

eye of the law. So much land reverted to officials in this era that the government took steps to limit the holdings of officials. Specifically, it made them liable to the corvee applying to lands in excess of a stated limit.

In the Southern Sung, officials and rich commoners avoided the corvee by parceling out their excess land to other families. Often the latter were purely fictitious, but at times they were freeholders of the same name as the real holder or even other names, and in many cases they were tenants who until this time had no land. This last instance is exactly opposite to general practice of the Northern Sung. The latter, incidentally, did not cease entirely, for we find occasional cases of families commending their land to officials or members of the royal family in return for the status of tenant or overseer.

In the Yüan period, influential Chinese of the region south of the Yangtze sometimes presented their land to officials or members of the Mongolian royalty and became tenants, overseers, or over-aged dependents. These Chinese were merely avoiding taxes and corvee, but as time went on they came actually to be regarded as tenants and to bear a heavy rent burden. In the case of those who had called themselves aged dependents, their sons and grandsons were often reduced to servitude to pay for their upkeep. The Chinese had given up their property with much the same intention as their ancestors of the Sung, but they had reckoned without the strong hierarchical feeling of the Mongols, and they found themselves reduced to a surprisingly low status with regard to the persons to whom they had ceded their land.

There were also instances in the Yüan of holders dividing up their property among a number of houses in order to avoid the corvee.

On One Aspect of Faith in the Three Noxious Insects in Japan

Concerning Particularly Methods of Exterminating Them

by Noritada KUBO

In various sections of Japan, a number of popular beliefs and practices are centered around the day of metal and the monkey

(*kōshin*) in the old Chinese cyclical calendar. Until recently it was generally thought that this cult was imported from China during the Edo period, but of late Japanese students of ethnography have propounded the theory that it is an indigenous Japanese phenomenon.

In Chinese Taoism one finds the idea that in each person's body there live three noxious insects which try to shorten the person's life. On the day of metal and the monkey the insects are supposed to ascend to heaven and recount all the person's evil deeds to the god of life. The Chinese believe that if one stays up all night on the night of the day in question, the insects will not be able to go up to heaven, and one's life will accordingly be lengthened. Furthermore, there are various medicines and superstitious methods designed to exterminate the insects. The present author believes that the theory of the three insects as well as the methods of eliminating them were brought to Japan at an early date and became the basis of the Japanese *kōshin* cult.

An examination of Japanese *kōshin* practices as seen in Oyabu, Mihama-machi, Mikata-gun, Fukui Prefecture, reveals a certain number of customs related both to Shinto and Buddhism. People stay up late at night somewhat as in China, but all in all there is little suggestion of the three insects, and one might be prone in this instance to suspect a Japanese origin. On the one hand, practices in other areas as well as statements in early Japanese documents make it virtually impossible to dissociate the Japanese *kōshin* cult from that of the three insects.

To illustrate this point, the author has in the present article enumerated around eighty Chinese methods of exterminating the insects and has compared them with means of extermination seen in Japanese texts. It is clear that the Japanese methods are almost entirely based on those of China.

The Japanese cult as it appears today is completely different from the Chinese. The reason is that this foreign religious element has been totally assimilated into Japanese culture. The author regards this development as excellent example of acculturation.