

Native Spirituality and Faith in the *Marebito*:
Ancient Japanese, Ainu, and Okinawan Conceptions

By

Izumi Nayuki
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Abstract

Some communities through the Japanese islands conduct some ceremonies, festivals, or customs, according to the belief that spiritual beings come from a distant place to bless villagers and go back to their own world. These ritual practices are often embedded in the basic notion in which life (spirit) exists in all forms and the spirit continues its journey between this world and the spiritual world by obtaining different physical forms each time it manifests itself in this world. In this way, an immense spiritual life force exists throughout the universe; this life force exists even within each human individual. In other words, all life forms repeat this cycle, births and deaths; a spiritual self and a physical self are not separated from one another.

This notion is often expressed as faith in the *marebito* in present day Japan. Orikuchi Shinobu (1887-1953), a Japanese scholar in the field of Japanese folklore, introduced this notion through his *marebito* images presented in his *marebito* theory in his work, *Kodai kenkyu: Kokubungaku no hassei* (Archaic Studies: the Origin of National Literature).

This thesis does not reflect Orikuchi's influence on Japanese imperialism during his time. The aim of this thesis is to illustrate his *marebito* images in the context of nature's law or the rule of the universe that has been introduced in the first paragraph. In order to capture his *marebito* images in this context, the author introduces spiritual worldviews of ancient Japanese, the Ainu people, and the Okinawan people. Through exploring the commonalities of these native worldviews, the author shows the intimate relationship between deities and humans as well as a macrocosm and a microcosm.

By interpreting Orikuchi's *marebito* images in relation to these spiritual views with the utilization of existing scholarly works around Orikuchi's studies, the author seeks a way for humans to understand one another beyond the boundaries of cultural differences.

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Introduction

“Eiya-ho, Eiya-ho, Eiya-ho, Eiya-ho,” singing and dancing by forming a circle, the Ainu people (indigenous people who today mainly inhabit Hokkaidō⁽¹⁾) conduct their ritual ceremony, *Iyomante*. Kayano Shigeru, an Ainu elder who was knowledgeable about folk customs, explained that because this ritual takes three days and participants are sometimes inexperienced today, people in the ceremony feel a certain pressure to complete this most prominent ritual (Himeda 1977). They may also experience different emotions, such as sadness, bravery, and respect. In this ceremony, the Ainu people take the life of a bear cub, which they have raised, and send the spirit to the divine world with many gifts and their appreciation. For various reasons, it is difficult to employ this ceremony today as often as they used to. However, it is worthwhile to note that this ceremony reflects their spiritual worldview to a great degree.

The source that is used to depict this ceremony is the video produced by Himeda Tadayoshi in 1977. Throughout this video, Kayano explains the procedure of the ceremony. Himeda in the video also expresses his view, “the attitude of the Ainu people in conducting the ceremony is to be one of respect and seriousness” (1977). He questions whether or not there are some other people who, like the Ainu people, also carefully raise and treat a bear in the same manner. Himeda believes that this respectful manner of the Ainu people toward the bears comes from their perception of bears as one of the highest-

⁽¹⁾ Northern Island of Japan, Hokkaidō, comprised by various islands, exists at the most northern part of Japan.

ranking deities (Himeda 1977). His statement certainly illuminates the relationship that should exist between humans and deities in the Ainu worldview.

The ceremony, *Iyomante*, reflects the holistic Ainu way of life itself. This ceremony is embedded in the basic ritual belief that life (spirit) exists in all forms and the spirit continues its journey between this world and the spiritual world by obtaining different physical forms each time it manifests itself in this world. Based on this belief, the Ainu people, with their appreciation, often send many spirits to the spiritual world through certain ritual practices.

People in some cultures conduct ceremonies, festivals, or folk customs based on this belief or the rule of the universe. In this rule, an immense spiritual life force exists throughout the universe; this life force exists even within each human individual. According to this rule, all life forms repeat births and deaths. In other words, a spiritual self and a physical self are not separated from one another. The aim of this thesis is to illuminate this concept that helps one to understand oneself as well as other life forms as a spiritual being that is closely connected to one another; humans will be able to more easily understand each other by understanding this spiritual perspective.

Josef Kreiner (1994:39) describes how Japanese people in the present day recognize this belief, a spirit going back and forth between this world and the spiritual world, as faith in the *marebito*, a word first used by Orikuchi Shinobu (1887-1953). Orikuchi was one of the prominent scholars in the field of Japanese folklore, the *minzokugaku*, and illustrates this basic principle through his *marebito* images presented in his *marebito* theory. Orikuchi presents this theory in the third manuscript of his work,

Kodai kenkyū: Kokubungaku no hassei (Archaic Studies: The Origin of National Literature).

Orikuchi was someone who, throughout his life, looked for “deities.” What he found as some answers of his “deity quest” was symbolized by his *marebito* images. In his *marebito* theory, Orikuchi presents that the *marebito* were originally spiritual beings or deities who visited ancient Japanese folk villages to bless people only on specific occasions. After they blessed villagers, they went back to the spiritual world; hence, they were always visitors who sooner or later had to leave the villages. As time went on, original *marebito* images as spiritual beings have faded out of view. People perceive only human performers, who come to their festivals to perform the characters of deities, to be the *marebito*. However, throughout his theory, Orikuchi reminds his readers that his *marebito* images are comprised of spiritual beings and human performers; his *marebito* images are compiled images of spiritual and physical selves.

It has been generally said that the work of Orikuchi is difficult to understand due to a lack of enough explanation or empirical evidence, a logical leap, a complex content, or a co-existence of contradicting ideas. These characteristics of his work create a tendency for people to recognize him as a poet or novelist rather than a scholar. Contradicting ideas on his images of deities also encompass a danger that leads his readers to see his deities only as human-form deities and that justifies the Japanese government in imperial structure participating in world wars by worshipping the Emperor of Japan as a deity. Some scholars criticize Orikuchi for acting as a public speaker who encouraged this imperial Japanese government participating in these wars.

It can be said that his view of the Emperor shifted after the Second World War. Readers of his work, especially before the war, are able to recognize that he differentiates the Emperor from people in general. This is probably because he greatly utilizes and relies on classic court literature in order to form his studies. As a result, the information about ancient spiritual worldview that he shows in his work often focuses on the Court and the Emperor.

At the same time, it is also true that readers of his work are able to find some elements that illustrate ancient concepts or spiritual worldviews of Japan that are associated with nature's law or the rule of the universe. In his work, Orikuchi often discusses spiritual life forces and inner existences within human individuals. From the spiritual perspective based on nature's law, the Emperor, people in general, as well as all life are the same: all are manifestations of spiritual life forces. Orikuchi could have illustrated his ancient world by using this type of wisdom that exists within Shintoism. He should not express his ancient world by differentiating certain types of people, such as the Emperor, from people in general by treating them special. This tendency not only causes his readers to see contradicting ideas of deities (human-form deities and spiritual life forces), but also causes his readers to miss his point of view and not to see the great potential that his work could have more directly expressed.

It can be considered that the source that he heavily relied on, a traditional framework of the field of national literature in which he might have been trapped, and social and political background in his time did not allow him to express spirituality and philosophy that more directly depicted nature's law that should be a primary teaching in

Shintoism. Orikuchi should have illustrated the law of nature by fully utilizing these elements.

This thesis does not cover this political part of his position, the field of Japanese folklore, and the *marebito* festivals in villages. This thesis captures his *marebito* images as a symbol that represents the notion of cycle or nature's law. Despite many criticisms on Orikuchi's studies, it is true that many scholars still discuss the *marebito* theory as well as his studies even after his passing many years ago. They have presented many of their opinions about how they perceive or capture Orikuchi's *marebito* images. These scholars continue to search for the significance of the *marebito* images by discussing why Orikuchi was strongly attached to these images throughout his life. Understanding his *marebito* images creates clear understanding of Orikuchi himself, the purpose of his life, and his philosophy and spirituality that supported his entire scholarly work. In short, the *marebito* images represent many important aspects that constituted his life. Searching for the meaning of "deity" or the *marebito* images served as a crucial element for Orikuchi to pursue his personal journey.

Orikuchi's *marebito* images in the context of the notion of cycle are the core of this thesis; he was the first scholar who introduced the *marebito* images that inspired his readers to see a spiritual existence within a physical body as well as a personal journey of each individual. Some people call Orikuchi a traveler. He seemed to search for the meaning of his life by questioning forms of "deities." Some scholars believe that Orikuchi compared himself and his personal journey to the *marebito* images that kept traveling throughout human villages. In order to achieve his spiritual personal goal, he also kept traveling by searching for pieces that could make some sense to his life.

Through his *marebito* images that illustrate the unification between spiritual and physical beings, one is able to visualize one's spiritual journey between two different worlds. This concept, spirit's ongoing journey, helps one to perceive a chain of life in the spiritual context. This perception allows one to perceive spirituality that can surpass cultural differences. Unless humans are able to perceive this physical world from the spiritual perspective, it is difficult to create a real peace amongst different cultures. As this spirituality can be symbolized "cycle of life," or "spirit's migration," Orikuchi's personal journey as well as his *marebito* images are special to the author; for this reason, his *marebito* images are used as the thread that connects spiritual worldviews of native cultures throughout the Japanese islands.

This thesis encompasses illustrations of spiritual worldviews of the ancient Japanese, the Ainu people, and the Okinawan people in order to deepen our understanding of the word "deity" for Orikuchi; an attempt to understand or interpret the word "deity" for Orikuchi leads one to understand his *marebito* images in a broader or deeper sense. This understanding of his *marebito* images in a broader perspective is vital to come to a resolution to create a society in which humans have a close relationship to deities that exist within themselves and are deeply connected to the universe. This intimate relationship between humans and deities will be fully illustrated through the native spiritual worldviews held by the cultures mentioned above in relation to the notion of spiritual migration or Orikuchi's *marebito* images.

In ancient Japan, people believed that an immense life force existed within all life forms, and they respected this life force as deities. There was no term that indicated

nature in ancient Japan; rather, people used the word “life” in order to express nature. In this view, deities are expressed as life and these deities existed very close to humans.

Likewise, in the Ainu cultures, spiritual life forces, the *kamuy*, manifest themselves in many life forms. These *kamuy*, as life forces, exist even within human individuals. In the Ainu cultures, people often conduct the *marebito* rituals by simply sending spirits off to the spiritual world. The Ainu people believe that the *kamuy* deities visit the Ainu villages by disguising themselves as various life forms that the Ainu people can consume. The *kamuy* are the *marebito* who bring their villages gifts or provisions. This Ainu spiritual worldview allows them to recognize a cycle of life that exists close to them in their everyday lives.

Similar to this Ainu worldview, many Okinawan cultures recognize souls within human individuals. They perceive this soul as a microcosm that is connected to the eternal universe, a macrocosm, at a deep spiritual level. In their rituals and festivals, female practitioners go within themselves in order to connect themselves to the eternal universe. This idea shows that a microcosm (an individual life) is inseparable from a macrocosm (an immense life force) that pervades throughout the universe.

These native spiritual worldviews throughout the Japanese islands show a close relationship between humans and deities. In these worldviews, the word “deity” is replaceable with the word “life” or one’s “spiritual self,” and this replacement makes deities and humans have a close relationship. Deities then can be found within oneself whenever one looks inward.

Throughout his work, Orikuchi also illustrates spiritual life forces within all forms, including humans. His spiritual philosophy as well as the *marebito* images is

embedded in his idea of the *gairaikon*; souls or spiritual life forces come from outside to attach to human flesh, and humans die when these life forces leave their flesh. This spirit's migration as well as the relationship between spirit and flesh is a backbone that supports his studies, especially for his *marebito* theory.

Orikuchi's definition of deity is represented in the *marebito* images that connect two different worlds or two different elements. These *marebito* images can be compared to the *musubi* deities that Orikuchi in the latter part of his life often points out. He expresses that the pair of the *musubi* deities represents a skill or force that ties spiritual life forces to physical objects; this skill makes physical objects come into life. Orikuchi's *marebito* images represent this unity between spiritual and physical elements or energy and mass.

Strong awareness of this basic principle enables one to achieve a spiritual or internal growth that facilitates a personal journey. With this principle, one tends to more focus on finding out the reason why one continues one's spiritual journey. It is difficult for one to spiritually grow if one does not recognize that a spiritual self as a deity that is connected to the universe exists within self. The more one internally grows and establishes an intimate relationship with one's spiritual self or inner existence, the easier one recognizes spiritual life forces and personal journeys of other people. Strong recognition or awareness of this spiritual life force that is connected to one another at a very deep spiritual level helps us to understand each other by crossing over superficial differences, such as ethnicity, culture, or gender.

The aim of this work is to re-interpret Orikuchi's *marebito* images in order to facilitate this understanding at a deep level. For this goal, Orikuchi's *marebito* images

will be illustrated with spiritual worldviews of ancient Japan, the Ainu people, and the Okinawan people. Through this evaluation, the commonality between spiritual worldviews of these cultures is pointed out; that is, the unity between spiritual and physical aspects or the relationship between a microcosm and a macrocosm.

This evaluation will utilize existing scholarly works on Orikuchi's studies. My method here is probably controversial because I emphasize how Orikuchi and his studies have been understood, as there are many good works that interpret and understand his studies and his life well. Many of these scholars, who lived at the same time as Orikuchi, can more holistically comprehend his work by incorporating how he lived and how he shared his ideas through personal conversations and his lectures. As his studies cannot be separated from his entire life and who he was, these existing scholarly works are helpful for those who know Orikuchi only through his work. These existing scholarly works also helped Orikuchi to reflect on himself and his work.

The purpose here is to show how Orikuchi's *marebito* images can help one to be more strongly aware of one's inner existence and its ongoing personal journey. In order to understand each other by going over superficial differences, one has to be more aware of the fundamental place that all life forms originate or share. There is no superiority or inferiority when one focuses on one's spirit or a spiritual life force that is one's primary self. In order to understand others or other spirits, one needs to understand one's spirit and meaning of one's personal journey by establishing an intimate relationship with one's spiritual self. Orikuchi's *marebito* images provide one with an opportunity to realize that such a solution to create a better society exists within self.

The exploration of the significance of his *marebito* images and the importance of spirituality in this modern age by examining Orikuchi's studies through existing scholarly works is the goal of this work. After all, the *marebito* are messengers who bring people important messages; a life or a deity that is connected to the universe exists within self and a strong recognition of this inner existence is crucial in order to understand each other and in order to understand the reason why one continues one's personal journey in this lifetime.

Translations from Japanese texts here are my own, unless otherwise noted. Japanese names are given in the usual order: family name first, given name last.

Chapter 1

Faith in the *Marebito*

One wishes to know more about faith in visiting deities. People in some cultures have held festivals and ritual ceremonies based on this notion or faith. In such festivals and ceremonies, people metaphorically experience migrations of spiritual beings based on the idea that sacred visiting deities come to their villages in order to bless them, but these deities leave the villages sooner or later. Orikuchi was able to form his *marebito* theory when he witnessed these types of folk beliefs and associated ritual practices on his field trip; his *marebito* theory is rooted in numerous Japanese local folk data and classic Japanese literature.

Throughout this chapter, the general notion of the *marebito* from the ethnographical perspective as well as Orikuchi's *marebito* theory will be introduced. Also, how other scholars, including his detractors, perceive his studies and his *marebito* theory will be presented in order to understand his scholarly work. The *marebito* theory and the *marebito* images were important for Orikuchi throughout his life. The meaning of his *marebito* images, his definition of "deity," as well as his personal journey will be more clearly understood when a set of difficulties that his *marebito* theory faced was introduced.

Yamaori Tetsuo (1986:20) introduces faith in the *marebito* in some ancient folk villages of Japan. He suggests that preaching and roaming in this modern age are generally considered human behaviours; nonetheless, there was a belief that especially at

each seasonal change, spiritual beings, deities, and ancestral spirits roamed from one place to another. People perceived these invisible beings as the causes of diseases and misfortunes in some circumstances. In some other cases, people perceived these spiritual beings as their guardians who protected them from diseases and misfortunes (1986:20). These deities or ancestral spirits roamed around on the earth and between the two different worlds.

Yamaori (1986:20) points out that the more people established solid agricultural societies, the less these spiritual beings migrated. Therefore, the spiritual beings that descended from the sky left their traces on more specific places, which became the places where people held their festivals to connect their communities to the universe (1986:20). Throughout time, the villagers welcomed numerous deities from the universe to their festivals. In this way, the paths on which deities travel to visit humans have been established in history. Yamaori writes that these sacred spots, to which deities descended, possibly created the images of migrating deities as an element of the Japanese psyche (1986:20).

It is essential to discuss this Japanese psyche in relation to its history. As Yamaori points out, the gradual change of their way of life also changed the way people formed the images of their deities. For instance, their deities tended to migrate less as they established a more settled lifestyle. Yamaori adds that ancient Japanese people believed that invisible deities migrated in order to find places where they could permanently stay (1986:22). This statement can be interpreted as that the images of the deities were reflections of ancient Japanese peoples' own way of life or wishes.

Tanigawa Kenichi (1991:338) introduces an example of a settled deity who appears in the myth of the Miyako Island in Okinawa, one of the provinces today that exists at the southern end of Japan. According to Tanigawa, people sing a song of the deity who decided to stay at Karimata in the Miyako Island after he or she went many places searching for good water (1991:338). This deity became a native deity, or the progenitor of the land, after he or she settled in Karimata. Tanigawa (1991:339) notes that it has been believed that this deity first descended to the land of Ōura near Karimata; yet, where this deity originally came from is not known. Because this deity has settled in the forest near Karimata, Tanigawa concludes that the deity of Karimata cannot be considered a visiting deity, who is considered to visit humans from a distance and go back to their spiritual world (1991:339). Similar to this deity, there are numerous stories of deities who have settled in particular places. However, it should be noted that the progenitor of the Karimata deity came from elsewhere at the beginning and descended at Ōura, which shows that this deity was a visitor in the past before the settlement. Tanigawa does not consider this deity at Karimata a visiting deity; nevertheless, throughout the Japanese islands, folk customs and ritual ceremonies that show unique characteristics of deities who keep migrating between different places, including two different worlds, can be found. This notion of migration of the *marebito* inspired Orikuchi to form his theory.

According to Orikuchi (2003:3), the original meaning of the word *marebito* is guests who *infrequently* visit. Orikuchi (2003:5) further explains his images of the *marebito*.

The original *marebito* that I hold in my mind were deities. The basic

understanding of the *marebito* were spiritual beings that occasionally visited ancient Japanese folk villages from a distant sea in order to provide the villagers with happiness and then went back to their spiritual worlds (Orikuchi 2003:4-5).

Orikuchi believes that these visiting deities came from a distant sea, or the spiritual world, to bring people abundant provisions on specific occasions. Orikuchi (2003:20) goes on to explain that villagers held festivals in order to welcome these deities. In these festivals, the deities, that are actually humans who impersonate the characters of gods, gave sacred advice and prayers with certain performances to restrain natural spirits who might harm villagers (Orikuchi 2003:32). After the *marebito* ascertained that the natural spirits would not harm humans, they left the village.

One captures various *marebito* images, which possess similar characteristics to the one described above, in Japanese folk festivals and ritual customs. Alexander Slawik believes that the spirit-sending ceremony, *Iyomante*, in the Ainu culture is also one of their expressions of these *marebito* images. Slawik (1980:96) explains these customs and festivals of the *marebito* in Japan from the ethnographical perspective. Deities, individually or in a group, occasionally visit human villages from another world when a season changes, especially from winter to spring. For local festivals, villagers welcome these *marebito*, who bless humans by performing various actions. These *marebito* leave each village with many gifts that the villagers provided in return for blessings that the villagers have received during the performances. Slawik adds that villagers consider gods, spirits, demons, ancestral spirits, the dead, people who are feared or respected, travelers from a distance, and animals to be the *marebito* (1980:96). Visits of the *marebito* certainly result in much energy that creates a seasonal transition (1980:97).

Compared to faith in the *marebito*, which Slawik illustrates, the unique part of Orikuchi's *marebito* theory is that he connects sacred messages that the *marebito* spoke to the origin of Japanese literature. The way Orikuchi connects numerous objects, including the *marebito* images, sacred messages, and local performers, represents a unique characteristic of his studies. By placing the *marebito* theory, which is actually the third manuscript, at the beginning of his work *Kodai kenkyū: Kokubungaku no hassei* (Archaic Studies: The Origin of Japanese Literature),⁽²⁾ Orikuchi is effective in making his studies distinct. The *marebito* images, which are thoroughly depicted in this third manuscript, symbolize the fundamental principle of life on earth as well as the universe; all living creatures are comprised of spiritual and physical aspects.

The most unique aspect of his studies is how he immerses this basic idea into his story and depicts lives of specialists who led Japanese literature and performing arts to gradually evolve into present-day style. The process of gradually forming Japanese literature and performing arts results from numerous chances of transformation, which have taken place by peoples' interactions through migration. It can be considered that these human dynamisms in human lives are depicted based upon his individual philosophy, which is symbolized through the *marebito* images. Orikuchi's *marebito* images are complex; other than spirit's migration that illustrates the notion of cycle, he incorporates human-form deities into his *marebito* images, which will not be deeply covered in this work. These two different concepts on the *marebito* images confuse his readers and remind them of complex conceptions that co-exist in Shintoism.

