a temple for the laying to rest of remains supported by the faith of the ordinary people. According to the classification of Gorai Shigeru, they include: one wooden vessel in the shape of a thirteen-story pagoda tower; three wooden vessels in the shape of five-element stupas; two cypress (*hinoki* 檜) vessels in the shape of wooden scoops; and seven bamboo tube vessels.[58] Gorai infers from these that wandering monks (*kanjin hijiri* 勧進聖) affiliated with Gokurakubō hall tended exclusively toward methods of propagation focusing on the laying to rest of remains, and that eventually, through the establishment of the temple-supporter system, Gokurakubō came to share the same fate as village temples that took custodianship of the bones of the dead.[59] Further, independent of the temple-supporter system in which remains were held in custodianship, the belief in spirit mountains as sacred sites for gaining the repose of the spirits of the dead and of ancestors gradually spread in scope, and following the example of Mt. Kōya, the laying to rest of bone

and hair remains and worship at stupas came to be performed in order to make offerings for the repose of the dead and the spirits of ancestors. Such practices have, down to the present, given birth to a variety of cult locales, large and small; representative among them are Osorezan 恐山 in Aomori prefecture, Gassan 月山 and Yamadera 山寺 in Yamagata prefecture, Iwafuneyama 岩舟山 in Tochigi prefecture, Tateyama 立山 in Toyama prefecture, Asamayama 朝熊山 in Mie prefecture, Maniyama 摩尼山 in Shimane prefecture, Daisen 大山 in Tottori prefecture, and Yataniyama 弥谷山 in Kagawa prefecture.[60]

To summarize, it is possible to infer that the act of laying bones to rest and the practice of taking custodianship of bones developed in various forms as a relationship of exchange that promised communication between this world and the next world, and this gave rise to conceptions and rites of this-worldly, utilitarian worship of remains. In one aspect, this is a development signifying a change from "hypersensitivity to death pollution" as a negative view of impermanence in the Heian period to the worship of cremated remains as a positive view of impermanence in the Kamakura period. We can illustrate this by considering the crucial epoch of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

The Significance of Laying Bones to Rest

I have spoken of the shift from "hypersensitivity to death pollution" to "worship of cremated remains." It is difficult, however, to explain why this took the form of laying bones to rest. This is because, as mentioned before, interpretations differ concerning whether worship of remains itself is a matter of preservation or of reverence. Further, as Tanaka Hisao states, it is reasonable to connect the practice of laying remains to rest with the pervasive spread of Pure Land teachings and the diffusion of belief in the next world. Whether with cremation or burial, the white bones that result are a symbol that reminds us of the certainty of death, and at the same time, prayers for birth in the Pure Land became ever more urgent. Nevertheless, even though the bone remains after the funeral indeed became an occasion for arousing aspiration for birth in

the Pure Land, this aspiration and making the remains themselves objects of worship are not necessarily the same.[61]

I have already mentioned that the nobility in the Heian period avoided contact with corpses or remains because they regarded them as sources of pollution. For ordinary people, also, it was usual to abandon the remains without attachment after leaving the corpse exposed. The corpses left exposed at Toribeno 鳥辺野 or Adashino 化野 were abandoned, and it is said that corpses were even left in the second story of Rajōmon 羅城門 gate.[62] The tradition of regarding not only the corpse but also remains as taboo out of a consciousness of death defilement continued for an extended period. Kūya, a wandering monk of the tenth century, dedicated his life to the propagation of nenbutsu among the common people and was called "the *hijiri* of the marketplace" or "Amida *hijiri* 阿弥陀聖." According to *Kūya-rui* 空也誄, in which his biography is recorded, he often gathered together corpses abandoned in the open, poured oil over them and cremated them, and then performed a service on their behalf.[63] The monks who stem from Kūya's stream of practice aided with the handling of corpses abandoned along roads, transferring their merit as they carried on their itinerant life.

As we have seen above, there can be no doubt that the custom of abandoning corpses was deeply rooted among both the nobility and the common people. Why, then, was the practice of laying remains to rest newly born? As one reason, we have considered the spread of Pure Land teachings and the diffusion of belief in the next world, but this does not appear to resolve all the problems. Let us therefore delve more deeply into the matter.

3. The Mechanism of Spirit Transference

Laying Remains to Rest from the Perspective of Rites of Cleansing Remains

In general, the following two views regarding bone remains after the treatment of the corpse may be imagined. First, the corpse and bone remains may be abandoned without any attachment to them as merely lifeless remnants. In this view, only the enshrinement of the spirit is

regarded as important. Second, from the view of a close relationship between the corpse or bone remains and the spirit, the spirit is enshrined through the bone remains. One thoroughgoing form in which this is done is the washing of bone remains still performed today in Okinawa and Amami 奄美. This second treatment of remains by washing is called *āgarinishiri* ("showing clearly") on Tokunoshima 徳之島 Island, *atoague* ("raising after") on Kakeroma 加計呂麻 Island, and *churakunasun* ("making beautiful") in Okinawa. It probably indicates a purification of the dead spirit through a cleansing of the bones and signifies an aid to deification of the dead.[64] Here, it must be noted that the concept of reverence for bone remains ultimately has the aim of the repose of the spirit and is not rooted in a fetishism regarding the bones themselves. In other words, even while fearing the dead spirit and seeking to avoid death defilement, one seeks to see, for example, one's ancestors in the bodily and bone remains.[65] Further, through such a view of ancestors, the cleansing of bones is performed for the purification of the dead spirits.[66]

