

# SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF SHRINE DISTRIBUTION IN CENTRAL JAPAN

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*Abstract* For the fear of strong winds which bring calamity to a rice crop, there are shrines that deify the god of wind in various places in Japan. In order to clarify various wind god shrines, the distribution of prominent shrines, which has influenced them, was investigated. Consequently, it became clear that the distribution of prominent shrines can be roughly classified into six types. They are whole country type, central part type, inland type, Kanto type, Chugoku type, and Kyushu type. It was presumed that their formation age and the difference in divine favor reflect these distributional types.

**Key words:** festival, shrine, wind god, central Japan

## 1. Introduction

A small shrine called Kazenomiya is seen in the area where a strong local wind blows (Tagami 2000a). A wind festival where people pray for the calm is performed at Kazenomiya (Tagami 2000b). Also, the wind festival is performed in each house and it is performed by people who gather together from a wide area (Tagami 2001a). People deified the wind god in each area from ancient times, and they have prayed for safety from a calamity.

Besides the Kazenomiya, there are many shrines which moved from other areas. The prominent shrine relates to the local shrine, Kazenomiya, in the wind festival. While the noted shrines change in various forms everywhere, the local shrine, like Kazenomiya, has also changed (Tagami 2001b).

It is expected that certain characteristics of shrines like Kazenomiya will become clear from the distribution of nationwide shrines. Central Japan is an example and the distribution of prominent shrines is investigated in this article. In particular, the distribution pattern is classified and each type is examined in relation to Kazenomiya.

## 2. Prominent shrines and their classification method

### Various names of the shrines

The distribution of each noted shrine has been investigated. The number of specific shrines has been known at the prefectural level. Recently, the whole shrine and its festival

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have been investigated in Japan (Zenkoku Jinjya Saishi Sairei Sogochosa Honcho Inukai 1995). Based on this, the number of shrines in the whole country is totaled. Especially, for three shrines, Kumano, Suwa, and Taiga, their number in each prefecture is examined (Jinjya Honcho Kyogaku Kenkyujyo 1996).

In order to examine the distribution of main shrines, the number of shrines is totaled according to prefectures or cities, towns and villages from the above-mentioned data. The name of a shrine was usually made afterwards. Also the Chinese character notation is sometimes different for the same shrine name. The shrine name has been called everywhere such as "OO-jinjya", "OO-sha", and "OO-miya" and so on. There is a difference in the hiragana notation with the voiced sound and contracted sound. Therefore, they were dealt with through the hiragana notation about the main part. And the different pronunciation of the same shrine has been treated as the same one.

Thus, it turns out that the major shrines cover a rather wide area at present. When shrines spread in such a wide area, various influences may be brought to bear on them.

#### **The main shrine and the attached shrine**

There are two types of shrines. One is the main shrine and the other is that belonging to it. That is placed in the garden of the main shrine. The number of shrine was totaled based on these two types. The rate of the main shrine and the attached shrine changes with the shrine. In the case of Akiba, Inari, Kotohira, Tsushima, and Yasaka, they are deified in many cases as the attached shrine. On the other hand, in the case of Katori, Shirahige, Shinmei, Jyuni, Suwa, Hakusan, Hachiman, Hiyoshi, Hikawa, Hoshinomiya, and Mishima, the rate of them being attached to the main shrine is only twenty per cent or less.

As for the attached shrine, certain characteristics can be pointed out. For example, Akiba is for fire prevention and Inari is for fertility and trade, Kotohira is for a safe cruise, Tsushima is for disease and Yasaka is also for disease. On the other hand, the main shrine type is usually distributed in a limited area.

While any shrine is deified as an attached shrine, it has been usually a main shrine before the Meiji Era. Therefore, the main shrine and attached shrine are treated as the same.

#### **Classification of shrines distributed over a wide area**

There are various differences in the notation of a shrine. That is, 1) the old use of kana, "dumi" and "zumi", 2) different names for the same shrine, for example, "Itsukushima", "Munakata", and "Benzaiten". 3) the composite name by which the name of a place is entitled, such as OO Hachiman and X X Hachiman. If there are these differences in the same shrine, they are treated as the same.

