

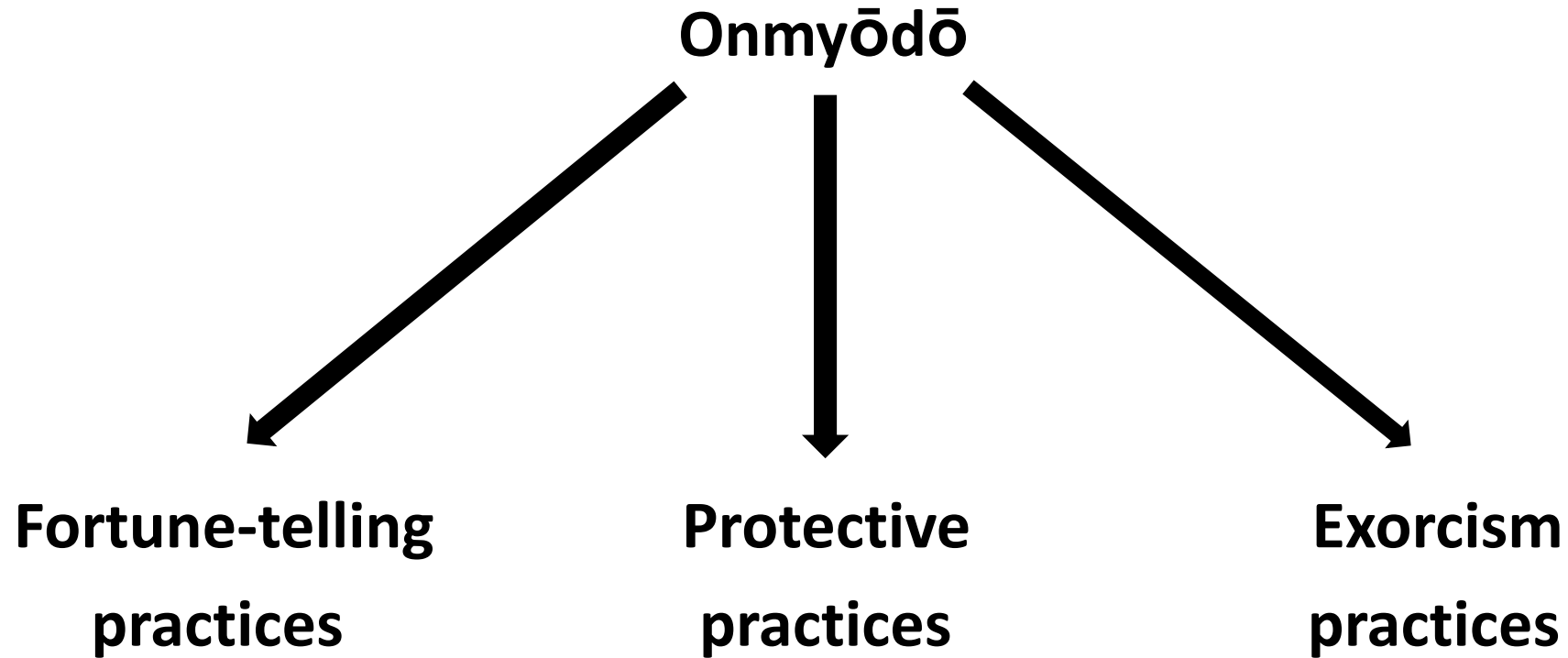
# **The exorcism practices in medieval and modern Onmyōdō**

Zinchenko Alina

# Introduction

- Onmyōdō is a branch of Japanese esoteric practices, which is a mixture of natural science and occultism.
- Onmyōdō can be considered as a special esoteric vision of reality typical for Japanese aristocracy during the Heian (794-1185) period.
- After transition to the period of Shogunate Kamakura (1185-1333), Onmyōdō practices gradually lost their power and became forbidden for centuries before repeal of the law in 2006.

# The branches of Onmyōdō



# Research Questions

- How the exorcism practices of Onmyōdō are held?
- What are the main reasons for a soul to become a vengeful ghost (Yūrei) in the terms of Onmyōdō's believes?
- Which types of Yūrei exist in the terms of Onmyōdō?
- How a soul can be relieved during the exorcism practices?