In considering the practice of cleansing bones that is still carried on today in the southern islands, we see from the above that it does not have as its purpose worship of the bones in themselves, but to the very end indicates a strong interest in affecting the fate of the spirit through the bones, as part of the rites for the dead. If this is the case, how can we understand the relation between this practice and the issue of laying remains to rest, which came to be widely practiced in the medieval period in Japan? Of course, it is impossible to compare the practice of laying remains to rest in the main islands of Japan during the medieval period and the practice of cleansing remains seen in the southern islands today on the same level. In spite of this, however, between these two rites for the dead we find a common view that may be said to constitute the central topic concerning the relationship of bones and spirit. That is, just as a (relationship of) correspondence may be seen between the placing of remains on Mt. Kōya and belief in the next world, in the practice of cleansing bones in Okinawa, we see a relationship with the view of the other world in that region, and here there functions a mechanism of mutual complementarity between spirit and bones.

Gorai's Theory of the Laying of Remains to Rest as Spirit Transference

Gorai has put forward a highly suggestive view of this matter. Concerning the vessels for remains discovered in the Gokurakubō hall at Gangōji, he has stated the following. The purpose of the laying of remains to rest (*nōkotsu* 納骨) practiced in medieval temples was, in short, for the repose of (offerings to) the spirits of the dead. Further, when compared with this fundamental theme, the concept of the Pure Land is little more than embellishment.[67]

Working from the assumption of Gorai's thesis, I will develop his argument that the laying to rest of remains (in the case of burial, this involves hair and nails) is a rite for the repose of the spirit involving "spirit transference" (*rei utsushi* 霊移し). The first point is that in the cult of laying remains to rest, the funeral method of *mogari* practiced in ancient times has, superficially, undergone a Buddhist transformation; it is an extremely distinct method of handling the dead. As mentioned before, cremation was transmitted to Japan from India together with Buddhism, but in India, the ashes are placed in the sacred river and not stored. In Japan, however, the tradition of *mogari* (handling of the corpse by exposure to the elements) existed from the ancient period. This means that, without using fire, the remaining bones were collected and placed in a surface grave in a second funeral (or renewed funeral). Hence, even after the importation of the practice of cremation, the ashes were not placed in a river as in India, but the traditional practice continued in the form of a second handling of remains. Herein lies the basis for the notion that the distinctive practice of laying remains to rest in Japan is related to the ancient concept of *mogari*.[68]

Gorai's thesis given above reminds us of Frobenius's theory. According to Frobenius, worship of the Buddha's relics was born as a fusion of cultural elements, including the destruction of the corpse practiced in the north and the preservation of the corpse practiced in the south. The core of Gorai's view of laying remains to rest also takes it to be the result of a fusion of practices, in this case, of cremation and the rite of *mogari*. We see here a striking resemblance in frames of thought.

Concerning this point, I wish to emphasize that in Japan, both the worship of Buddhist relics and the cult of laying remains to rest are forms of faith from the same lineage, both born from a common cultural situation.

The second point asserted by Gorai is that the laying to rest of remains (hair and nails in the case of burial) is first of all a "rite for the repose of the spirit involving spirit transference." In other words, from the time of the practice of treating the corpse by exposure (*mogari*), the site used was called *sanmai* 三昧 (burial grave), which was considered greatly defiled and thus was avoided by all. For this reason, rites to transfer the spirit alone, which had separated from the body, from the site filled with pollution to a sacred place and to give it repose gradually came to be regarded as essential. This is the mechanism of "spirit transference" spoken of by Gorai.

In the primitive stage, this was not to transfer the bones remaining after exposure or the cremated remains themselves; it was enough for something representing the spirit to be placed in a sacred place such as a mountain or island and for rites of repose to be performed. The representative article, in the ancient period, was a "flower branch" (*shikimi* 樒) called *sakaki* 榊, or a "jewel skewer" (spirit stick), and with the Buddhist transformation, it became the *toba* post with branch, leafed *toba* 塔婆, *matsubotoke* 松ぼとけ, *sugibotoke* 杉ぼとけ, paper *toba*, and so on. Bamboo (bamboo grass) and *itsukitake* 斎竹 bamboo also served as representative articles. It is asserted that the five-story tower replicas (including bamboo grass *toba*, small, wooden five-story towers, and five-story tower reliquaries for storing bones) discovered in the Gokurakubō hall at Gangōji are all articles for spirit transference. When a step is taken beyond this stage, the form of spirit transference in which earth from the funeral site is put in a bamboo tube and placed in the Buddhist altar appears; in this way, spirit transference through laying to rest of bone remains emerges.[69]

Lastly, the third point asserted by Gorai is that the concept and rites of spirit transference in the laying to rest of bones seen above is in fact fundamentally similar to the cleansing of bones in the southern

islands and the double grave practice seen in the main Japanese islands. It is already known from the research of Iha Fuyū 伊波普猷 that in the southern islands treatment of the corpse by exposure and the cleansing of bones has been practiced,[70] but in this case, the site of burial is called *haka* (grave), while the place of the transference of the spirit and the renewed treatment of remains by washing is called *tera* (temple). Gorai points out the resemblance in the fact that the second treatment of remains in the main islands was mostly carried out within the precincts of temples and called *tera haka* 寺墓 or *rantō* 卵塔. In other words, in the practice of double graves in the main islands, the grave site is not necessarily limited to the burial site (or site of cremation); the sacred site where the spirit is enshrined is also regarded as the grave. This does not differ at all from the thinking regarding spirit transference in the laying to rest of remains.