The number for any shrine, including the attached shrine, was totaled. Of the about 500 or more shrines, it turns out that the distribution pattern is different among them. The feature of a distribution is extracted by adopting the multivariate analysis.

A cluster analysis is adopted for each shrine as sample and shrine's number of each prefecture as element. Mahalanobis' distance or the generalized distance is used for distance measure between samples. And the longest distance method is used for clustering technique. By the dendrogram or the tree diagram, six clusters are recognized (Fig.1).

Characteristics of each distribution pattern are shown by the composite map. At first,

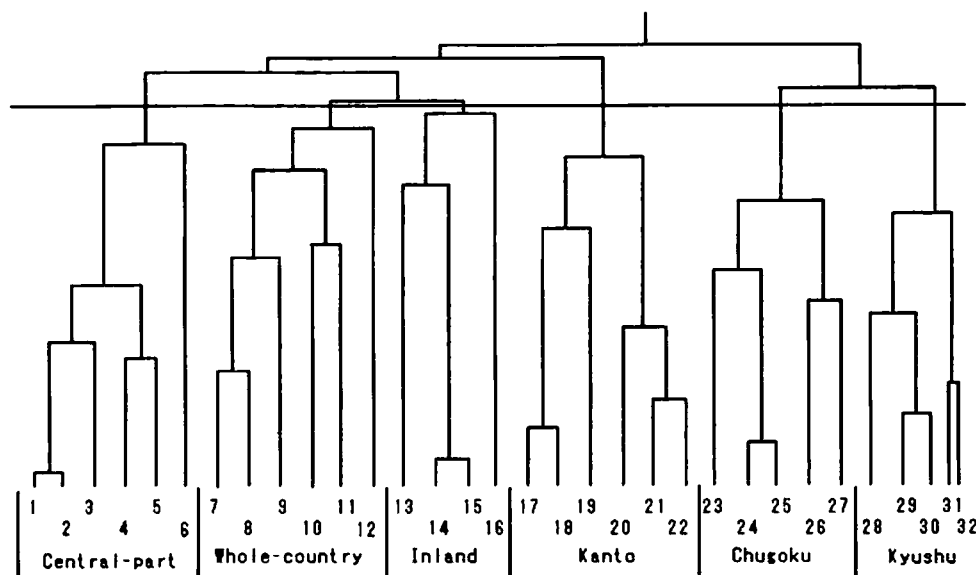


Fig. 1 Classification of shrine distribution.

Shrines name in this figure are as follows: 1: Akiba, 2: Tsushima, 3: Shinmei, 4: Hakusan, 5: Hachiman, 6: Kasuga, 7: Atago, 8: Inari, 9: Kumano, 10: Kotohira, 11: Yama, 12: Kotai, 13: Oyamazumi, 14: Jyuni, 15: Suwa, 16: Mishima, 17: Kashima, 18: Katori, 19: Yasaka, 20: Sui, 21: Sengen, 22: Hie, 23: Itsukushima, 24: Otoshi, 25: Sumiyoshi, 26: Kamo, 27: Ko, 28: Ebisu, 29: Kifune, 30: Tenman, 31: Hiyoshi, 32: Wakamiya.

occupied ratio of each shrine by prefecture is calculated and also it is compared to their country mean. Next, the ratio of each prefecture to whole country is averaged by shrines that belonged to the same cluster.

The center of the distribution is different among them. They are as follows: whole country, central part of Japan, inland, Kanto, Chugoku, and Kyushu (Fig.2).

### 3. Distribution type of shrine

#### Whole-country type

This shrine type is distributed in almost all areas (Fig. 3). Kumano-Sanzan became the training place to practice Buddhism in the Heian period. Connected with the Haguro mountain priest, its power increased throughout the whole of the Tohoku Region. Through pilgrimages to the Kumano-Sanzan, it spread amongst the people. Moreover, everyone was just going to visit at one time to Kotohira for care a marine accident and to pray for rain, and also to Ise. Thus, this may be the cause of the nationwide spread of them.

