

Chapter 3 Consolidation of the Land

At this time, the heavenly deities together (1) set forth a command (2) to Izanaki no mikoto and Izanami no mikoto, proclaiming (3): “Put in order, solidify, and complete (4) this drifting land!” They bestowed a heavenly jeweled halberd (5) on the two deities and charged them with this mission. Standing (6) on the heavenly floating bridge (7), the two deities thereupon plunged the halberd into [the sea] and stirred the brine round and round, making a *kōro kōro* sound. When they pulled up the halberd, the salt that dripped from its tip piled up and formed an island. This is Onogoroshima island (8).

Text Notes

1. “The heavenly deities together” (*amatsukami moromoro* 天神諸)

Opinion has long divided as to which deities this phrase designates. The term *moromoro* 諸 (“several,” “various”) indicates that it cannot be one deity alone. One possibility is that the phrase refers to the five deities who appeared first and are named as the “set-apart heavenly deities” (*koto amatsu kami* 別天神). If the deities described as having “hid their bodies” are seen as the abstract commanding deities of the heavenly realm, “the heavenly deities together” might be taken to be the “set-apart heavenly deities” in combination with Kuninotokotachi and Toyokumono.¹ Or, as all the deities that have appeared heretofore came into existence in Takamanohara, all might be considered heavenly deities. In this case “the heavenly deities together” might be seen as designating all the deities mentioned so far apart from Izanaki and Izanami, who are described as receiving the command of the “heavenly deities.”

If “the heavenly deities together” is interpreted as the first five deities, the problem arises why they are not specifically referred to here as the “set-apart heavenly deities.” Similarly there is no clear basis for taking the phrase to refer to the “set-apart heavenly deities” plus Kuninotokotachi and Toyokumono. The text does not offer a solid rationale for equating the deities who “hid their bodies” with the “heavenly deities together.” Usage of the element *moro* in the *Nihon shoki* and *Fudoki* 風土記 in terms such as *morogami* 諸神 (“the various deities”) or *morohito* 諸人 (“the multitudes”) suggests that it does not convey any particular mark of respect. Is it thus not best to see “the heavenly deities together” as comprising all the deities that have appeared hitherto apart from Izanaki and Izanami? If we focus on the question of a primary actor behind the “command” (*mikoto mochi* 命以) charging Izanaki and Izanami with the “mission” (*koto yosashi* 言依) of

¹ For the “set apart heavenly deities” and deities who “hid their bodies,” see chapter 1, text notes 7 and 10. For Kuninotokotachi and Toyokumono as deities who also hid their bodies, see chapter 2.

land consolidation, the deity Takamimusuhi would seem to be the logical candidate.

2. “Set forth 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 often occurs as a set phrase in combination with the term *koto yosashi* (“charge with a mission”; “entrust with a charge”). Of the twelve instances of *mikoto mochi* in the *Kojiki*, one is in a declaration by Susanoo and another in a speech by the “unrobed rabbit of Inaba” (*Inaba no shirousagi* 稲羽の素兔).² Otherwise it serves largely to describe commands by the deities Amaterasu and Takamimusuhi (or Takagi no kami 高木神). Ōta Yoshimaro 太田善麿 argues that the logic of *mikoto mochi* is closely connected to the authority structure supporting the existence of Takamanohara.³

In the later episode where Izanaki directs his “three noble children”) to rule over different realms, *koto yosashi* is transcribed three times as 事依 (with the first graph suggesting that what is being entrusted is a “matter”).⁴ Otherwise it is always transcribed as 言依 (with the first graph implying speech). The combination of *mikoto mochi* and *koto yosashi* is thus understood to express a situation in which a command is given orally.⁵ Nishida Nagao 西田長男 holds that in the present instance the entity receiving the command and the entity issuing it act with the same rank and competence. In other words, the entity issuing the command is in effect enacting it.⁶