⁽²⁾ The third manuscript was first published in the journal, *Minzoku*, in 1931. The work, *Kodai kenkyū*, is in the collections of Orikuchi's work, *Orikuchi Shinobu Zenshū* vol. 1, which was published in 1966 by the publisher, Chūō Kōron. The book that I refer to is *Kodai kenkyū III: Kokubungaku no hassei* published in 2003 by Chūō Kōron Shinsha.

In order to avoid this confusion, Orikuchi should have explained his philosophy more clearly. Although one can find many elements that indicate nature's law or the notion of cycle in his work, Orikuchi sometimes makes use of these elements differently; as a result, his readers obtain the idea that only certain people are privileged.

It can be said that what Orikuchi truly desired to depict through his work seems to be indirectly illustrated. It lies as a foundation of his stories; some examples will be introduced in the latter chapters. Thus, a different interpretation is needed in order to read the work of Orikuchi in relation to the rule of nature. These complex features make some scholars question the value of the work of Orikuchi.

Suwa Haruo (1994:26) is one of the scholars who suggest that the systematic study of Orikuchi itself cannot be accepted as fact at this present time. Suwa (1994:37) writes that the severe criticisms of the *marebito* theory have already been presented. One of the most severe of many criticisms was made by the teacher of Orikuchi, Yanagida Kunio (1875-1962), the founder of the field of Japanese folklore. According to Suwa, Yanagida did not accept Orikuchi's *marebito* theory throughout his life because of the difference between their ideas of Japanese deities. Suwa (1994:38) explains that Yanagida believes that all visiting deities are ancestral spirits, whereas Orikuchi defines various beings, including demons and performers, as the visiting deities. This difference resulted in Yanagida not accepting Orikuchi's *marebito* theory (1994:38).

Nishimura Tōru (1988:28) writes that the most difficult problem that Orikuchi's *marebito* theory has faced is how one proves the theory with empirical evidence. Nishimura explains that the detractors of the *marebito* theory would have been convinced if Orikuchi was able to prove by empirical means the *marebito* theory, and include

reliable examples from classic Japanese literature and solid folk data collected from local folk societies. Nonetheless, even Orikuchi himself avoided the immediate answer when Yanagida asked the question of how Orikuchi came up with the idea of the *marebito*. Consequently, Yanagida, even after Orikuchi passed away, still writes, “this issue has not been resolved yet” (Nishimura 1988:28).

Many scholars often call Orikuchi a genius who was hardly understood by people at large. This comment on Orikuchi, as well as his study, contains both positive and negative aspects. Suzuki Mitsuo (1974:9) notes that the foundation that forms Orikuchi’s studies is his unique way of thinking. People at large were not able to create a study as individualistic as the one presented by Orikuchi. His study, therefore, has been called the *Orikuchigaku*, Orikuchi’s studies, or Orikuchism (1974:9).

At the same time, many people, who are not familiar with classic Japanese literature, are possibly puzzled by much of this classic information, which Orikuchi presents in his work by using his special talent of interpreting the classic Japanese literature. Without having an appropriate ability or opportunity to examine the classic literature, it is easy to simply accept his theories as fact. According to Suzuki, there are many students who have considered Orikuchi as the founder of a religion and have inherited and protected his study (1974:9). Without a knowledge that can comprehend vast classic literature and folk data, it is difficult to criticize the contents of his theories.

Suzuki adds that on the contrary, there are many people who cannot accept and evaluate Orikuchi’s studies seriously because of his unique expressions that are conclusive as well as gloomy (1974:10). As Suzuki indicates, many scholars only discuss Orikuchi’s studies in relation to his personal history and life. Darkness, loneliness, as

well as charisma, are embodied in Orikuchi and in his work. The criticism of Orikuchi's studies, however, is not only about his dark expression.

Nishimura (1988:28) notes that Orikuchi often presents his conclusion first without enough explanation for his readers to understand his conclusions. Some people, therefore, think that Orikuchi formed his theory by solely relying on his intuition because of the logical leaps, or the lack of explanation. Nishimura argues that the complex, long procedure to form the *marebito* theory made it difficult even for Orikuchi himself to understand where exactly he obtained the idea. In this sense, Orikuchi did not simply rely on his intuition to form the *marebito* theory; rather, he relied on a great amount of deliberation that complicated his work (Nishimura 1988:28).

On the other hand, Murai Osamu (2004:138) discusses one of Orikuchi's characteristics: flexibility. Murai suggests that Orikuchi changed his opinions if it was convenient for him; as a result, what Orikuchi says keeps changing throughout his work. Murai compares this talent to that of a good storyteller who tells a long, complex story with many differing elements in order to make it sound plausible (2004:138).

Nonetheless, it can be said that the *marebito* images reflect the fundamental principle of nature. Throughout Orikuchi's theories, readers can witness this basic law in many parts of his theories by being exposed to human natures. It was difficult for even Orikuchi to answer Yanagida's question of where the *marebito* images originated because the images could often be witnessed in everyday lives; in this sense, the *marebito* images could be considered a theme for his entire life. Hence, the basic characteristics of the rule of nature, symbolized as the *marebito* images, are immersed in

his theories. This broad, personal meaning of his *marebito* images made Orikuchi confused as to where to begin his long story.

If Orikuchi himself could not prove his *marebito* theory, neither could his students. Ogasawara Kyōko (1993:89) states that the word *gaku*, such as *Orikuchi-gaku*, which means study, is generally attached after a person's name when people recognize that the study will cease after the person dies. She believes that in this sense, students who learn Orikuchi's studies should not carry further (1993:90). If this were to occur, it would be hard to expand Orikuchi's studies.

Ogasawara (1993:92) further explains that Orikuchi's theory is undermined by the fact that subsequent researchers could not empirically prove some parts of his theory despite the amount of research that they used. In spite of this fact, Ogasawara argues that many people simply accept Orikuchi's theory as fact rather than his individual truth. This is because people accept Orikuchi's theory from the perspective of the study of inspiration, which should be different from the study of empirical proof. She addresses the possibility that even a great inspiration presented by a genius can be destroyed easily by a simple empirical fact (1993:92). Ogasawara (1993:99-100) considers Orikuchi's studies nebulous; that is, his theory can be correct or incorrect, depending on how a person perceives it. For this reason, she anticipates the day we discontinue Orikuchi's studies (1993:100).

As Ogasawara discusses, Orikuchi's work has been labeled by his detractors as work of non-academic or imaginative thinking because of the lack of empirical evidence, the lack of appropriate reference citation, and the lack of careful examination of the reliability of the resources that he used. Some scholars point out that his illogical

thinking and the use of incorrect historical background as well as the use of his dubious interpretation of classic Japanese literature in forming his conclusions weakens his philosophy. It is true that there are some scholars who have identified numerous incorrect elements existing in Orikuchi's theory.

Ikeda Yasaburō (1971:91), one of Orikuchi's students, also writes that finding fault in Orikuchi's work is easy; Ikeda, however, argues that Orikuchi did not mind that people could easily find superficial, incorrect elements throughout his work. Ikeda suggests that the unique theories as well as expressions of Orikuchi are what have to be valued (1971:91). Katō Morio, another student, also notes that the natural gift of Orikuchi is an ability to expose, or illuminate, the core of a subject without being distracted by external phenomena (1971:78).

Ikeda (1971:91) explains that after going through agonizing processes, Orikuchi created these theories as forms of material that he had captured from various, complex objects that he had examined throughout his life. For this reason, his theories have often been considered as being on the edge (1971:91). It can be considered that this risky condition on which his theories manage to depend has made some people feel uncomfortable or insecure; as a result, these people struggle to perceive or accept the work of Orikuchi as academic work. Nakamura Ikuo (1995:148) notes that Orikuchi himself had recognized this problem, and questioned if there was a real student of his theory who fully understood him. Because of this, Orikuchi prognosticated that his hypotheses would forever remain as hypotheses (Nakamura 1995:148).

Not being fully understood by the people who surrounded him, Orikuchi was sad and lonely. This unhappy feeling led him to make this precognition. His loneliness was

not separated from the images of the *marebito* that Orikuchi had witnessed in his life, and his lonely feelings were vital for his study. Simultaneously, because people did not appropriately understand and interpret the work of Orikuchi, there is still the possibility for us to expand his study. A question that must be addressed is how or where should his study be expanded.

In this chapter, I have primarily illustrated the general notion of the *marebito* and Orikuchi's studies in relation to difficulties that the *marebito* theory has faced. In the next chapter, more details of Orikuchi's life and characteristics of his studies will be illustrated in order to examine how his study can be expanded. This broader view will explain why only Orikuchi, but not Yanagida, expressed the images of the *marebito*. As I mentioned earlier, these images of the *marebito* deeply interrelate to how he defines "deity."

Chapter 2

Orikuchi Shinobu, His Life and Studies

Yanagida and Orikuchi are the most prominent scholars in the field of Japanese folklore. The Japanese dictionary, *Kōjien*, defines the field of folklore as the study of traditional cultures of an ethnic group by mainly relying on its oral traditions (1970:2140). Japan certainly is not a nation of a homogeneous people. Throughout the Japanese islands, there are diverse cultures, such the Ainu people, the Okinawa, various folk villages, and other ethnic peoples. It is generally recognized that Yanagida's studies focused on the culture of the settled farmers, known as the *jōmin*, who made up the majority of the Japanese population, whereas Orikuchi's studies focused on people who had different ways of life.

According to Nomura Junichi (1988:33), Yanagida published his most famous book, *Tōno Monogatari* (The Stories of The Tōno Region), in 1911. Hasegawa Masaharu (1988:686) explains that Orikuchi was attracted to this book, which depicts a Japanese folk world by describing isolated communities through their timeless folk legends and oral traditions. Yanagida's early studies focused more on Japanese people who practiced different ways of life from the one practiced by the *jōmin*. Hasegawa believes that throughout his life, Orikuchi had a passion to understand these marginalized people (1988:686) because he perceived the same characteristics in these people as he possessed himself (Hasegawa 1979:2-8).

Nomura (1988:33) notes that Orikuchi, being attracted to Yanagida's *Tōno Monogatari*, decided to pursue his personal life goal in the new field that Yanagida had just found. According to Nishimura, Orikuchi, in pursuing this path, succeeded in creating his own unique world by connecting the fields of national literature, Japanese folklore, and the history of performing arts (1985:7). Orikuchi's unique world, which spreads into many fields, shows different characteristics from those of Yanagida's folk studies.

Kajiki Gō (1982:34) writes that people call the study of Yanagida, *Yanagidagaku*, and the study of Orikuchi, *Orikuchigaku*. Each word indicates the study of each person as distinct from the other (1982:34). These two scholars were two vital elements that constituted the field of Japanese folklore at that time. The different characteristics of their studies complement each other, establishing a more complete form. In this sense, it seems that they were destined to live at the same time as a pair of academics, instituting a new field by sharing a common mind, but creating different ways to express it.

Nakamura (1995:169-170) explains that Yanagida emphasized how people traditionally saw and felt the world in their hearts, whereas Orikuchi was interested throughout his life in finding observable customs in the traditional Japanese way of life. For Orikuchi, these elements emerge as a Japanese psyche through their hearts and minds. Referring to these comments, Nakamura suggests that what Yanagida and Orikuchi searched for were very similar in core meaning (1995:174).

Andō Reiji (2004:165) also introduces the similarity between the two scholars. According to him, Yanagida searched for the original form of Shintoism through his study. This form of Shintoism had existed among the ancient Japanese people before any

written doctrines of Shintoism were established. Andō writes that this type of Shintoism was different from shrine Shintoism as well as state Shintoism.⁽³⁾ The original form of Shintoism that Yanagida searched for was Shintoism practiced without any physical, ritualistic objects; Japanese people in the ancient time did not worship any ritual icons. They preferred to live their everyday lives by simply sensing the existence of invisible deities (Andō 2004:165). Andō notes that this concept of deities is at the core of the study of Yanagida. Orikuchi, who was attracted to this foundation, never stopped respecting Yanagida as his teacher (2004:165).

Ikeda (1971:91) notes that he believes that Orikuchi had strong confidence that he was the only scholar who fully understood the significance of Yanagida's field and incorporated it sincerely into the field of national literature (1971:91). Orikuchi established his own distinct study, which differs from Yanagida's studies; yet, Makita Shigeru (1976:300) believes that Orikuchi was more than the best student for Yanagida—he was the only, real student.

As Nakamura and Andō point out, it seems that there are some common thoughts existing between these two scholars. Although they did not always have a calm, peaceful relationship, they respected and agreed with each other deeply. The main difference in their studies is the way they express their interests.

Katō (1971:78) writes that “intuition and insight with poetic mind” has often been used to express the work of Orikuchi. According to Katō, both Orikuchi's supporters and detractors use this phrase to comment on his work. Katō ironically adds that Orikuchi's detractors often use this phrase to express his characteristics as *imaginative* (1971:78).

⁽³⁾ Shrine Shintoism was established based on doctrines that were intentionally adjusted in the Middle Ages; state Shintoism was created with the principles that originated from the myths of deities who created the land of Japan (Andō 2004:165)

In this chapter, some primary characteristics of Orikuchi as well as his study in relation to the images of the *marebito* will be illustrated. It seems that how Orikuchi perceived his life has to be seriously considered when one discusses the images of the *marebito* that he depicts in his theory. How he felt about his life, including the purpose of life, was an important factor for him when he formed his *marebito* theory. Consequently, understanding his feelings may lead us to find out why only Orikuchi witnessed the *marebito* and created the systematic study by placing the *marebito* theory at its core. Discovering this answer may also lead to finding a solution as to where his studies should be expanded as well as the definition of “deity” for Orikuchi.

According to Hasegawa (1979:2), Orikuchi, who was also known as a poet with the name Shaku-chou-kū, was a scholar while being a literary person. Hasegawa believes that through his work, Orikuchi searched for the significance of his own existence, the way to save insecure spirits, and the happiness that Japanese people should obtain. Besides this illustration, the title of Hasegawa’s book, *Orikuchi Shinobu, kokou no shijingakusha* (Orikuchi Shinobu, A Lofty Poet and Scholar), also implies that Orikuchi had a lonely life.

Katō (1987:6) writes that Orikuchi was a person who projected an “unusual” image. People who contacted Orikuchi recognized his mystic characteristics. Orikuchi was a bachelor throughout his life, but he was always surrounded by his students, who were attracted to his charisma (Katō 1987:6-7). Moreover, Katō (1987:8) introduces the illustration of Orikuchi written by Satō Haruo. Satō also considers Orikuchi as a person who was lonely because he was different from the world in general. Satō explains that Orikuchi used his own distinct scale to decide right or wrong and attractive or

unattractive. Referring to Satō's description, Katō suggests that Orikuchi was lonely throughout his life because of his extreme individuality (1987:8).

Hasegawa believes that throughout his life, Orikuchi searched for means to prove the value of his own existence. This search resulted from his doubts about his own birth, (1979:6) as he was adopted early in his age (1979:2-3). Furthermore, Hasegawa writes that like the *marebito*, Orikuchi had been a traveler who kept looking for a place where he could feel at home. This search shows why Orikuchi's studies often focused on another world as well as ancient periods of Japan (1979:6-8).

Katō (1987:7) states that Orikuchi made many difficult trips to remote mountain areas, in which ancient folk customs still remained. Katō (1987:7-8) believes that the purposes of these trips for Orikuchi were not only to collect folk data, but also to experience a way of life there, which had been handed down through many generations. Katō writes that Orikuchi felt like he was returning home when he found these ancient customs or faith: anything that had supported lives of the village folk. The psyche of the ancient Japanese that had made them continue their customs has been inherited, still existing within contemporary Japanese people (Katō 1987:8); the ancient Japanese faith has become the foundation of Japanese life today (1987:12). Katō sympathizes that the agony caused by Orikuchi's loneliness let Orikuchi keep searching for his real "home" of heart in the ancient times of Japan (1987:9).

Orikuchi was unhappy because he was not often appropriately understood or accepted for who he was by the people around him. This unhappy feeling can also be expressed as loneliness, but his loneliness can be considered a gift from the universe; it was the crucial element for him to seek the existence of "deities," which was the purpose

of his life. In order to let him continue his personal spiritual journey, throughout his life, the universe had kept taking away people whom he loved. Losing these people, often by their death, forced Orikuchi to face his personal path by looking within himself.

The more he spent his time with the universe or the more clearly he recognized his own personal journey, the more he focused on listening to what the universe said about the purpose of his life. In order to continue his personal path, he had to use his own criteria or scale to express himself; this individuality helped him to establish his unique studies. If he had not been lonely or dissatisfied with the relationships that he had with those who surrounded him, he would not have been motivated to establish his studies. If he had not questioned the value of his own existence through unhappy, lonely feelings caused by bitter experiences in his life, he would not have seriously looked within himself.

Through collecting data on the ancient Japanese faith, Orikuchi ascertained his own belief that came from deep within himself. By comparing his own belief to the ancient Japanese folk customs and beliefs that he could still find in his time, Orikuchi attempted to find the value of his own existence, momentarily escaping from the loneliness that he had held throughout his life.

Many scholars still pay attention to Orikuchi's description of the archaic elements. Ueda Masaaki (1974:31) explains that through his study of ancient times, Orikuchi searches for the archaic elements, such as folk customs, that can still be found at the present time. Katō (1974:25) adds that the archaic elements, which Orikuchi was searching for, are not simple time classifications. In history, many folk customs have been unconsciously handed down through stories related by successive generations;

hence, the archaic elements in such folk customs can be found even today. Katō (1987:14) believes that the archaic elements as well as the images of the *marebito* in Orikuchi's studies are not specific, real existences. They are rather *examples* of the ancient faith that has been inherited as a certain image in some Japanese folk societies (1987:14).

Orikuchi's loneliness and search for his real home in ancient eras of Japan have been so far discussed. A connection between these elements may allow one to find where Orikuchi obtained the images of the *marebito*. Okano Hirohiko (2003:26-27), another student of Orikuchi, illustrates the scene in which Yanagida asked Orikuchi where the idea of the images of the *marebito* originated. Orikuchi avoids an immediate answer, but he leaves the following statement:

I think it started with a question of why Japanese people traveled by getting over so many obstacles or difficulties in such ancient periods when people could not easily travel [through domains]. I thought that they could continue such difficult journeys because throughout the journey, they preached about gods and became closer to gods (2003:27).

Okano (2003:27) notes that Yanagida at that time did not accept Orikuchi's explanation as a proof of his *marebito* theory. Okano writes that Orikuchi formed his *marebito* theory by combining his knowledge of classic Japanese literature, local folk data that he collected, and his own experiences; however, Okano believes that the primary foundation that formed Orikuchi's *marebito* theory was his strong desire to find something precious in his life. In Okano's view, Orikuchi himself became one of the *marebito* who kept traveling through many villages in order to find what he was searching for (2003:27).

What was Orikuchi searching for? Why could only Orikuchi, but not Yanagida, find the images of the *marebito*? Murai (2004:57) writes that Orikuchi's studies form a distinct paradigm or framework; thus, understanding the work of Orikuchi requires readers to recognize and accept this unique framework. Murai believes that Orikuchi did not find the images of the *marebito*; rather, Orikuchi invented or created the images of the *marebito*. If this is true, some seeds of the images of the *marebito* would exist within Orikuchi himself, and this would answer the question of why only Orikuchi, but not Yanagida, could find the images of the *marebito* (Murai 2004:58-59).

The difficulty of continuing his personal journey has been expressed in Orikuchi's statement that he made in front of Yanagida to explain where he obtained the idea of the *marebito* and that I introduced earlier. Orikuchi talks about journeys that ancient Japanese people made in order to preach about their gods, despite many difficulties (Okano 2003:27). Some scholars question whether or not people in the ancient time could travel through different regions; historical and social backgrounds in the past did not allow people to easily migrate through these different regions. Orikuchi, however, believes that many people in ancient Japan before the Age of Civil traveled searching for better lands; thus, traveling ultimately became a way of life (2003:115).

The previous statement that Orikuchi made in front of Yanagida suggests that Orikuchi recognizes the difficulty of this type of journey. Nevertheless, people in these ancient periods continued their journeys. Orikuchi compares himself and his personal journey to these people and their journeys. The adjective "difficult" that describes their journeys must be the adjective that describes his personal journey. In this way, as

Orikuchi calls these ancient people the *marebito*, Orikuchi himself is the *marebito* as some scholars have already pointed out.

Orikuchi witnessed the *marebito* in numerous native folk customs and associated ritual ceremonies. He also witnessed the same types of the *marebito* who searched for the meaning of their lives on their personal journeys, as did he in his everyday life. These *marebito* images create a problem when they are discussed in a regular, academic framework with empirical evidence. There are many elements existing in this world, which cannot be explained with solid written proof or empirical evidence, and Orikuchi and his study challenge this academic boundary.

One of these challenges have been known as the importance of the intuition, or inspiration, called the *jikkan*. This word *jikkan* is more precisely translated as a “direct experience” or “physical sensation.” Katō (1987:13) explains that the most essential element for Orikuchi to pursue his study was this “physical sensation.” Nishimura (1985:8) points out that even Yanagida admitted that Orikuchi had academic talent as well as a sharp intuition. Yanagida believed that Orikuchi’s intuition could be considered as an academic strength in the Asian approach to life (1985:8).