Among the people who live in a mountain area, there is the mountain god who governs wild animals and trees in Yamajinjya. Among the farmers, the same god was considered as it comes down from a mountain from spring to autumn, and becomes a god of the paddies. Atago is believed in as the god of fire prevention. Inari is a god of agriculture and commerce. Thus, it may be deified nationwide because of the object of prayer.

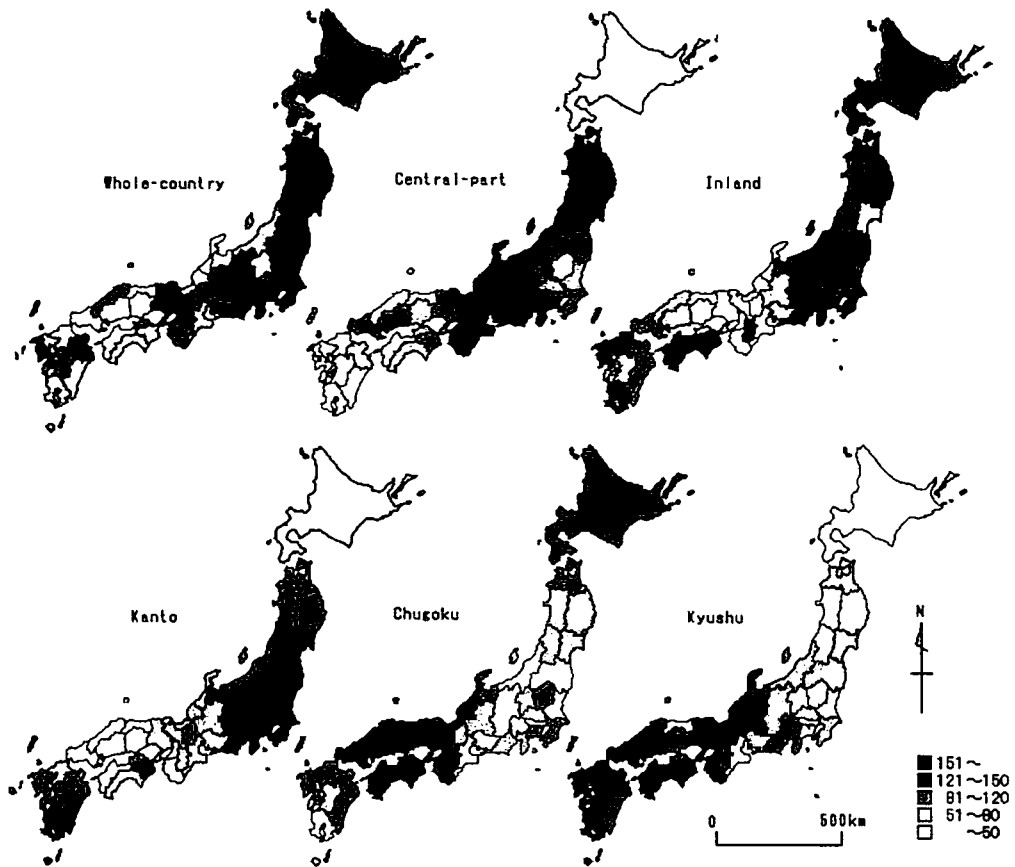
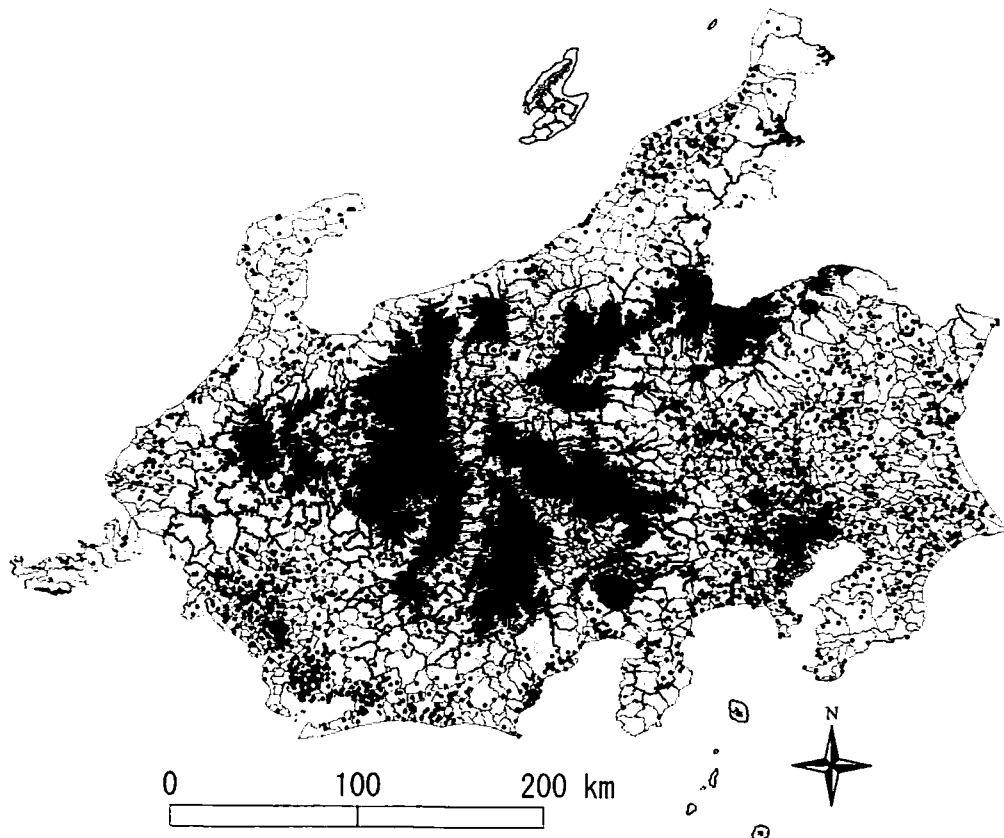


