Miya-za in Northern Kyushu: Focusing on Jigan and Jinga

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In Fukuoka Prefecture and Oita Prefecture, people known as jinga and jigan, and miya-za called jigan-za perform religious services. This article focuses on specific examples to study the distribution, the contents, and the meaning of such services. Jigan is seen in Kitsuki City (eastern part of Kunisaki Peninsula) and Nakatsu City (area of Yamakuni River) in Oita Prefecture, and the Keichiku area in Fukuoka Prefecture (eastern part of former Buzen-no-kuni in Fukuoka Prefecture), and jinga spreads in the Chikuho area and the eastern area of former Chikugo-no-kuni in Fukuoka Prefecture, and also in Beppu City in Oita Prefecture like an enclave. The miya-za is seen in the area of former Chikazeni-no-kuni in Fukuoka Prefecture. Jigan and jinga have various and unfixed forms of notation with kanji characters. Originally, jigan means a native person assuming religious services different from a Shinto priest as a specialist, and jinga has a stronger relationship with a god as a house. There is also a place called miyabashira with a relationship between a special person from one house assuming religious services in one shrine and jigan. Thus, organizations for religious services in a shrine in northern Kyushu are not simple. The organizations for religious services assumed by jigan and jinga are originally Kabu-za, and many of them adopt the to-za system. The family lines of them are often called a pioneer of the region or a head family line, and there are also some legends that some families were involved with kanjo (transfer of a divided divine spirit to other shrine), or some family lines date back to the Middle Ages. Kabu-za was a privileged group assuming religious services. However, most of them were transformed into mura-za (where all houses of the region were members) in the modern period. Among the festivals conducted by such organizations for religious services of jigan, jinga, etc., there are unique festivals such as the "Doburoku Festival" of Shirahige Tawara Shrine in Kitsuki City, and rituals to carry the divine spirit of "Sanjin" and "Sanjin Hashiri" in Kunisaki City and Buzen City.

Key words: Miya-za, Jigan-za, Jigan, Jinga, Organization for religious services