It is true that this word *jikkan* often creates a misconception among academic scholars. According to Katō (1987:13), people often define the word *jikkan* as simply “to observe the folk customs and performing arts in fieldwork.” Katō argues that these “physical sensations” are not simple impressions. After much fieldwork, an individual eventually obtains a well-trained skill, which distinguishes the common archaic elements from the new elements. This practiced skill instantaneously captures a comprehensive image of the archaic elements, and this sense is expressed as a “physical sensation.” In

other words, some researchers understand, or capture, the significance or the complete image of a folk custom, without a long procedure of verification and comparative study (Katō 1987:13).

Katō (1987:14) believes that the real ancient times can only be depicted through overall inclusion of data that has not been recorded. For instance, customs that have been inherited through many generations in folk societies of the mountain and seaside areas should be studied to depict the real ancient world. The written data on documents may not be a true reflection of how people generally lived. It may rather be the created world rationalized by the people in a higher class. This created world should be deconstructed for depicting the real ancient way of life (Katō 1987:14).

Katō (1987:14) also points out that there has been a criticism against the work of Orikuchi for its lack of empirical proof. He considers that this criticism arose due to misunderstanding of Orikuchi's "physical sensations." Katō argues that it is difficult, with only pieces of unwritten data collected from folk societies, to convince scholars who only accept a written document as empirical evidence (1987:14).

It has been said that this explanation of "physical sensations" by Katō represents how the group of scholars who support the work of Orikuchi perceive his work. It can be said that this feature of Orikuchi's studies simply shows another fragment of the *marebito* images. "Physical sensation" can be translated as *messages* from one's inner existence. Which means, without any specific reasons, one sometimes knows or understands something: the information often comes from deep within oneself, but one finds it difficult to make use of this information. Orikuchi (1956:13) writes about these inner voices in the following statement:

The human trait of virtuosity signifies that the person possesses the ability to very clearly hear voices of deities. That is, deities are able to share their secrets with the person who possesses such a trait of virtuosity... (Orikuchi 1956:13).

Orikuchi, by using the word *jikkan*, points out that this human trait and associated ability has to be valued in academia. For Orikuchi, his studies should not be disconnected from life in general, and this feature made his studies distinct. As Murai previously points out, people who study the work of Orikuchi should be aware of this kind of distinct framework on which his work relies, and this framework still raises a question as to how it should be considered in an academic context.

The primary characteristics of Orikuchi's studies in relation to his life and the images of the *marebito* have been presented in this chapter. It seems that Orikuchi's studies focused more on shedding light on the core of a subject rather than focusing on correctness or incorrectness of each external data. In this way, the work of Orikuchi may be called more like the field of philosophy or religion rather than the field of folklore. If this were true, then Orikuchi's studies would be more fully understood in the context of spirituality.

The distinct thoughts of Orikuchi, being combined with his knowledge of folk customs, associated ritual beliefs, and classic Japanese literature, gradually formed the *marebito* theory. It can be said that the existence of the *marebito* did not just originate from Orikuchi's mind. There were some foundations, and Orikuchi witnessed them throughout his journey. What are the spiritual foundations on which his *marebito* theory depends? In the next three chapters, spiritual worldviews of ancient Japanese folk villages, the Ainu people, and the Okinawan people will be depicted in order to seek

some commonalities. These commonalities may allow one to observe the significance of the images of the *marebito* and the definition of “deity” for Orikuchi from different angles.

(1994:106). This multi-dimensional transformation expands the Japanese spiritual worldview that people have formed in their social lives.

Similar to this complicated spiritual worldview, Orikuchi's studies involve various factors. Orikuchi (1956:443) recognizes this complex nature of Shintoism and expresses this complexity:

The study of deities that surround us does not show any logical methods. Ancient ways of life are always correct because they were the beginnings or the foundations of where we stand now, although we have to admit that information that we use to examine these ancient ways of life is limited. This limited amount of information allows us to examine or organize it easily. Our present way of life, on the contrary, produces a great amount of information; as a result, it makes difficult to organize it in order to examine it (Orikuchi 1956:443).

Orikuchi (1956:443) further explains Shintoism in the Middle Ages (the Kamakura and Muromachi periods) in relation to this complexity:

We do not know much about the Kamakura and Muromachi periods. When we compare these periods to more ancient periods, we can find many attractive elements that can be utilized in order to study ways of life in these periods. These elements have not been organized and appropriately studied yet. Among us, because of the lack of written forms, there was an idea that perceived Shintoism in these periods to be vulgar or fake belief that scholars in the field of national literature created...This type of vulgar Shintoism, which often cannot be interpreted by using knowledge based on ancient belief or which cannot be explained theoretically, has been eliminated. So, it was not perceived as Shintoism. However, we have to pay attention to this vulgar Shintoism and carefully examine it in order to understand Shintoism as we know it (Orikuchi 1956:443).

This statement indicates that various types of beliefs or ideas of deities that people brought from many areas existed throughout Japanese history. Orikuchi (1956:449-450) also argues that the nature of Buddhism that does not destroy native beliefs, but take

advantage of them has made Shintoism complex; as a result, it is difficult for people to distinguish elements of Buddhism from elements of original Shinto (1956:449-450).

These explanations reinforce the fact that throughout history, depending on ages, people have perceived deities of Shintoism differently. Orikuchi (1956:444) moreover discusses how many Shinto experts in his time, including himself, do not fully understand

Shintoism:

There are many elements that exist in Shintoism and that we cannot fully explain. Especially, the knowledge of Shintoism, which we believed that our seniors had fully understood or interpreted, shows a dead-end today. Which means, the knowledge of Shintoism that we hold today seems to be not only useless, but also harmful. Since the Meiji Restoration, some Shinto priests have attempted to unite Shinto with legal law as well as political science. There are many who have taken advantage of this unification. Purification ceremonies of Shinto today have become very different from those ceremonies that were practiced in ancient times. People who said that these current ceremonies are foundations that should lead Japan were not Shinto experts, but who were in different Shinto branches. That is, the current Shinto represents a concept that was created by some people who led Shinto rationally so that this Shinto is not the real Shinto (Orikuchi 1956:444-445).

Orikuchi criticizes Shintoism in his time that led Japan into world wars. As he explains, there are many types of Shintoism that include spiritual life forces as well as human-form deities. Like this, the *marebito* images that he depicts in his work represent spiritual aspects, life forces, and even the role of the Emperor. Orikuchi has a certain respect for the Emperor; however, readers of his work find that he attempts to destroy state Shintoism in a subtle way. It can be said that this subtlety partially represents Japanese culture and society. Orikuchi does not attempt to damage the basic structure of the Emperor system. His subtle criticism of the Emperor as well as his tendency of differentiating certain types of people contradicts each other so that his readers are

Chapter 3

The Worldview of Japanese Folk Societies

What happens after ice melts? In answering this question, one student said, “spring is around the corner.” According to the Ainu-edition of the Asahi Newspaper (1993:32), the correct answer was that “water is found after ice melts.” However, the former answer might have made the teacher smile. The answer also reminded some Japanese people of their distinct, traditional connection to nature and the spiritual world, which is the foundation for Japanese culture.

This spiritual worldview of the ancient Japanese is often defined as animism. *Kōjien* defines animism as a belief that all life is comprised of physical and spiritual beings, and many phenomena in this world are manifestations or expressions of these spiritual beings (1998:1391). Takemura Seiichi (1997:11) also defines animism as a belief in which people recognize and respect spiritual beings that exist in nature. In his book, Graham Harvey introduces an interesting definition of the words animists and animism:

Animists are people who recognize that the world is full of persons, only some of whom are human, and that life is always lived in relationship with others. Animism is lived out in various ways that are all about learning to act respectfully towards and among other persons (Harvey 2005:xi).

His statement shows that animism reflects a perspective in which humans should focus on seeing spiritual beings that exist in all life. Because there is no superiority or

inferiority in a spirit, all one has to be concerned about is how one establishes a good relationship to other spiritual beings. This perception allows one to create a harmonious environment in which one type of spiritual being does not exploit other types of spiritual beings. It can be considered that animism is a perception that simply indicates a proper manner or basic principle in this natural world. Beyond time and space, this basic principle simply exists, sustaining all creation.

It seems that the values as well as spiritual worldviews of animism are easily overlooked these days despite the fact that one recognizes its values deep within oneself. The basis of the Japanese spiritual worldview, recognized as Shintoism, represents these characteristics of animism. Throughout this chapter, the values of this spirituality in which humans have a close relationship to spiritual beings or deities will be depicted. This close relationship of humans and deities is related to the relationship among deities, nature, and all living creatures. By introducing these characteristics, how spirituality relates to Orikuchi's *marebito* theory and his *marebito* images will be discussed. This relationship will deepen the interpretation of the word "deity" for Orikuchi.

Kamata Tōji (2003:16) notes that Japanese people in ancient times respected various life forms in nature, such as trees, rocks, and fountains. According to Kamata (2000:54), this respect came from peoples' recognition of a spiritual force that existed in all natural phenomena as well as physical life forms; the ancient Japanese people perceived this kind of spiritual force as a deity. For example, Japanese people considered a spiritual force in the sound of thunder as the voice of a thunder god, and a spiritual force in a fire the fire god (2000:54). This perception reflected a relationship that existed

between humans and nature in the era of ancient Japan. People at that time continued their lives knowing that numerous deities closely surrounded them.

Yamaori (1997:116) examines this relationship by introducing Terada Torahiko's explanation. According to Yamaori, Terada believes that Japanese people became sensitive in order to understand the depth and mystery of nature. This effort of understanding nature is a part of the wisdom that Japanese people have obtained. This wisdom also requires that humans not fight against nature. Humans rather should be obedient to the laws of nature. In other words, nature is regarded as a teacher from whom much could be learned (Yamaori 1997:116). Terada seems to suggest that humans should understand where the boundary between humans and nature exists. In this view, getting along with nature can be compared to getting along with a human individual; since both are living entities, they require the same consideration.

Seasonal change can be clearly recognized in the Japanese landscape. Spring always comes back and nourishes numerous life forms by changing the colour of the landscape from the one in winter to the one in spring. People, especially in springtime, more easily recognize an invisible life force that nurtures all creatures. Such a life force certainly influences people; spring provides them with happiness and recognition of the time of "rebirth."

Nature, in this way, follows the rule of the universe. Humans cannot create spring in a different season, despite the technological advancement of this modern age. All they can do, like the other living creatures, is wait for the time of spring. The entire world of wind, rains, thunder, trees, and animals creates an immense web of life forms enabling

humans to thrive. From this perspective, humans are a part of nature; consciously or unconsciously, they follow the rule of the universe.

This concept lies as the foundation of Shintoism, or Shinto.⁽⁴⁾ According to *Kōjien* (1998:1391), the original meaning of the word Shintoism signifies a principle in which people understand or feel the existence of deities. These deities make all creatures alive according to nature's law (1998:1391). Shintoism has been intertwined with the Japanese way of life throughout history. For this reason, some Japanese people may not recognize as Shintoism what they naturally feel about the existence of deities in nature.

Kamata (2000:37) further explains that the word *Shinto* in Japanese can be literally expressed in two Chinese characters, 神道. According to Kamata (2000:4), these characters suggest the meaning "the direction of gods," and there are two ways for gods to move: away from gods and toward gods. "Away from gods" is considered as the flow of natural occurrence to humans, and "toward gods" is the flow of appreciation by humans for what they have received from deities. Put in other words, "away from gods" is expressed as the process, flow, or history of the universe: an evolutionary process, or a creation story (2000:4). "Away from gods" reminds humans of the process by which the universe and deities have provided them with an environment to sustain their lives. In such an environment, humans are able to learn how to be humans through everyday experiences; that is, "away from gods" is a gift from the universe. Kamata adds that people have transmitted this gift in the form of stories from one generation to another, including Japanese folk customs and ritual practices (2000:4).

⁽⁴⁾ The Japanese dictionary, *Kōjien* (1998:1391), defines the word *Shinto* as a faith that Japanese people, as an ethnic group, have worshipped. This faith includes the worship of their ancestors as well as natural deities; it has been intertwined with Buddhism and Confucianism throughout history.

Kamata (2000:4-5) explains that “toward gods,” on the other hand, is a way in which humans show their appreciation to deities in return for what they have received. Humans have expressed their appreciation to deities in the form of festivals and prayers; festivals and prayers represent returning gifts from humans to deities (2000:4-5). Therefore, it can be said that Shintoism represents the paths that connect humans to deities. Within this philosophy, an essence of the images of the *marebito*, which can be recognized as a symbol that connects humans to deities, has been found.

Kamata (2000:37) also believes that Shintoism should not be a written doctrine; rather, Shintoism is a way of life itself. It can be said that the doctrines of *Shinto* is only found in nature or the universe; hence, people in ancient periods had to be sensitive and modest enough to receive various messages from nature through constant interactions with many life forms.

Kamata (2000:164) further explains that in the classic Japanese language, there was no terminology that represented *nature*; Japanese people in ancient periods held the general idea that the word *life* could be used to express nature. In this sense, life could be considered as a *deity*. Kamata writes that natural phenomena were manifestations of life. Nature is a life that creates a life circle, and this circle is comprised of all living creatures (2000:165).

One came to realize a common idea: a *cycle* or *circle* forms the bases of Japanese folk beliefs. As spring always returns after three other seasons throughout the year, so Japanese people have held the belief that spirits, or deities, return to this world and leave again.

In this way, deities are often beings that come from elsewhere. Kamata notes that Japanese people wait for the visits of deities in their spring festivals; the word festival means “to wait” (2003:17). Based on the belief that invisible deities migrate to visit humans, various villages throughout the Japanese islands have practiced distinct customs and festivals. These distinct customs and festivals have also been developed along with the basic notion of a spiritual world. Yamaori explains that with well-honed sensitivity, Japanese people are able to sense invisible worlds through their hearts and minds (1997:237). They have held the idea that another world beside this one exists. Yamaori writes that many people in Japan perceive death as a state in which a spirit leaves its flesh and is reborn in another world (1997:237). From this perspective, this world and another world are not physically separated from each other; people believe that a spirit can migrate between the two worlds on specific occasions, including festivals and ceremonies (Yamaori 1997:237).

The foundation of the *marebito* theory is rooted in the spiritual worldview that has been introduced. Hasegawa states that for Orikuchi, the most important thing throughout his life was searching for deities (1979:15). If true, Orikuchi continued his “deity quest” by holding the basic Japanese spiritual worldview in his mind. Japanese spiritual worldview has been transformed throughout time. According to Suwa (1994:106), the transformation of the Japanese spiritual worldview does not signify the death of previous belief systems. He notes that previous belief systems have changed by being modified to include certain elements of new belief systems. At the same time, the ability of the Japanese spiritual worldview to accept different belief systems has made its view very complex, but the various elements still exist to constitute the whole worldview

confused. In order to illustrate Shintoism, which should be embedded in nature's law, Orikuchi should not have differentiated certain types of people from other life forms; he should have questioned the basic philosophy that was embedded in the Emperor's system.

In this work, his *marebito* images have been illustrated by being focused on nature's law; the *marebito* images do not represent certain types of people, including the Emperor, as Orikuchi intended. The basic principle of the *marebito* images should originate from a very ancient spiritual worldview, in which one recognizes spiritual life forces or deities within organisms. Although Orikuchi writes about a human-form deity by including the Emperor, his spiritual philosophy should be primarily embedded in an ancient spiritual worldview, which will be emphasized for this work.

The following explanation reinforces this view. Orikuchi (2003:26) writes that the ancient Japanese people believed that a spirit of an individual continued existing regardless of whether or not he or she was alive or dead; these spirits also had the characteristic of easily being detached from human physical bodies. Orikuchi notes that ancient Japanese people conducted spiritual festivals or ceremonies, specifically for the spirits that existed in human bodies for blessings (Orikuchi 2003:28). A spirit never dies in this worldview; that is, a spirit would obtain another container for its ongoing journey. With this recognition of both spiritual and physical aspects, Orikuchi seemed to be interested in the *relationship* or *interaction* between the two dimensions of spiritual and physical existences.

In fact, Orikuchi emphasizes that spiritual beings come from elsewhere, outside, to interact with people. In addition to his *marebito* images themselves, his idea of the *gairaikon* (spirits or souls that come from outside to attach to human bodies) can also be

considered as an example of the relationship between spiritual and physical worlds.

Orikuchi presents a story between a stone and a drift-deity as an example:

There are many stories of drift-deities that relate to faith in souls. There are many stories in the coast lines of Japanese islands in which people often find new objects on their beach that they did not find in the previous day...Ancient Japanese people found something in the sea was floating and coming toward the shore. When it came closer to them, they found to be a stone. Within a night, the stone that was washed in, grew and became a bigger stone, while people kept an eye on it. This type of story was based on the belief in which a soul came to their shore by putting itself in a stone. It sounds strange that an object, like a big stone, is dashed against waves within a night. However, it is understandable if the stone was only a tool for a soul to use in order to come to the shore (Orikuchi 1956:226-227).

Orikuchi further explains the meaning of this story by comparing it to an egg and its eggshell. According to Orikuchi (1956:227), an eggshell encompasses the content of an egg. This eggshell should be in a complete form without any holes; despite this complete form, a life can enter in this enclosed container. This life represents a soul, and this soul grows while it stays in the enclosed container. When it is fully grown, it comes out of the shell. Ancient Japanese applied the same principle to the drifting stone by believing that a soul existed within a stone; when the soul was fully grown, it came out of the stone. That was the reason why the size of the stone changed within a night (Orikuchi 1956:227). This story shows how his concept of the *gairaikon* works between a soul and a physical object.

Orikuchi explains the *gairaikon* by saying that:

Ancient Japanese people believed that souls of human individuals came from outside and attached to human flesh. After these souls attached to human flesh, humans started exercising the same power as these souls possessed. Simultaneously, after these souls left human flesh, humans lost

the power of these souls... In ancient Japan, there was no concept of “death” that we hold in our minds today. Although there was the word death, this word simply signifies the state that a person was losing a power or force (Orikuchi 1956:200).

With arrivals of the *gairaikon*, people are able to sustain their lives and experience how to be humans in the environment where their spiritual and physical aspects coexist. The spiritual life force eventually leaves from their physical bodies when humans die; however, the experiences of both spiritual and physical aspects staying together are important in enhancing both aspects in various ways.

Orikuchi (2003:107) illustrates this basic idea by using the phrases “the container of spirits” or “the box in which spirits were put into.”

Human performers, the *hokaibito*, in ancient Japan left noble names, performing arts, and famous instruments...Roaming around with their performing skills, they might have maintained their principal occupation, conveying sacred messages. Although their occupations had been diversified throughout time, they did not forget to hand down their belief of deities. While they disseminated sacred messages and performing arts, they might have carried boxes in which sacred spirits were put into. There are some examples that show people who preached about their deities in the past carried spirits within boxes with them (Orikuchi 2003:107).

This statement shows that the *hokaibito* in the past carried actual containers or boxes to remind people of spirits within physical bodies. These boxes make one to be more aware of the unity between spiritual and physical aspects, and Orikuchi keeps depicting this type of unity indirectly through his illustrations of human lives.

The spirit’s journey cannot be physically witnessed, but a spirit should keep migrating between the two worlds in order to continue its journey. This migration is a crucial key in explaining a part of Orikuchi’s studies. Orikuchi often reminds his readers

of the existence of the spiritual life forces that exist in numerous objects; simultaneously, his studies illustrate the nature of human individuals. That is, a deep spiritual basis was vital in understanding himself as a human individual, and he gradually formed his *marebito* theory by collecting folk data, in which he encountered some folk customs and festivals that show traces of the characteristics of visiting deities.

In this chapter, the omnipresent characteristics of a spiritual life force, the notion of cycle, and the relationships not only between nature and humans, but also the spiritual aspect and the physical aspect have been illustrated. These features have created a framework upon which the notion of the *marebito* relies. The basic concept that Orikuchi often illustrates as traits of spiritual life forces in his studies deeply relates to the concept of animism. These two concepts certainly show similarity. Deities and humans seem to lose the boundaries of their worlds in these concepts; deities exist very close to humans, even within human individuals. These *marebito* images are opposed to Orikuchi's tendency of differentiating certain types of people from other people.

The Ainu spiritual worldview also reflects the idea of cycle, or the spirit's migration, as well as this intimate relationship between deities and humans. This spirituality is precious in order for one to understand the fundamental concept or notion of the *marebito*. This spirituality also helps one to reflect on the spiritual aspect of living organisms to a great degree. For these reasons, this spirituality will be illustrated in the next chapter so that the *marebito* images and his definition of "deity" at the core of Orikuchi's belief system will be more clearly understood.

Chapter 4

The Worldview of the Ainu People

Kayano Shigeru states that the Ainu people are considered to be descendents of a culture that was developed in the northern islands and coastal regions of Siberia (1998:29). Fujimura Hisakazu notes that the central place where the Ainu people now live is Hokkaidō; nevertheless, they lived in a broader area in the past, including Northeastern Japan, Hokkaidō, Sakhalin, and the Kuril Islands (1982:303). Kayano (1998:29) further illustrates the culture of the Ainu people:

Distinct in language and traditions from the ancestors of modern-Japanese, the Ainu are one of many maritime cultures that flourished and traded all around the rim of the North Pacific Ocean for thousands of years before the arrival of industrial culture from the south. A lifestyle based on hunting and gathering was maintained in these regions up until the last century (1998:29). Translated by Langill, Jane Corddy with Taki Rie.

This statement shows that the Ainu people have maintained their own identity, including their distinct material culture and cosmology.

