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# Occult Exercises of *Shugendo* Religion

## — Mechanism and World View —

*Hitoshi Miyake*

The present article attempts to reveal the hidden meanings of occult exercises of *Shugendo* religion, i. e. walking on fire, bathing in boiling water, etherealization of body, walking on sword-edge, flying in the air, etc. with special reference to the contexts of world view of that religion.

To begin with, we assume that the actions in each exercise are symbolic, and analyze them to the level of meaning. By so doing, we recognize that the occult exercises, e. g. walking on fire etc. are the rites which symbolize the transformation of the exerciser into another being who possesses super-natural powers and who is in heaven.

*Shugendo* has such a religious world view that recognizes the world of spirits in heaven, and that the occult exercisers, by becoming shamans, get access to that world and get informed of the causes of the fortunes and misfortunes of the actual world.

Hereupon, occult exercises of *Shugendo* has the function, on the one hand, of demonstrating the supernatural powers of the exercisers to his followers, and, on the other, to convince the exerciser himself possession of the religious power.