

Studies on the *Kojiki*

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Chapter 2: The Seven Generations of the Age of Deities

(The first part of this chapter and the notes to it appeared in issue 4. To provide context, the first part of the text is repeated immediately below. For the text notes up to 4, as well as the endnotes and citations up to endnote 16, see issue 4.)

The deity that next came into existence was named Kuninotokotachi no kami 国之常立神 (1). Next appeared Toyokumono no kami 豊雲野神 (2). These two deities also came into existence as solitary deities, and they hid their bodies. Next came into existence a deity named Ujihini no kami 宇比地迺神 (3), and next his sister-spouse (4), Suhichini no kami 須比智迺神.

Next, Tsunogui no kami 角杵神, and next his sister-spouse Ikugui no kami 活杵神 (5). Next, Ōtonoji no kami 意富斗能地神, and next his sister-spouse Ōtonobe no kami 大斗乃弁神 (6). Next, Omodaru no kami 於母陀流神 (7), and next his sister-spouse Ayakashikone no kami 阿夜訶古泥神 (8). Next, Izanaki no kami 伊耶那岐神, and next his sister-spouse Izanami no kami 伊耶那美神 (9). The deities named above, from Kuninotokotachi no kami to Izanami no kami, are called altogether the Seven Generations of the Age of Deities (10).

Gloss: The first two solitary deities are each called “one generation” (ichidai 一代).

Each pair of the next ten paired deities is called jointly “one generation” (11).

Text Notes

Further comment to note 4, “sister-spouse” (imo)

As described in the following chapter, Izanaki and Izanami, the final pair of the

Seven Generations of the Age of Deities, stand on the celestial floating bridge (*ame no ukihashi* 天の浮橋), under which the ocean spreads broadly. They create Onogoro 淤能碁呂 island, to which they descend and begin the process of procreating the different lands (*kuni* 国). In this scene they alone exist amid the ocean's broad expanse. Oka Masao 岡正雄 (1898–1982), who found in this account traces of a primordial flood myth, described it as follows:

Among Japanese myths we can find the story of the divine ancestors Izanaki and Izanami, the brother-and-sister pair who married and gave birth to numerous deities. This myth is a remnant of the flood myths often observed among the tribes of southern China and Southeast Asia. In these narrations humankind becomes extinct as the result of a flood that leaves only two survivors, a brother and a sister. Since they are siblings, they cannot wed. However, they conduct a magic ritual to remove the incest ban, marry as non-kin partners, and bear offspring. In the Japanese myths, although the part with the flood has disappeared, the details of the story's content are exactly the same.⁽¹⁾

Ōbayashi Taryō 大林太良 (1929–2001) describes Oka's analysis of the subject as “definitely reductive.” Nevertheless, he accepts that there is a link between the Izanaki and Izanami myth and the “flood-type sibling marriage and first-founder myths” found in southern China and Southeast Asia. On that basis he attempts a more detailed analysis of the matter.⁽²⁾

As a representative example of these “flood-type sibling marriage and first-founder myths” that attracted the interest of Oka and Ōbayashi, we can cite the myths of the Miao people in China. According to the Miao myth, a brother and sister are the only humans to survive a great flood caused by the wrath of the gods. The brother tries to wed his sister so as to create progeny, but she refuses on grounds that they are siblings. The brother persists, whereupon she says that if he chases after her and manages to catch her, she will agree to marry him. The brother pursues the sister around a tree, but is unable to catch her. He

thus decides to reverse directions and succeeds. The two marry and produce an offspring, but it is only a lump of meat with no arms or legs, so they chop it up in small pieces. Those pieces fall to the ground, and a human being takes shape out of them.⁽³⁾ This myth has several features in common with the Izanaki and Izanami story, as seen below, such as the act of circling an object or the first child being deformed.

Flood myths can be widely found all over the world. Perhaps the most famous is the narrative of Noah's Ark, described in the Old Testament, which is in fact an example of the flood-myth motif that spread from Western Asia. In this regard it resembles closely the myth of Utnapishtim, included in the epic of Gilgamesh, and also the Akkadian myth of Atra-Hasis. The Indian myth of Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa has also been described as an example of the ark motif. In his book *Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, James G. Frazer takes up the relationship between world flood myths and the Old Testament, but he expresses skepticism that all flood myths throughout the world share the same origin.⁽⁴⁾

The Japanese creation myths, where the opening scene is a boundless sea, could be regarded as a flood myth where the step of the flood itself has been omitted. However, the Japanese archipelago has always been exposed not only to floods, but also to various kinds of natural disasters, including tsunami. Hence it might also be hypothesized that it was such environmental conditions as a whole that underlay the following myth of the formation of the land (*kuniumi* 国生み).

Hirafuji Kikuko 平藤喜久子

5. Tsunogui no kami and Ikugui no kami 角杵神・活杵神

These seem to be names of stakes (*kui* 杵) that have been deified, but it is not at all clear what "stake" signifies in this context. Usually a stake marks a border, and stakes often are placed to indicate possession of a piece of land. It appears

that the *kui* in the names of these deities may have been intended to express a further stage of development from that of the preceding pair of deities Uhijini and Suhichini (see text note 3), but this is not a certainty. Interpretations vary regarding *tsuno* 角 (“horn”) and *iku* 活 (“vigor”). As for *iku*, Yamaguchi Yoshinori 山口佳紀 and Kōnoshi Takamitsu 神野志隆光 take it to mean “full of vitality.” Ogihara Asao 荻原浅男 views *tsuno* as “an omen of germination.”⁽⁵⁾ There may be connotations here of a sprout brimming with life force, but it is also necessary to think about these names in relation to the implications of those of the preceding and following deities.