In the first variant of the corresponding episode in the fourth section of the *Nihon shoki* Age of Deities chapter, the heavenly deities command Izanaki and Izanami to rule the land. Only in this variant, however, do the heavenly deities figure. In the main text and nine other variants, Izanaki and Izanami consult together and give birth and form the land on their own initiative.⁷

3. “Proclaiming” (*mikotonori* 詔)

This term is fundamentally an honorific used to refer to an imperial declaration. Apart from the graph *shō* 詔, the graph *choku* 勅 is also used to describe an imperial utterance. The *ritsuryō* 律令 legal codes of the Nara period appear to distinguish between the term *shōsho* 詔書, employed for extraordinary major matters and imperial edicts, and the term *chokushi* 勅旨, employed for ordinary minor matters. The Six National Histories

² For the latter instance, see chapter 25, text note 10.

³ Ōta, *Kodai Nihon bungaku shichōron*, vol. 2, pp. 166–70.

⁴ The “three noble children” (*mihashira no tōtoki ko / sankishi* 三貴子) are Amaterasu, Tsukuyomi, and Susanoo; see chapter 14. (TN)

⁵ On these points, see also chapter 14, note 3.

⁶ Nishida, *Nihonshintōshi kenkyū*, vol. 2, pp. 16–23.

⁷ Kojima et al., *Nihon shoki*, SNKBZ 2, pp. 24–35.

(*rikkokushi* 六国史), however, seem to use the two characters *shō* and *choku* interchangeably.

The *Nihon shoki* (the first of the Six National Histories) uses the graph *shō* solely for imperial proclamations, and the Age of Deities chapter contains no examples of it. It uses the graph *choku* for the utterances of the ancestral deities of the imperial lineage. Many of the instances where it uses *choku* correspond to *Kojiki* passages that employ *shō*. Except for two instances in the preface, the *Kojiki* contains only one occurrence of the graph *choku*, in the last book, in the chronicle of Emperor Ankō 安康天皇. There the minister Neomi 根臣 refers to an imperial command as 勅命 (*ōmikoto*).⁸ The *Kojiki* tends to treat deities and emperors as a continuum, and it may be for this reason that it refers to the utterances of both as *shō*. It does not, however, limit use of the term to deities who are direct imperial ancestors. It applies it also to Susanoo, a deity linked to Amaterasu, and Yamatotakeru, a prince who stands in a similar relation to the emperor.⁹

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

Commentators have read the four-graph sequence 修理固成 in a variety of ways. Watarai Nobuyoshi 度会延佳 (1615–1690) adopted the reading *osame katame nase* (“oversee, solidify, and complete”) in his edition of the *Kojiki*, published in 1687.¹⁰ Nishimiya Kazutami 西宮一民 and the editors of the *Nihon shisō taikai* 日本思想大系 edition do so as well.¹¹ Motoori Norinaga reads it as *tsukuri katame nase* (“form, solidify, and complete”) in his *Teisei kokun Kojiki* 訂正古訓古事記 (1799),¹² while Tanaka Yoritsune 田中頼庸 and Kurano Kenji read it as *osame tsukuri katame nase* (“oversee, form, solidify, and complete”).¹³ Saigō Nobutsuna 西郷信綱 reads it as *tsukuri katame yo*,¹⁴ and Kōnoshi Takamitsu and Yamaguchi Yoshinori read it as *tsukuroi katame nase* (“put in order, solidify, and complete”).¹⁵ Most of those who take the two graphs 修理 to represent a single word opt for either the reading *tsukuru* (“form,” “make”) or *osamu* (“oversee,” “govern”); those who read the graphs individually combine them as *osame tsukuru* (or *tsukuri osamu*).

Further comment: As the above note indicates, commentators differ as to whether the two graphs 修 and 理 are to be understood as expressing two separate actions or

⁸ Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, pp. 328–29.

⁹ For detailed analyses of use of the graph *shō* in the *Kojiki* and other ancient texts, see Koga, “*Kojiki ni okeru kaiwa inyō*”; Yokota, “*Kojiki to Nihon shoki ni okeru shō to choku*”; Taniguchi Masahiro, “*Kojiki ni okeru ‘shō’ ji no shiyō igi*.”