The Symbolic Nature of Bone Remains

Gorai's theory reminds us that the cult of "bone remains" of the common people that developed in Japan in the medieval period was not necessarily worship of the remains themselves. In particular, we should note that bones, like evergreen trees, functioned as representative articles of kami or kami spirits. Bones were the receiver selected for the transference of the spirit from the defiled corpse, or the sacred essence for the sake of completing rites for the repose of the spirit.

In this way, we see that the cult of laying remains to rest that gave direction to the beliefs of the common people in the medieval period was in fact another expression of the cult of the spirits of ancestors. Further, we see that in the background of such beliefs there was established the notion that while a defiled spirit dwells in the defiled corpse, in the bone remains that have passed through a process of decay and corruption, a purified ancestral spirit dwells. The hard bones in which the bodily remains have been compressed to an ultimate degree were taken as objects for enshrinement as charms that symbolize in condensed form the process in which the invisible existence called spirit moves from defilement to purity

III. The Cult of Bones in Japan

1. On the Spiritual Power of Corpses

The World of the Illustrated Scroll of Famished Ghosts (Gaki zōshi)

The *Illustrated Scroll of Famished Ghosts* 餓鬼草紙, one of the masterpieces among medieval horizontal painted scrolls, was created at the beginning of the Kamakura period. It includes a well-known scene of graves and corpses.[71] (see frontispiece) There are three mound graves and two graves of heaped stones, with four corpses and skulls and long bones scattered about. Of the four corpses, one has become a skeleton. A dog is gnawing on a body in a coffin. The focus of the work, however, is on five famished ghosts.

The mound graves represent the burials of nobles or persons of rank, while the stone graves probably represent either the handling of cremated remains or a second burial.[72] Of the four corpses, one has been placed in a wooden coffin, two on straw mats, and one has been left directly on the ground. These are the variations of "treatment of corpses by wind" (*fūsō* 風葬, disposal by exposure) that were commonly practiced by the lower classes.

This scene from the *Illustrated Scroll of Famished Ghosts* provides quite realistic depictions of the actual treatment of corpses at the time among people of all classes, though the famished ghosts loitering about the graves and bodies are of course imaginary images of the dead. Famished ghosts are a type of spirit who, unable to attain Buddhahood after death, wander in the world of darkness. In the present scene, one of the ghosts clasps a skull to its stomach while crouching. This is surely strange, for these famished ghosts are wandering spirits of the dead who have separated from the corpses and skeletons. In other words, the ghost clutches its own remains.

Needless to say, the spirits of the dead are invisible, imaginary existences. They are rendered visible in the form of famished ghosts with

hair standing on end and distended stomachs. These famished ghosts as spirits of the dead made visible are in the process of transmigration; they have left their corpse or skull and set off on a journey through the realm of darkness. That which ties, with a conceptual thread, the skull clasped by the famished ghost and the ghost itself is the movement of the spirit floating in space. It must be noted regarding the skulls that appear in the *Illustrated Scroll of Famished Ghosts* that they are not so conspicuous as to emphasize the existence of the bones themselves. Rather, they give the impression of the final form of human beings left exposed, who lie where they have been left, having turned to corpses and skeletons.

Worship of Skulls and the Tachikawa-ryū Tradition

The interest in and worship of skulls has a long history. Scholars have noted the deep connection with head-hunting and human sacrifice, and with ancestor worship. As seen particularly in southeast Asia and Africa, as well as in Brazil, interest in skulls is related to the concept of bones as possessing special magical powers; further, as the site in which spirits abide, bones have been worshiped as protector gods and memorial objects.[73] It is not possible to consider the distribution of such practices here in detail. In the case of Japan, however, skull worship did not develop. Rather, as we have seen in the *Illustrated Scroll of Famished Ghosts*, skulls are symbols of things impermanent (whitened bones) after they have been exposed to wind and rain in mountains and fields; they did not serve as protector gods and were not the objects of attachment and collection as memorabilia.

Of course, there were exceptional phenomena. Skull worship in the Tachikawa tradition (Tachikawa-ryū 立川流), which enjoyed a period of popularity in the Kamakura period, is an example. The Tachikawa tradition is a mixture of Shingon esotericism and yin-yang magic (*onmyōdō* 陰陽道). According to *Juhōyōjinshū* 受法用心集 (1272) by Seiganbō Shinjō 誓願坊心定 of Echizen 越前 province (middle and northern Fukui prefecture), for skulls to be employed as the central object of worship (*honzon* 本尊), those of wise persons, religious

practitioners, and kings are excellent, and those of one's parents are also fine. Since the *kon* 魂 spirit has already left the skull and only the *haku* 魄 spirit remains, however, a *kon* spirit must be procured through magical rites. The skull is lacquered and teeth are put in place. Further, the intermingled fluid obtained from sexual intercourse (two drops from the fusion of male and female) are applied to the skull and a mandala is drawn. Then, if every night during the hours of the rat and ox (11 p.m. to 3 a.m.) incense for the return of the *kon* spirit is burned and the mantra for inducing the spirit's return is recited for seven years without interruption, in the eighth year the skull will speak. This is a method of incantation for recalling the spirit, by which the *kon* spirit that has already departed returns and fuses with the remaining *haku* spirit, so that the skull speaks.[74]

In the development of the Tachikawa-ryū, monks connected with Daigo Sanbōin 醍醐三宝院 temple (one of three streams of Daigo, which itself belongs to the Ono-ryū 小野流 that is one of the Jisō 事相 streams of the Shingon school) played a large role, and among them, for example, is Monkan Shōnin 文観上人, who appears in *Taiheiki* 太平記 as a person deeply trusted by Emperor Go-Daigo 後醍醐. The Tachikawa tradition, however, gradually fell into decadence and its biases strengthened; in the early Muromachi period its writings were burned as heretical and it followed a path toward extinction throughout the country. In addition to undergoing persecution, it appears not to have been able to become indigenized in Japan.