Fig. 2 Shrine distribution pattern of each cluster.  
 Patterns are shown by relative value of whole country mean. The value in the legend means per cent.

### Central-part type

Concentration in the Tokai and Hokuriku Regions is especially salient in this type (Fig. 4). This type of shrine has a source there as usual. The source of Akiba is in Akibasans in the western part of Shizuoka Prefecture. That of Tsushima is located in Tsushima-shi, Aichi Prefecture. Akiba is the god of fire protection. Tsushima is a god for protection from epidemics. The source of Hakusan is the Shirayamahime shrine in Tsurugi-cho, Ishikawa Prefecture. It was propagated widely by Hakusan mountain priests that related to the Jodoshinshu and Soto sects.

However, Hachiman and Shinmei are distributed nationwide besides in Tokai and Hokuriku Districts. As for Hachiman, the composition rate is over ten per cent depending on the northern Tohoku Region and also on Setouchi Region. Usa-hachiman deifies Emperor Ohjin, as a god of national protection, combined and tied up with Buddhism from early days. Therefore, it was carried out all over the country as a guardian deity of a temple. Furthermore, since the Genji whole families also worshipped as a patron saint, Hachiman is



**Fig. 3** Whole country type (the distribution of Inari).

Atago, Inari, Kumano, Kotohira, San, and Kodai shrines are included. In the circumference in Tokyo or Nagoya, the rate is remarkably high. In Inari shrine, a god which manages five cereals is deified, and it is connected with the spirit-of-the-rice faith. Many were non-ranked shrines and a patron god of residence. After medieval times, it was thought of as the god of increase in production and commerce.

called out to every place as a guardian deity of the samurai (Kawaguchi 1999).

#### **Inland type**

The Oyamazumi, Jyuni, Suwa, and Mishima belong to this type. Suwa deifies the god of army, hunting, farming, and it has a source in Suwa-shi, Nagano Prefecture. It is distributed especially in the Shin-etsu District (Fig. 5). There are many Suwa also in southern Kyushu.

