

Kijimun's Monologue —No.7—

Topic: *Pāntwū*

Haisai, Kijimun *yaibīn!* (Hi, I'm Kijimun!)

Have you ever heard of "*Pāntwū*"? *Pāntwū* is known as a god of sound health in Shimajiri village of Miyako island. Maybe you have seen its figure chasing after people and putting muds on their faces, on TV. I am going to talk about *Pāntwū* in this month.

In Shimajiri village, there is a festival called *Punaha* three times a year. (*Punaha* means both a festival of invocation and a banquet. The periods of *Punaha* are from the end of March to April 1st, from the end of May to June 1st and two lucky days of September with the lunar calendar.) Among three times, it is in September (with lunar calendar) when *Pāntwū* appears, and this festival is called *Pāntwū Punaha*. *Pāntwū Punaha* is held for two days, *Pāntwū* comes into the picture from dusk in both days.

There are three figures of *Pāntwū*, *Uya* (Large) *Pāntwū*, *Naka* (Medium) *Pāntwū* and *Ffa* (Small) *Pāntwū*. These three masks are separately preserved in different houses.

●The birth of *Pāntwū*

Pāntwū is born from a well called "*Nmarigā*" located on the outskirts of the village.

1. Preparation

- Go to get vines called *Kyān* or *Yumunda* to wrap the body of *Pāntwū*.
- Prepare a rope called "*Mīpī tsuna*" to fix the vines. *Mīpī tsuna* is the same rope which is used for the event to drive evil spirits out from the village, called *Sumarissa*.
- Draw water from the well.

2. Transform to *Pāntwū*!

- Wrap the bodies of three young men who were selected as *Pāntwū* with the vines and fix them by *Mīpī tsuna*. Their whole bodies must be covered with vines except their face, arms, and ankles. Check if they are well covered.
- Cover their bodies with mud which was brought from *Nmarigā*.
- Put a thatch's leaf to which *Māta* (a talisman to protect the young men from evil) is tied in their foreheads.
- Get them into *Nmarigā* and soak in mud, the mud of *Nmarigā* is stinking...
- Make them hold a cane made of *Dadif* (a name of the plant, *Arundo donax*), at the end.

Then, *Pāntwū* goes to the village, visits each place of worship and houses, and put the mud of *Nmarigā* on the wall of houses or bodies of villagers and onlookers to bring them a state of perfect health.

In this year, *Pāntwū Punaha* was held on October 6th and 7th. Several years have already passed since I wanted to go to see *Pāntwū*. I will be there next year!