6. *Ōtonoji no kami* and *Ōtonobe no kami* 意富斗能地神・大斗乃弁神

The element *to* 卜 is thought to mean “place.” However, opinions are divided as to what this “place” is. For example, Tsugita Uruu 次田潤 (1884–1966) thinks it should be understood as “the earth” (*daichi* 大地),⁽⁶⁾ Shikida Toshiharu 敷田年治 (1817–1902) sees it as “a palace” (*tono* 殿),⁽⁷⁾ Kurano Kenji 倉野憲司 thinks of it as “a residence” (*idokoro* 居所),⁽⁸⁾ and Ogihara Asao views it as the male and female genitalia.⁽⁹⁾ Kōnoshi Takamitsu and Yamaguchi Yoshinori think the morpheme *ji* expresses the concept “man” as in the word *hikoji* ひこじ. They hold that the morpheme *be* is a variation of the more common *me* and indicates “woman.” They also posit, however, that *be* may be a variation of *ha*, their argument being that *me* is usually paired with *o* while *ha* is paired with *ji* (as seen in such pairs as *ōji* [“grandfather”] and *ōba* [“grandmother”], and *chichi* [“father”] and *haha* [“mother”]).⁽¹⁰⁾ Ultimately, however, given that such issues are connected to interpretations of the names of the Seven Generations of the Age of Deities as a whole, there are limits as to how far one can go in defining each deity’s name on its own.

7. Omodaru no kami 於母陀流神

Motoori Norinaga seeks the meaning of the name of this deity in that of the characters *men soku son* 面足尊 used for it in the *Nihon shoki*.⁽¹¹⁾ Following in the same line, both Nakajima Etsuji 中島悦次 (1899–1983) and Tsugita Uruu see the element *men/omo* 面 as referring to the earth, and the combination *men soku/omodaru* 面足 as meaning the fullness or completion of the earth.⁽¹²⁾ Ozaki Nobuo 尾崎暢殃, meanwhile, argues that although this term carries the sense of a “filled-out” face, its original meaning is the “completion” or “perfection” of the land.⁽¹³⁾ Kurano Kenji, on the one hand, and Yamaguchi Yoshinori and Kōnoshi Takamitsu, on the other, interpret this two-character compound as meaning the completion or perfection of the human body.⁽¹⁴⁾

8. Ayakashikone no kami 阿夜^上訶志古泥神

All commentators are in agreement that the element *aya* is an interjection (*kandōshi* 感動詞) and that the element *kashiko* 訶志古 is the stem of an adjective meaning “august” or “awe-inspiring.” However, they explain differently the reason for this emotion depending on how they understand the name Omodaru with which Ayakashikone is paired. Kurano Kenji, for instance, argues that the name Ayakashikone indicates the emergence of human consciousness and that it should be understood as conveying the generation of consciousness following the completion or perfection of the human body.⁽¹⁵⁾

9. Izanaki no kami and Izanami no kami 伊耶那岐神・伊耶那美神

Some commentators hold that these names derive directly from the root *izana* of the word *izanau* 誘ふ (“to invite”), while others argue that they come from a combination of the element *iza* with the auxiliary particle *na*. In either the case,

the names are interpreted to mean a male and female deity who beckon one another.

10. “The Seven Generations of the Age of the Deities” (*kamuyo nanayo* 神世七代)

The *kamuyo* (“realm of the deities”) stands in contrast to the human realm (*hito no yo* 人の世). It would appear that in the *Kojiki* this *kamuyo* was conceived of as a broad realm or age in distinction to the *miyo* 御世—the “honored realms” (i.e., the reigns)—of each emperor. The digraph 御世, with the reading *miyomiyo*, occurs in the first volume of the *Kojiki* in the episode of the descent to earth of Ninigi, the grandson of Amaterasu (*tenson kōrin* 天孫降臨), in a passage referring to the later relationship of the Sarume 猿女 lineage to the court.⁽¹⁶⁾ There it appears to indicate the reigns or generations of all the successive emperors to come. The term “the seventeen reigns” (*tō yo amari nanayo* 十七世) can be found in the lineage of the deity Ōkuninushi 大国主. Coming as it does in the first book of the *Kojiki*, which deals with the age of the deities rather than that of the emperors, it leaves an odd impression and presents problems in interpreting the meaning of this term.⁽¹⁷⁾ As for the character *yo* 代, numerous examples can be found in the *Kojiki* where it appears in the names of deities, persons, and places, or in terms such as *minashiro* 御名代 (a hereditary occupational group attached to the ruler’s consort or a prince), and *tsukue shiro* 机代 (objects placed as offerings on a stand).⁽¹⁸⁾ However, *kamuyo nanayo* is the only instance in all the *Kojiki* where *yo* 代 is employed in the sense “generation” (*sedai* 世代 in modern Japanese); it hence attracts our attention.