The source of the Oyamazumi is in Omishima of Ehime Prefecture. It is a god of sea and it protects the navy. It is also a god that totally governs the spirit of the mountain. It is also called the Mishima-Daimyojin from the enshrinement grounds. Mishima-Taisha of Shizuoka Prefecture, for the protection of Kanto, also deifies Oyamazumi (Kawaguchi 1999). Moreover, many Jyuni shrine, which are mainly distributed in Niigata Prefecture, deify the Oyamazumi.

### **Kanto type**

In this type, a large number of shrines are distributed in the Kanto Region and they are distributed also in the Tohoku or Tokai Region (Fig. 6). Kashima, Katori, and Sengen have sources in this area. Kashima deifies Takemikazuchi-no-Mikoto, Kashima-no-Okami, and it is believed in as an army god. It advanced to the Tohoku Region in the middle of the Heian Era, and many of them are on the seashore of Miyagi and Fukushima Prefecture (Kawaguchi 1999).

Katori deifies Futsunushi-no-Mikoto, the god of the army. Although Katori is related deeply with Kashima, it is distributed southward of Kashima. Motomiya at the top of Mt. Fuji is the source of Sengen. The society for climbing Mt. Fuji prospered from the Muromachi period. There are many societies of this kind in the area from where Mt. Fuji is visible. Sanno Festival of Hie shrine is one of the three grand festivals of Edo. Hie has received the protection of the Edo Government. Therefore, Hie developed in Kanto Region in Edo era.

Suijinjya deifies the water god and also Suitengu was the water god of the Chikugo River from the early days. It came to deify the spirit of the dead of Heike at Dannoura, and is also known as the God of an easy delivery. Thus, it is distributed in the Tokai District besides the Kanto and Kyushu Regions.