The distinct identity and culture of the Ainu people must be clearly recognized when one discusses some common characteristics existing in the spiritual worldviews held by the Japanese and the Ainu. In this chapter, the foundation of the Ainu spiritual worldview, which surely involves the notion of the *marebito*, will be presented. As I noted earlier, the notion of the *marebito* in the Ainu culture is crucial to understand their entire spiritual worldview. Although Orikuchi does not directly introduce Ainu

spirituality into his work, comprehending this spirituality, along with the notion of the *marebito*, inspires one to interpret Orikuchi's *marebito* theory and *marebito* images differently.

Kayano (1998:29) writes that the Ainu people, in the Ainu language, divided all beings into two groups: the *ainu* (humans) and the *kamuy* (deities). According to Kayano, the Ainu people do not view the relationship between the *ainu* and the *kamuy* as hierarchical. Humans should interact with the *kamuy* in every aspect of their routine lives because the *kamuy* are considered to be the life force of all creatures in the natural world. In short, the *kamuy* are beings that do not rule from above; despite the fact that humans should respect and revere deities, humans and deities should have an equal relationship or mutual trust (Kayano 1998:29).

This relationship between humans and deities is identical to Terada's explanation of the one between humans and nature. It seems that there should be no great distance or hierarchy between humans and nature; humans should not forget how to coexist with nature. According to the Ainu-edition of the Asahi Newspaper (1993:3), the Ainu musician Toyooka Masanori Atuy states that there is no word for nature in the Ainu language. This statement displays the holistic Ainu worldview. Atuy explains that there is a reason why the Ainu people did not create a word that represents nature; in order to express nature, they would choose the word *kamuy* as a suitable word if necessary (1993:3).

Referring to Atuy's statement, one may question what the *kamuy* are. Watanabe Hitoshi explains that the *kamuy* are spiritual beings considered to pervade every space throughout the world (1999:198). Watanabe (1979:69) also explains that the Ainu people

consider every natural phenomenon to have its own activity, which is interconnected in relation to time and space. The Ainu people perceive the earth's surface, which is generally considered as the carpet of fauna and flora, as the carpet of the *kamuy* groups in their temporal disguises; every part of the earth, including hill, river, and sea, was regarded as the field of activity for these *kamuy* groups (Watanabe 1979:69).

This description implies that the Ainu people consider invisible life forces, which manifest themselves in numerous visible objects and living creatures, as this world's disguised figures of the *kamuy*. The Ainu people see all organisms not only as material beings, but also as spiritual beings. Fred C.C. Peng (1977:222) introduces Munro's expression: "it is impossible to describe any aspect of Ainu life without reference to ritual practices" (1977:222). The Ainu way of life then seems to emphasize a spirit or life force that always exists within an organism.

Similar to this idea, Orikuchi (1956:209) through his work often introduces spiritual life forces. One example is his explanations of the words *tamashii* and *tama*.

.... When I refer to vocabularies of ancient Japanese languages, I find the word *tama* that had been used before the word *tamashii* was created. The general terminology that ancient Japanese people used to express souls was the word *tama*... More precisely described, people used the word *tamashii* to express abilities, talents, or forces that made physical objects operate and thrive independently of others, whereas they used the word *tama* to express spiritual life forces that existed within physical objects. The word *tama* was later separated into two words to express deities, or spirits, (*kami*) and physical objects (*mono*). When I refer to one hypothesis, the *tama* remain within organisms, whereas the *tamashii* leave organisms. This nature of the *tamashii* allows them to perceive and learn outside world, and this is the reason why the *tamashii* represent bases that wisdoms or abilities are rooted... (Orikuchi 1956:209).

His explanation shows that these words, *tamashii* and *tama*, slightly differs from each other; nevertheless, they show similar characteristic of how ancient Japanese people perceived spirits or spiritual life forces: spiritual life forces existed within any physical objects, like how the Ainu people perceive the relationship between the *kamuy* and organisms.

Yamada Takako (2001:48) defines the word *kamuy* as the most important and common terminology for referring to supernatural beings that possess spiritual power or divine nature. She believes that most *kamuy* are manifested as living creatures, natural objects, or natural phenomena. For instance, plants and animals, heavenly bodies, weather conditions, geography and even diseases, are the *kamuy*, or the manifestation of the *kamuy* (Yamada 2001:48). In other words, the *kamuy* possess certain supernatural abilities that humans do not possess. Fujimura (1982:309) also explains that a living person cannot fight against the *kamuy* beings with his or her bare hands. He (1995:20) explains that natural phenomena, fire and thunder, are examples of the *kamuy* because humans cannot put out fire with their bare hands; they cannot fight against thunder without using any tools.

Fujimura (1982:309) further introduces the Ainu people's general idea of *kamuy* who behave and live in a similar manner to humans. The personalities of the *kamuy* are considered to be true to their feelings; they often express their emotions. Therefore, the *kamuy* can be good or bad, depending on the situation. One example is that the *kamuy* decide how they treat humans based on how humans treat them (Fujimura 1982:309). This behavior of the *kamuy* reminds one of an equal relationship existing between the *kamuy* and humans. As the universe allows all living creatures to express their

uniqueness in their own individual ways, the universe also allows the *kamuy* to honestly express their feelings.

Fujimura goes on to explain that the *kamuy* usually stay in the divine world, but disguise themselves by wearing special dresses when they interact with humans. If they disguise themselves as bears, they wear bear fur and flesh; they take off the bear disguise and go back to their routine lives when they return to their divine world (Fujimura 1982:309).

This Ainu worldview is similar to Orikuchi's explanation of the spirits' migration between the spiritual world where spirits, the *tama*, usually stay and this world. Orikuchi (1956:200-201) explains how the *tama* and the spiritual world relate to each other:

Ancient Japanese people did not have a perception in which souls of human individuals, the *tamashii*, constantly stayed within human flesh; rather, they believed that human flesh provided the *tamashii* with places where they could temporarily stay... In this view, souls were considered to come from outside and attached to human flesh...

The *tamashii* that came to attach to human flesh in this world were the same spiritual forces that existed within all life forms in the spiritual world or another dimension. That is, human individuals, whom these spiritual life forces attached to, received abilities or powers of all life forms that existed in the spiritual world. Further described, these humans, by having the *tamashii*, possessed capabilities of dealing with all life because spiritual life forces that existed in all life also existed within the *tamashii*. In this view, souls or spirits were supposed to have other bodies in the spiritual world where they usually stayed; thus, spirits migrated between these bodies in the spiritual world and physical bodies that they attached to in this world. This idea triggered another idea in which all life that existed in the spiritual world also could manifest themselves in this world. This same idea also illuminated the aspect in which these original bodies always existed in the spiritual world (Orikuchi 1956:200-201).

Like the story of the migration of the *kamuy* deities, Orikuchi's story of the *tama* shows the existence of the spiritual world where spirits or deities usually stay as well as spirit's

journey between the two different worlds. Orikuchi's explanation also indicates that ancient Japanese believed that the *tamashii* and spiritual life forces that existed within all life were related to each other; therefore, humans who obtained the *tamashii* were able to exercise the same capabilities that all life in the spiritual world possessed.

This explanation displays manifestation of spiritual life forces into many life forms in this world. The illustration of this phenomenon enables one to see that migration of souls or spirits is not only for humans, but also for all life. In this way, operation of life with the rhythm of the universe constantly continues through a phenomenon in which all life repeats births and deaths by appearing in this world and disappearing from this world; this movement continues throughout time.

Orikuchi also illuminates an intimate relationship between living beings and nature from the spiritual perspective. As an example, he (1956:201) introduces the reason why ancient ritual practitioners, often rulers or leaders of villages, used sacred plants for their ritual conducts.

Ancient Japanese people practiced ritual ceremonies by using sacred plants based on the belief in which not only these sacred plants possessed special magical powers, but also humans who conducted such rituals possessed some magical powers. This type of relationship between these practitioners and plants shows the close relationship between them. For this reason, these ritual practitioners were able to incorporate the special powers of these plants into their own special powers in order to conduct ritual ceremonies effectively (Orikuchi 1956:201).

It has to be pointed out that from the perspective of nature's law, this type of close relationship between humans and nature should exist equally amongst all life, not just between certain types of people and nature. What has to be noted here is that all humans

are, through spiritual life force, interrelated to the rest of the world. The Ainu worldview also shows similar interrelationship that exist amongst living beings.

Matsuda Kenichi (1999:34) introduces how nature and the *kamuy* closely relate to each individual by referring to a statement ascribed to Kuzuno Tatsujirō, an Ainu elder. According to Kuzuno, the Ainu people do not worship shrines and charms because the world of nature itself is their deity; all living creatures along with nature are their deities. This statement signifies that all life forms on earth can survive with the blessing of nature. For this reason, Kuzuno keeps warning people not to become the ones who do not respect nature (Matsuda 1999:34). In Kuzuno's view, nature, which contains the life force that nourishes all living creatures, reflects the existence of a deity. Sustaining all life forms is beyond human ability; in short, life forces in nature are expressed as the *kamuy*.

According to the Ainu-edition of the Asahi Newspaper, Kuzuno also says that it is vital for humans to get along with the *kamuy* that exist in their hearts (1993:6): praying to a deity means praying to *oneself* or praying to one's *heart* (Matsuda 1999:34). He believes that this heart is the most important matter for the Ainu people (Matsuda 1999:34). Kuzuno adds that getting along with one's *kamuy* means to love oneself (1993:6). He implies that one has a deity within oneself. Definitions of this deity differ from person to person, depending on one's belief. Nonetheless, in Kuzuno's view, the word "deity" may be replaceable with the word "life." This perception is comparable to the spiritual view of ancient Japan: a deity is life. In this perspective, deity, nature, and life are closely related to each other, and the word *kamuy* seems to represent all three existences. This feature of the *kamuy* also explains the reason why ritual practitioners in

ancient Japan managed to induce the power of the sacred plants. The same *kamuy*, as spiritual life forces, existed within both ritual practitioners and sacred plants; that is, they are connected to each other at a very deep spiritual level.

Ritual customs of the *marebito* in the Ainu culture should be discussed based on this basic spiritual worldview. The bear-sending ceremony known as *Iyomante* is the most famous ceremony that represents the *marebito* concept in the Ainu culture. Fujimura (1998:141) also notes that in the Ainu spiritual view, a spirit sustains creation; flesh is simply a container of a spirit. He (1998:142) believes that a spirit and flesh in the Ainu worldview are inseparable while an individual is alive. One's spirit leaves one's flesh to return to the divine world when one passes away (1998:142).

Based on this idea of a soul, the Ainu people practice a bear-sending ceremony, *Iyomante*. Keira Mitsunori (1995:104) writes that it is incorrect to translate the Ainu word *Iyomante*, or *Iomante*, simply as "a bear ceremony"; this word means, "to send it." The "it" in the phrase can be any substance, depending on what humans desire to send. In this ritual practice, humans send to the divine world mainly souls of living creatures that they have consumed (Keira 1995:104).

The Ainu people conduct this ritual ceremony, believing that the souls, which humans send to the divine world, will return to this world as *provisions*. This spiritual migration between the two worlds represents the migration of the *marebito* that Orikuchi depicts in his work. Although the *marebito* images that Orikuchi illustrates in his theory take different forms from those of the Ainu spiritual worldview, the fundamental aspects that constitute these two views have something in common, which will be discussed later in the chapter.

According to Fujimura (1998:142), the Ainu people prepare for the ceremony by hunting bears in springtime. The Ainu people do not use the word “hunting”; they instead use the word “welcoming.” They go to mountains to welcome the bear *kamuy* to their villages (Fujimura 1998:142). Akino Shigeki (1999:249) additionally writes that the Ainu people believe that the mountain deities (*kimun-kamuy*) often disguise themselves as bears. In order to welcome these *kimun-kamuy*, the Ainu people go hunting in spring after a bear cub has been born (1999:249).

Akino (1999:250-251) further explains that the bear cub is taken to the Ainu villages to be raised by humans if it is found. The Ainu people believe that as parent deities, the parent bears have trusted humans to raise their cub. Generally, the cub is carefully brought up in the Ainu village for a year or two. Then people conduct *Iyomante* in a ceremonial feast style to send the bear god (*kimun-kamuy*) to his or her home, the divine world, with abundant gifts. When the bear’s spirit returns to the divine world, he or she holds a party at his or her house by inviting the other gods. On this occasion, human gifts, including *sake* (*tonoto*), dried salmon (*satchep*), and sacred shaved sticks (*inau*), are shared by all the guests with good stories of how respectfully the bear deity was treated by the Ainu people. These gifts are used to persuade the other gods to visit the Ainu world in the future to receive the same benefits. With more visits of the other deities, the Ainu people are able to obtain more provisions (Akino 1999:250-251).

This entire story definitely reflects the journey of the spirits. The interesting point is that the Ainu people consider the sacred visiting deities as gifts: provisions. According to Watanabe (1999:199), the Ainu people believe that the provisions that they receive are gifts from the *kamuy*, which they bring on their bodies. As a result, the search for their

sustenance cannot be inseparable from various kinds of *kamuy* rituals (Watanabe 1999:199).

This Ainu story of the *marebito* can be compared to Orikuchi's story of the *tama*. According to Orikuchi, ancient Japanese people believed that souls have other original bodies in the spiritual world (1956:201). From this perspective, physical bodies in this world are simply temporal disguises of the *tama*; thus, these physical bodies in this world can be gifts to humans as provisions. Both the story of the bear *kamuy* and the story of the *tama* express the belief that deaths in this world do not hurt souls themselves. Souls or spirits have a place where they will return after their deaths in this world, to the original place where they came from. Slawik (1980:98) also points out that in the Ainu worldview, all living creatures are perceived as sacred beings that are only "visiting" humans in their disguised figures. The *kamuy* then visit humans in order to sacrifice their flesh. Slawik (1980:98) believes that the *kamuy* are willing to be consumed by humans in order to return to their own world; hence, it is vital for the Ainu people to continue the cycle of receiving and sending the *kamuy* deities from the village to the spiritual world (1980:98).

It has to be emphasized that the important aspect that the Ainu people have maintained throughout time is that they have appreciated this cycle of life; this cycle of life has made them sustain their lives. For this reason, they have conducted the *marebito* rituals in a serious manner by ascertaining that the *kamuy* return to their divine world. Respectfully sending off the souls of the creation means completing a life circle between the two different worlds. The *kamuy* can be seen as the *marebito* who come from another world to bless humans.

According to Slawik, like Orikuchi's story of the *tama*, these *marebito* in the Ainu worldview cannot permanently stay in this world. The *marebito*, sooner or later, have to leave this world in order to revisit humans with various gifts and blessings (1980:101). Slawik believes that this concept of the sacred visit continues as long as the mutually reciprocal relationship of gifts exchanged between the *kamuy* and humans is maintained (1980:103). Therefore, in the Ainu traditional way of life, the *marebito* from the divine world are crucial guests.

In this world, there are no organisms that eternally remain unchanged. All living creatures, including humans themselves, experience gradual aging throughout their lives. When these creatures are no longer alive, their physical bodies have to decay; nevertheless, in the Ainu worldview, souls will be able to return to this world by obtaining different physical bodies. In this view, humans can also be the *marebito* as important guests who are able to provide other people with happiness and opportunities to learn from each other. The notion of the *marebito*, which is conceivable as a moral for people to follow to make their societies healthy, is deeply interrelated to the Ainu way of life.

Orikuchi does not write about the gift exchange that Slawik points out when he discusses the migration of the *tama* between the spiritual world and this world. However, his *marebito* images, bringing villages happiness and leaving villages with abundant gifts from humans, share the same feature that the migration of the *kamuy* deities shows. Orikuchi's story of the *tama* can be compared to sacred visitors, who come from another world and go back to the same world; in this sense, the *tama* could be expressed as spiritual beings or spiritual selves. If these spiritual beings were believed to be deities or

the *kamuy*, deities would exist “within” selves. Put in other words, the relationship between deities and humans should be very close, and this closeness is the reason why deities do not rule humans from above in the Ainu worldview. If Orikuchi’s most important interest in his life were to search for a “deity,” this Ainu perspective would help one to expand Orikuchi’s *marebito* images.

The spiritual worldviews of the ancient Japanese and Ainu cultures are similar; a relationship between deities and humans is close because deities can be defined as spiritual aspects of human individuals. In his work, Orikuchi introduces this inner existence that can be found especially in the form of a dialogue. One example is the blessing of the *Yunoki*. According to Orikuchi (2003:84), there was a folk custom in the warriors’ class in which warriors spoke out certain phrases in the form of a dialogue for blessing; this dialogue originated from a dialogue between humans and deities of each household. Orikuchi (2003:99) further explains this dialogue, a call and a reply, especially by focusing on the reply:

As a reply of a phrase that a warrior calls, “*yunoki no onkoto*,” there is a phrase, “*sareba sonokoto, medetaku sourou*.” This call aims to bless an individual, and this reply represents an inner voice, a voice of a spiritual self of the person who was just blessed; this reply is often phrased by someone else [because the inner voice is supposed to be silent]... That is, this phrase is considered to be a reply that should be made by a spirit or a soul of an individual in return for the blessing that the person just received (Orikuchi 2003:99).

His explanation of this blessing signifies that he recognized this type of inner existence as a part of his extensive knowledge obtained from classic Japanese literature. Another example is also from a Japanese myth.

After the god, Ohokuninushi, lost another god, Sukunahiko, he walked around the beach, wondering what to do with the loss. Then, he saw a light coming toward him. He asked to the light, "Who are you?" and the light answered, "I am your spirits that are supposed to attach to you" (Orikuchi 1956:225-226).

These spirits are the *gairaikon* that came from outside and became inner lives of Ohokuninushi by attaching themselves to his physical body. This story continues and implicates an aspect that special types of deities (or people) possess these special souls, and this connotation should be corrected by rephrasing it as "souls or spirits exist in all physical forms; there is no superiority or inferiority in spiritual life force."

Spiritual selves always coexist with physical selves while humans are alive; however, humans often do not pay attention to their spiritual selves because the voices of spiritual selves are silent. Unless humans intend to listen to these silent voices, spiritual selves are easily overlooked; this tendency creates a large distance between spiritual and physical selves or humans and deities. Forgetting the concept that one's deity exists so close to oneself creates the images of deities and a spiritual world that remain distant. This psychological distance creates the images of the *marebito* who are supposed to come from somewhere *far away* with a certain power.

An interesting aspect of Orikuchi's studies is that these spiritual selves are always illustrated in relation to physical selves. For instance, Orikuchi writes that ancient Japanese people believed that the *tama* had original bodies that maintained its life in the spiritual world although they obtained physical bodies in this world in order to temporally stay in this physical world (1956:201). The *tama* had some *bodies* that kept the souls thrive in the spiritual world. As this example shows, Orikuchi often discusses spiritual life forces in relation to some elements that remind us of physical aspects.

From this perspective, for Orikuchi, physical aspects are crucial elements in completing his image of a “deity.” For example, the *marebito* images that Orikuchi witnessed throughout the Okinawa islands often appear in their festivals in the form of a human being (sometimes as demons) with special masks and costumes; these deities are often local performers who disguise themselves as the characters of deities. They express the unity of spiritual and physical aspects in such a human form by using the opportunity presented by their local festivals.

In this chapter, the Ainu spiritual worldview has been presented in order to depict the principle of the cycle of the spirit’s journey. Through the illustration of this principle, one came to understand that the relationship between a deity and a spiritual self should be seriously reflected to broaden the definitions of “deity” for Orikuchi. In this exploration, comprehending the *marebito* images that appear in local festivals of Okinawa would be essential because it has been said that the *marebito* images in Okinawa greatly inspired Orikuchi to create his theory. In the next chapter, faith in the *marebito* in the cultures of Okinawa will be introduced. Through the illustration of a local *marebito* festival, a key to how we expand the meaning of “deity” will be further explored.

Chapter 5

The Worldview of the Ryūkyū Culture

The Ryūkyū islands, known as Okinawa Prefecture (or province) today, exist amongst the southwest islands. The Ryūkyū islands, comprised of various small and large islands, extend from the Kagoshima Prefecture in Japan to Taiwan; they are made up of four groups of islands: Amami, Okinawa, Miyako, and Yaeyama.

Higa states that the native people in the Ryūkyū islands have maintained their own ritual practices and spiritual worldviews despite the long history of being occupied by different powers, including Japanese warriors, Japanese government, and American soldiers (2000:22). Similar to the Ainu culture, the Ryūkyū cultures show different characteristics from those of mainland Japan; each culture of the Ryūkyū islands is distinct from one another.

In his book, Higa (2000:22) specifically introduces the worldview of Kudaka Island, one of the Ryūkyū islands. According to him, people in Kudaka were able to maintain their physical and spiritual independence from other sources. This independence has been expressed by the word *shima*; this word is defined as “complete, independent spaces” (2000:22-23). Asato Eiko adds that in such complete spaces, people in the Ryūkyūs established their own ways of life in which nature, humans, and deities harmoniously coexisted (1999:116); their ritual practices greatly helped them to maintain this coexistence. Tōma Ichirō states that people in the Ryūkyū islands have held their festivals in sacred places known as the *utaki*. These sacred places are often natural,

specifically open fields. The only physical objects that are placed within the spaces are holy stones under holy trees (Tōma 1976:242).