Further comment: The reasoning behind the grouping of “the seven generations of the age of the deities” is not clear. It seems forced to combine the first two solitary deities (独神) with the following five sets of paired deities (双神)

so as to add up to seven generations (*nanayo*). It is possible that the compilers of the *Kojiki* divided the first five deities of the first chapter from the next seven generations of the second chapter so as to align them with the so-called sacred numbers found in Chinese works such as the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing* 易經). Yet it remains uncertain why they combined Kuninotokotachi and Toyokumono with the five sets of paired deities to come up with seven generations. Perhaps the intent was to emphasize the distinction between the first five Special Celestial Deities (*koto amatsu kami* 別天神) and the other deities. Inasmuch as the deities who appear after Izanaki and Izanami are all descended from this couple, they naturally constitute a succession of generations. It may be that the compilers adopted the term “seven generations” to convey the notion that generations existed prior to Izanaki and Izanami as well. The term Special Celestial Deities would then serve to situate the deities so designated as belonging to a category that transcended the notion of generation.

As for the meaning of the names of the ten paired deities, this should be considered within the context of the form the myths take in the *Kojiki*. The *Nihon shoki* assigns meaning to deity names through the characters it adopts to transcribe these names, but in many cases it cannot be said that the two texts share the same assumptions about this issue. Norinaga appears to take a double standpoint in his interpretation of these names, holding that “[the names of the paired deities] are ordered by a configuration that assigns them, one after the other, either to the origin of the land or to the appearance of deities.”⁽¹⁹⁾

Kurano Kenji interprets the meaning of the seven generations of deities’ names as heterogeneous in nature, moving from the origin of the land to the formation of a primeval terrain to the generation of mud and sand to the planting of stakes to the construction of a dwelling to completion of the body and the emergence of consciousness to the establishment of conjugal relations.⁽²⁰⁾ By contrast, Kanai

Seiichi 金井清一 sees the names as pertaining to the formation of the deities' bodies, moving step by step from mud and sand as the deities' original constitution to an emergent primeval form to the concrete appearance of the gender of male and female deities to completion of that form in both shape and function. Kanai sees this process as leading naturally to the next stage of the myth, in which the pair Izanaki and Izanami act making use of their bodies.⁽²¹⁾ Kōnoshi Takamitsu and Yamaguchi Yoshinori also adopt Kanai's views in their *Kojiki chūkai*.⁽²²⁾

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11. "Paired" (*tagueru* 双)

The digraph 双神 (paired deity) contrasts with the solitary deities (*hitorigami*), who, as explained above, concealed their bodies (*mi o kakusu* 隱身). Izanaki and Izanami represent the fully realized form of the paired deities with bodies and as such succeed in the following passage in carrying out the command (*mikoto mochi* 命以) of the celestial deities.⁽²³⁾

Endnotes

- (1) Oka, *Ijin sono ta*, p. 40.
- (2) Ōbayashi, *Shinwa no keifu*, pp. 245–56.
- (3) Kimishima, *Chūgoku no shinwa*, pp. 54–61.
- (4) Frazer, *Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, vol. 1, pp. 338–60.
- (5) Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, SNKZ 1, p. 29; Ogihara, *Kojiki, Jōdai kayō*, NKBZ 1, p. 31n18.
- (6) Tsugita, *Kojiki shinkō*, pp. 25–26.
- (7) Shikida, *Kojiki hyōchū*, vol. 3, folio 5 recto.
- (8) Kurano and Takeda, *Kojiki, Norito*, NKBT 1, p. 51nn23 and 24.
- (9) Ogihara, *Kojiki, Jōdai kayō*, NKBZ 1, p. 31n19.
- (10) Kōnoshi and Yamaguchi, *Kojiki chūkai*, vol. 2, pp. 48–49.
- (11) See Kojima et al., *Nihon shoki*, SNKZ 2, p. 22n12; Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki*

den, MNZ 9, pp. 149–50.

- (12) Nakajima, *Kojiki hyōshaku*, p. 29; Tsugita, *Kojiki shinkō*, p. 26.
- (13) Ozaki, *Kojiki zenkō*, p. 30.
- (14) Kurano, *Kojiki zenchūshaku*, vol. 2, p. 62; Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, SNKZ 1, p. 30n3.
- (15) Kurano, *Kojiki zenchūshaku*, vol. 2, p. 62.
- (16) Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, SNKZ 1, p. 120n1.
- (17) Taniguchi, “‘Kojiki’ jōkan, Izumo kei keifu kisai no igi”, pp. 198–203.
- (18) See the interpretations given in Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, SNKZ 1, p. 286n1 and 121n10.
- (19) Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki den*, MNZ 9, p. 151.
- (20) Kurano, *Kojiki zenchūshaku*, vol. 2, pp. 64–70.
- (21) Kanai, “Kamuyo nanayo no keifu ni tsuite,” pp. 39–46.
- (22) Kōnoshi and Yamaguchi, *Kojiki chūkai*, vol. 2, pp. 51–52.
- (23) Regarding “solitary deity” and the implications of “conceal their bodies,” see *Kojiki gaku* 3 (2017), pp. 298–300; Taniguchi, “Kojiki shinwa no mi o kangaeru,” pp. 78–79.

Chapter 3: Consolidation of the Land

At this time, the Celestial Deities together (1) gave a command (2) to Izanaki no mikoto and Izanami no mikoto, declaring (3): “Consolidate, solidify, and complete (4) this drifting land!” They bestowed a celestial jeweled halberd (5) on the two deities and charged them with this mission. Thereupon, the two deities, standing (7) on the celestial floating bridge (6), plunged the halberd into [the sea] and stirred the brine, making a *kōro kōro* congealing sound. When they pulled up the halberd, the salt that dripped from its tip piled up and formed an island. This is Onogoro island (8).