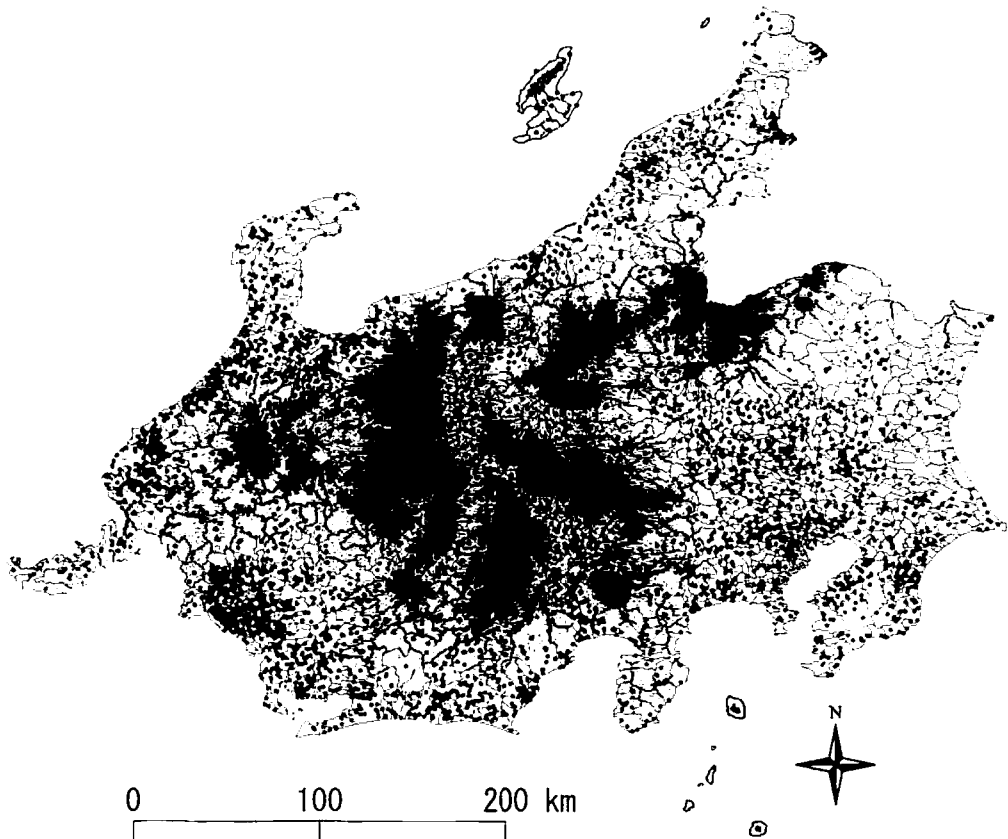
### **Chugoku type**

Itsukushima, Ootoshi, Sumiyoshi, Kamo, and Ko shrine belong to this type. It is distributed in Setouchi District and Kinki Region, and its distribution has a center in Hyogo and Hiroshima Prefecture. The source of Itsukushima and Sumiyoshi is in this area. Ichikishimahime-no-Mikoto is deified in Miyajima, Hiroshima Prefecture. Itsukushima and Munakata deify Ichikishimahime-no-Mikoto. It is goddess for a safe voyage, originating in a river. Sumiyoshi is located in Sumiyoshi-ku, Osaka-shi and it was once called Suminoe. Suminoe-Sanjin and Empress Jingu are deified in this shrine and people pray for protection of sea routes. However, also all over the country, Itsukushima and Sumiyoshi are distributed. Ichikishimahime-no-Mikoto is identified with Benzaiten, one of the Seven Lucky Gods, the goddess of eloquence, music, wisdom, and treasure. Many Benzaiten were renamed as the Itsukushima shrine after Shinto-and-Buddhist-deities separated (Kawaguchi 1999). Moreover, Sumiyoshi is a god of "Waka", the 31-syllable Japanese poem, and farming. By these miracle covering voyage safety, agriculture, quotient, and sentence, it has spread to every place.

Ootoshi and Ko shrine are concentrated in Hyogo, Hiroshima, and Okayama Prefectures. The god of Ootoshi is the son of Susano-no-Mikoto, and is the same god as the New Year's deity who comes in the New Year and is deified also in houses. Many of Ko may deify Susano-no-Mikoto, and it deifies also Honokagutsuchi-no-Mikoto. Kojin is believed in as the god of land or as a god of the kitchen fire (Kawaguchi 1999). Since Kamo deifies god of an affiliated sequence, it is possible that the distribution shares similarities.

### **Kyushu type**

The distribution center of Tenmangu is located in northern Kyushu. One of its sources is in Dazaifu, Fukuoka Prefecture. Michizane Sugawara is deified here and also in Kitano shrine, Sugawara shrine, and many Oimatsu shrine. In the case of Kifune, a source is in



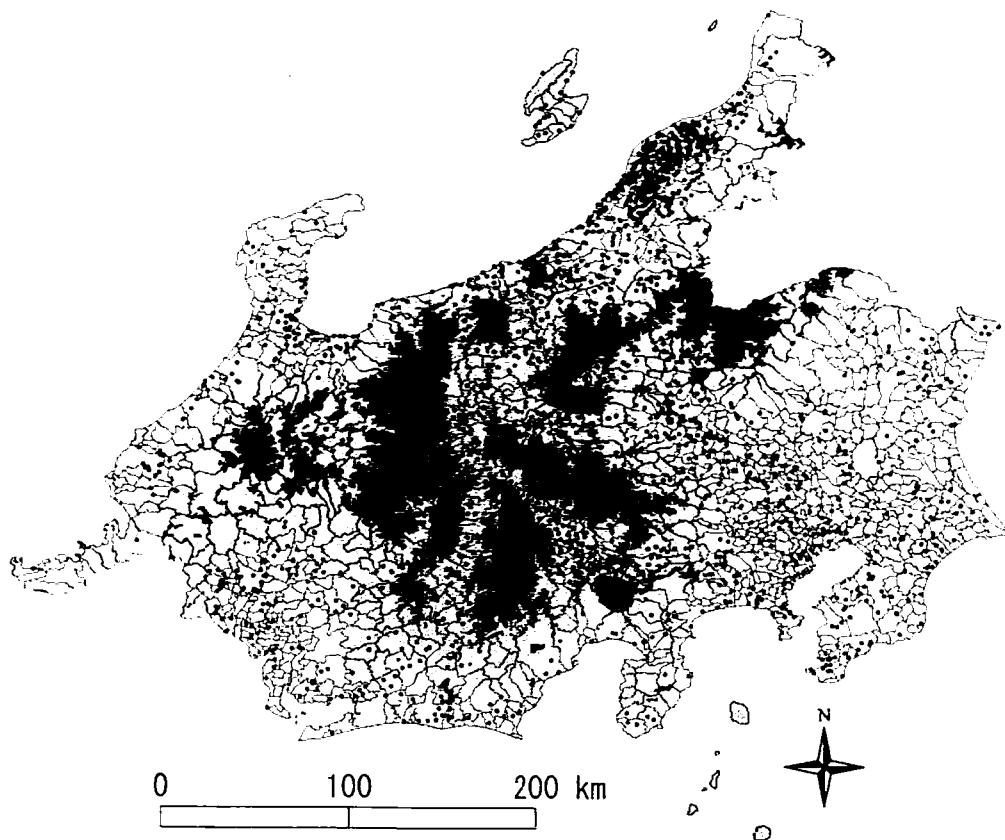
**Fig. 4** Central part type (distribution of Hachiman).