We must note here that the esoteric tradition and yin-yang practices that composed the doctrinal foundation for the Tachikawa tradition were not forms of thought present in ancient Japan. The esoteric tradition gave birth in Tibet to cults of bones and skull worship. In Tibet, skulls of corpses left exposed were made into cups for liquor, and bones of arms and legs were made into instruments for spells and flutes. Further, in Tibetan Tantra (in one type of mandala), the god of death, Yama, is depicted as a skeleton in sexual embrace with his consort.[75] Thus, in the esoteric tradition in particular, skull worship that incorporated special characteristics of the locale is taught, and it

undoubtedly provided half of the influence for the formation of the Tachikawa tradition. As mentioned before, however, it did not take root in the foundations of folk religion in Japan.

It remains of interest, nevertheless, that the skull treated as the central object of worship in the Tachikawa tradition speaks as though alive after the fusion of the *kon* and *haku* spirits. This fantastic process indicates that the skull is an incantatory vessel in which the spirit comes to rest. The skull as object of worship, in this sense, appears to hold the same significance as the skull embraced by the famished ghost in the *Illustrated Scroll of Famished Ghosts.*

The Spirit Power of Corpses and the Crime of "Opposition to the Corpse"

Regarding the spiritual power latent in corpses, Katsumata Shizuo 勝俣鎮夫 has raised the issue of "opposition to the corpse" (*shigai tekitai* 死骸敵対). For example, in the Kamakura period, a serf under the control of Zenjōji 禅定寺, a branch of the Byōdōin 平等院 temple in Uji, was murdered by a resident of Kohata 木幡 in Yamashiro 山城 province. The serf's companions demanded that the murderer be handed over to them, but were denied. They then took up the corpse of the murdered man and tried to carry it to the place of the murderer in Kohata. The concept of a person's being in "opposition to the corpse" developed from the background of this social practice, but it is taken as an issue for study as a term that appears in the letters of the disposition of property and in wills of warriors from the Kamakura to the Muromachi period. As a similar expression, one finds occurrences of "father-child opposition," indicating a hostile relationship between father and child, or a relationship in which a child opposes the father. In the same way, there is the expression "opposition between lord and follower," and also "opposition to the Three Treasures," indicating acts of antagonism to the domain of Buddhism. "Opposition to the corpse" is a usage developed from such expressions.

The term "opposition to the corpse" expressed the gravity of the crime and does not indicate that the corpse was actually brought into the

court to face the accused. In the case that, after the death of a parent, the intention or will expressed by the parent when alive is not followed, the crime of "opposition to the corpse" may be charged, according to the law determined by the bakufu 幕府. Katsumata, leaving aside the social significance behind this statute, reviews a number of examples and notes that running through them all is the concept of the absoluteness of the "corpse's will." In other words, the problem of the manner of death is deeply related to the will of the corpse and the concept was born that the corpse's will should be honored. Katsumata further notes that, for example, in the case of the expression in *Azuma kagami* 吾妻鏡, "In order to wash away the shame of the father's corpse . . . ," the corpse itself is significant, and that in the corpse was harbored a "will as spirit power."

The corpse's will as spirit power spoken of here is a matter of magical spirit power lying within the corpse itself, and not of the spirit of the dead person who was the owner of the corpse. Logically speaking, however, it seems more natural to understand the spirit power of the corpse as arising where the spirit of the dead person shifts into and possesses the corpse, rather than as being directly latent in the corpse itself as in Katsumata's understanding. When we reflect on the "opposition to the corpse" employing notions of spirit possession of the corpse, we find a resonance with the world seen earlier in the *Illustrated Scroll of Famished Spirits* and the Tachikawa tradition.

2. From "Interest in Corpses" to "Dried Bones"

"Living Corpses" in the European Medieval Period

The expression "opposition to the corpse" calls to mind the concept of the "living corpse" (*eine lebende Leiche*) in medieval Europe. According to Abe Kin'ya 阿部謹也, in the world of the German people from before the early medieval period, the dead were treated as alive.[77] For example, there were cases in which punishments were carried out against corpses, and at the same time, the taking of a corpse was considered the same crime as kidnapping. Further, it was possible for the dead to appear in

court as accusers, and since burial was impossible until blood revenge was completed, corpses were hung and dried in order to preserve them. According to Abe, this thinking concerning the "living corpse" did not easily disappear even after the penetration of Christianity.