Text Notes

1. “The Celestial Deities together” (*amatsukami moromoro* 天神諸)

Opinions have long been divided as to which deities this compound term designates. Judging from the element *moromoro* 諸 (“several,” “various”), it cannot be regarded as meaning one single deity. Insofar as the five deities that appeared first are specifically referred to as Special Celestial Deities (*koto amatsukami*), *amatsukami moromoro* might be held to refer to these five deities. On the other hand, if we consider the deities who hid their bodies as the abstract commanding deities of the celestial realm (for the deities “who hid their bodies,” see text note 7 in chapter 1), *amatsukami moromoro* might also be taken to designate the ensemble formed by the Special Celestial Deities together with Kuninotokotachi and Toyokumono. Or, in that all the deities that have appeared heretofore were born in Takamanohara and thus might be considered Celestial Deities (*amatsukami*), it is also possible to see the term as designating all the

deities mentioned so far apart from those identified in the following words as entrusted with the mission, namely Izanaki and Izanami.

If the term is interpreted as referring to the first five deities, the problem arises why they were not then designated here specifically as the Special Celestial Deities. There also is not firm ground for taking the term to refer to the Special Celestial Deities plus Kuninotokotachi and Toyokumono. The narrative context does not justify seeing “hid their bodies” as the criterion for identifying this group as the Celestial Deities of this passage. Judging from usage found in the *Nihon shoki* or the *Fudoki* 風土記, such as *morogami* 諸神 (“the various deities”) or *morohito* 諸人 (“the multitudes”), the element *moromoro* does not convey any particular mark of respect. It thus seems best to think of *amatsukami moromoro* as including all the deities that have appeared hitherto, with the exception of Izanaki and Izanami. However, if we focus on the specific issue of the primary actor behind the “command” (*mikoto mochi* 命以) charging Izanaki and Izanami with the “mission” (*koto yosashi* 言依), the deity Takamimusuhi appears to play the central role among the Celestial Deities.

2. “Give a command” (*mikoto mochi* 命以) and “charge with a mission” (*koto yosashi* 言依)

The term *mikoto mochi*, an honorific meaning “by their words,” does not appear in the *Nihon shoki* and is specific to the *Kojiki*. It is usually found as a set phrase in combination with the term *koto yosashi* (“entrust to”). The term *mikoto mochi* occurs thirteen times in the *Kojiki*. Except for one instance where it appears in relation to a statement by Susanoo and another where it occurs in relation to a speech by the White Rabbit of Inaba (*Inaba no shirousagi* 稲羽の素兎), it is found largely to describe a command by the deities Amaterasu and Takamimusuhi (or Takagi no kami 高木神). According to Ōta Yoshimaro 太田善麿, the logic

of *mikoto mochi* is closely connected to the structure assumed to support the existence of Takamanohara.⁽¹⁾

In one instance, the later episode of the “three noble children” (*sankishi* 三貴子), the term *koto yosashi* is rendered by the digraph 事依 (with the first character suggesting a matter that is the object of the second). Otherwise it is always transcribed as 言依 (with the first character implying speech). For that reason the combination of *mikoto mochi* and *koto yosashi* are understood to depict a context where a command is given orally. According to Nishida Nagao 西田長男 (1909–1981), in this instance the entity receiving the command and the entity issuing it share the same rank and competence. In other words, the two can be seen effectively as one and the same.⁽²⁾ In the *Nihon shoki* (episode 4), only in the first variant are Izanaki and Izanami commanded to rule the land by the Celestial Deities. In the main text (*honsho* 本書) and all the other variants Izanaki and Izanami act on their own initiative, first discussing together and then undertaking to give birth and form to the land.

3. “Declaring” (*mikotonori* 詔)

This term is fundamentally an honorific used to refer to a declaration by an emperor. Apart from the graph *shō* 詔, the graph *choku* 勅 is also used for an emperor’s verbal utterance. The *ritsuryō* 律令 legal codes of the Nara period appear to distinguish between the compound *shōsho* 詔書, used to designate extraordinary and serious matters or imperial edicts, and the word *chokushi* 勅旨, employed to refer to ordinary, minor matters. However, the Six Official Annals of the Country (*rikkokushi* 六国史) and other works of the time seem to use the two characters *shō* and *choku* interchangeably. The *Nihon shoki* (the first of the Six Official Annals) uses the character *shō* solely to refer to speeches by the emperors, and thus there are no examples of it within the section on the Age of Deities (*jindaikan*

神代卷). On the other hand, it uses the character *choku* in reference to the utterances of deities such as the ancestral deities of the imperial lineage (*kōsoshin* 皇祖神).

In many of the corresponding passages of the *Kojiki*, by contrast, these speeches by deities are introduced by the character *shō*. Except for two instances in the preface, the *Kojiki* contains only one occurrence of the character *choku*, and that is in the last volume of the book, in the chronicle of Emperor Ankō 安康天皇, where the minister Ne no omi 根臣 refers to an order of the emperor as *ōmikoto*, transcribed by the graphs 勅命. The *Kojiki* tends to emphasize the continuum between the deities and the emperors, and for this reason it may use the term *shō* for the utterances of both. However, the usage is not limited to the deities who were the direct ancestors of the emperors. It also is used of Susanoo, a deity parallel to Amaterasu, and Yamatotakeru, a prince who stands in a similar relation to the emperor. Detailed analyses of use of the character *shō* in the *Kojiki* and other archaic texts may be found in works by Koga Seiichi 古賀精一, Yokota Ken'ichi 横田健一, and Taniguchi Masahiro 谷口雅博.⁽³⁾

4. “Consolidate, solidify, and complete this drifting land!” (*tsukuroi katame nase* 修理固成)

