Aspects of Religious Services as Seen through the Section for Shrine Parishioners in the *Tatsuta-ji* Shrine of *Ikaruga-cho*

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Hattori is situated approximately one kilometer south of Horyu-ji temple and Kitasho (Tatsuta-kita) is situated approximately one kilometer northwest of Horyu-ji temple. There are sub-shrines and temples in the villages, and they have a traditional aspect as they had a miyaza (council of elders who represented families who claimed association with a local shrine and who annually elected a shrine official to run festivals).

However, a closer examination of the location of Kitasho reveals that it goes up to the southern tip of Yata hill that lies behind Horyu-ji, lying between hills on which there are rice-paddies. Hattori is a type of village with a moat surrounding it where low-lying land was raised and drainage was a most arduous task. Both villages are under siege from the wave of urbanization today and are trying to prevent themselves from being buried by new housing. At the same time, there are points of interest among the differences in the religious organizations and religious services that have barely managed to survive to the present day.

At one time, both villages took part in the religious services of the Tatsuta-ji shrine (new branch shrine) which served as the local shrine for the whole of Ikaruga, but today it is only the former miyaza (the Kasuga association) of Kitasho that continue to visit the shrine dressed in traditional clothing to present offerings there.

It is thought that the differences in the religious services of the two villages that arose in the process of modernization are attributable to the presence or absence of assets held by the religious associations and that assets provide an incentive for the immediate future of religious services as part of communal life. Here, I present an overview of present-day religious customs as part of an effort to understand the process of the transformation of relevant local culture.

There is an wealth of documents and records related to the villages and shrines and temples in this region and by the adoption of a multidisciplinary approach it should be possible to derive a cautious understanding of the chronologies of the process of transformation of folk customs. In particular, the degree of accuracy of the understanding of local miyaza and the like has improved dramatically as a result of the recent discovery of documents belong to the kagura association of Hattori in Ikaruga-cho and the subsequent sorting, deciphering and study of these documents (refer to papers by Sonobe and Moritomo Omiya).

In addition, a joint research project has made it possible to sort and compile and index of re-
lated documents, including documents from the Ongushi family (Tatsuta) and the Fukita family (Hattori), which will contribute to future research.