We see from the above that between the Japanese and Western Europeans there was a great difference in conceptions related to life and death. The legal concept of the dead as accuser or as the accused who receives punishment never existed in Japan. At first glance, the expression "living corpse" appears to include the same metaphor combining life and death as "opposition to the corpse," but in "living corpse," in contrast to "opposition to the corpse," there is no assumption of a division of spirit and flesh. Of course, it is not that the distinction between spirit and body was traditionally absent from European society. Even without looking back to the Orphism that arose from worship of Dionysus in the seventh century BC and the Neoplatonism that appeared in third century Rome and Alexandria, the distinction of spirit and body came to be taught following the introduction of Christianity. Nevertheless, the concept of the separation of spirit and body, as Abe states, gradually spread over a long period up to modern times, and in medieval society was not at all generally taken for granted.[78]

Interest in Corpses (The Macabre)

Johan Huizinga raised a number of issues regarding interest in corpses (or interest in skulls) in Europe. In *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, he collects and analyzes data regarding the macabre in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[79] He notes the influence of sermons on *memento mori* by mendicant monks from the thirteenth century on, and of woodblock prints developed in the fifteenth century, and states that in particular, the *Danse macabré* (dance of skeletons) published by the Paris printer Guyot Marchant in 1485 terrified the people of the day. This *danse macabré* was depicted on the walls of the church hall and also sung in lyrics. In it men and women of various classes who have become skeletons dance boisterously led by the god of death. Needless to say, it was

designed by the church to express a religious, allegorical meaning. When viewed from a slightly different perspective, however, there unfolds a raucous scene in which the "living corpses" mentioned earlier join the dead living in a parody of the present world.

Huizinga's discussion of interest in corpses in Europe is limited to the medieval period, but the same topic has been discussed in the form of comparative history covering the period up to the eighteenth century by Philippe Ariés. Beginning from the fifteenth century treated by Huizinga, Ariés closely follows the strengthening tendency, with the passage of time, of the medieval interest in corpses toward an erotico-macabre.[80] The Freudian-like theme of the encounter of eros (sexual instinct) and thanatos (death instinct) revolving around the corpse arises here, and an example of an intellectual practitioner may be found in Marquis de Sade. Ariés discusses this drawing materials from painting, drama, and literature.[81] Interest in corpses, however, reached its peak in the gradual emergence of "graveyards decorated with artificial caves using human bones."[82] In the graveyard of the Kapuchin church ("Skeleton church") and the underground catacombs of Santa Maria della Morte and Palermo in Rome, this grisly scene may be seen still today. In various places in the catacombs bones have been carefully placed, and among them, there are even some which are dressed in monk's robes and poised standing as in life.[83] These examples may be called sacred places in which skeletons have fulfilled to their greatest extent a decorative function.

According to Ariés, in this second flowering of interest in corpses in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the corpse eaten by maggots was replaced by the skeleton, and the skeleton itself was further broken down into smaller elements—skull, leg bones, and other smaller bones—until finally, an age was reached in which it was "reconstructed in an algebraic form."[84]

The Italian sculptor and architect G. L. Bernini, known as the Michaelangelo of the Baroque, was also a master builder of tombs. He enjoyed a close relationship with the Vatican, and is famous for the tombs he made for popes and saints. His tombs often bear the decorative

use of "the skeleton god of death."[85] The practice of carving the image of the dead in gravestones goes back to the medieval period, at least to the eleventh century.[86] At first an image reclining in repose was depicted, but from the end of the medieval period, images of the dead revealing aspects of death appeared, and developed into frightening images of mummies. In the modern period, although there are regional variations, the realistic living image disappeared and changed into a symbolic skeleton.

Further, in the medieval period in the west in general, faith in relics of saints was the most standard form of faith among the ordinary people. Miracles occurred in places where saints' relics were kept, and those sites became places of pilgrimage. An indication of one peak may be seen in the worship of the bones of Saint Jacob.[87] This worship of saints' relics was, in the final analysis, a faith in bones of the dead. Worshippers came to hope that their own bones after death would be preserved alongside those of the saint enshrined in the church. As bones, they would hear the mass, and treading by the feet of their brothers and sisters, would accumulate the merit of humility. This was the afterlife they aspired to.

Worship of the Skeleton as Parody of the Physical Body

As we have seen, in Western Europe, skeleton worship, particularly as it developed from the medieval period on, is especially conspicuous in its pursuit of a mode of life of skeletons in which they behave just as though alive. Whether in the case of the "living corpse" or in the case of the "interest in skeletons," the "bones of the dead" did not merely assert themselves as accuser or accused in the court of law. They also danced as manifestations of the god of death, and even prompted sexual stirrings as accouterments of sadistic and masochistic desires. They drew attention as novel designs in graves and curious antiquarian articles on display, and through participating in mass and listening to the hymns, they contributed to the construction of a mosaic map in the architecture in which death and life were conjoined.

In short, it is possible to view the skeletons as parodies of the physical body. The links of the skeleton, through mechanisms like those of an automatic machine, suggest the ultimate form and movement of the physical body viewed with contempt. The bones are the crystallization of the transient body, which is despised and ridiculed; they are archaeological souvenirs. That is, it must be noted that the skeleton, in every sense, could not be the point of mooring in which the spirit arrives and departs. There is no sign here of the movement of the spirit, nor do we see any presentiment of the approach of spiritual power. Perhaps it may be said that the bones themselves were the fossilizations of the spirit. The skeleton as the relief of the body, just as in the case of modern anatomy, held its own sphere, and colored by madness and loud laughter, obscenity and menace, gave birth to a kind of theatrical space.