These four characters have been read in many different ways, and a standard reading is still not established. Watarai Nobuyoshi 度会延佳 (1615–1690), for instance, reads it as *osame katame nase* in the earliest published edition of the *Kojiki* (1687).⁽⁴⁾ The modern scholar Nishimiya Kazutami 西宮一民 does so as well,⁽⁵⁾ as does Aoki Kazuo 青木和夫.⁽⁶⁾ However, Motoori Norinaga reads it as *tsukuri katame nase* in his *Teisei kokun Kojiki* 訂正古訓古事記 (1799),⁽⁷⁾ while Tanaka Yoritsune 田中頼庸 (1836–1897) reads it as *osame tsukuri katame nase*,⁽⁸⁾ as does Kurano Kenji.⁽⁹⁾ Saigō Nobutsuna 西郷信綱 (1916–2008) reads it as *tsukuri*

katameyo,⁽¹⁰⁾ whereas Kōnoshi Takamitsu and Yamaguchi Yoshinori read it as *tsukuroi katame nase*.⁽¹¹⁾ If the two characters 修理 are interpreted as a compound transcribing a single word, that compound might be read as either *tsukuru* or *osamu*, but it would also be possible to read the characters separately as *osame tsukuru* (or *tsukuri osamu*).

Further comment: As the above note indicates, the interpretation of this passage differs depending on whether the two characters 修 and 理 are understood as two separate terms or a single compound. The *Kojiki* has two other examples of these characters used as a compound, one in the Chronicle of Emperor Suinin 垂仁,⁽¹²⁾ and the other in the Chronicle of Emperor Nintoku 仁徳.⁽¹³⁾ In both it occurs in reference to the repair of a building. By contrast, in the case of the command to Izanaki and Izanami, the expression is used in regard to creating the land anew. It thus does not make sense to interpret the term in the same manner as the other two examples as referring to the “repair” of something that already exists. Kōnoshi and Yamaguchi try to align the different instances by postulating that in the case of the command to Izanaki and Izanami the expression means to bring the land into conformity with its ideal form as conceived by the Celestial Deities (in other words, the land already “existed” in the Celestial Deities’ imagination).⁽¹⁴⁾ In the case of Izanaki and Izanami, however, the command pertains to the land that was still “drifting about like a jellyfish” (*kurage nasu tadayoeru*; see chapter 1). It thus seems most straightforward to understand the expression 修理 as meaning “to consolidate” that “drifting land.” (*tadayoeru kuni*). If this interpretation is adopted, the reading *tsukurou* would seem to be the most appropriate.

As for the two following characters 固 and 成, the graph 固 does not appear elsewhere in the *Kojiki*. Further, the Shinpukuji-bon 真福寺本 manuscript uses the character 因 instead.⁽¹⁵⁾ Some thus construe the four-character phrase as *shūri shite... nasu ni yorite* 修理して・・・成すに因りて.⁽¹⁶⁾ However, such a reading

does not fit smoothly with the following phrasing. It also is possible that the graph 因 is a copying error, since the Shinpukuji-bon often confuses it with another character (for instance, the character “to say” 曰). We have thus retained the graph 固. The meaning of the combination 固 and 成 is not clear. We may interpret it, nevertheless, as Norinaga did, in the light of similar expressions found in the section on the formation of the land (*kunizukuri* 国作り) by Ōkuninushi.⁽¹⁷⁾ If, following this line of interpretation, we consider these two graphs as forming the sequence 固→成, the character 成 can be understood as meaning “completion.”

Opinions diverge as to what concrete actions the command “consolidate, solidify, and complete” refers, or as to when the command was fulfilled. Focusing on the fact that the Celestial Deities give a “command,” bestow the celestial jeweled halberd on Izanaki and Izanami, and “charge them with the mission,” the interpretation most limited in scope sees the command as pertaining to the stage up to the creation of Onogoro island. The term “solidify” (固) is also held to fit this hypothesis. Drawing from the reading of the digraph 修理 as *tsukuru* (“to create”), another thesis sees the command as extending to Izanaki and Izanami’s subsequent creation of the land. (Some who adopt this line of interpretation see the command as covering up through the procreation of the land; others hold that it encompasses the following bearing of deities as well.)

Carrying this line of interpretation a step further, Kōnoshi Takamitsu and Yamaguchi Yoshinori point to Izanaki’s declaration when he seeks out Izanami in the realm of the dead (Yomi no kuni 黄泉国) that “the land that we were creating is not yet fully created.”⁽¹⁸⁾ This, Kōnoshi and Yamaguchi argue, suggests that the process of creation (*tsukuru*) signified by the digraph 修理 was still incomplete at that stage. It would be continued by the deity Ōkuninushi, as recounted in the passage where he and his partner Sukunabikona are directed by the Celestial Deity Kamimusuhi to “form and solidify this land” (作堅).⁽¹⁹⁾ The process would

only be finished and the “land completed” (国成) with the worship of the deity of Mount Mimoro called for in the same passage.⁽²⁰⁾ This would constitute the realization of the ongoing process of consolidating (修理), solidifying (固), and completing (成) the land.⁽²¹⁾