Akiba, Tsushima, Shinmei, Hakusan, Hachiman and also Kasuga shrines are included. Although Hachiman is distributed over a wide area, almost everywhere, it is distributed especially in Nobi Plain and the Hokuriku District. Hachiman was a guardian deity of the Todaiji Temple, and it collected veneration as a god of national protection for a long time. The samurai venerated Hachiman in Kamakura, with the spread of the samurai, the shrine spread all over the country, too.

Sakyo-ku, Kyoto-shi. Kibune-yama is the object of worship. It is also the god of the upper part of the Kibune-river. Therefore people pray for rain or fine weather here. After the Heian period, it spread to every place (Kawaguchi 1999). The distribution center is located in northern Kyushu; it may be connected with its numerous droughts and floods damage.

Ebisu is distributed over western parts of Japan including the Sea of Japan side. This may be because it deifies Kotoshironushi-no-mikoto or Hiruko-no-mikoto, the fishing god. There are many Ebisu also in Osaka. This may be because Ebisu is one of the Seven Lucky Gods and a market god.

Wakamiya means the shrine of the son of a god. Wakamiya is connected to Hachiman deeply and Wakamiya is distributed all over the country including northern Kyushu.



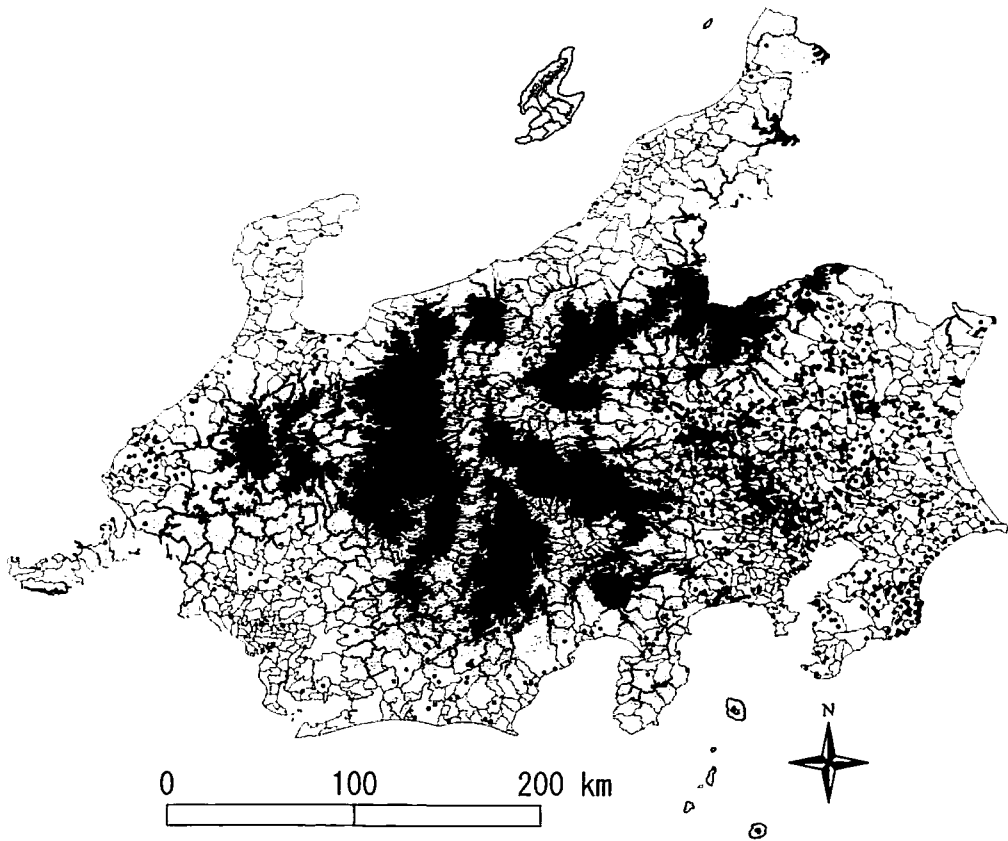
**Fig. 5** Inland type (distribution of Suwa).  
 Suwa, Oyamazumi, Jyuni, and Mishima shrines are included. Inland of Chubu Region, around Nagano Prefecture, has a wide distribution of Suwa. Moreover, a large number are concentrated also in the Niigata Plain.

