

REVIEWS



Umeda Chihiro 梅田千尋, *Kinsei Onmyōdō soshiki no kenkyū* 近世陰陽道組織の研究 [Research on early modern Onmyōdō organization]

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WHILE THE Onmyōdō 陰陽道 craze that accompanied the one-thousandth anniversary of Abe no Seimei's 安倍晴明 death has died down, Onmyōdō research, especially on the Edo period, is thriving. *Kinsei Onmyōdō* is the first monograph of historian Umeda Chihiro, who along with scholar of religion Hayashi Makoto and ethnologist Koike Jun'ichi, has taken a leading role in Edo period Onmyōdō research. *Kinsei Onmyōdō* primarily contains previously published research along with some new material.

Unlike research on Buddhism and Shinto, Onmyōdō scholarship is not connected to sectarian universities. Partially due to this situation, basic work such as the uncovering of internal documents from Onmyōdō communities and organizations has been comparatively slow. On the other hand, since scholars from a wide variety of fields such as religious studies, ethnology, literature, astronomy, and history have been able to engage in research based on their own interests, Onmyōdō scholarship has taken a different path to that of Buddhist and Shinto research (even if not to the same extent as research on Shugendō). However, until recently the focus had primarily been on medieval times and earlier: as is the case overall with scholarship on religion in Japan, there was a tendency to neglect the “disenchanted” Edo period and later times. Umeda's work comes at a time when Onmyōdō scholarship itself has made great progress and research on Edo period religious history is regularly published.

Following the scholarship of Kiba Akeshi 木場明志 and Takano Toshihiko 高埜利彦, research on Edo period Onmyōdō has largely adopted their framework, progressing considerably from analyses of individual cases to consideration of these cases' relationships to state and society. Three publications deserve particular mention. First, ENDŌ (1985) comprehensively introduced historical documents related to Onmyōdō from the Imperial Household Agency's Archives and Mausolea Department

(Kunaichō Shoryōbu 宮内庁書陵部), the Cabinet Library (Naikaku Bunko 内閣文庫), and the Kyoto Prefectural Library and Archives (Kyōtō Furitsu Sōgō Shiryōkan 京都府立総合資料館). Second, MURAYAMA's (1992) edited volume was released, covering from state to regional issues and Onmyōdō festivals to calendars. Third, HAYASHI (2006) focused on Edo period Onmyōdō and calendars, a topic that he was unable to cover in HAYASHI 2005. Of course, scholarship on *onmyōji* 陰陽師 (Onmyōdō practitioners) from various localities is steadily progressing as well (HAYASHI 2005, 15–22), and research is even being done that seeks to uncover Onmyōdō in popular knowledge and religious activities (for example, that of Koike Jun'ichi).

First I would like to note that in the midst of the flourishing of Onmyōdō research described above, Umeda has produced a solid body of research. At a time when scholars senior to him have been publishing works one after another, he has not been satisfied with just adding new case studies. Instead, he offers new frameworks that are supported by a solid sense of the issues. Partially due to Umeda's efforts, in a short period of time the individual research of scholars has advanced the field as a whole through a process of mutual influence and growth.

Next, let us consider several points related to the content of the book. It is necessary to first mention that Umeda almost entirely sticks to Hayashi's definition of Onmyōdō and *onmyōji*: "Edo period *onmyōji* refers to those who were under the rule of the Tsuchimikado 土御門 family. Edo period Onmyōdō refers to the activities, rituals, and knowledge that *onmyōji* were involved in" (HAYASHI 2005, 22). In addition, Umeda creates an Onmyōdō-specific periodization of the Edo period, emphasizing that the reorganization of the *honjo* 本所 (social status group head) system in Tenmei 天明 4 (1784) was an even more epoch-making event than the events of the Tenna 天和 (1681–1683) and Jōkyō 貞享 (1684–1687) periods, as has been claimed by Takano, Kiba, and others from a state-based perspective. Hayashi, pointing out the epoch-making nature of the Tsuchimikado family carrying out a reform of the *honjo* system at the Edo government offices during the Meiwa 明和 period (1764–1771), is critical of this Tenmei-focused approach. Regardless of which is correct, both Umeda and Hayashi should be commended for moving a step beyond Takano and others by drawing attention to the transformation of the Tsuchimikado family itself as well as the very organization of Onmyōdō.