On the other hand, commentators who adopt the reading *osamu* (“bring under control”) for 修理, such as Yamada Yoshio, see the scope of the Celestial Deities’ command as extending as far as the reigns of the emperors.⁽²²⁾ Seen within the context of the *Kojiki* myths, however, this proposition presents difficulties. Further, in that the command was given to Izanagi and Izanami, we ought to consider it within the sphere of this pair of deities’ activities. Since their carrying out of the command to “consolidate, solidify, and complete” culminates with their giving birth to the land and deities, should not we see the end of this process of giving birth as marking the fulfillment of the command? The passing away (*kamusari* 神避り) of Izanami might be held to terminate that process. In the episode of the creation of the “three noble children,” however, Izanagi declares “I have borne one child after another, and at the end of these bearings, I obtained three noble children.”⁽²³⁾ We thus see these acts of bearing by Izanagi alone as also falling within the compass of the command to “consolidate, solidify, and complete this drifting land!”⁽²⁴⁾

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5. “Celestial jeweled halberd” (*ame no nuboko* 天沼矛)

As for the meaning of the morpheme *nu*, in the *Nihon shoki* this halberd appears as 天之瓊矛, and a gloss inserted between the third and the fourth characters states: “瓊 means jewel; here this character is read as *nu*.”⁽²⁵⁾ Following this gloss, *nuboku* may be interpreted as a halberd decorated with jewels.

6. “Celestial floating bridge” (*ame no ukihashi* 天浮橋)

This word occurs three times, including this instance, in the *Kojiki*, and each time it is depicted as a place to stand when descending from Takamanohara (the High Celestial Plain) to the Central Land of Reed Plains (Ashihara no nakatsukuni 葦原中国). A number of deities descend from Takamanohara to the Central Land of Reed Plains other than Izanaki and Izanami; they include Susanoo, Amenohohi, Amewakahiko, Takemikazuchi, Amenotorifune, Oshihomimi, and Ninigi. However, the only ones who stand on the celestial floating bridge apart from Izanaki and Izanami are the imperial ancestors Oshihomimi and Ninigi. Standing on the celestial floating bridge might thus be thought of as something limited to the depiction of the descent of important deities of the imperial lineage. It does not function solely as that, however; it is also a place where something happens in regard to the land below. In the case of Izanaki and Izanami, it is the stirring of the brine with the celestial jeweled halberd. In the case of Oshihomimi, it is the detection of an unsettling noise emanating from the land.⁽²⁶⁾ In the case of Ninigi, the precise nature of what happens remains unclear, but the use of the special phrase *ukijimari soritashite* 宇岐土摩理蘇理多々斯弓 to describe standing on the celestial floating bridge suggests that this act was seen a requisite element of Ninigi’s descent to assume authority over the land below.⁽²⁷⁾

Some hold that *ame no ukihashi* was conceived of as a corridor connecting the celestial world with the earthly one, as with *yasobashi* 八十橋, mentioned in the section on Kako 賀古 district in the *Harima no kuni fudoki* 播磨国風土記,⁽²⁸⁾ or *ama no hashitate* 天梯立, mentioned in the *Tango no kuni fudoki* 丹後国風土記.⁽²⁹⁾ Within the context of the *Kojiki*, however, it is difficult to sustain the assumption that *ame no ukihashi* had such a function. It functions solely as a place to stand when descending to earth and does not appear in cases of ascension to heaven.

Further comment: Foreign scholars who approach the issue from the standpoint of comparative mythology or comparative religious studies have interpreted the celestial floating bridge of the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* as a rainbow. An early example is Karl Florenz (1865–1939), who points out this possibility in a note to his 1901 German translation of the *Nihon shoki* and remarks that the celestial floating bridge calls to mind the Bifröst bridge in Germanic mythology.⁽³⁰⁾ In the mythological poem *Grímnismál* of the Poetic Edda and the book *Gylfaginning* of the Prose Edda (both compiled in the thirteenth century), this Bifröst (sometimes called Billröst) is described as an unsteady bridge between the earth (Midgard) and the realm of the gods (Ásgard), and it has been identified with the rainbow.⁽³¹⁾

Shortly thereafter, in 1905, William G. Aston (1841–1911) also argued that “the ‘floating bridge of Heaven’ is no doubt the rainbow.”⁽³²⁾ Raffaele Pettazzoni (1883–1959), a scholar of the history of religions, compares the celestial floating bridge not only to the above-mentioned Bifröst bridge but also the Chinvat bridge depicted in the Zoroastrian sacred text *Avesta*, where it serves to connect the land of the living and that of the dead.⁽³³⁾ He holds that these are ancient mythical notions that clearly derive from the rainbow and suggests that this idea can also be found in the substratum of Japanese mythology.⁽³⁴⁾

Ōbayashi Taryō introduces additional legendary and literary examples from different parts of the world and argues on this basis that the conception of the rainbow as a bridge can be found as well in Japan, with the celestial floating bridge being one manifestation. He also notes that the German ethnologist Paul Ehrenreich (1855–1914) deemed the presence of a hero who descends from heaven to earth via either a bridge or a rainbow to be a common element in foundation legends. According to Ōbayashi, the fact that the imperial ancestor Ninigi stops on the celestial floating bridge during his descent to earth fits this

pattern.⁽³⁵⁾ Indeed, apart from Izanaki and Izanami, Oshihomimi and Ninigi are the deities who used the celestial floating bridge to descend from heaven. As all may be ranked as founders, it may be said that the common trend in foundation legends described by Ehrenreich is also present in Japanese myths.