¹⁰ Watarai Nobuyoshi, *Gōtō Kojiki*, p. 21.

¹¹ Nishimiya, *Kojiki shūteiban*, p. 27; Aoki Kazuo et al., *Kojiki*, p. 21.

¹² Motoori Norinaga, *Teisei kokun Kojiki*, MNZ 8, p. 537.

¹³ Tanaka, *Kōtei Kojiki*, vol. 1, p. 2; Kurano, *Kojiki zenchūshaku*, vol. 2, p. 73.

¹⁴ Saigō, *Kojiki chūshaku*, vol. 1, pp. 100–101.

¹⁵ Kōnoshi and Yamaguchi, *Kojiki chūkai*, vol. 2, pp. 62–65.

one. The *Kojiki* has two other examples of these graphs used in combination, one in the chronicle of Emperor Suinin 垂仁, and the other in the chronicle of Emperor Nintoku 仁徳. In both the combination refers to the repair of a building.¹⁶ The context in the current passage, on the other hand, is the new production of the land. It may thus be questioned whether the use of 修理 here is the same as in the two cases where it means the “repair” of something that already exists. Kōnoshi and Yamaguchi, who read 修理 as the single term *tsukuroi* (“adjust,” “repair,” “put in order”), seek to coordinate the three usages by postulating that in the passage at hand the heavenly deities have in mind what the land should be and command Izanaki and Izanami to bring about that proper form (in other words, the land already “exists” in the heavenly deities’ mind).¹⁷ Would it not be more plausible, however, to focus on the point that the heavenly deities command Izanaki and Izanami to “put in order” the “land” that is still in a state of “drifting about like a jellyfish” (*kurage nasu tadayoeru*; see chapter 1)? In other words, they are to correct that “drifting” condition. From this perspective, too, the most appropriate reading would seem to be *tsukurou*.

As for the two following graphs 固 and 成, the graph 固 does not appear elsewhere in the *Kojiki*. Further, the Shinpukuji-bon 真福寺本 manuscript has in its place the graph 因 (*yoru*, “accordingly”).¹⁸ For these reasons Kanda Hideo 神田秀夫 and Ōta Yoshimaro construe the four-graph phrase as *shūri shite . . . nasu ni yorite* 修理して . . . 成すに因りて (“in that [Izanaki and Izanami] are to put in order and complete . . .”).¹⁹ Such a reading, however, does not fit smoothly with the phrasing that follows. It also is possible that the graph 因 is a copying error, since in a number of instances the Shinpukuji-bon uses it in place of another graph, such as “to say” 曰. We have thus retained the graph 固. The meaning of the combination 固 and 成 is not clear. As Motoori Norinaga has pointed out, however, similar expressions found in the section on Ōkuninushi’s 大国主 formation of the land offer some suggestions.²⁰ There Ōkuninushi (Ōanamuji 大穴牟遲) is described as having acted together with Sukunabikona 少名毘古那 to “form and solidify this land” (*kono kuni o tsukuri katameki* 作堅此国). Ōkuninushi also receives a pronouncement from the deity of Mt. Mimoro 御諸 that if he worships the deity properly, “together . . . we will be able to form and complete the land” (*aitsukuri nasamu* 相作成), but otherwise it will be difficult for “the land to be made complete” (*kuni narikatakemu* 国難成).²¹ These latter phrases suggest a sequence from “solidify” (固) → to “completion” (成) and indicate that 成 means “completion.”

Commentators have proposed various hypotheses regarding the concrete content of

¹⁶ Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, pp. 206–207, 286–87.

¹⁷ Kōnoshi and Yamaguchi, *Kojiki chūkai*, vol. 2, pp. 60–65.

¹⁸ The Shinpukuji-bon (1371–1372) is the oldest extant manuscript of the *Kojiki*. (TN)

¹⁹ See Kanda and Ōta, *Kojiki*, vol. 1, p. 176.

²⁰ Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki den*, MNZ 9, p. 159.