In fact, I would suggest that at least with regards to this issue, Umeda's analysis of *onmyōji* who formed the Onmyōdō organization is more precise than that of Hayashi. In the case of Hayashi, who mainly analyzes historical documents from disputes, his point is that *onmyōji* in various localities were organized (or excluded) by the Tsuchimikado family. On the other hand, in the case of Umeda, since he carefully analyzes historical documents of Wakasugi 若杉, Daikoku 大黒, and traditional *onmyōji* (*rekidai kumi* 歴代組), he is able to offer a perspective that does not necessarily understand Onmyōdō as a story of "regulation from above" but rather "participation from below." In other words, he makes clear that each *onmyōji* had strong

reasons for participating in the Onmyōdō organization. By offering this viewpoint, it allows him to organically connect issues surrounding the organization (Part I) and academic knowledge (Part II) of Onmyōdō. Above all, Umeda, who mainly deals with the *honjo* system in Kyoto, skillfully focuses on areas that Hayashi, who mainly deals with Edo *yashiki* 屋敷 (warrior residences), does not. This goes for his work on individual regional *onmyōji* as well. Specifically, the regional analysis centering on *onmyōji* villages in Chapter 4 of Part I is methodologically significant, and work based on this type of analysis on *onmyōji* from other regions needs to be done.

Lastly, I would like to draw attention to the fact that Umeda is keenly aware of the relationship between medieval *shōmonshi/shōmoji* 声聞師 (lower class entertainers) and Edo period *onmyōji*, an issue that scholars engaged in Edo period *onmyōji* research have not always considered. Umeda thereby succeeds to an extent in charting the development of the medieval social status system in the Edo period. This perspective enables him to offer a new viewpoint on the *jige kanjin* 地下官人 (Imperial Court bureaucrats below the third rank). In this way, this book is an important contribution to research on the social status system of the Edo period.

Umeda, following Hayashi's definition above of *onmyōji* and Onmyōdō as people and activities under the rule of the Tsuchimikado family, has produced a work focused on Edo period Onmyōdō *honjo* that brilliantly depicts the Tsuchimikado family and those who surrounded it. However, as a result of this approach, the discussion of Onmyōdō knowledge that developed in the Edo period is almost entirely limited to astronomy and calendar studies. Granted, in Chapter 3 of Part II the Onmyōdō rites of the Tsuchimikado family and the Kyoto *kogumi* 古組 *onmyōji*¹ are considered. There, Umeda describes these rites as carryovers of Muromachi 室町 period Onmyōdō festivals (with which they share many points of similarity) in the form of "conventionalized prayer cycles." However, while he carefully carries out his analysis of objects of prayer, tribute money, and so on, analysis of the contents of the rites themselves is not necessarily as good as it could be. This becomes even clearer when it is compared to his analysis of astronomy and calendar studies. There is certainly no problem with having astronomy and calendar studies represent the knowledge of the *honjo* that was centered around the Tsuchimikado family. Yet, since Part II of the book is on Onmyōdō knowledge, even readers who do not possess a full understanding of Onmyōdō and *onmyōji* and are not specialists in Edo period religious history will probably wonder concretely how the (religious) Onmyōdō knowledge of previous eras changed in the context of the Edo period *honjo* system, or if it did not change, why not, and so on.

My next point is closely related to the above. While this book succeeds in offering a new framework to understand the *honjo* of Onmyōdō by emphasizing "participation from below" of those who were in the Onmyōdō organization instead of the

1. Kyoto *kogumi* (old group) *onmyōji* refers to the Wakasugi, Daikoku, and other *onmyōji* who had their roots in the *shōmonshi* that had existed in Kyoto since medieval times.