Famous Japanese artist, Okamoto Tarō's comment, "I found nothing there," expresses his impression of the *utaki* in Kudaka Island (1996:168). In this place, Okamoto could not find any physical, ritualistic objects, which people often worship for ritual purposes; nonetheless, he sensed the energy of cleanness and pureness. Okamoto further shares his impression at that time:

Deities may descend to such an empty, transparent natural place [the *utaki*] in order to interact with humans (1996:168)...There are no physical objects that indicate it is a ritual place. The energy, which I felt, was clean and unconditional. People should actively participate in finding or feeling the existence of deities for the lack of ritual icons in the place. I felt strong holiness, and this holiness reminded me that I was alive...The space around me was filled with deities. Deities were in the flow of pure life forms in such a silent place, or deities might exist on the ground beneath my shoes (1996:173).

This description shows how Okamoto felt the presence of invisible deities in the *utaki*. Recognition of these invisible deities, or spiritual energies, can be expressed as the primary spiritual worldview in the Ryūkyū islands.

This concept of spiritual energy or life force reflects spiritual views of ancient Japanese and Ainu cultures. A very different part of the Ryūkyū rituals from those of the Ainu cultures is the way that the Ryūkyū people conduct the *marebito* festivals. The spiritual views throughout the Ryūkyūs have often been maintained through various types of the *marebito* festivals, in which local performers impersonate characters of deities.

In this chapter, a basic Ryūkyū spiritual worldview as well as one example of the *marebito* festivals in the Yaeyama region, known as *Pūri*, will be introduced. In his work, Orikuchi has introduced the names of the *marebito* who appear in this festival, *Akamata* and *Kuromata*, as an example to prove his theory. Through the illustrations of their performances as well as the associated worldview in this festival, the relationship or the distance between humans and deities in the Ryūkyū spiritual worldview will be re-examined. Additionally, a shamanistic role that the Ryūkyū women perform in ritual ceremonies will be illustrated. In this role they become a human medium that connects their communities to the universe. In pursuing this role, they connect themselves to the universe; a microcosm that represents a spiritual self of a human individual is related to a macrocosm that represents the universe or an immense life force. This shamanistic practice allows the female practitioners to deeply comprehend the Ryūkyū spiritual worldview. How this worldview can be compared to spiritual worldviews of the Ainu people and the mainland Japanese will be presented, and this exploration will help one to deepen meaning of the word “deity” for Orikuchi.

Similar to worldviews of Japanese and Ainu cultures, people in the Ryūkyūs recognize a spirit, or a life force, within human flesh. Kojima Yoshiyuki (1996:143) explains that the word *mabui* in the Ryūkyū language represents souls of human beings. Kojima introduces that there is a general notion that prevails in ordinary Ryūkyū life: a soul of a child can be easily disconnected from his or her flesh (1996:143).

Doi Takuji (1983:290) also introduces the idea of the *mabui* that pervades through Yoron Island of the Ryūkyūs. Doi notes that the professional female shamans of Yoron Island believe that there are two types of souls: the *ikimaburi* and the *shinimaburi*

(1983:290). Doi explains that the former word represents the *mabui* that exist within humans, and the latter represents the *mabui* that leaves human flesh (1983:290). The existence of these words show that there is a belief in the Ryūkyūs that humans possess souls within their flesh, and they die when these souls leave their physical bodies.

Higa deduces that a form of the *mabui* is vapor, like smoke, from a funeral song that has been sung in the Kudaka Island. Based on this song, people in Kudaka believe that *mabui* are non-physical beings, which head to another world after they leave human bodies (2000:44). Higa (2000:46) notes that the Kudaka worldview is immense, and involves even the cosmic universe; nevertheless, its foundation is the *mabui*. Their recognition of the importance of a soul is the center of their worldview. This recognition of the *mabui* reminds us of the idea of the recognition of the *kamuy* in the Ainu culture, the recognition of the *inochi* (life) in mainland Japan, as well as the recognition of the *tama* in ancient Japan. Although each culture shows distinct characteristics, they share the similar concept of spiritual life forces within organisms that relates to animism.

How this concept of the *mabui* also relates to faith in the *marebito* and another world in the Ryūkyū worldview will be further illustrated. Sakurai Tokutarō (2004:172) explains that the word *obotsukagura* in the Ryūkyū language represents heaven, which exists on a vertical plane, and the word *niraikanai* represents another world in a distant sea, which exists on a horizontal plane. The word “*ni*” in the word *niraikanai* also signifies the world of the underground; hence, Sakurai (2004:174) writes that the Ryūkyū people have believed that heaven, the world of the underground, as well as the distant sea encompass each island. Sakurai adds that there is a belief in the Ryūkyūs that different types of deities visit humans from another world, the *niraikanai*, to bring humans

happiness and gifts. The Ryūkyū people welcome these deities in their festivals and pray for peace (2004:175). These sacred visiting deities surely represent the *marebito* images in Orikuchi's studies. It has been well known that these *marebito* figures in the Ryūkyū islands greatly inspired Orikuchi to form his *marebito* theory.

The concept of the *niraikanai*, where the *marebito* come from, is often associated with the Ryūkyū festivals. Yoshinari Naoki (2003:56) notes that the ritual ceremonies with sacred visiting deities in a part of the Ryūkyū islands are well known for the unique appearances of the deities whom humans impersonate; these performers decorate themselves with specific types of leaves, or straw raincoats, and appear in the ritual festivals to bless humans.

One example of such a festival is the *marebito* festival called *Pūri*. Ine Yūji (2005:70) notes that people welcome sacred visiting deities called *Akamata* and *Kuromata* in *Pūri* held in the Yaeyama islands. Orikuchi, as examples of the *marebito* deities, refers to the names of these deities (2003:21). Ine (2005:74) explains that the names of these deities originated from the colours of their masks. The word *aka* in *Akamata* represents red, and the word *kuro* in *Kuromata* represents black. *Akamata* is considered a male deity, whereas *Kuromata* is believed to be a female deity (Ine 2005:74). Ine (2005:71) goes on to explain that *Akamata* and *Kuromata* appear in the festival with sticks and costumes made of leaves, and they dance to the rhythm of drums. When they finish dancing, they start visiting each household in the village. *Akamata* and *Kuromata* do not speak a word; instead, they dance in each house for a minute in order to bless the occupants (Ine 2005:71).

As I wrote earlier, these deities, *Akamata* and *Kuromata* bring villages a good annual harvest from another world known as Neil. Orikuchi writes about deities of a couple. He assumes that they often represent a symbol of a good harvest: production (2003:62). Tanigawa (1983:252) states that these *marebito* performed by male villagers are also called *Yomochigami*, who provide humans with a year of a good harvest. The word “*yo*” in *Yomochigami* represents abundant provision (1983:252). Orikuchi also writes that the word *yo* means grains and their ripeness (2003:63). According to Orikuchi, ancient Japanese people also expressed a close relationship between a male and female with the word *yo* (2003:64). It seems that the word *yo* represents life force that creates production of new physical objects, including a good harvest and children.

According to Yoshinari (2003:56), Sumiya Kazuhiko states that the structure of *Pūri* has been characterized by “a death and rebirth.” Sumiya himself (1983:156) writes that he is impressed with the idea that *Akamata* and *Kuromata* are deities who are annually reborn. According to Yoshinari (2003:63), Kreiner and Sumiya define *Akamata* and *Kuromata* as original deities for males and females; these divine beings are considered as “the antediluvian patriarch for all human beings.” Yoshinari explains that these sacred deities annually repeat a birth and death at the cave leading to another world in the underground, and they visit their descendents in festivals (2003:63). The abundance that the *marebito* bring represents a never-ending activity of life. Although *Akamata* and *Kuromata* do not convey any sacred messages, their annual arrival certainly brings the village some important messages. In this sense, *Akamata* and *Kuromata* are the *marebito* as Orikuchi depicts in his theory.

The Ainu people, along with their basic spiritual worldview, have maintained their everyday lives; the notion of the *marebito* for the Ainu people has been intertwined with their everyday living. A frequent interaction between humans and deities, as well as recognition of each other's values, exists in every aspect of their ordinary lives. Such a way of life demands that people have constant interaction, or conversation, with various life forms, and such communication lessens the distance between humans and deities.

On the other hand, the *marebito* festivals in the Ryūkyūs do not directly interrelate to their everyday needs at every moment of their lives. Kreiner (1994:44) notes that he has not heard the *marebito* in the Ryūkyū islands appearing in the form of fish; instead, the *marebito* often appear in a human form. I previously introduced Tanigawa's explanation of *Yomochigami* who bring humans a good annual harvest (1983:252). Yoshinari (2003:2) adds that it has been believed that sustenance, which humans need to maintain the Ryūkyū lives, originally came from another world; therefore, rice, wheat, and millet were brought from another world (2003:2). Considering this view, the notion of the *marebito* in the Ryūkyūs also relates to everyday needs of people, although these deities only visit humans on special occasions.

Sakurai Tokutarō (2004:169) writes that distinct, traditional characteristics of Japanese cultures are disappearing today. Yet, similar characteristics still remain in the Ryūkyūs, and shamanism is an example. He (2004:70) believes that shamanism lies as a foundation of a spiritual worldview of Japan. Communities in the past held festivals in order to listen to messages that female shamans obtained from deities; these messages were often warnings and advice for the coming year (Sakurai 2004:70).

The *marebito*, who rarely visit villages to bless humans, remind us of these shamans who receive messages on special occasions. People who live on farms in settled villages relied on the occasional festivals and ceremonies on a community level to obtain such messages. The *marebito* in a human form, who come with sacred words to bless villagers, perform the role of shamans and symbolize the unified state between spiritual and physical aspects of human individuals.

In his *marebito* theories, Orikuchi illustrates a long story of how the original sacred messages that the *marebito* shared in festivals became different forms of Japanese literature by introducing specialists who traveled to bless people with specific words. In Orikuchi's studies, the more different types of professionals who emerged to disseminate sacred messages through migration, the more Japanese literature evolved or was transformed by repetition and alteration. In Orikuchi's view, the occurrence of a form takes place more than once; that is, Japanese literature has gradually transformed itself through constant repetition and change.

Orikuchi (2003:69) writes that shamans in ancient Japan shared messages from deities and these messages became different types of Japanese literature:

Epic poems that are usually expressed in the first person represent monologues of deities. These deities, through human mediums, told about their origins as well as the stories of long histories of their communities and lands. These messages might have been perceived as imagined stories that were made in shamanistic states; however, it should be noted that these messages were consistent with beliefs of their communities. In such shamanistic states, accumulated memories of communities might have suddenly emerged from shamans.

These original stories were certainly shared in an oral form with some certain rhythms... Many of these autobiographies of deities disappeared by being perceived as temporal stories. At the same time, some stories that deeply affected the lives of their villages have been handed out by being

simplified or fixed. While these original stories had been repeatedly shared, by being modified with new adjectives and some other memories of communities, sacred messages as the *kamigoto*, had become complete forms (Orikuchi 2003:69-70).

As his explanation shows, in his view, original sacred messages that shamans received in a shamanistic state became different forms of oral traditions, simultaneously creating various types of professionals who transmitted these stories. Orikuchi writes that people in ancient Japan tended to perceive these shamans as various types of specialists who disseminated sacred messages on special occasions (Orikuchi 2003:71).

Orikuchi (2003:71) introduces some examples of these specialists:

While shamans had shared sacred messages that they had obtained in shamanistic states and that especially messages which greatly had influenced lives of the villagers, their professionals as story tellers had become diversified. These professional jobs, through the accumulation of experiences of memorization and dissemination, had been established as traditional heritages (Orikuchi 2003:71).

Orikuchi names this group of professionals as *kataribe*, who transmitted sacred stories that were originally received in a shamanistic state and that greatly influenced lives of the villagers. He also introduces other professionals, such as the *saniwa*, who interpreted metaphors and symbols that deities used to communicate with humans (2003:71-72).

Orikuchi presents this story in *Kodai kenkyū: Kokubungaku no hassei* (Archaic Studies: The Origin of Japanese Literature). This story tells that shamans were able to receive some important messages for their communities. Receiving messages for their people was important and this role should be greatly respected. At the same time, this story can be possibly interpreted as that the distance between ordinary villagers and deities became greater, as more professional occupations emerged through diversification.

In this story, Orikuchi says, “people today do not recognize that original visitors, who came in a seasonal transition from winter to spring, were deities” (2003:15). This statement signifies that people can forget the meaning of the *marebito*: deities exist within themselves. In this sense, it can be interpreted as that each individual could also receive important messages with one’s firm recognition that deities, or one’s spiritual aspects, exist within oneself. It can also be interpreted as that people may prefer to rely on sacred messages transmitted by shamans, or some specialists, or to constantly reflect on every moment of their lives in order to receive personal messages, which come in diverse forms. The ideas of the *marebito* in these two cultures, the Ainu and the Ryūkyū, should be respected because there are many teachings that people in this modern age should learn. Simultaneously, differences in function in these *marebito* ceremonies and festivals are recognizable.

The Ainu *marebito* provide humans with their direct needs and their need for more frequent interactions with deities, while the Ryūkyū *marebito* occasionally convey a community sacred messages which give them an opportunity to remember the existence of another world. With their visits, the villagers are able to remember the significance of the beginning of human life. Simultaneously, they obtain the opportunity to reflect on their lives, and to improve on any negative individuals, relationships, or occurrences to maintain a healthy community. Wise teachings through these customs or festivals have been valued and respected as important elements to maintain healthy communities and to unite people in their communities.

At the same time, it can be pointed out that there is a difference in the distance between humans and deities when two types of the *marebito* ceremonies between the

cultures of the Ainu and Okinawa are compared. Frequent interaction between deities and individuals certainly creates *less* distance in the Ainu *marebito* concept; on the other hand, relying on shamans or the *marebito* performers to receive messages from deities on special occasions creates *more* distance in the Ryūkyū *marebito* concept. This difference in distance surely affects the interpretation of the word “deity.” The *marebito* festivals in the Ryūkyū islands have been maintained by depending on this distance to some degree.

Komatsu Kazuhiko (1997:221) believes that any concept of another world, which people create, must reflect or be based upon their experience or perception of this world. In this view, another world has to exist somewhere in the distance. In other words, another world exists as another world because of this distance from our world (1997:221).

Komatsu (1997:224) further explains that a clear distinction and a medium, between the two worlds should always exist in order for these worlds to relate to each other; a being that does not usually exist in this world, but that appears in this world, reveals the existence of another world (Komatsu 1997:225). Sacred visiting deities in the Ainu culture often appear in this world dressed as living creatures, for example, wearing bear furs. The Ainu people have not performed any *marebito* ceremonies as masked deities. Their understanding of the deities allows them to practice spirit-sending ceremonies by simply sending the spirits off. On the contrary, people in mainland Japan and the Ryūkyū islands often conduct the *marebito* festivals with masked, or disguised, deities; performers who act the *marebito* in these festivals often appear in masks or costumes. Komatsu (1997:226) believes that this “disguise” represents a state in which humans become deities; “disguised” humans are sacred visiting deities in festivals.

Komatsu (1997:226) additionally explains that this “disguise” represents a state in which an individual hides his or her ordinary self. By hiding one’s ordinary self as a human being, one becomes a sacred visiting deity in festivals; in short, a sacred being does not appear unless a human being hides his or her ordinary self in a disguise (Komatsu 1997:227). Orikuchi (2003:14) also discusses disguise of ancient Japanese people:

Ancient Japanese people perceived a straw rain-cape and a hat as a tool that they used to disguise themselves, although people today perceive these tools for ordinary use by farmers. It can be considered that by wearing a straw rain-cape and a hat, a person could obtain an opportunity to focus more on manifesting his or her spiritual self, being away from the human state... In order to disguise oneself as a deity, the straw rain-cape and the hat were necessary in ancient times (Orikuchi 2003:14).

Komatsu (1995:193) discusses that this idea, a straw rain-cape and a hat symbolize a visiting deity, is not always true; however, Komatsu interprets Orikuchi’s explanation by saying:

A straw rain-cape and a hat becomes a symbol of various deities. Wearing a straw rain-cape and a hat signify that some aspects of spiritual self emerge; more generally described, wearing them symbolize that something spiritual or unusual emerges (Komatsu 1995:193).

In this way, both scholars express the trait of human individuals who often disguise themselves by using some physical objects in order to manifest spiritual aspects.

Komatsu (1997:227) believes that people perceive this disguised state as a medium, or junction, between the two worlds. When they expose the true identity of the performer, they cannot find either a real sacred being or another world. Komatsu concludes that masks or special costumes only work with *vagueness* or *indirectness*;

these create the distance. In short, sacredness disappears when a real identity of the performer is disclosed (1997:227).

In this view, people have held the *marebito* festivals with disguised performers in order to create a distance between deities and humans; creating the divine beings demands distance from ordinary living space. Performers in these types of *marebito* festivals represent the basic principle that humans are spiritual beings that possess physical bodies. By intentionally placing distance between deities and humans in such ritualistic plays, one is able to reflect on oneself and remember that one is comprised of physical and spiritual aspects.

These ceremonies are very effective in creating an opportunity in which humans show their respect toward deities who provide humans with a good environment through a good harvest so that humans are able to maintain their everyday lives. Because humans show such a respect and appreciation toward their deities in their festivals, deities agree to help humans to sustain their lives; in return for the appreciation that humans show, deities will come back to human villages for the next opportunity to complete a circle. This reciprocal relationship can be compared to the Ainu *marebito* ceremonies in the context of a gift exchange. This good relationship with their deities can also relate to a good relationship between physical and spiritual aspects within selves; each individual can be a medium, or junction, of the two worlds in every moment of one's life, as long as one pays attention to one's spiritual aspect. This basic concept exists as the root of the Ryūkyū worldview as well as those of the Ainu and of mainland Japan.

In his work, Orikuchi (2003:56) writes that conceptions of the *marebito* among people have changed throughout time. He explains these changes in the following statement.

People used to worship the *marebito* as ancestral spirits, but this concept faded out of view. As time went on, people in some areas considered the *marebito* as supreme deities; people in some other areas considered the *marebito* as demons who were fearful, but could bring their villages happiness. Some people considered the *marebito* as power less, lonely dwarfs, while others considered the *marebito* as a group of migrating deities. Besides, people believed that these visiting deities could be represented by epidemic diseases and even worms (Orikuchi 2003:56).

In this statement, Orikuchi indicates changes or diversifications of the *marebito* images throughout time. Orikuchi (2003:57) further explains these changes:

The *marebito* images have been changed; as a result, people do not perceive the *marebito* only as spiritual beings that came from the spiritual world. People have created various types of the *marebito*. Some *marebito* images existed only in myths of the past. Some other *marebito* are only human beings by forgetting the state in which they put forth efforts to become closer to deities (Orikuchi 2003:57).

In this statement, Orikuchi brings up the state in which humans perform the *marebito* by attempting to become closer to deities through some processes of purification. In the following statement, Orikuchi (2003:55) moreover explains this state.

Numerous Japanese folk customs aim to calm, purify, adjust, or re-attach souls that exist within human individuals, but need to be re-connected to human flesh on specific occasions, including seasonal changes. Japanese people often recognize these types of customs as the process of purification. This concept of purification is originally rooted in the belief that human individuals can become closer to deities by purifying themselves in order to obtain the same subtle, sacred energy that deities possess; nevertheless, people often do not pay attention to the original meaning of this purification (Orikuchi 2003:55).

His statement shows that people used to put forth efforts to become closer to deities in order to perform the characters of deities without using any physical objects; people became closer to deities through the process of purification. Orikuchi does not explain how people purified themselves. However, his description reminds one of the possibility in which people, without any physical objects, can be a medium that connects deities and communities. It should be noted that this basic concept exists in the Ryūkyū festivals, although people there conduct the *marebito* festivals with disguised masks and dresses.

According to Asato, the Ryūkyū females play central roles in practicing rituals for their communities. In ritual practices, they transmit many stories by using their physical bodies as a medium (1999:77). Asato (1999:13) further writes that festivals provide people with an opportunity for remembering the ancient ways of life. Each period in history has social elements that affect festivals, causing festival songs to transform themselves throughout history. Asato believes that these songs have accumulated ancient memories while they have been handed down from one generation to another (1999:13). During festivals, while the female practitioners sing songs, they unconsciously travel to the ancient times that these songs represent. Similar to these songs, the practitioners themselves have inherited ancient memories of their communities in their genes. These practitioners realize that these old memories still exist in this present time, when they focus within themselves. This realization triggers other villagers to recall the similar types of memories that they have inherited. Hence, festivals provide villagers with an opportunity to recall these ancient memories, and people will hand

down these memories to their next generations through their songs and genes. In this way, a chain of life circulates throughout time (Asato 1999:13).

Life is a conduit that connects ancient times to this present time, which is expressed as a vertical relationship. At the same time, this relationship of life is expanded to the horizontal direction; that is to say, life exists within each individual as well as throughout the universe. These relationships can be compared to Orikuchi's archaic elements, including the images of the *marebito*.

Through a chain of life, folk archaic elements that Orikuchi found in his time had been transmitted as folk customs, and this transmission can be expressed as a vertical line. Simultaneously, Orikuchi suggests that the *marebito* images have been disseminated through peoples' migration. It is interesting that the *marebito* images can be found in many places throughout the world. This horizontal dissemination shows that the *marebito* images that Orikuchi depicts in his theory can be possibly accepted by large numbers of folk communities.

Asato adds that the female practitioners meditate in order to interact with deities; it is believed that their ritual practices ultimately lead them to reach the "eternal universe," the *niraikanai* (1999:116). That is, the Ryūkyū rituals provide these females with an opportunity to connect their internal universe to the external universe (1999:18). They are eventually able to reach another world, the *niraikanai*, by focusing within themselves (Asato 1999:116). Deities are able to manifest themselves through the bodies of female practitioners when these females focus their spiritual aspects. This shamanistic practice will succeed as long as the practitioners understand the fundamental principle that life exists within each individual as well as the universe.

