
Rituals and Ritual Texts of Early Modern Onmyōji : Focus on the “Saimon” of “Jichinsai” in the Documents of the Yoshikawa Family, Calendar Artists in NARA

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The purpose of this paper is to present to the scholarly community the true state of activities of an Onmyōji (yin-and-yang master) family known as the Yoshikawa, as an example of regional Onmyōji in the Edo period.

The Yoshikawa family was based in Inyōcho, Nara, where many Onmyōji lived in the Edo period. The Yoshikawa family's livelihood was creating calendars, distributing them throughout the Yamato region, and performing rituals as Onmyōji. In the Edo period, all Onmyōji were supervised by the Tsuchimikado family, who were connected to the lineage of the Abe family, who were Onmyōji from the Heian period, and the Yoshikawa family were also grouped under the Tsuchimikado family with other Onmyōji in Inyōcho.

This article addresses the “Jichinsai” and “Takuchinsai” festival that calms the sacred spirits of the land, as an Onmyōji ritual performed by the Yoshikawa family. In particular, this article looks at eight texts from the extant Yoshikawa family documents, called “Saimon,” which were used at the groundbreaking ceremony, and analyzes the interrelationships and contents of manuscripts.

This paper reveals that the Yoshikawa family used the “orthodox” ritual texts of the Onmyōji handed down from the Tsuchimikado family; that the ritual manners of the Tsuchimikado family were shared among the Onmyōji in Inyōcho, including the Yoshikawa family; and that the head of each generation of the Yoshikawa family inherited this special knowledge by copying the ritual texts repeatedly.

Key words: Early Modern Onmyōji, Nara Koyomishi, Ritual text, Jichinsai, Takuchinsai