“view from above” of the Tsuchimikado family, it should be noted that the reason that these Onmyōdō organizations were able to continue to exist through the Edo period was because there were those who adopted popular Onmyōdō knowledge. People not only adopted the Onmyōdō that took the form of the centralized authority of knowledge of astronomy and calendar studies, but they also adopted religious Onmyōdō and knowledge of Onmyōdō outside of these fields. What I wish to highlight is that Umeda does not consider how we should think about the Edo period Onmyōdō (organization) that spread centered around this type of Onmyōdō religious belief and popular knowledge. His book focuses on the Tsuchimikado *honjo*, and almost nowhere is there any analysis of those who adopted Onmyōdō on a popular level. As I stated previously, since Umeda limited his research in this way, he was able to produce this work of importance. However, perhaps it would have been best if Umeda had in his own way offered some sort of consideration of the issue of popular Onmyōdō knowledge and religious practice. As described above, research on Onmyōdō that transcends the boundaries of scholars’ specialized fields is thriving and at present positive interdisciplinary scholarship is possible. Research would certainly progress even further if it were carried out on the religious and popular knowledge side of Onmyōdō from a historical perspective, instead of just leaving it to ethnology and religious studies. This could be an opportunity to begin to make clear the relationship between “belief” and “knowledge” in various eras throughout history.

My third point concerns Umeda’s use of the phrase *minkan onmyōdō* 民間陰陽道 (private Onmyōdō). In the last chapter he states, “While there was not much of a difference between the Onmyōdō functions of Edo period Kyoto court nobility and the Onmyōdō of medieval court nobility, this is also true with regards to Onmyōdō functions carried out in towns and villages on the periphery. The overall picture of Edo period Onmyōdō should be reconsidered, including this supposed split between Imperial Court Onmyōdō and *minkan* Onmyōdō” (301–2). According to Umeda, such a dichotomy is problematic considering the lack of difference in the content of the Onmyōdō rites of these respective spheres. I found this to be a convincing claim supported by his analysis. However, when it comes to the classification of *onmyōji* themselves, Umeda refers to Onmyōdō practitioners other than the Tsuchimikado and Kōtokui 幸徳井 families as *minkan onmyōji*. Should Wakasugi, Daikoku, and other Kyoto *kogumi onmyōji* who became the center of the *honjo* organization, were frequently in contact with the Tsuchimikado family, worked as *keishi* 家司 (officials who oversaw higher-ranking nobility), and so on, really still be called *minkan onmyōji*? This is doubtful. Furthermore, Umeda states that in the future he hopes to investigate the religious activities of *onmyōji* in the Kinai region. They were organized by the *honjo* organization as part of the *rekidai kumi*, and in most cases were basically *edamura hyakushō* 枝村百姓 (hamlet farmers). If one were to use the category *minkan onmyōji*, it should be applied to them; however Umeda does not do so. In this way, in his classification scheme that uses the nature of an *onmyōji*’s existence as benchmarks for analysis, there is a problem with the division between Imperial Court

onmyōji and *minkan onmyōji*. Umeda, focusing on the social status system, holds the development of medieval *shōmonshi* in the Edo period to be an important issue, and understands those who were part of this development to be *minkan onmyōji*. However, in many ways this does not correspond to the actual situation in the middle- and late-Edo period. It would have been easier to understand if Umeda had offered his own definition of these terms after having pointed out that there is a problem with the benchmarks uncritically used in previous research.

Besides this, there are other points that I would have liked to have had explained in more detail. Throughout the Edo period, how were the *furegashira* 触頭 (local administrative representatives) appointed? Were the widespread requests for special prayers submitted to the Tsuchimikado family from warrior families and merchants that became readily apparent in the Bunka 文化 period (1804–1818) and later related to the adjustment of the *honjo* system due to changes in Edo period society itself? I hope that these and other points will be considered in Umeda's future research.

Limiting himself to an analysis of the Onmyōdō *honjo* organized around the Tsuchimikado family, Umeda has considerably advanced Onmyōdō research within this framework. On the other hand, as I outlined above, I have several issues regarding the book. I expect research on Edo period Onmyōdō to continue to advance not only in the field of history, but also ethnology, religious studies, and intellectual history. Furthermore, I hope that research on Onmyōdō will further progress from comparative research on Edo period religion that transcends the framework of Onmyōdō to comprehensive research (as the author has done here by comparing research on *honjo* to Shinto scholarship).

[translated by Dylan Luers]

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