Through this description, one comes to understand that a microcosm that exists within an individual is connected to a macrocosm, the universe. Asato's statement interrelates to Kuzuno's statement that I introduced earlier: the *kamuy* exist within oneself (1993:6). Kamata's statement, "the words *nature* and *deity* are replaceable with the word *life* (2000:164)" can also be compared. By referring to these statements, a deep foundation that lies within the spiritual worldviews throughout the Japanese islands becomes clear—a deity can be found within oneself when one looks *inward*. One may still question how this concept works.

Higa (2000:44) explained before that people in Kudaka consider a form of the *mabui* as vapor. Kamata (2000:164) also explains that the Japanese word *inochi*, which generally represents life, is comprised of three words, *i*, *no*, and *chi*; the word "*i*" means a breath and the word "*chi*" indicates the feature of fluidity, or pervasiveness. The word "*chi*" also signifies the world on a multi-dimensional level. Consequently, the word *inochi* represents a life that circulates throughout the universe. (Kamata 2000:164). It is interesting that the word "*i*" represents a "breath." Kamata notes that a "breath" means "to live" (2000:164).

These explanations by Higa and Kamata inspire one to have a concept: life force could be compared to air. Living beings surely cannot live without air; at the same time, all beings created require the sharing of air. In other words, a life within oneself can also be found in the universe: the microcosm and macrocosm are deeply interrelated.

In this sense, an immense life that pervades the universe, which can be compared to air, manifests itself in all life forms. In their meditations, the Ryūkyū females as well as shamans in mainland Japan focus on their spiritual aspects in order to interact with the

universe. A strong recognition that they are spiritual beings rather than physical beings enables them unite themselves with such an immense life force that percolates throughout the universe. This state brings them a chance to converse with the universe.

This type of conversation or communication can take place in everyday lives in the Ainu worldview. Because the Ainu people believe that the immense life pervades the universe, they receive messages from the universe in various ways: different voices of animals, weather conditions, conversations with friends, or emotions of each individual. According to Fujimura, many Ainu elders often receive important messages from other living forms, such as voices of crows. Through the voices of crows, which differ from day to day, the elders are able to understand weather conditions, degrees of their success in hunting, as well as news of someone's death (1982:38-39). This special ability results from their respect or recognition of spiritual life forces that exist within all life forms; they may not be able to understand the voices of crows if they do not have a strong recognition of such life forces. Their recognition that an immense life or the *kamuy* pervade the universe connects them (microcosm) to all life forms (macrocosm). The spiritual worldviews of the Ryūkyūs, ancient Japanese, and the Ainu cultures in terms of how people interact with the universe are very similar at their core, although their communication ways differ from one another.

This similarity helps one comprehend his or her interpretation of the word "deity" for Orikuchi. The unique part of the *marebito* theory as well as the *marebito* images is that Orikuchi includes human beings (or demons) in the category of a deity, including performers. In Orikuchi's view, a physical aspect of a human being, which is definitely an essential part in this physical world, is often emphasized. Hasegawa (1983:29) notes

that Orikuchi's *marebito* images combine spiritual beings and actual performers. For Orikuchi, deities are often beings that possess physical bodies (1983:29). Orikuchi (2003:33) himself illustrates various *marebito* images:

People forgot that the *marebito* were ancestral spirits and perceived the *marebito* as fearful demons; on the other hand, people worshipped the *marebito* as deities. When these various *marebito* images in Japan can be simplified into a simple *marebito* image and can apply it to only a human form, the image of a noble person as an honored guest who is treated well as someone special emerges (Orikuchi 2003:33).

It has to be pointed out that Orikuchi discusses the *marebito* as a human form, although he perceives the original *marebito* as a spiritual being. His *marebito* images encompass both spiritual and physical aspects; nevertheless, he should not differentiate only certain types of people, especially people in a high status, from people in general or any other life forms. In this type of tendency, his definition of the word "deity" often involves a type of human-form deity, like a saint. This tendency of his expression may cause a misconception on his *marebito* images that should be depicted in this work. The point here is that from the perspective of nature's law, all physical forms are only manifestations of spiritual life forces, and the *marebito* images symbolize this basic concept.

Orikuchi often depicts human natures through his work. An individual as the unification of spiritual and physical selves employs more limited innate abilities than the state when his or her spiritual self exists by itself. These limited abilities make the characteristics of human nature awkward or incomplete. People often express their incomplete nature through negative emotions, such as sadness, jealousy, and hatred. Nevertheless, spirits have to continue their long journeys of mastering how to be better

humans through many challenges that often prevent them from expressing their innate characteristics in the fullest degree. Orikuchi (1956:87) expresses this type of limitation by using his experience in the trip to Kumano:

During my trip in Kumano, I strongly felt that the real home of my soul existed somewhere at the end of the ocean that I was looking at near the edge of Daiousaki which exists along the coast. This feeling should not be just named as a simple sentiment of a poet. I believe that this is a type of nostalgia that was caused by transmission of ancient memories that sometimes emerge in one's life (Orikuchi 1956:87).

In this statement, Orikuchi attempts to explain his feeling or experience at that time with a human trait that craves for the spiritual world. It can be interpreted that this trait has been inherited throughout many generations. Orikuchi says, "...as a common desire of human beings, our ancestors also held an image of another world in their mind with the desire of escaping not only from restrictions that they felt as humans, but also from restrictions that they felt as being a part of nature" (1956:87). He discusses more about these restrictions by saying that humans have always valued the spiritual world in order to escape from many restrictions, including inconveniences and sufferings that exist in this physical world (1956:87).

It can be interpreted as that for Orikuchi, any human beings, who struggle throughout their lives to try to understand human conditions with these restrictions of as a human being and as a part of nature, are important and still represent the characteristics of a "deity." By greatly suffering from understanding the meaning of his life, Orikuchi himself saw the same awkward characteristic of human individuals within himself; any humans are often controlled by their egos. However, from the spiritual perspective, any human, like any other physical form, is a spiritual being that possesses a physical body.

From this point of view, the reason why Orikuchi includes human individuals in the category of deity is understandable. In this view, all humans are on their way to continue their personal journey despite many struggles and certainly represent the characters of deities, even though they look awkward. Orikuchi should have more clearly stated that all humans, including all life forms, represent the characters of deities.

In this chapter, the Ryūkyū spiritual worldview and the *marebito* who perform characters of deities in local festivals have been presented. These types of the *marebito* festivals are different from the spirit-sending ceremonies in the Ainu cultures in terms of physical distance between deities and humans. Nonetheless, the Ryūkyū *marebito* festivals, like the notion of the *marebito* in the Ainu culture, provide one with the opportunity to remember the inner existence, although people have to create a distance between deities and humans in order to succeed at their festivals. These *marebito* festivals makes one to remember the time of origin as well as one's spiritual self; in addition, the festivals makes one be more aware of the importance of this physical self in the context of spirituality. This value of physical self relates to Orikuchi's illustration of different forms of deities. In the next chapter, I will introduce his *marebito* theory in order for us to comprehend how Orikuchi perceives the relationship between spiritual selves and physical selves in depicting the *marebito* images. This exploration helps one to deepen how he or she interprets the word "deity" for Orikuchi.

Chapter 6

Marebito Theory

Orikuchi presents his *marebito* theory as his third manuscript of *Kodai kenkyū: Kokubungaku no hassei* (Archaic Studies: The Origin of Japanese Literature). It has been said that this work, comprised of four manuscripts, represents unique characteristics of Orikuchi's academic collection from his early years. The first manuscript was originally published in the journal, *Nikkou*, in April of 1925; the second manuscript was published in the same journal in June, August, and October of the same year. The third manuscript that thoroughly depicts the *marebito* images, however, was not published in the journal, *Minzoku*, until 1930. Nishimura assumes that the long period between publication of the second and third manuscripts is due to Yanagida's rejection of the work as well as Orikuchi requiring this much time to write (1988:14). In the end, the publication of the fourth manuscript, which was in the journal *Nihon bungaku kouza* in 1928, was earlier than that of the third manuscript.

Orikuchi intentionally placed his *marebito* theory, the third manuscript, at the beginning of *Kodai kenkyū: Kokubungaku no hassei*. It can be considered that this unusual arrangement indicates that Orikuchi regarded his *marebito* images as important. *Kodai kenkyū: Kokubungaku no hassei* is roughly made up of two parts. Orikuchi creates the first part with a story of spiritual beings that came from another world to bless humans. He introduces numerous *marebito* figures that he found in many folk festivals and customs to prove this story. In the latter part, Orikuchi depicts a story of how

specialists, by disseminating sacred messages, made Japanese literature and performing arts evolve into modern forms.

Orikuchi introduces the original, spiritual *marebito* images at the beginning of this work in order to explain that specialists, human *marebito* performers in the latter story, are alternated figures of the original *marebito* images. Orikuchi explains this story by saying that people in the present day forget that real ancient guests, who visited villages at the transitional season from winter to spring, were spiritual beings; people consider that the *marebito* are demons in some local areas, while people consider that the *marebito* are only human individuals, performers, who bless people with specific words in some other local areas (2003:15). These human *marebito* figures are specialists who disseminate the sacred messages originating from deities. Through this work, Orikuchi depicts the spiritual beings of the *marebito* and these specialists deeply interrelating to each other; the spiritual *marebito* images that Orikuchi illustrates at the beginning are vital elements to illustrate his entire story.

These images symbolize the basic principle of life on earth and that of in the universe. Throughout his work, Orikuchi keeps illustrating this principle as an ancient belief that the spirits, which Orikuchi calls the *gairaikon*, coming from outside to attach to human flesh. It can be said that his idea of the *gairaikon* symbolizes the notion of cycle in a broad scale, although he often depicts this principle by using examples of human souls. One of these examples is that the foundation of education, especially in court of ancient times of Japan, was embedded in faith in the spirit. Orikuchi writes that the most important educational issue then was whether or not the good quality of the

spirit attached to students (Orikuchi 1956:134). As it was introduced earlier, Orikuchi writes that people in the past referred to these spirits the *tama*.

Orikuchi further explains, "Ancient Japanese people believed that strong spirits often existed in some physical objects, and they called these spirits the *tama*. By attaching these spirits, which often existed in animals and objects, to humans, the people started showing the great ability of these spirits..." (Orikuchi 1976:135). Orikuchi's studies often show this principle, spirits come from outside, stay for a while, and leave. Kamata compares this idea to the basic concept of Shinto: cycle of life (1983:173). Kamata's idea can be interpreted as that the *marebito* images can be compared to the basic concept of Shinto that is represented in the directions of gods: away from gods and toward gods. The spiritual *marebito* images show this same principle; the spiritual *marebito* come from a distant place to villages often by manifesting themselves through shamans, whereas the human *marebito* images come from a distance to villages to bring a certain power that prompts happiness in the villages. Both spiritual and human *marebito* leave villages after their short stay. This feature of migration repeatedly appears throughout his long story.

Orikuchi uses the spiritual *marebito* images as a conduit to illustrate the lives of professional people, both performers and those who contributed to Japanese literature, festivals, and performing arts, helping them to gradually become modern forms. This gradual development of Japanese literature and performing arts did not take place without many interactions of different types of people. Through the *marebito* images, various folk festivals and customs, as well as historical elements that greatly affected ways of life for ancient Japanese people, readers are able to see a human life in the story

of how original sacred messages, the *kamigoto* that the *marebito* shared in ancient festivals, evolved into different forms of modern Japanese literature and performing arts.

Orikuchi's story illustrates the interaction of different elements that often create a new form or a change; he defines these changes as the *hassei*. For this reason, his story makes readers reflect on the significance of two different elements that always exist in this world. As it was mentioned before, the *marebito* images symbolize the basic principle of life on earth and that of in the universe. This foundation shows the unified state of spiritual and physical elements, the cycle of birth and death between two different worlds, and any forms of change that take place due to interactions of different elements in this world. His readers witness that these two different elements repeatedly emerge in different forms throughout his work. Examining the reason why Orikuchi keeps illustrating these different elements will be a solution to comprehending the images of deities as well as the meaning of the *marebito* for him.

In this chapter, I will discuss the *marebito* theory by illuminating these two elements that appear throughout his work in order to understand the meaning of the *marebito* images or deities for Orikuchi. The long story that he depicts in *Kodai kenkyū: Kokubungaku no hassei* is certainly interrelated to his spiritual philosophy, which is symbolized by the *marebito* images. The ancient customs and the flow of history are often illustrated as a set with spiritual principles so that readers realize the double meanings that go side by side between spiritual and physical worlds. In other words, by shedding a light on the deep meanings of these human lives or chains of life that he presents in his story in the context of spirituality, one will be able to understand what he truly aims to depict in his work. In focusing on two different elements that often interact,

leading to confrontation, the importance of sacred messages as well as the fundamental place where all life forms originate will be pointed out. For this examination, the meaning of dialogues between the *marebito* and natural spirits should be emphasized; these dialogues were important in ancient Japanese ritualistic plays. This discussion will lead one to understand more deeply how one will be able to interpret the word “deity” for Orikuchi.

Orikuchi created his narrative by imagining uncountable numbers of interactions of different types of people or roles; for example, the *marebito* as spiritual beings and the *marebito* as performers, who receive sacred messages and are known as the *hokqibito*, the rulers and the ruled, as well as the performers (outsiders) and villagers (insiders). From Orikuchi’s perspective, different forms of Japanese literature and performing arts that we find today result from such interaction between these different elements. In fact, Orikuchi’s *marebito* images are comprised of spiritual and physical elements; that is, the spiritual beings (deities) as well as human guests (the *hokaibito*) constitute his *marebito* images. Hence, Orikuchi begins the third manuscript with the following statement: “the native Japanese pronunciation of a Chinese character, 客(guests), has been *marebito* since the beginning of written literature in Japan”(2003:3). After a short explanation of the word *mare* in the word *marebito*, Orikuchi (2003:5) further explains:

The ancient meaning of the word *mare* meant “infrequent visitors.” The word *bito* (or *hito*) in the word *marebito* meant deities (spiritual beings) or successors before its meaning was fixed as humans. When one chooses the meaning of the word *bito* as deities, or spiritual beings, the *marebito* are considered the visiting deities. Whereas, when one chooses the meaning of the word *bito* as humans, the *marebito* are performers who impersonate the characters of gods. In this chapter, I will explain that in ancient times of Japan, the word *marebito* meant deities who came from spiritual world on occasions (Orikuchi 2003:5).

In this explanation, Orikuchi attempts to connect the word *marebito*, which signifies “human guests who rarely visited,” to “deities.” When these two elements are each combined with the word *marebito*, Orikuchi’s *marebito* images are complete; humans (guests) and deities are two different aspects that constitute the images of the *marebito* for Orikuchi.

As it was mentioned earlier, Orikuchi writes that people today forget that the original guests who visited villages in spring were spiritual beings; instead, they believe that only human performers are their guests. Orikuchi calls these specialists the *hokaibito*, who represent human *marebito* figures; they were performers who disguised themselves to perform deities in local festivals in order to bless villagers with the sacred messages.

One may question who these performers are or where they did originate.

Orikuchi (2003:74) writes about how these people originated:

Ruling families of local areas maintained their authority amongst villagers by serving the deities in ritual conducts and performances in ancient times of Japan. These families were still primary participants of ritual conducts in their villages even after they did cease serving for gods. However, they had to face the central power, the Yamato Imperial Court, which attempted to unify these numerous small villages... These small nations did not abandon their own ritual beliefs even after they started serving the Court... Thus, the important policy for the Court to maintain its power was to terminate these distinct beliefs of the small nations(Orikuchi 2003:74).

Orikuchi believes that the unification of local beliefs took place as a result of the unification of small nations. Under this unification, new deities and beliefs had gradually changed ways of life for these small nations (Orikuchi 2003:70). Consequently, native

deities as well as the original beliefs of these nations were degraded, simultaneously creating the situation that made the lives of holy people who had served for native deities difficult. This situation forced them to leave their nations and start migrating with their special skills to bless people (Orikuchi 2003:114-115). Orikuchi's *marebito* theory, which depicts the origin of Japanese literature, cannot be discussed without the historical background as well as the existence of these *hokaibito* who were forced to migrate due to social and political factors.

Nishimura (1988:15) writes that the narrative of the *marebito* festivals is usually performed as a ritualistic play today; nevertheless, people in ancient times believed that their guests in festivals were real spiritual beings because of their strong faith in the spiritual world (1988:15). Orikuchi often introduces the spiritual *marebito* images by intertwining with the human *marebito* figures; this unification gives readers the difficulty of separating the spiritual *marebito* images from the human *marebito* figures. For instance, Orikuchi (2003:11) explains that people in ancient eras believed that deities visited their villages at the time of their harvest festivals. Based on this folk belief, specific women in each household remained in their houses in order to welcome these deities who visited them only on special occasions. The visitors whom these women waited for were the holy people who preached about gods. According to the myth, however, the real guests whom villagers expected were the deities who brought the good annual harvest to their villages (Orikuchi 2003:11).

Orikuchi also introduces some folk poems in which the ancient Japanese people heard deities knocking on the doors at the night of their harvest festivals (2003:12). It is difficult to read from his text whether or not the ones who knocked on the door at the

night of their harvest festivals were real deities or performers. This difficulty may indicate that myth is often deeply intertwined with folk customs; people often maintain their folk customs based upon their certain belief in myth.

As it has already been mentioned, some scholars question the credibility of Orikuchi's *marebito* theory. In his work, Orikuchi introduces many names of deities that he considers as *marebito* deities, including the deities of *Maya*, *Angamā*, and *Akamata* and *Kuromata*. From his perspective, these deities are the *marebito* who come from a distant place in order to bless villagers; nonetheless, these deities are distinct from each other. Orikuchi himself recognizes the difference.

Orikuchi (2003:20) explains that people in the Yaeyama islands believe that deities of the *Maya* come from another world known as Maya in order to pray for the good annual harvest. He (2003:21) also writes that the deities *Akamata* and *Kuromata* come from another world known as Neil. They bring the good annual harvest as well as warning and advice that restrain negative behaviours of villagers. Orikuchi points out that the way in which people in these two communities perceive the visits of the two types of the *marebito* is identical, although the forms of these deities are different from each other (2003:22). Orikuchi also discusses that some chosen males in villages disguise themselves to perform the characters of these deities. During the performances, these performers as well as villagers feel that they interact with real deities (2003:22). The feeling of closely interacting with their deities through their festivals urges the performers as well as villagers to feel that the messages shared in the festivals are sacred and precious. Additionally, Orikuchi discusses that some villages perceive the deities of the *Maya* as kinds of demons, even though they deeply respect their deities (2003:20-22).

This fact indicates that what people in villages cherish is not the form of their deities. Rather, they cherish an opportunity that reminds them of their connections to their communities as well as the rest of the world by being blessed with the power of messages.

Orikuchi (2003:24-25) furthermore writes that the name *Angamā* indicates a group of ancestral spirits that come back to this world on a special occasion in order to bless their descendents. The representative of this group, *Oshumai*, shares some teachings, warnings, and encouragements in each household. Occupants of each household follow whatever *Oshumai* demands them to do in order to receive his blessings (2003:25).

His description of different deities indicates that Orikuchi recognized the complex characteristics of these visiting deities. The spiritual worldviews throughout the Ryūkyū islands are very complex: their deities in each island show unique characteristics. Some scholars deny the *marebito* theory because of this complexity; it is true that some deities in the Ryūkyū islands do not show the same *marebito* characteristics as the one that Orikuchi depicts in his theory.

Orikuchi (2003:33) himself writes about this complexity:

According to the Ryūkyū folk customs, those who occasionally visited villages in the Ryūkyū islands for blessings were ancestral spirits; nevertheless, there were some times in which people perceived the same visitors as demons. At other times, people tended to perceive these visitors as deities who came from a different world. By comprehending numerous folk beliefs and customs throughout Japan, I find that the *marebito* images involve different elements, including ancestral spirits, demons, and deities. Villagers expressed their expectations on these respected or feared entities, who rarely visited their villages, by naming them the *marebito*; these *marebito* images have been handed down and performed in their festivals by mature male members in their villages. This is the original

marebito images that I hold in my mind (Orikuchi 2003:33).

From his point of view, these villagers have held an image of the *marebito* in their minds as a reflection of their own expectations or emotions toward some precious beings that have been feared or respected by the villagers, but that have come to bring villages happiness. The villagers have handed down these images of the *marebito* through actually performing them in ritualistic plays. Orikuchi expresses that these images were the original forms of the *marebito*.

Based on this view, Orikuchi attempts to show his readers a simplified *marebito* model that prompted the transformation of Japanese literature. What Orikuchi illustrates as a foundation of the *marebito* characteristic is a combined image of spiritual beings and human performers that conveys sacred messages. These figures bring villages sacred messages that prompted different forms of literature and performing arts; these messages also made these special professionals to be the *marebito* who connect two different worlds as well as two different roles.