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7. “The character 立 should be read *tatashi*” (立 *o yomite tatashi to iu* 立
訓立云田多々志)

The original contains this gloss (*kunchū* 訓注) inserted in small characters after the graph 立; it indicates that this character should be read *tatashi* (“standing”). The reading *tatashi* is formed by adding the ending *shi* (the connective form of the honorific auxiliary verb *su*) to the imperfective form *tata* of the verb *tatsu* (“to stand”). In *Koshiden* 古史伝, Hirata Atsutane 平田篤胤 (1776–1843) interprets this character 立 as meaning “to set off,”⁽³⁶⁾ but in the *Kojiki* this idea is conveyed by the graph 発, not 立. The reading gloss indicates the use of a conjugated form that matches the context. The same is true for the character 鳴 (“make a sound”). Another gloss similarly indicates that this should read in the conjugated honorific form *nashi*.⁽³⁷⁾ In the first chapter, a gloss of the character 立 in the name of the deity Amenotokotachi 天之常立 indicates that there it should be read *tachi* (“appear”).⁽³⁸⁾

As mentioned in the preceding text note 6, references to standing on the celestial floating bridge appear in two other passages apart from this one. The first occurs at the beginning of the episode of cession of the land (*kuniyuzuri* 国譲り), where we find the phrase “Oshihomimi, standing on the celestial floating bridge” (*ame no ukihashi ni tatashi* 天浮橋多々志) followed by the gloss “the last three graphs are [to be read] phonetically.”⁽³⁹⁾ The second reference occurs in the episode of Ninigi’s descent, where, as mentioned in text note 6, we find the phrase *ame no*

ukihashi ni ukijimari soritataashite 於天浮橋宇岐士摩理蘇理多々斯弓. Here a gloss states that “the eleven graphs from 宇 are [to be read] phonetically.”⁽⁴⁰⁾ In both instances, the gloss specifies that the conjugated, honorific form *tatashi* is to be used. Kōnoshi Takamitsu and Yamaguchi Yoshinori note that the specification of the reading *tatsu* for the character 立 serves to confirm that the sentence should be understood to mean “standing on the celestial floating bridge,” not “building the celestial floating bridge,”⁽⁴¹⁾ an interpretation that might arise if the character 立 were read otherwise. Indeed it may well be that there was such a consideration. This issue may be connected to the fact that there is no gloss for reading the combination 見立 that occurs in the next passage.

8. Onogoro island (Onogoro shima 淤能碁呂嶋)

Nihongi shiki 日本紀私記 indicates that the name *Onogoro* was understood to mean an island that solidified by itself.⁽⁴²⁾ Attempts have been made to identify it with a number of actual islands, such as the small Nushima 沼島, located south of Awaji 淡路 island, or the Tomogashima 友が島 islands, located in the Kitan 紀淡 strait between Wakayama 和歌山 and Awaji island, or even the tiny island of Eshima 絵島, in the municipality of Awaji-shi 淡路市 in the northern part of Awaji island. However, it should rather be considered as part of the world of the myths. In the section of the *Kojiki* on Emperor Nintoku, the emperor sings a song in which he mentions seeing Awa 淡 island and Onogoro island when he rows into Naniwa bay to view the land.⁽⁴³⁾ This song might be held to indicate that one of the islands in the present Osaka bay 大阪湾 was called Onogoro. However it takes the form of a song of praise of the land (*kunimi uta* 国見歌), a genre thought to have been recited originally on ceremonial occasions. This factor, as well as the mention in the song of Awa island, whose actual existence is also open to question, suggests that the names of these islands are meant to evoke the scene

at the beginning of the world as depicted in the myths and imagined by Emperor Nintoku (for details, see the section on Emperor Nintoku below).

Endnotes

- (1) Ōta, *Kodai Nihon bungaku shichōron*, vol. 2, pp. 166–70.
- (2) Nishida, *Nihonshintōshi kenkyū*, vol. 2, pp. 16–23.
- (3) Koga, “Kojiki ni okeru kaiwa inyō,” pp. 29–45; Yokota, “Kojiki to Nihon shoki ni okeru *shō to choku*,” pp. 17–30; Taniguchi, “Kojiki to Nihon shoki ni okeru ‘shō’ ji no shiyō igi,” pp. 101–23.
- (4) Watarai Nobuyoshi, *Kojiki*, vol. 1, *jōkan*, folio 2 recto.
- (5) Nishimiya, *Kojiki shūteiban*, p. 27.
- (6) Aoki et al., *Kojiki*, NST 1, p. 21.
- (7) Motoori Norinaga, *Teisei kokun Kojiki*, MNZ 8, p. 537.
- (8) Tanaka, *Kōtei Kojiki*, vol. 1, p. 2.
- (9) Kurano, *Kojiki zenchūshaku*, vol. 2, p. 73.
- (10) Saigō, *Kojiki chūshaku*, vol. 1, pp. 100–101.
- (11) Kōnoshi and Yamaguchi, *Kojiki chūkai*, vol. 2, p. 62–65.
- (12) *A ga miya o tsukuroite sumeramikoto no miaraka no gotoku seba* 修理我宮如天皇之御舍者. Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, SNKZ 1, pp. 206–207.
- (13) *Kotogotoku ame moredomo katsute tsukurou koto nashi* 悉雖雨漏都勿脩理. Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, SNKZ 1, pp. 286–87.
- (14) Kōnoshi and Yamaguchi, *Kojiki chūkai*, vol. 2, pp. 62–65.
- (15) The Shinpukuji-bon (1371–1372) is the oldest extant manuscript of the *Kojiki*. (TN)
- (16) See Kanda and Ōta, *Kojiki, Nihon koten zensho*, vol. 1, p. 176.
- (17) See such expressions as *kono kuni o tsukuri katameki* 作堅此国 (“[Ōnamuji and Sukunabikona] created and solidified this land”), or *aitsukurinasamu* 相作成 ... *kuni naru koto katakemu* 国難成 (“I [Sukunabikona] will create [it] together [with you] but ... [if you do not worship me] it will be difficult to make the land complete”). Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, SNKZ 1, pp. 94–97; Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki den*, MNZ 9, p. 159.
- (18) Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, SNKZ 1, pp. 44–45.

