A Place Where Sacred Water Springs Out

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This paper is in fact an extension of my previous paper which discussed Kasuga Wakamiya On-Matsuri (the festival of Wakamiya). In the previous paper, the view was obtained that the performing art played in the festival space of On-Matsuri might be conceived as a representation of Kasuga as the other world. Consequently, the following question arises: even if the performing art represents Kasuga as the other world, was there not the next, indefinable, other world, slipping in?

Accordingly, this paper sets a wider spatial view to give attention to Wasaka, which was regarded as the next other world from Nara. Specifically, by paying attention to the folk background of the Omizutori (water drawing) ceremony carried out at the Shunie of the Todai-ji Temple, and to the legend of Yao-Bikuni, this paper makes clear the circumstances under which Wasaka was regarded as a place where sacred water sprang out, or a land of perennial youth and immortality.

It is needless to say that such a concept seems to be a product of the historical memory which accumulated in Wasaka. This paper attempts, without resorting to historical explanation, to clarify the location of the other world represented in the performing art by examining Oh-no-Mai (King’s Dance) handed down in Wakasa. However, the other world represented by Oh-no-Mai not only leads to the “Marine Route”, but also reverses its course to Nara and Kyoto. The other world which appears in thus complicated composition is none other than nonexistent space produced from the relationship of “seeing/being seen”. Therefore, it is read into the performing art which also arises from the relationship of “seeing/being seen”.

Then, where should the performing art as violence, which cannot be explained by the concept of the other world, be positioned? The next indefinable other world — this may be a “place where sacred water springs out”, which is not restricted to a space under the name of Wakasa. But nobody has yet found a word to describe such a space.