How are the sacred messages important for Orikuchi to form his *marebito* images? At the beginning of the fourth manuscript in *Kodai kenkyū: Kokubungaku no hassei*, Orikuchi (2003:129) writes that he firmly believes that faith is one of the strongest reasons for people to transmit certain sacred messages. In other words, people are not committed to hand down certain messages unless they have a strong faith in these messages. Orikuchi (2003:130) starts using the word *jugon* to express these sacred messages, the *kamigoto*. He explains that the *kamigoto* that shamans received in a trance state became a certain form, the *jugon*, through repetition, alteration, and simplification

throughout time. Some of these messages have been transmitted from holy people to the other holy people (2003:130).

In Orikuchi's view, these messages were transmitted through shamans in the first person; precisely described, these messages were believed to come from sacred visiting deities who visited villages at the beginning of spring. The messages included a description of who the visiting deities were as well as of how they created stories describing the importance of nourishment and nutrition to the cycle of birth and death (Orikuchi 2003:130). People in folk communities relied on specialists to obtain these messages.

Sakurai Tokutarō (1989:110) points out that the original image of the *marebito* that were spiritual beings illuminates only one side of Orikuchi's *marebito* story; another side shows how people welcomed deities in festivals. According to Sakurai (1989:110), Orikuchi explains that people in ancient periods considered success in an annual harvest for the coming year to depend to some extent on how successfully the deities and villagers interacted with each other in festivals. Shamans, as representatives of their communities, therefore, welcomed visiting deities, and this hospitality and associated activities came to be known as festivals (Sakurai 1989:110).

Interestingly, Orikuchi (2003:80-81) introduces this story by using the concept of a marriage between shamans and deities:

People created the situation in which they tended to differentiate deities with the scale of high status and low status after they had accepted the idea of visiting deities, who came from a distant sky or sea, other than the idea of respecting native deities. Visiting deities, especially who came farer, had become a center of a faith in a village. People in these villages often prepared shamans as brides of the visiting deities called "*Tsueshiro*," despite that these deities rarely visited their villages. Female

shamans had to perform the same role to accommodate those who came to their villages in order to perform the characters of deities in their festivals (Orikuchi 2003:81).

This marriage can be visualized as a symbol of notion of cycle or basic operation of life; spiritual *marebito* represents spirits, and shamans represent physical beings. Like this, the interesting part of his studies is that he often illustrates a basic operation of life through ordinary human life. As a result, readers are able to receive double meanings that go side by side on the spiritual and physical planes. Further discussed, shamans have the role of connecting two different worlds (spiritual and physical); simultaneously, they connect outsiders (holy people) to insiders (villagers). This role of connecting different elements is represented in the *marebito* images, and the key words that make deities as well as shamans or local performers the *marebito* are sacred messages.

Orikuchi (2003:67) describes sacred messages, the *kamigoto*, in the first manuscript:

It is true that repeated words, messages, or stories in ancient times created the same effects as written forms. Repetition of these words or messages has maintained and developed rhyme... People created these types of rhyme in order to maintain the *kamigoto*... So, the first oral tradition in our country took a form of epic poem (Orikuchi 2003:67).

Orikuchi goes on to explain that the epic poems in the first person were considered to be the monologues of deities, and shamans in ancient communities disseminated these poems as the *kamigoto* in their trance state (2003:69). With this explanation, Orikuchi tries to prove that the *kamigoto* from deities were at the origins of the different forms of Japanese literature.

Throughout *Kodai kenkyū: Kokubungaku no hassei*, Orikuchi repeatedly

discusses the power of messages. One example is the story of how the *marebito*, with the power of sacred messages, restrained natural spirits that might harm villagers. Orikuchi (2003:137) writes that people in spring festivals or ritual ceremonies observed performers acting out this story in a ritualistic play. In this play, performers who disguised themselves as the *marebito* conveyed certain sacred messages that recalled the memories of natural spirits in which spirits had sworn the *marebito* not to harm villagers. Thus, people in villages could observe a ritualistic play in which two kinds of performers, the *marebito* and the natural spirits, had a dialogue (2003:137).

Orikuchi (2003:32) points out the importance of the form of dialogue for performing arts in Japan. He introduces two types of performers, the *shitekata* and the *modoki*, who often appear in Japanese performing arts; they were vital elements, especially in ancient forms of performing arts. According to Orikuchi (2003:32), the *modoki* are those who play the fool on stage by imitating the actions and the speech of the *shitekata*, the main actors. He believes that ancient Japanese people greatly valued this dialogue between the *shitekata* and the *modoki*; the reason why the people created these two types of performers who confronted to each other was that the performing arts of Japan originated from a dialogue (Orikuchi 2003:32).

Orikuchi (2003:32) further explains that the *shitekata* can be compared to the *marebito*, and the *modoki* can be compared to the natural spirits. By actually performing the procedure of how the natural spirits handed over their controls to the *marebito*, people in the past expected to see the same effect on their annual harvest. This confrontational relationship between deities and natural spirits had been repeatedly performed in ancient ritual practices; this play shows the wish of the villagers for some

powerful deities to come to help them to restrain or control natural spirits that lived nearby and had a power over their native land (Orikuchi 2003:32).

Hosaka (1988:76) explains that in Orikuchi's view, sacred messages are the origins of Japanese literature; however, Orikuchi later incorporated natural spirits that confronted the *marebito* into his theory. The *kamigoto*, sacred messages, usually are communicated in the first person, which indicates they are monologues of deities. For Orikuchi, the monologues of deities are less dependable than dialogues. Orikuchi believes that, for this reason, people started applying this more reliable form, dialogue, to their ritualistic plays (Hosaka 1988:76). That is, Orikuchi brings two different elements into his studies again.

By incorporating natural spirits into his theory, Orikuchi obtained more pieces to complete his image of sacred messages. In his story, after a dialogue, conversation, or negotiation between the *marebito* and the natural spirits took place, natural spirits eventually accepted the *marebito*'s order. This narrative shows that the *marebito*, who came from a distant place, possessed superior power to that of natural spirits, who lived nearby. Some scholars believe that this superiority of the *marebito* implicates the power of the Yamato Imperial Court that originally came from a foreign land and that conquered many native Japanese villages. Orikuchi (2003:160) believes that performances that mimicked beasts or the disgraceful behaviour of people frequently performed in ancient dance are comparable to the performances of natural spirits resisting the *marebito*. Which means that the power struggle between two different roles that are often witnessed in Japanese plays metaphorically expresses a relationship

between a warrior and a subordinate warrior or the ruler and the ruled (Orikuchi 2003:160).

Orikuchi (2003:143) later describes the *jugon* as sacred messages that visiting deities from a distant place shared in order to restrain natural spirits in native lands. Natural spirits did not reply to the *marebito* for a while; instead, they remained a silent. However, the power of the *jugon* already affected these spirits. While this power was affecting them internally, they expressed this influence by using mysterious, symbolic ways, or “*ho*.” The ways that these natural spirits express these “*ho*” differ from each other. These “*ho*” signify that the power of *jugon* affected these natural spirits and that these spirits accepted the orders of visiting deities. In other words, as Orikuchi (2003:148) explains, one side gives its control to another.

One has to critically think about the reason why Orikuchi depicts two different roles or groups that are opposed to each other in his theory. What do these confrontations signify? These two different elements should not be considered either power struggles amongst people in different classes or power struggles in different ethnicities, as Orikuchi implicates. Through his statement, readers of his work can perceive his tendency of differentiating certain people from the other. Based on nature’s law, these two confrontations that take place between two different elements have to be interpreted differently. Orikuchi should clearly recognize and write the significance of two different elements in this world in the perception of the rule of the universe other than depicting these relationships in power struggles by giving only one side a power or superiority.

How should he interpret these confrontations then? The *marebito* figures in the Ryūkyū islands symbolize the unification of spiritual and physical aspects in this world.

By intentionally creating deities that are different from villagers themselves, villagers are able to reflect on themselves and remember that their spiritual selves or deities exist within themselves. In other words, humans are able to learn about themselves by creating objects that are different from them or that exist at a certain distance. Dialogue usually requires two roles that address one another. Through the dialogue, each side learns about the other side as well as itself because what one sees in others often reflects oneself.

In one's everyday life, one often witnesses power struggles between two roles as human natures. Orikuchi (2003:183) writes that these power struggles originate from the same ground: people often desire to conquer the spirits of other people. In this way, a proposal of marriage as well as a war can be solved by the same means; these matters could be solved if a person would understand how he or she could conquer the spirits of other people (Orikuchi 2003:183). Orikuchi finds that this conquering of spirits can be accomplished by using the power of certain words.

Why do these certain words possess this type of spiritual power? Orikuchi (2003:177) writes that specialists who disseminated sacred words from deities valued how to repeat traditional sacred messages; simultaneously, they created new messages by relying on their ability of receiving new messages. Orikuchi explains that these specialists received these messages by becoming closer to deities rather than being simply possessed by deities (2003:177). This explanation indicates that the state in which specialists attuned to the energy of deities was important for them to receive sacred messages. In such a state, they were not just possessed by deities, but more fully manifested their spiritual (true) selves. Strong recognition of their spiritual selves

required them to put forth more efforts in their everyday lives; they constantly faced struggles between their true selves and their egos.

Like this, the type of struggle that is often witnessed as a human nature can be compared to conflicts between one's true self and one's ego. Orikuchi's nature captured this type of human nature in his life, and depicted it in his theory. From the psychological perspective, the defeat of natural spirits represents to peoples' psyches that those who come from a distant place often possess superior power. However, by using the *spiritual* perspective, Orikuchi should have interpreted that this confrontation between the *marebito* and natural spirits represent conflicts between true selves and egos. In this way, the *marebito* can simply symbolize one's spiritual self or true self; in contrast, the natural spirit can symbolize one's physical self or ego.

In fact, Orikuchi writes (2003:40) that in addition to blessing villagers, the *marebito* asked natural spirits to swear that they would not harm villagers. Moreover, they intentionally stamped, referred to as the *henbai*, in order to suppress the spirits of earth that might harm the houses of villagers (2003:40). These actions taken by the *marebito* show how people in ancient times of Japan recognized the power of spirits in nature. Orikuchi (2003:44) further explains how people in ancient times blessed their new houses. In order to prevent a spirit in each room from exercising its excess power, they conducted certain ritual practices whenever they made or reformed their houses (2003:44). These spirits that more likely practiced their power excessively, which caused chaos, can be compared to peoples' egos. This type of chaos is an essential element for experiencing human conditions; simultaneously, people need to calm themselves and

remember their inner existences in order to understand why this chaos is required for their personal journeys.

By comprehending these actions that the *marebito* occasionally conducted for blessings, one is able to find the principle that Orikuchi tries to depict in his work. As Kamata explains, Orikuchi's studies often illustrate a certain relationship; spirits stay in physical objects for a while and leave them (1983:173). One should not look at the *marebito* who came from another world (or heaven) as those who possessed superior power to natural spirits as well as spirits of earth, which simply signify physical objects (or ground). Likewise, one should not look at the *hokaibito* (outsider) who shared sacred words to bless new houses had a power to suppress the spirits of houses (insiders or native spirits that rooted in lands). From the spiritual perspective, there is no superiority or inferiority. In order to express the ancient spiritual worldview in the fullest degree, Orikuchi should have explained that these different elements simply represent different characteristics of two types of elements of different roles. In Orikuchi's studies, spirits or spiritual selves often come from outside. Physical selves are often illustrated or compared to villages, native lands, or earth. These confrontations simply express power struggles between one's spiritual self (true self) and one's ego.

The defeat of natural spirits shows that one's spiritual self never dies, though one's physical self does. This principle indicates that one's true self understands the purpose of one's spiritual journey; that is, one's true self possesses the ultimate obligation to determine one's personal journey. Although one's ego can resist one's true self, it has to eventually obey whatever one's true self decides to achieve one's spiritual goals.

Nonetheless, as dialogues or negotiations that take place between the *marebito* and natural spirits signify, true selves do not strongly force egos to abandon their controls. Orikuchi says, “deities often express their intentions in metaphors or symbols” (2003:71). This is because each individual receives messages of deities differently based on their different experiences; there is no one answer that satisfies all people. So, this could be the reason why Orikuchi says that monologues of deities are less dependable. Dialogues and negotiations between these two roles are the key for human individuals to consider how they can live in balance. In this spiritual perspective, the reason why ancient people often performed dialogues in their ritualistic plays is understandable.

Kamata (1983:171) expresses this type of relationship between the spirit and the flesh in Chinese characters, 靈主体従 (*reishutaijū*). These words simply express that the spirit is active, whereas the flesh is passive. According to Kamata (1983:171), the phrase *reishutaijū* represents the relationship between two different elements in this world. These two elements, the positive and the negative, fire and water, or spirit and flesh, originated from an immense life force that pervades the universe.

Kamata writes that these two elements frequently symbolize opposing roles. For example, spirit signifies the left direction and moving forward, while flesh signifies the right direction and moving backward; spirit is also symbolized by fire, whereas flesh is symbolized by water. Kamata states that these two elements or roles follow the basic principle of the universe; spirit, fire, and positivity are active forces, whereas flesh, water, and negativity are subordinate force.

Kamata (1983:171) categorizes these two elements into two groups: the groups of spirit (fire) and flesh (water). The former group includes fire, masculinity, positivity,

heaven, and the deity called *Takami-musubi*, and the latter group includes water, femininity, negativity, earth, and the deity called *Kami-musubi* (1983:171). For Kamata, these two types of element represent the primary characteristics of the physical world (1983:172). Unless one achieves enlightenment, uniting oneself with the universe by becoming attuned to very subtle energies, one keeps seeing these two types of elements.

Kamata (1983:172) adds that a famous Japanese religious man, Deguchi Onisaburō, uses two Chinese characters, 火水 (fire and water), in order to express “deity”; Deguchi made people pronounce these characters *kami*, which means “gods” (1983:172). From his point of view, these two elements represent “gods” because they are vital to the creation of the physical world. Yet, Kamata (1983:172) points out that the *reishutaijū* does not simply represent relationship between two different elements; rather, this word represents the principle of an immense life force from which spirit and flesh or fire and water originate. This view shows that there is a place where two different elements originate, and this special place is also where sacred messages originate.

Andō (2004:56-57) writes that people in festivals are able to receive sacred messages when shamans are in a trance state in which they cease to recognize a boundary between themselves and other beings. Sacred messages are powerful because they come from such a neutral space or condition, in which one feels unity beyond a boundary between the self and the other (Andō 2004:57). By possessing this spiritual power, the sacred messages connect two different elements, such as shamans and the rest of the world, or the self and the other. This special place, where shamans experience unifying themselves with the rest of the world, is identical to an immense life force where two different elements originate. In his work, Orikuchi desires to illustrate the same place or

space where only subtle energy exists. In this sense, for Orikuchi, the *marebito* images are vital to symbolize the foundation of his studies: the significance of this basic space where a microcosm meets a macrocosm or where one's ego meets one's true self.

According to Andō (2004:210), in his work, Orikuchi depicts an image of a deity as a *source* of all life, and he calls this deity the *musubi*. Andō (2004:212-213) describes that the *musubi* does not manifest itself as a human deity; rather, it exists as original, spiritual life force that pervades the universe. It is the force that can create substances and that can remain in substances. In this view, a minute particle or subtle energy that is identical to the *light* that exists within all life as well as that pervades the universe is represented in the image of the *musubi* (Andō 2004: 212-213).

This image of the *musubi* is comparable to Higa's illustration of human souls (*mabui*) (2000:44). The characteristics of the ancient Japanese deity (*musubi*), as a particle, wave, or light is identical to the characteristic of air. The spiritual life force that makes physical objects come to life exists in a form, like particle or subtle energy; this particle combines with another by the force of the *musubi* in order to form substances.

Orikuchi (1956:458-459) says that the *musubi* deities were often recognized as ancestral spirits, but this is because ancient Japanese people tended to perceive powerful deities as their ancestral spirits. These deities are not ancestors of human individuals, but they are ancestors in terms of the forces that provide a spirit with an appropriate flesh in this world by combining flesh and spirit (1956:459). In this sense, these deities are true parents of all human beings and all living creatures.

Andō (2004:96) defines Orikuchi's *musubi* as the fundamental force that attaches to creation and remains within creation by being the source of its life force. Andō

(2004:212) introduces Orikuchi's explanation of the *musubi* in Orikuchi's work from his early years:

There was an ancient Japanese faith in a certain soul that possesses mysterious, spiritual force. This faith was the original Japanese faith, and this spiritual force was believed to have a capability to make a human individual alive when it attached to a human flesh. This force is known as the *musubi*. This life force is not recognized as a deity. Shinto scholars do not consider the *musubi* as a deity who appears in myths in a human form. The *musubi* is an invisible being. It is a more advanced spiritual force than a general life force, and it gradually becomes closer to a deity (Andō 2004:212).

In this Orikuchi's text, the *musubi* seems to be a special, spiritual force that the ancient Japanese people worshipped in their original faith. The *musubi*, nonetheless, is not a deity; it is only a superior spiritual force. In his work, especially from the latter part of his life, Orikuchi (1956:459) states that the *musubi* is a deity. Further described, the *musubi* is a skill or a technique to tie or connect a life force to a physical object. Ancient Japanese people worshipped the *musubi* as deities because the people could not perform any ritual ceremonies and conducts without this type of skill or force; the *musubi* is a force that can produce a life form into this world. In other words, this force makes physical objects come to life; as a result, all life forms can maintain their activities (Orikuchi 1956:459).

This explanation of the *musubi* completes its image with Andō's earlier description; the image of the *musubi* represents a minute particle or subtle energy, similar to the light that exists in the universe (Andō 2004: 212-213). This form of force, energy, or light has been recognized as an immense life force, deity, nature, the *kamuy*, or a macrocosm that intensely participates in creating this physical world.

The critical aspect of Orikuchi's interpretation of deities is that this macrocosm is deeply interrelated with a microcosm. Kuzuno says that the *kamuy* exist within human individuals. Kamata's explanation of the Japanese word *inochi*, which means life that circulates through the universe, signifies that this life also exists within a human individual. Asato explains that by focusing on this existence of life (a microcosm) within the self, female practitioners in the Ryūkyū islands are able to connect themselves to the universe (a macrocosm). These descriptions lead one to the concept that a life force or a spiritual self that is connected to something greater exists within oneself. In this world, life forms need two aspects (spiritual and physical) to maintain their lives; each element requires the other element. This relationship has to be described as intimate.

Human individuals should look for their deities within themselves. A deity that is connected to the universe and also exists within each individual can more easily manifest itself when the person is strongly aware of one's inner existence. From this spiritual perspective, each individual as well as a life form is already a deity regardless one firmly believes that he or she is only a human individual; this idea can also be applied to all physical forms. Orikuchi writes that all life forms, including land, trees, minerals, animals, and people, are made up of the life force that the *musubi* deities originally tie to all physical forms (1956:471). This explanation indicates that the same spirit exists within all life forms. Orikuchi (1956:469) adds:

Ancient Japanese people considered that deities were beings who manifested these life forces in the most complete forms, and humans were next. Islands and lands were more incomplete forms (Orikuchi 1956:469).

This interpretation shows his tendency of differentiating life forms by rank. According to nature's law, he should have interpreted this ancient belief as each life form expresses or manifests itself differently. Qualities as well as characteristics that each form possesses and expresses should be unique. So, his interpretation should mention that each life form expresses the essence of its inner existence and is unique. This uniqueness may be the reason why the universe started creating all life forms.

Orikuchi's tendency to differentiate life forms by rank has ruined his spiritual philosophy that might be created based on ancient spiritual worldviews. Certainly, Orikuchi can point out spirituality and inner existences of specific types of people in his work. At the same time, he should write that the same spirituality and inner beings that connect to the great existence pervading the universe exist within all physical forms. There is no inequality in this spiritual life force. By looking inward, one is able to recognize one's inner beings as well as an immense life force that pervades the universe. One is also able to establish an intimate relationship with the universe, by establishing this intimate relationship with one's inner being. This concept makes one realize that no human-form deities as mediums that connect humans and deities are required. In this view, one just recognizes the great existence that also exists within oneself; one realizes that he or she, consciously or unconsciously, already belongs to the universe, participating in the great flow or rhythm of the universe.

In this chapter, I discussed Orikuchi's *marebito* theory by illuminating the relationship or confrontation between two different elements that exist in this world. Through the discussion of these elements, how Orikuchi depicts this relationship in a philosophical or spiritual context has been examined. His *marebito* images represent not

only the unification of two different elements, but also the universe itself where these different elements or all life forms originate. In this sense, the *marebito* images also represent the ancient Japanese deity, the *musubi*. The *marebito* and the *musubi* can be primary definitions of “deity” in the context of natural law. In the next chapter, how the spiritual perspective, which has been illustrated, is valuable will be discussed with the introduction of the spiritual worldview of the Ainu cultures. How one will be able to tie this worldview with the *marebito* images will be explored.

Chapter 7

The Significance of the *Marebito* Images in This Modern Age

Through the exploration of the spiritual worldviews of the Ainu and Okinawa, the ancient Shinto, and Orikuchi's work, one is more aware of the existence of spiritual life force. In other words, each view amongst those stated above expresses the notion of cycle in a different way, but each culture recognizes this life force. In this last chapter, I further explore the significance of the *marebito* images in relation to one's personal journey and intimate relationship between humans and deities or humans and the rest of the world by introducing teachings found primarily in the Ainu culture. This exploration will lead one to find the true sense of spirituality in this modern age that can be the key for one to get over differences amongst people. In this exploration, how Orikuchi's *marebito* theory is applicable in this modern age will be also examined.

