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54. Notes on Some Japanese Methods of Personal Purification After a Funeral.

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When all the boats are ready the magician utters charms over certain herbs, with which the canoes are rubbed. The fishing implements also have incantations chanted over them, and the fishermen proceed ceremonially on the first fishing expedition. The greater part of the quarry caught during the first outing is sent to the main chief in the village of Omarakana.

During the whole season of shark fishing, which lasts for about two moons, the magician keeps certain special observances and performs certain rites. Thus he has to abstain from sexual intercourse, in fact, his wife and family move away from the house, in which he remains alone, keeping the interior and the surroundings of his hut clean and tidy. He must keep to the village, as he is forbidden to hear the sound of drums or of song. When the fishermen go out on an expedition, he opens wide the door of his house and sits on the platform without his pubic covering, keeping the legs apart. This is said to make the shark keep his mouth wide open and catch on to the bait. Sometimes the magician sits in the same attitude and condition on the beach, singing a song of magical import to attract the shark.

Thus fishing, an activity of great economic importance and a favourite sport all over the Trobriands, ranges from a purely economic pursuit to almost a magico-religious ceremony. In fact, the *kalala* fishing in Labai is surrounded with more numerous and more stringent taboos, and is more bound up with tradition and ceremonial than any other social activity in the Trobriands. B. MALINOWSKI,

### Japan: Folklore.

Hildburgh.

#### Notes on Some Japanese Methods of Personal Purification **54** after a Funeral. *By W. L. Hildburgh.*

Contact, or even association (including that by relationship), with a corpse is regarded in Japan as a source of ritual uncleanness from which the person who has become thus impure may require early purging, lest he bring misfortune upon himself or upon others. Attendance at a Buddhist funeral being looked upon as a cause of such impurity, a person returning from one is subjected to a form of purification before he (or she) enters his (or her) house. The misfortune which may be brought about by a person newly coming from a funeral is generally ascribed to the wrath of some Kami (*i.e.*, Shinto divinity) who has been offended by the proximity of the impure person.\* And that misfortune is thought not necessarily to fall upon the offending person, but to be liable as well to affect some other member of the household—though whether because of some belief in an infectiousness of the state of impurity which may lead to the anger of the divinity falling upon some person actually innocent of offence: or due to a notion that the divinity holds all the members of the household responsible for the affront to him and may strike at the household through any one of its members; or as the result of an idea that while the divinity is angry he ceases to protect any of the household from the lurking supernatural beings seeking to injure them, I do not know. The following is an example showing a misfortune supposed to result from a neglect of the precautionary purification mentioned:—

On returning home from a Buddhist funeral, a boy mischievously omitted to purify himself, by washing his hands in the vessel of water specially provided for the purpose, before entering the house. One of the servants of the household having, soon after this event, become ill, the boy was questioned as to his behaviour,

\* When a person has been buried according to the Buddhist rite, then during a mourning period of fifty days (some people say that twenty suffice), while the members of the family are in a state of impurity, "the kamidana must be entirely screened from view with pure white paper" and even the Shinto ofuda, or piona invocations fastened upon the house door must have white paper pasted over them." I. Hearn, *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, 1894, p. 401.

and, having confessed his neglect, the misfortune was ascribed to his transgression, for which latter he was then severely punished [Chikuzen province].\* Similar washing, as a means of ritual purification, is of very ancient standing in Japan—Chinese travellers to Japan, “centuries before the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi* were written,” say that there was a “practice, when the funeral was over, for the whole family of “the deceased to go into the water and wash.”†

A common form of purification for a person returning home after a funeral is the throwing of salt upon him, before he enters the house, by a person who has not attended the funeral [Yokohama]. Similarly, salt, scattered immediately about the room where the corpse has rested‡ and about the threshold, and then swept out, is employed for the purification of a house as soon as the body of a dead person has been taken away from it, just as it is used in the preparation of spots which, for religious or for magical purposes, require to be placed in a condition of ceremonial purity. The anti-spectral virtues attributed to salt lead not only to its employment as a dispeller of evil influences already acquired, but also to its use as a preservative against the acquirement of such influence or against the machinations of evil supernatural beings.

If a person, after attending a funeral, goes to a tea-house before returning home, his purification by means of salt, before entering his own house, becomes unnecessary [Yokohama]. Why this should be my informant (a keeper of a tea-house) did not tell me. I think that possibly the tea taken is thought to serve as a sufficient purification, because the drinking of a cup of tea before leaving one's house in the morning is sometimes believed to keep one safe from accidents while away from home during the day;§ or that, perhaps (as my informant told me that the impurity remains at the tea-house) there is a belief either that the cause of the state of impurity stays in the first dwelling into which its bearer enters, or one that the presence of a more or less noisy crowd of people tends to drive it away from its bearer.|| We may observe, incidentally, that since a tea-house is open to any passing stranger, it may receive unawares at any time a person who is (due to any of the various causes of such impurity) ritually unclean, and that it must therefore be so arranged that no harm shall come to its household or its guests throughout the presence of such a person.