As we have seen above, skeleton worship was a marker that guided the consciousness of Western Europeans regarding death and afterlife in a certain direction. Many, if not all, of the concepts regarding graves and the afterworld in Western Europe gradually took form within the womb of this consciousness. Of course, we must not forget that outside the sphere of European culture there existed other cultural spheres of bone worship completely distinct from this "interest in skeletons." It is impossible here to treat historically this complex and diverse development. What are particularly impressive, however, are cultures that recognize a close interrelationship between bones and spirit mediated by death. Here, in the point that it seeks to recognize the identity of the self through bones, the European mode may be said to be a highly contrastive form of faith. Further, this has been highlighted in quite vivid fashion in the article "A Contribution to the Study of the Collective Representation of Death" by Robert Hertz.[88]

The "Dried Bones" of Indonesia

Hertz was a close disciple of the French sociologist Emile Durkheim, and a promising new star of the *L'année sociologique* school, but unfortunately was killed in April 1915, in World War I, at the age of thirty-three. He dedicated himself to study of the Dayak people of Borneo, and though he was not able to carry on research in the field, in the end the Dayak became for him his "blood and flesh."[89]

The theme Hertz takes up in the article mentioned above revolves around the issues underlying death and the main funeral, that is, the problems of the second funeral or repeated treatments of the dead. He discusses this topic using data related to the tribes of Indonesia, particularly the Dayak tribe of Borneo. Hertz's particular method is to focus on the corpse, the spirit, and the person in mourning as three aspects of death.

Hertz covers a diversity of topics, but for our concerns here, the chief point is that the period between the first death and the final funeral ritual normally corresponds to the period necessary for the corpse to reach a skeletal condition. Precisely the period of "waiting until the bones dry for holding the main funeral"[90] is taken to issue. "Until the bones dry" means until the corpse becomes white bones, and in the process of becoming bone, the fate of the spirit is closely involved. At the stage in which the drying of the bones has reached completion, a second funeral is held, and thereby the spirit attains repose and departs for the world of the dead. Between bones and spirit a strong bond is recognized. Not only that, this concept is also seen in the washing of bones and the worship of sacred bones practiced in the various regions of Indonesia. Further, among the Oro Gaju tribe, it is said that when a person dies, the spirit divides into the "spirit as marrow" and the "spirit as body."[91] In this case, the "spirit as body" indicates the spirit of bones, hair, nails, and so on. We see here that bone and spirit are in a relationship of inseparability.

Hertz was interested in the practices of the Dayak partly out of curiosity as a sociologist, but at the same time, I think the culture of the

Dayak was the source of much surprise for him as a European. After a person's death, with the passage of time and the advance of decay, the dried bones gradually take shape, and these bones, in the depths of the consciousness, were a symbolic code foretelling and prophesying the fate of the spirit after death. This actuality among the Dayak, in the eyes of one familiar with the interest in skeletons in Europe, surely appeared to be a completely alien practice. In this sense, Hertz's surprise was the surprise of Europeans.

Nevertheless, when this same practice of the Dayak is viewed, not from the perspective of a European, but by a Japanese, quite different thoughts arise. The second treatment of corpses of the Dayak is remarkably similar to the *mogari* rites of ancient Japan. Moreover, we cannot overlook the resemblance with the Okinawan practice of washing bones, in which the process of calcification is finished. Above all, in that the change in the form of the bones (wet bones to dried bones) was a crucial medium for viewing the movement of the soul or spirit, we see manifest almost the same ethos (the practices and morality of a people or social group) as in the practice of keeping and interring bones that flourished in Japan from the medieval period on.

In short, Hertz's research regarding death among the Dayak may be said to function as a touchstone for research on death among the Japanese. While the cultural sphere of death in Indonesia was a shocking entrance into another culture for European researchers, for the Japanese, it provided a passageway to a deep stratum of common culture. Through reflecting on the differences in concepts, east and west, regarding bones, perhaps we have been able to cast a little light on the subject.

3. The Japanese and the Metaphysics of Bones

Japanese Bones: A Metaphysical Object

According to Matthew, the name Golgotha, the hill where Jesus Christ was crucified, means "the burial place of the skull." The Hebrew name for Golgotha meant "skeleton." The same can be said of the sites

Toribeno 鳥辺野 and Rendaino 蓮台野 in ancient Japan. We do not know whether saints were unjustly executed like Jesus at sites called "Toribeno" or "Rendaino" throughout the country, but at the "Golgothas" of Japan countless skeletons were left exposed, just as in ancient Jerusalem.

Nevertheless, as mentioned repeatedly above, once we have entered into the inner world of skeletons, we are made to realize that engraved there are conceptual traces that may be called the study of the wake of the spirit. Something like a watershed dividing Toribeno and Rendaino from the hill of Golgotha, which symbolizes trial and sacrifice, has been formed there. We should note that this watershed is also a point of ethnic divergence that encourages a free and open reflection regarding the mode of life of "skulls." This is because the field of bones in Japanese ethnology that encompasses the study of the wake of the spirit becomes, at the same time, an object of metaphysical reflection. For bones have cast off their clothing of "practices" and have come to spin out a song of "thought." Regarding this point, the level of interest in skeletons in Japan is clearly distinct from the dualism of spirit/bone of the Dayak that Hertz speaks of. If the interest in skeletons in Western Europe that Huizinga and Ariés discuss is a boisterous parody of the physical body, and the dried bones "discovered" in Indonesia are memorial objects symbolic of the happy spirit, then the tradition of skulls and exposed corpses in Japan is a topic far richer in metaphysical savor and filled with wit. It is a keyword that lays bare a vital psychological point in the traditional arts. One person who experienced this directly is Matsuo Bashō 松尾芭蕉 (1644-1694).