- (19) *Sono kuni o tsukuri katamemu* 作堅其国. Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, SNKZ 1, pp. 94–95.
- (20) See endnote 17 above.
- (21) Kōnoshi and Yamaguchi, *Kojiki chūkai*, vol. 4, p. 190–91.
- (22) Yamada, *Kojiki jōkan kōgi*, pp. 95–97.
- (23) Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, SNKZ 1, pp. 52–53.
- (24) See Taniguchi “*Kojiki shinwa ni okeru kuni no ‘seisei,’*” pp. 23–40.
- (25) Kojima et al., *Nihon shoki*, SNKZ 2, p. 25.
- (26) Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, SNKZ 1, pp. 98–99.
- (27) A gloss specifies this phonetic reading, the meaning of which is uncertain. Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, SNKZ 1, pp. 116–17.
- (28) Uegaki, *Fudoki*, SNKZ 5, p. 27.
- (29) Uegaki, *Fudoki*, SNKZ 5, p. 472.
- (30) Florenz, *Japanische Mythologie*, p. 13.
- (31) Taniguchi, *Edda to saga*, pp. 30–33.
- (32) Aston, *Shinto*, p. 87.
- (33) “Bridge of judgment” or “beam-shaped bridge.” (TN)
- (34) Pettazzoni, *La mitologia giapponese*, p. 42n1.
- (35) Ōbayashi, *Ginga no michi, niiji no kakehashi*, pp. 688–89.
- (36) Hirata Atsutane, *Koshiden*, SHAZ 1, p. 151.
- (37) Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, SNKZ 1, pp. 30–31.
- (38) *Kojiki gaku* 1 (2015), pp. 9–10. For the English translation of this section, see *Kojiki gaku* 3 (2017), pp. 296–97, 306.
- (39) Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, SNKZ 1, pp. 98–99.
- (40) Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, SNKZ 1, pp. 116–17.
- (41) Kōnoshi and Yamaguchi, *Kojiki chūkai*, vol. 2, pp. 68–72.
- (42) 自擬之嶋也. *Nihongi shiki*, p. 205. The *Nihongi shiki* (Private Records of Chronicles of Japan) is a record of gatherings at the imperial court between the ninth and tenth centuries where the *Nihon shoki* was recited and scholars of the time commented on its meaning. (TN)
- (43) Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, SNKZ 1, p. 290.

Notes on Usage

General Conventions

- The English translations included in *Kojiki gaku* generally follow the stylistic conventions and citation format detailed in the *Monumenta Nipponica* style sheet (http://dept.sophia.ac.jp/monumenta/pdf/MN-Style-Sheet_201809.pdf).
- In the interest of readability, phonetic transcriptions of names, terms, and phrases from the *Kojiki* and other Nara-period texts are rendered in a modified Hepburn system of romanization and according to the modern dictionary pronunciation. No attempt is made to indicate archaic Japanese phonetic distinctions such as the *kō* 甲/ *otsu* 乙 vowels. Likewise, archaic usages that later evolved into extended vowel sounds, such as in the honorific prefix “Oho,” are indicated by a macron, “*Ō*.”
- Phonetic transliterations from archaic texts follow the rendering given in the *yomikudashi* 読下し version of the edition cited. The translation generally omits the phonetic glosses given in the original text.
- The *pinyin* system is used to transliterate Chinese terms.
- In principle characters are given for Japanese and Chinese names and terms at the first instance where they occur in each issue of *Kojiki gaku*. They are only repeated in that issue when they are the subject of discussion or if necessary for clarity.
- Citations to the *Kojiki* and other archaic texts indicate the page numbers of both the original text (generally speaking, the *kanbun* 漢文 text) as reprinted in the modern edition cited and the *yomikudashi* version adopted by that edition.
- Cross-references to other passages in the *Kojiki* cite the *Kojiki gaku* version of

the text when possible. In cases of passages from sections not yet covered by *Kojiki gaku*, citations are to the SNKZ version edited by Yamaguchi Yoshinori and Kōnoshi Takamitsu.

- Information in the notes added by the translator is indicated by the acronym TN.
- Bibliographic details of the different commentaries and other works cited are given in the list of references included in each issue.

Frequently Used Bibliographic Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used for frequently cited compendia and sources

- MNZ *Motoori Norinaga zenshū* 本居宣長全集. Ed. Ōno Susumu 大野晋 and Ōkubo Tadashi 大久保正. 23 vols. Chikuma Shobō 筑摩書房, 1968–1993.
- NKBT *Nihon koten bungaku taikai* 日本古典文学大系. 102 vols. Iwanami Shoten 岩波書店, 1957–1967.
- NKBZ *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 日本古典文学全集. 51 vols. Shōgakukan 小学館, 1970–1976.
- NST *Nihon shisō taikai* 日本思想大系. 67 vols. Iwanami Shoten, 1970–1982.
- SHAZ *Shinshū Hirata Atsutane zenshū* 新修平田篤胤全集. 20 vols. Meicho Shuppan 名著出版, 1978.
- SNKZ *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 新編日本古典文学全集. 88 vols. Shōgakukan, 1994–2001.

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