#### 4. Conclusion

In the original style, people prayed for ripe crops in Kazenomiya. However, different local factors have also been concerned with it. Moreover, the relationship changed after the Meiji Era. The distribution pattern of prominent shrines is examined in comparison with Kazenomiya. For the distribution of these shrines, there are six types. The main types are as follows.

- a) Whole country type: Inari, Kumano, Kotohira, San. Atago. Kodai are included. They are distributed from the Kyushu Region to the Tohoku Region.
- b) Central part type: Hachiman. Shinmei. Hakusan. Akiba. Kasuga, Tsushima are included. They are especially concentrated in the Tokai District or the Hokuriku District.
- c) Inland type: Suwa. Oyamazumi. Jyuni, Mishima are included. They are distributed especially in Nagano and Niigata Prefecture.
- d) Kanto type: Yasaka, Sui, Hie. Kashima, Sengen, Katori are included. They are distributed





**Fig. 6** Kanto type (distribution of Yasaka).

Kashima, Katori, Yasaka, Sui, Sengen, and Hie shrines are included. Yasaka is widely distributed in the Kanto Plain. Yasaka, Gozutenno and Gion Temple are located in Higashiyama, Kyoto Prefecture. These shrines and temples carry out the Gion festival together. Epidemics are considered as a curse of the revengeful ghost of the aristocrats who fell from power. The spirits-of-the-dead are comforted by the festival. This festival is held on old June 15, and it is just the time of epidemic or disaster caused by blight and harmful insects. Therefore, it is considered as a god, which calms epidemics and disasters, and the Gion faith spread all over the country. Many shrines that have been called Tennosha have been renamed Yasaka, Yakumo, and Hikawa after the Shinto-and-Buddhist-deities separation.

from the Tohoku Region to the Tokai District, and are concentrated in the Kanto Region.

e) Chugoku type: Itsukushima, Sumiyoshi, Ko, Ootoshi, Kamo are included. They are distributed over the Setouchi District and the Kinki Region.

f) Kyushu type: Tenmangu, Wakamiya, Ebisu, Hiyoshi, Ebisu, Kibune are included. The center of their distribution is especially in northern Kyushu.

It is considered that the differences in the distribution of these noted shrines were produced through the deployment process in each district. By understanding the miracle of each shrine, various shrines are constructed in local areas. Gods are deified by their

miracles and people venerate them. They have influenced also religious services of the wind god in each district. Furthermore, if there is a joint enshrinement, it is possible that the wind god and the lineage of Kazenomiya also changed. These are discussed in another article (Tagami 2002).

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(\*: in Japanese, \*\*: in Japanese with English abstract)