Seemingly closely allied to the belief in the necessity of a personal purification after attendance at a funeral, is the belief that if for some reason — such as the lateness of the hour preventing his return home on the day of the funeral—a person who has been to the funeral sleeps in the house of the deceased during the night following it, that person, in order to avoid some misfortune occurring to him, should sleep in the same house again, seven days later [Yokohama]. There are, however, methods, should the person be unable to repeat his stay at the house, or be seriously inconvenienced thereby, for avoiding the evil results feared. To this end he may, should he be elsewhere than at the house of the deceased on the seventh night, set

\* Place names given thus identify the localities in which I recorded the respective beliefs or practices cited, or those where they had been observed by my Japanese informants.

† W. G. Aston, “Japanese Myth,” in *Folk-Lore*, Vol. X, p. 302.

‡ A curious parallel to this is the scattering of salt about the room in which an unwelcome guest has been, with the especial aim that he shall not return to the house. Whether the effect here desired is thought to be based on a clearing away of all psychical traces of the visitor, or whether it is referred to the actions of supernatural beings to whom, perhaps, a message is thought to be conveyed by the scattered salt used as a symbol (*cf.* MAN, 1917, 2), I do not know.

§ J. Inouye, *Home Life in Tokyo*, Tōkyō, 1910, p. 140.

|| In China, a certain character “which means boisterousness of a crowd, has for many centuries “been one of the best among devil-expelling charms.” J. J. M. de Groot, *Religious System of China*, Vol. VI., Bk. II, p. 1144.

one of his sandals or his clogs out of doors for the night [Yokohama and Tōkyō]; or he may, in anticipation, cross a bridge before he returns to his home [Echizen: reported at Yokohama]. What the reason for these beliefs is I have not been told. But we may guess that it is connected with the conceptions underlying the beliefs that "For forty-nine days the spirit of the dead wanders in the dark space intervening between this world and the next, and every seven days it makes an advance forward, in which it is materially helped by the prayers of those it has left behind; according to some, the spirit hovers for the same period over the roof of its old home, for which reason many people dislike to remove until the period has terminated from a house in which a member of the family has died, as his spirit would have to hover over a house deserted by those he loved."\* The placing of the piece of footwear out of doors is intended, I think, either to give the spirit of the deceased something to return to and to work upon in the place of the owner of the footwear, or else to convey to the spirit the idea that the owner is not in the house, because footwear is operated upon, in order to influence its owner, in various Japanese magical operations, while in some others it appears to me as if intended actually to represent its owner. We might guess that the bridge to be crossed in the Echizen practice must be one over running water, were it not that there are other explanations of the effect of crossing a bridge which may plausibly be advanced, and that the data accompanying my note are insufficient to make a detailed examination of it worth while.

A curious belief, which may be mentioned in connection with the conceptions recorded above, is that if a person has shortly before been bitten by a rat he should not attend a funeral, lest poisoning result from the bite, and he die [Yokohama].

W. L. HILDBURGH.

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## REVIEWS.

### India: Archæology.

Brown.

*Catalogue of Prehistoric Antiquities in the Indian Museum.* By J. Coggin **55**  
Brown.

This work deals with the prehistoric antiquities in the Calcutta Museum, about half the volume referring to specimens of characteristic palæolithic form, nearly the whole of the remainder being devoted to specimens of neolithic age, the number of early copper and silver antiquities catalogued being comparatively small. A good deal of doubt has been expressed whether Indian palæoliths, for the most part fashioned of quartzite, though of the same forms as the older drift implements of Europe, are contemporaneous with the latter. This doubt would seem to have been set at rest with regard to one specimen, which is, however, typical in form and technique of a whole series. This implement, which, to judge from the illustration, is a well-worked ovate of St. Acheul type, and comes from the Nerbudda Valley, furnishes "one of the few, but no less decisive pieces of evidence of human existence in late geological times, coeval with the presence of a vertebrate fauna long extinct." It is of Vindhyan sandstone, and was found lying flat and two-thirds buried, in a cliff face under some three feet of the stiff, reddish, mottled, unstratified clay which underlies about twenty feet of gravel containing bones of extinct mammals.

Another specimen of seemingly palæolithic age is an "agate chip" found *in situ* in the bone-bearing beds of the upper Godavari Valley. It is not of characteristic older palæolithic form, and the small size of the reproduction makes it difficult to discuss its affinities; moreover, there seems to be a discrepancy between its size as given in

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\* Inouye, *op. cit.*, pp. 247, 248.