# The procedure for conducting exorcism practices



Onmyōji – professional practitioners of onmyōdō



Paper dolls. Through them Onmyōji summon Shikigami, spirits conjured to exercise risky orders for their masters, such as protection from Yūrei.

# Yūrei



# The reasons of becoming an Yūrei

***Yūrei*** is a vengeful ghost in Japanese folklore.

A soul can become an ***Yūrei***:

- If a person committed suicide.
- If a person was tortured to death or suddenly died in a painful manner.
- If a person was betrayed or had regrets before death.
- If a person did not manage to finish an important task. Most often the task is a revenge.

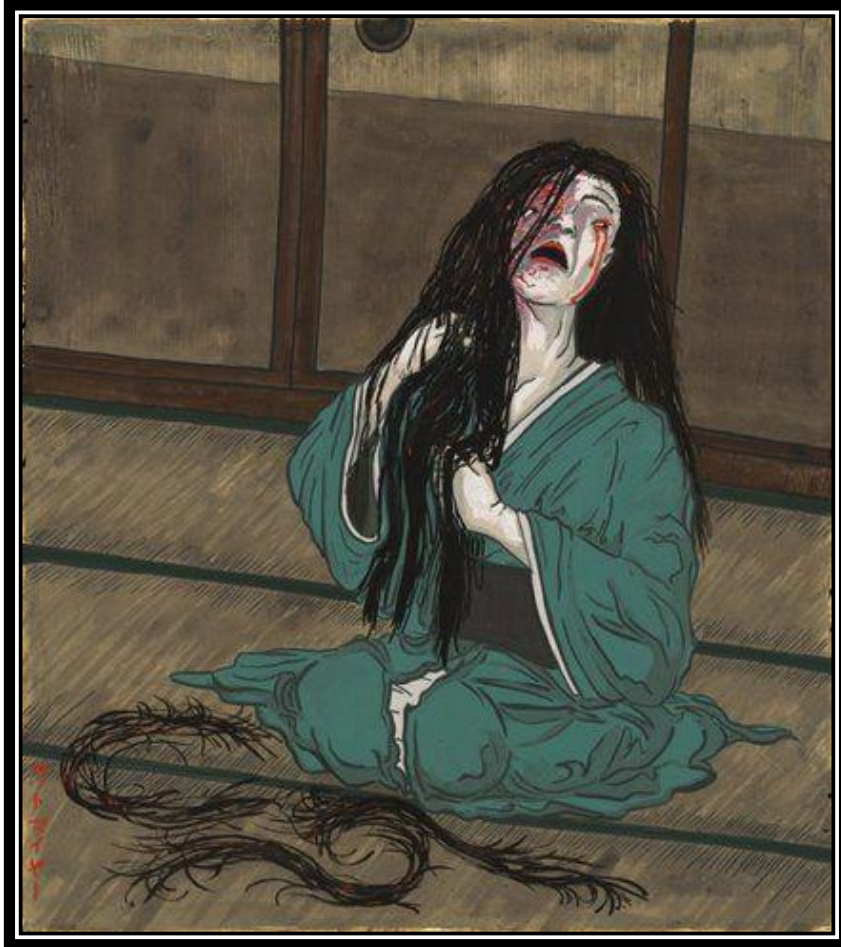
All *Yūrei* are driven by powerful emotions such as a desire for revenge, love, jealousy, hatred or sorrow

# Types of Yūrei





# Onryō



**Vengeful ghosts who come back from purgatory for a wrong done (murder, torture, betrayal and etc.) to them during their lifetime.**

# Ubume



**A soul of a mother died during childbirth or died leaving young children without care. Ubume is not a vengeful ghost, it is just a suffering ghost who is chained to the world of living because of its love to the child.**

# Goryō



Vengeful ghosts who are very close to onryō, but their souls belong to the aristocratic class.

# Conclusion

- Exorcism ceremonies of Onmyōdō might have a diversity but they always include an Onmyōji and a summoned Shikigami.
- For a soul to be relieved an Yūrei must be reassured by an Onmyōji. Otherwise their suffering may last for eternity.
- All Yūrei can be divided into some types depending on the way of death, their age, gender, the emotions they experienced before their death and etc.

# Sources

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Thank you for your attention!