From Teika to Bashō: Bones and the Way of Art

There are countless expressions in common speech regarding bones, both serious and colloquial: "skin and bone," *kotsugara* 骨柄 (character), "struggle of bone and flesh" (among relatives), "reaching the bone" (to the very quick), and in a recent song, "loving even the bones." The person who entered the mountain of oral traditions regarding bones and gradually, with reflection on the body of bone and flesh and skin as lever,

developed his own unique thought was Matsuo Bashō.[92]

In the eighth month of 1684, Bashō set out on the journey recorded in *Nozarashi kikō* 野ざらし紀行, which includes the verse:

> The wind pierces the heart
> of one who would be
> an exposed skeleton.
>
> *nozarashi o / kokoro ni kaze no / shimu mi kana*

He was forty-one years of age at the time. He set out on a wandering journey in which he compared himself to an exposed skull (*nozarashi*). Eight years later, on the eighteenth day of the second month, in a letter to Suganuma Kyokusui 菅沼曲水, he wrote:

> Further, endeavor in aspiration, find solace in feeling, and do not go out of your way to judge others; and from now on, as a person with the capacity for entering the true path, probe Teika's bones, trace Saigyō's muscle, wash Po Chu-i's intestines, and enter Tu Fu's mind. Counting on the fingers, there are not even ten such people in the cities and countryside. You are among them. It is well that you endeavor and devote yourself to practice.

Here, enumerating four names deserving of esteem in the field of poetry, Bashō laments the scarcity of people who receive their heritage. But he encourages his student Kyokusui, saying that he is one among that small number. This letter is interesting because of its characterization of the four poets in terms of parts of the body. For our concerns here, "the bones of Teika 定家" are the central topic. Setting aside here the correspondence of Po Chu-i 白楽天 with inner organs and Tu Fu 杜甫 with the mind, we see that "the bones of Teika" together with "the muscle of Saigyō 西行" are a physical image of quite important meaning for Bashō.

Although it is impossible to delve into this topic here, we should note that the dualistic evaluation of "bone" and "muscle" appears to be Bashō's own device, while at the same time, in traditional thinking on the arts, it is a framework that has roots going far back in history. Fujiwara Teika, in *Maigetsushō* 毎月抄, one of his treatises on poetry, makes use of such expressions as *fūkotsu* 風骨 ("atmosphere-bone") and *shōkotsu* 性骨 ("nature-bone"). These terms refer to poetic style and the nature of poets. Of course, they are more than this. Gotoba-in 後鳥羽院, Teika's contemporary, in *Onkuden* 御口伝, appraises Teika by saying he is a born master of excellent bone. In later periods, more critical views of Teika emerged, but the early Muromachi period poet Shōtetsu 正徹, in *Nikki* 日記, defends him saying that his style (*fūkotsu*) is enviable and should be studied. Eventually, with the rise of noh drama, Zeami 世阿弥 and Zenchiku 禅竹 taught that in noh there are the spheres of "skin," "flesh," and "bone." Here, the tradition in which Teika's poetic style is related to bone has been passed down. In this way, Bashō also received the notion of "delving into the bones of Teika."

Bashō's expression concerning "the bones of Teika" may be said to aptly characterize the figure of Teika, who devoted himself entirely to painstaking effort for the sake of delving into the techniques of waka and attaining a high level of refinement. The image of "bone" is appropriate for the work of Teika, who, in solitary, closed chamber, continued his austere effort. Bashō also, relating himself to this tradition of "bone," sought to probe the way of haikai as he himself conceived it.

In this sense, a discourse on the way of the arts regarding "bone," bearing this strong tradition from the medieval period, was forged as a kind of treatise on the defining essence of the poet's way of life, and was polished as the ultimate core common to all artistic ways. "Bone," as an unchanging measure, was an object of reflection that contrasted with transient phenomena.

The Aesthetics of Bone

This matter of constancy (*fueki* 不易) and change (*ryūkō* 流行) was reflect-

ed on from a religious stance by Ikkyū 一休 in the fifteenth century in *Gaikotsu* 骸骨, which depicts the mannerisms of skeletons modeled on human forms. Twelve illustrations accompany the text.[93] It is a religious tract that develops the slogan, "Birth-and-death is the matter of great concern; impermanence is swift," with humor and irony. This effort by Ikkyū was based on the contemplative practices transmitted from ancient times on nine stages of decomposition or on whitened bones.

The contemplation on the nine stages of a corpse's decomposition (*kusōkan* 九想観) is a method in which the process of decay is traced from the corpse exuding pus and blood, to the feasting of maggots, birds and animals, and finally to the reduction through further decay to white bones that are then scattered.[94] The contemplation of white bones focuses on the final stage of the skeleton. Here there germinated a metaphysics in which the skeleton is the final point of arrival of death and simultaneously the starting point for awakening. Ikkyū parodied such an assertion through his own unique method of jest. At about the same time, in contrast to Ikkyū's attempts of jesting, his contemporary Rennyo 蓮如 set forth a view of the whitened skeleton as a lamentation of impermanence in flowing prose. This was his "Letter on Whitened Bones," in which he states that "our existence is such that at dawn, we may have ruddy faces, and at nightfall, become white bones."[95] We should note that both Ikkyū and Rennyo associated with masters of linked-verse (renga 連歌) and noh performers and had a side in which they enjoyed speaking of the arts along with speaking of the dharma. Their writings on the Buddhist teaching were born from the same atmosphere of the period as the treatises on the arts of the rising performers.