Fujimura Hisakazu (1998:132) explains that the spiritual culture of the Ainu people reflects the spirituality within its people, and their spiritual culture focuses on *how* one is supposed to live as a human individual (1998:132). This *invisible* spirituality seems to be less valued in this modern age when people place excessive importance on material affluence. Nonetheless, it is obvious that there are many elements in this world that should not be devalued because they are simply incompatible with certain criteria or values that a dominant culture or society currently relies on. Fujimura (1998:133) writes that we lose precious gifts by simply applying standardized criteria to everything

regardless of suitability; that is, we lose the significance of diverse life forms and cultures if we only cherish *visible* physical aspects (1998:133).

Fujimura (1995:55) further writes that the spirituality or traditional criteria that the Ainu people have relied on is embedded in the deep questions that human individuals often ask of themselves. These questions are what each individual is supposed to achieve throughout his or her life or what the role of each individual is as a human being. According to Fujimura (1995:57), the answer to these questions that the Ainu people have sought is “to become a human individual with a mature spirituality.” The purpose of life for many Ainu people is to become an ideal person who possesses a good sensitivity and mature spirituality. This image of the ideal person can be expressed in the phrase, the *ainuneno-an-ainu*, in the Ainu language, which signifies a person who possesses many good human traits (1995:57).

Fujimura (1995:57) goes on to explain that the Ainu people have to actively participate in understanding or interpreting all life lessons that emerge in their lives in order to become the *ainuneno-an-ainu*. In this view, the Ainu people have paid attention to “how they live” in order to become like a holy person whose purpose of life is to achieve enlightenment (1995:57); consequently, people have to seriously face or confront the struggles, sufferings, and all difficulties that they experience through their lives (1995:60).

From the previous illustration of the Ainu spiritual worldview, we understand that the Ainu people believe in the reincarnation of spirit. According to Fujimura, the Ainu people believe that they, in the future, return to this world by attaching their souls to other containers (1998:147). Fujimura describes that the Ainu people believe that a man

of virtue deserves not only a good life in another world, but also to return soon to this world (1995:242). Which means, in the Ainu worldview, one seriously has to tackle one's life to understand the meanings of why one chooses such a life or an experience. In order to learn such specific lessons, a spirit by *itself* chooses specific cultures, ethnicities, or environments. In short, one is not able to excuse one's destiny or life; each spirit decides each life and associated life lessons by itself.

In the Ainu worldview, hence, one does not have to fight against another individual; rather, one has to understand one's life in a serious manner. Fujimura (1995:65) notes that the Ainu people are very gentle to others, but they are very strict with themselves as to how they should live or behave. What they have to achieve throughout their lives are their spiritual goals by maintaining a good relationship with their own spiritual selves that are connected to the universe or all life forms at a very deep spiritual level.

One may question why this spiritual understanding of the self or self-actualization is important. It is important to study about the self because this self is connected to all other life forms. When one understands the meaning of his or her life and finds one's role in which one should perform in relation to all other life forms, one fully participates in a circle of life. Fujimura writes that there are no ranks or hierarchies amongst deities in the Ainu worldview; however, each deity possesses different characteristics, including intimacy or distance (1995:22). Fujimura goes on to explain that different characteristics of deities simply represent their different capabilities or roles (1995:25). This statement can be used in order to interpret Orikuchi's statement of life forces that was introduced earlier.

Orikuchi (1956:469) writes:

Ancient Japanese people considered that deities were beings who manifested these life forces in the most complete forms, and humans were next. Islands and lands were more incomplete forms (Orikuchi 1956:469).

Using Fujimura's explanation, Orikuchi's statement can be interpreted as that deities, humans, and all life forms possess different capabilities and roles that they should perform in order to participate in a large circle that the universe maintains. In this way, Orikuchi should not use the word "complete" or "incomplete"; rather, he should emphasize unique characteristics of all life forms.

Fujimura (1995:26) writes how each life form and the world relate to each other:

If this world could be compared to a clock, each part that constitutes the clock is a life form, such as a mamushi, a mushroom, a human, a ship, a bear, or a fire deity. When each part collaborates with each other, the circle of life can maintain itself, as the clock can ring the bell at a certain time (Fujimura 1995:26).

This statement explains the relationship between a human individual and the rest of the world. Mushrooms and ships have some special roles that cannot be substituted by bears and humans. Mushrooms and ships may not consciously recognize their roles that they should perform, but they unconsciously fulfill their roles. In the Ainu cultures, some people seriously question how one should live by thinking over their roles or purposes of life. As there is a role for human beings as a group to play in relation to the rest of the world, each individual has a role to play. Thus, they often pay attention to meanings of each event or experience in one's life in order to perceive one's personal journey in a broader scale and how these events lead one to the next direction.

In this sense, knowing the self is important to participate in the rest of the world. When one better understands one's role in relation to the rest of the world, one can more readily fulfill his or her roles. These roles should be multi-dimensional, as each person has different roles for one's family, friends, community, and the universe. By understanding the self, one is able to better serve and to participate in the real collectiveness that is represented in the word "universe" or "all life."

Orikuchi's *marebito* images bring people in villages important messages at a collective level. Likewise, female practitioners in the Ryūkyū islands connect themselves to the universe by going within. Connection to the universe through a certain communication at a collective level is important in these worldviews. At the same time, the Ainu cultures value personal conversations with many life forms as well as various deities. These communications both at a communal level and an individual level provide people with an opportunity to feel the great existence that manifests itself through all life forms. By going within, one learns more about not only the rest of the world, but also the universe itself.

The images of the *marebito* provide one with a chance to pay attention to spiritual aspects, deities, or another world. By disseminating sacred messages, the *marebito* interconnect deities and humans or connect this world to another world. It is easy for one to spend one's lifetime without looking at the total life originating with creation. One often firmly believes that deities exist very far from him or her. Each individual is able to establish a close relationship with the universe on an individual level. In other words, each person has a responsibility to develop a certain relationship with one's deity, or

spiritual self, in addition to listening to messages at a collective level. This personal relationship with one's spiritual self can be expressed as a vertical relationship.

When each individual establishes a strong vertical relationship with one's spiritual self, a horizontal relationship with other people as well as all life forms is forced to change as well. One comes to better understand that the same life exists in all life forms. This view does not allow one to distinguish deities from human individuals in a hierarchical context. In this view, it is possible for a human individual to interact with a deity at anytime.

Through a long journey between two different worlds, a spirit gradually understands human emotions and conditions. From the perspective of such a spiritual journey, is there a superiority or inferiority of a spirit? There is no inequality in a spiritual life force, although the manifestation of a spiritual force, or the combination of particles, is distinct from each other. The only difference is a choice of a life lesson that each spirit decides for one's life. Josefina (1997:457) notes that a life of each individual is unique like a fingerprint; a spiritual growth and associated experiences are, thus, supposed to be original. She believes that one cannot live the lives of other individuals; which means, one has to find one's path on one's own, being lead by one's inner being. A close relationship with one's inner being makes one realize that one belongs to the universe and is participating in the great life circle regardless of whether he or she realizes the participation.

Josefina furthermore writes that the spiritual journey is a journey that goes on within. That is, one finds all the answers for one's lives within oneself (1997:458); knowing oneself means knowing the universe (1997:456). When more people focus on

their spiritual selves to establish a vertical relationship, human beings can more easily develop healthier relationships with one another through a horizontal relationship. This is because one is more aware of and focuses on the meanings of one's life. Understanding each individual's life lesson helps one to understand each other because one tends to see this world from the spiritual perspective other than the cultural perspective; in this way one tries to see the spirit and its spiritual goal rather than superficially label each individual in terms of ethnicity, culture, or gender. Differences always exist in this physical world. One has to greatly value these differences; at the same time, one is not able to develop a harmonious society unless one sees the fundamental life where all life forms originate and see the world from this spiritual perspective.

A spirit continues its journey until it is satisfied with experiencing all human conditions and emotions. Through all happy and unhappy experiences associated with all human emotions, one learns what it is like to be physically separated from others on a surface level. Feeling insecure due to this physical separation, one ultimately goes within oneself in order to remember the deep spiritual level from which one connects to the rest of the world.

Throughout this work, native spirituality and faith in the *marebito* throughout the Japanese islands have been illustrated. Orikuchi's unique spiritual philosophy, which can be symbolized by his *marebito* images in this work, has been the thread of these spiritual worldviews. In his *marebito* theory, Orikuchi depicts the basic principle of life on earth as well as in the universe through his unique idea of the *gairaikon*, spiritual life forces coming from outside and attaching to physical forms to make them come to life. This idea is very similar to nature's law or basic principle of animism as well as spiritual

worldviews of the Ainu and Okinawa folk cultures. This work introduces Orikuchi's *marebito* images from this perspective. With this perception, the existence of the spirituality that exists within the self and that is connected to all life, his *marebito* image can be a conduit that connects all spiritual worldviews of these cultures mentioned above. When one looks at this fundamental place, one finds the commonality between the Japanese concept of the *marebito* and the worldviews of the cultures of the Ainu and Okinawa. The *marebito* images, compiled images of all life, remind one of that one is related to each other at a deep spiritual level. From this spiritual perspective, one is able to surpass cultural barriers in order to understand each other for its humanity.

The simple model of the *marebito* that Orikuchi illustrates in his theory is not always applicable to diverse Japanese cultures. That is, numerous folk data that did not exist in his time, but exist today shows that the simple model of the *marebito* cannot be a template that applies to complex forms of cultures throughout Japan. Nonetheless, the compiled *marebito* images that have been depicted in this work and that encompass many symbols and meanings show one the importance of spirituality as well as the meaning of spiritual personal journey. Through the depiction of various *marebito* images, Orikuchi also indicates the possibility that each individual is the *marebito* who has a responsibility to establish a close relationship with one's spiritual self that is connected to the rest of the world. When one develops a closer relationship to his or her spiritual self, one is able to obtain a chance to realize a society in which one can more easily coexist by going over the cultural barrier through developing both vertical and horizontal relationships.

Because of insufficient amount of research and concerns on political issues and the tendency to universalism, this spiritual perspective that has been raised and depicted through the *marebito* images in this work only shows some potentiality to become a solution of cross-cultural understanding amongst different people at this stage. This spiritual perception does not devalue any diverse cultures, diverse ethnicities or identities. However, this spiritual perception allows people to understand each other. This understanding may change societies to some extent. The author who has a firm belief that these perceptions possess a great potential for the preservation of humanity should explore these areas further.

Orikuchi's *marebito* images metaphorically inspire one so that one is a traveler who seeks the purpose of one's life through a long spiritual journey. For some people, this story sounds imaginative. However, for those who seek purpose in their lives and wish to take full responsibility for their spiritual choices, the *marebito* images and their ongoing personal journeys are valuable in understanding this world from the spiritual perspective.

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Glossary of Japanese Terminology

- **Ainu**
The Ainu people, indigenous people who reside in Northern Japan today, are considered to be descendents of a culture that was developed in the northern islands and coastal regions of Siberia (Kayano 1998:29). Today, the Ainu people mainly live on the Northern Island, Hokkaidō. However, they used to live in a broader area, such as Northeastern Japan, Hokkaidō, Sakhalin, and the Kuril Islands (Fujimura 1982:303).
- *ainu*
The word *ainu* in the Ainu language means humans (Kayano 1998:29).
- *ainuneno-an-ainu*
The phrase *ainuneno-an-ainu* expresses an ideal person who possesses characteristics of good humanity and matured spirituality (Fujimura 1995:57).
- *aka*
“*Aka*” in *Akamata* represents a colour, red (Ine 2005:74).
- ***Akamata and Kuromata***
These deities, who appear in *Pūri*, one of the Ryūkyū festivals, are sacred visiting deities whom villagers impersonate. *Akamata* represents a male deity and *Kuromata* represents a female deity (Ine 2005:74).
- ***Ameno-minaka-nushino-kami***
This is the name of the supreme deity who created two *musubi* deities.
- ***Amaterasu-o-mikami***
This is the name of the Sun Goddess. This was the primary deity worshipped by the Emperor and the Court. State Shintoism used this deity to make the Emperor of Japan a deity because of the myth in which the deity and the Emperor’s family interrelated in the past.
- ***Angamā***
The name *Angamā* indicates a group of ancestral spirits that come back to this world on a special occasion in order to bless their descendents (Orikuchi 2003:24-25).
- ***gairaikon***
In Orikuchi’s studies, the word *gairaikon* represents souls that come from the spiritual world where souls usually stay.
- ***hassei***
Orikuchi’s story illustrates the interaction of different elements that often create a new form or a change; he calls these changes as the *hassei*. For him, the origin of national literature did not take place only one time; a set of changes

has made Japanese literature to become a current form.

- ***henbai***
The *marebito* used the action called *henbai* when they asked natural spirits to swear that they would not harm villagers. During this opportunity, the *marebito* intentionally stamped in order to suppress the spirits of earth that might harm the houses of villagers (Orikuchi 2003:40). These actions taken by the *marebito* show how people in the ancient times of Japan recognized the power of spirits in nature.
- **Hokkaidō**
According to *Daijirin* (1988:2233), Hokkaidō, the Northern Island, is one of the four largest islands that constitute the Japanese islands. It lies at the northernmost tip of the Japanese islands.
- ***ikimaburi***
The word *ikimaburi* represents human souls that still exist within human flesh (Doi 1983:290).
- ***inau***
The word *inau* in the Ainu language means sacred shaved sticks that people use for ritual ceremonies (Akino 1999:250-251).
- ***inochi***
The simple translation of this word is life. According to Kamata (2000:164), this word more precisely represents life that circulates through the universe, beyond this physical plane.
- ***Iyomante or Iomante***
The word *Iyomante* is a general term that refers to a ritual practice in the Ainu culture. In this ritual practice, humans send to the divine world souls of living creatures, such as bears. Usually, what they send are living creatures that they consume or objects that have supported their routine lives (Keira 1995:104).
- ***jikkan***
The word *jikkan* represents a physical sensation or direct experience, which Orikuchi valued, and which formed his study (Katō 1987:13).
- ***jōmin***
The word *jōmin* represents people who make up the majority of the Japanese population.
- ***jugon***
Orikuchi (2003:130) uses the word *jugon* to express sacred messages, the *kamigoto*, which shamans received in a trance state. These messages became a certain form, the *jugon*, through repetition, alteration, and simplification throughout time.
- ***kami***
This word *kami* in these days represents deities. According to Orikuchi, the *kami* (deities) were known as the *tama* (spirits or spiritual forces) in ancient Japan (Minagawa 1988:178).
- ***kamigoto***
The *kamigoto* are sacred words that the *marebito* shared in ancient festivals
- ***Kami-musubi***

Kami-musubi is the name of one of the *musubi* deities who represents forces that connect spiritual life forces to physical objects.

- ***kamuy***
The word *kamuy* in the Ainu language represents deities or spiritual forces that pervade throughout the universe (Kayano 1998:29).
- ***kataribe and saniwa***
According to Orikuchi, the *kataribe* and the *saniwa* were specialists. The *kataribe* transmitted sacred stories that were originally received in a shamanistic state and that greatly influenced lives of the villagers. The *saniwa* interpreted metaphors and symbols that deities used to communicate with humans (2003:71-72).
- ***kimun-kamuy***
The word *kimun-kamuy* in the Ainu language represents mountain deities who often disguise themselves as bears (Akino 1999:250-251).
- ***Kodai kenkyū***
Archaic Studies.
- ***Kojiki***
The classical court literature.
- ***kokubungaku***
The field of national (Japanese) literature.
- ***Kokubungaku no hassei***
The Origin of National Literature.
- ***kuro***
“*Kuro*” in *Kuromata* represents a colour, black (Ine 2005:74).
- ***mabui***
The word *mabui* is a general Ryūkyū term that represents souls of human beings (Kojima 1996:143).
- ***marebito***
The word *marebito* currently indicates guests, or visiting deities, who come from a distant or the spiritual world (Kreiner 1994:39). This word *marebito* was originally used and was broadly disseminated by one of the prominent scholars in the field of Japanese folklore, Orikuchi Shinobu.
- ***Maya***
Orikuchi (2003:20) explains that people in the Yaeyama islands believe that deities of the *Maya* come from another world known as *Maya* in order to pray for the good annual harvest.
- ***minzokugaku***
The field of Japanese folklore.
- ***mono***
The word *tama* was later separated into two words to express deities, or spirits, (*kami*) and physical objects (*mono*) (Orikuchi 1956:209).
- ***musubi***
Andō notes that Orikuchi depicts an image of a deity as a source of “life.” Orikuchi calls such deities the *musubi* (2004:210). In the *Orikuchigaku*, the *musubi*, which do not appear in a human form, but pervade through creation, are considered “original” spiritual forces. They are the forces that create

substance, simultaneously being substance. In this view, the *musubi* are particles as well as energy that are identical to “light” that illuminate “life” throughout the universe (Andō 2004: 212-213).

- ***niraikanai***
The word *niraikanai* in the Ryūkyū language represents another world in a distant sea. “Ni” in the word *niraikanai* signifies the world of the underground. The notion of the *niraikanai*, where the *marebito* come from, often is associated with the Ryūkyū festivals (Sakurai 2004:174).
- ***obotsukagura***
This word in the Ryūkyū language represents the Ryūkyū worldview of heaven (Sakurai 2004:172).
- **Okinawa**
Okinawa is one of the Japanese prefectures (provinces) that lies in the southwest islands. It is also known as the Ryūkyū islands (Higa 2000:22).
- ***Orikuchigaku***
Orikuchi’s studies.
- **Orikuchi Shinobu Zenshū**
The collection of Orikuchi Shinobu
- ***Oshumai***
Oshumai indicates the representative of a group of ancestral spirits that come back to this world on a special occasion in order to bless their descendents. The *Oshumai* shares some teachings, warnings, and encouragements in each household. Occupants of each household follow whatever *Oshumai* demands them to do in order to receive his blessings (Orikuchi 2003:25).
- ***Pūri***
Pūri is one of the Ryūkyū festivals, in which the *marebito*, whom humans impersonate, appear with masks or costumes for blessing. People welcome the *marebito* called *Akamata* and *Kuromata* in *Pūri* held in the Yaeyama islands. People pray for a good harvest for the coming year in the festival (Ine 2005:70).
- **霊主体従 (*reishutaijū*)**
These words simply express that the spirit is active, whereas the flesh is passive. According to Kamata (1983:171), the phrase *reishutaijū* represents the relationship between two different elements in this world. These two elements, the positive and the negative, fire and water, or spirit and flesh, originated from an immense life force that pervades the universe.
- **The Ryūkyū islands**
The Ryūkyū islands are now called Okinawa Prefecture. The islands lie between Kagoshima Prefecture in Japan and Taiwan, being comprised of four groups of islands: Amami, Okinawa, Miyako, and Yaeyama.
- ***sake (tonoto)***
Sake is Japanese liquor that is made from rice. According to Akino, the same liquor is expressed by the word *tonoto* in the Ainu language (1999:250-251).
- ***satchep***
The word *satchep* in the Ainu language represents dried salmon (Akino 1999:250-251).

- *shima*
The word *shima* indicates complete, independent spaces, in which native Ryūkyū people maintain their distinct way of life in a self-sufficient condition (Higa 2000:22-23).
- *shinimaburi*
The word *shinimaburi* represents departed souls that have left human bodies after peoples' deaths (Doi 1983:290).
- *Shinto*
The Japanese dictionary, *Daijirin* (1988:1248), defines *Shinto* or Shintoism as Japanese native faith that originally relied on animism and shamanism. *Shinto* is a distinct, traditional principle that Japanese people, as an ethnic group, have worshipped. Throughout time, various theories of Shintoism have been established. Shintoism also had been transformed to the state Shintoism, in which the *Shinto* shrines subordinated to the Japanese state; after the Meiji Restoration, traditional Shintoism was transformed into state Shintoism. This state Shintoism was eventually terminated after World War II. According to *Daijirin* (1988:1679), the despotic government system, which the Emperor and his subordinates formed under state Shintoism, is known as the *tennōsei*. This government system considered that the Emperor was a monarch (1988:1679). Suzuki Masayuki (1992:54) notes that the Japanese government system declared that the Emperor was a manifestation of an ancestral deity in 1937. In 1946, the Emperor eventually declared that he was not a deity, but a human individual in *Ningen Sengen*. In 1947, the Constitution of Japan was founded. This constitution defines that the Emperor is only a symbol that does not exercise any political power (1992:54).
- *shitekata and modoki*
Orikuchi (2003:32) introduces two types of performers, the *shitekata* and the *modoki*, who often appear in Japanese performing arts; they were vital elements, especially in ancient forms of performing arts. According to Orikuchi (2003:32), the *modoki* are those who play the fool on stage by imitating the actions and the speech of the *shitekata*, the main actors. He believes that ancient Japanese people greatly valued this dialogue between the *shitekata* and the *modoki*; the reason why the people created these two types of performers who confronted each other was that the performing arts of Japan originated from dialogue (Orikuchi 2003:32).
- *Takamanohara (Amaterau-ō-mikami)*
People believed that the Emperor received messages from the deity of *Takamanohara (Amaterau-ō-mikami)*, the Sun Goddess who governs heaven (1956:150).
- *Takami-musubi*
According to Kamata, two different forces follow the basic principle of the universe; spirit, fire, and positivity are active forces, whereas flesh, water, and negativity are subordinate forces. Kamata (1983:171) categorizes these two forces in two groups: the groups of spirit (fire) and flesh (water). The former group includes fire, masculinity, positivity and heaven. People call the deity of this group, *Takami-musubi*.