To emphasize the matter, the discovery of "bone" in the medieval period was an important moment in forecasting the direction of aesthetic sensibility and faith in Japan in later times. On the one hand, there was the development of the cult of storing or placing bone remains at spirit mountains and spirit sites; on the other hand, an austere aesthetic related to bone was pursued to its depths. This combination, of course, is not a simple accident. In reflecting on the nature of Japanese

culture, these parallel phenomena in the development of the conception of "bones" must not be overlooked.

The Effectiveness of the Perspective of "Spirit, Flesh, Bone"

Here, our discussion returns to its original starting point. I have sought to pursue the topic of a Japanese "ethnology of death," but in fact have followed a long, dim, roundabout path through what may be called an "ethnology of bones." There has been the expectation that after completing our reflection on this "ethnology of bones," consideration of the ethnology of death would open forth before our eyes. The actuality is, however, that we must end with the tracing the lineage of the cult of bones. Remaining issues must be left for another occasion.

We began by noting the rift regarding remains of the dead between the ancient *Man'yōshū* and the recent *Shōwa Man'yōshū*, and by asking how it arose. This problem appears not to have been directly confronted up to now; this is one reason for my desire to pursue the issue. The investigation has passed through a diversity of topics and has resisted a simple summary or systematization. At very least, however, it is possible to say that the formation of the cult of storing remains in the eleventh and twelfth centuries is an important moment in considering this problem. It has been difficult, however, to determine what kind of investigation would cast light into the dense thicket of the ethnology and conceptions of death that spreads both synchronously and diachronously through this crucial period.

As a result, I have come to the conclusion that, in the case of Japan, rather than employing the dualistic schema of spirit and flesh, a tripartite, three-dimensional structure of "spirit, flesh, and bone" is effective, and perhaps necessary. The effectiveness of this method appears to have been suggested to us, quietly, but with conviction, since the medieval period.

Partly because of this, I have not taken up here the problem of the premodern period. With regard to the lineage and development of the cult of bones, the premodern period lies within the sphere of the

medieval. I had hoped to take into consideration the ethnological theme of the dual grave system (*ryōbosei* 両墓性), and at the same time, to include the world of the wit and Zen sensibility (*zenki* 禅機, the activity within the field of no-self occurring in Zen) in the skull paintings of Sengai 仙厓, who was active at the end of the Edo period; but these matters, too, cannot be taken up here.

"The Bones Wanted to Hear"

In October 1983, a man known as the American "GI Joe" died leaving behind the wish to be "buried beside the Elbe River," where "thirty-eight years ago, he shook hands with a Russian soldier and exchanged vows of peace." His name was Joe Polski, and he died of cancer at the age of sixty-six. A little more than a month after his death, his final wish was fulfilled, for his body was flown from Chicago to Europe together with an American flag. Breaking through the last resistance of Nazi Germany in the final days of World War II, soldiers of the United States and the Soviet Union joined from the east and west and took the "Oath of the Elbe" to maintain peace. Joe was one of the first American soldiers to shake the hand of a Russian. Joe's flag-draped coffin, returned to the earth, is marked by a gravestone carved with two hands in a firm handshake, continuing to transmit his dream to the living.[96]

Just one year later, on 19 October 1984, twenty-five members of the "third friendship group" visited the grave site of Japanese at Amur River province bearing cremated remains and placed them beneath a monument newly erected by the Chinese. These were the remains of people who committed group suicide on Mt. Mashan 麻山 (Jp. Masan) in northeastern China (former Manchuria) thirty-nine years ago. The collection of remains and services for interment of remains were conducted.

At the grave monument, the group placed chrysanthemums, Japanese sake, and *konpeitō* 金平糖 candy brought from Japan, and offered incense while one of the members chanted a sutra. Amid the falling snow, they prayed that the more than 460 spirits of the relatives

and friends killed in war find repose, and thus the services ended.[97]

The reports of these two events serve to make us newly aware that the war was not yet over. Though there are deep differences between the memories of the Oath of the Elbe and of the group suicide in former Manchuria, they form two sides of a coin, both engraved with the wounds of World War II. Nevertheless, it is also undeniable that those two sides, at the same time, manifest a deep rift in the thinking of the two peoples involved. On the one hand, the remains of the soldier who had participated in the Oath of the Elbe left his native land and were transported to the old battlefield, while on the other hand, for the Japanese, the collection of remains and performance of rites for the repose of spirits are still performed. Here we find a clear contrast.

The deep bass running through the *Shōwa Man'yōshū* remains in the depths of the consciousness of the Japanese still today. It is also seen in a poem by Nakahara Chūya 中原中也 on "Bones," in which he speaks of "the spirit returning to the place of bones." Recently, I discovered it again in the *Complete Works of Takeuchi Kōzō* 竹内浩三, who states, "Death in war is sorrowful, Soldiers dying is sorrowful," in a poem titled "Bones Sing." It includes the following passage:

> Bones as bones receive a medal
> and are highly praised.
> The praise is lofty, but the bones wanted to hear.
> The bones wanted to hear the immense resonance of love.
> The clatter and bang of officework and common sense flows.
> The old country was busy expanding and developing.
> Women were busy with their makeup.[98]

Takeuchi fought as a soldier at Baguio in the Philippines and was killed. He was not necessarily an anti-war poet, but in the passage, "The bones wanted to hear," we sense an immensity of thought and feeling, as though the entire ethos of the Japanese people were compressed in it. This urgent resonance has something in common with the deep sorrow of the following poem by a relative who received, in place of the remains

of one fallen in war, a small stone:

> This small rock
> of Saipan, delivered
> "in place of remains,"
> resembles a fragment
> of white bone.[99]
>
> ---Yoshimura Aiko