²¹ See chapter 34.

“put in order, solidify, and complete” and as to when the command was fulfilled. Those who hold to the interpretation most limited in scope focus on the point that the heavenly deities are said to set forth a “command,” bestow the heavenly jeweled halberd on Izanaki and Izanami, and “charge them with the mission.” Commentators who take this approach emphasize also the use of the term “solidify,” and on these grounds they see the command as fulfilled with the formation of Onogoroshima island. Another line of interpretation emphasizes the dimension of the digraph 修理 as *tsukuru* (“to make,” “to create”) and takes Izanaki and Izanami’s creation of the land to mark the command’s fulfillment. (Some who adopt this line of reasoning would see the procreation of the land as the key event in fulfilling the command; others would see fulfillment as achieved with the following bearing of deities.)

Kōnoshi Takamitsu and Yamaguchi Yoshinori carry this perspective a step further, noting that when Izanaki seeks out Izanami in the Land of Yomi (Yomotsukuni 黄泉国), he declares, “The land you and I were making is not yet finished (*imada tsukuri oezu* 未作竟).”²² This, Kōnoshi and Yamaguchi argue, suggests that the process of formation (*tsukuru*) signified by the digraph 修理 was still incomplete at that stage. Formation of the land would be continued by Ōkuninushi, and the entire process of “putting in order” (修理), “solidifying” (固), and “completing” (成) the land would be fully realized only through his joining with Sukunabikona to “form and solidify” (作堅) the land and offering rites to the deity of Mimoroyama 御諸山 mountain to secure “completion of the land” (国成).²³

Commentators who emphasize the aspect of *osamu* (“bring under control,” “govern”) in 修理, such as Yamada Yoshio, take another approach. He sees the scope of the heavenly deities’ command as extending as far as the rule of the successive emperors.²⁴ The *Kojiki* myth narrative, however, does not really support such a perspective. Since the command was given to Izanagi and Izanami, its scope should be weighed within the context of their activities. As their carrying out of the command to “put in order, solidify, and complete” takes the form of “giving birth,” should not the end of the process of giving birth mark the command’s fulfillment? Izanami’s “departure” from this world (*kamusari* 神避) might be held to terminate that process. After producing the “three noble children,” however, Izanaki declares, “I have borne child after child, and at the end of giving birth, I have obtained three noble children.”²⁵ Izanaki’s production of Amaterasu and the other two noble children would seem to demarcate the full compass of the command to “put in order, solidify, and complete this drifting land!”²⁶

Taniguchi Masahiro, *Ancient Japanese Literature*

²² See chapter 9.

²³ Kōnoshi and Yamaguchi, *Kojiki chūkai*, vol. 2, pp. 60–65.

²⁴ Yamada, *Kojiki jōkan kōgi*, pp. 95–103.

²⁵ See chapter 14.

²⁶ For further discussion, see Taniguchi Masahiro, “*Kojiki shinwa ni okeru kuni no ‘seisei.’*”

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

The *Nihon shoki* transcribes the corresponding item as 天之瓊矛 and inserts a gloss after the graph 瓊, stating that it “means jewel; here this graph is read as *nu*.”²⁷ In line with this gloss, *nuboku* may be interpreted as a halberd decorated with jewels.

6. “Standing” (*tatashi* 立)

The *Kojiki*’s compilers include here a gloss: “The graph *ritsu* 立 should be read *tatashi*” (*ritsu o yomite tatashi to iu* 訓立云田多々志). This reading adds *shi* (the connective *ren’yōkei* 連用形 form of the honorific auxiliary verb *su*) to the imperfective *mizenkei* 未然形 form *tata* of the verb *tatsu* (“to stand”). Hirata Atsutane 平田篤胤 (1776–1843) interprets the graph 立 as meaning “to set off,”²⁸ but the *Kojiki* typically uses the graph 発, not 立, to convey this idea. The reading gloss indicates the use of a conjugated form appropriate to the context. The same is true for a gloss in the same sentence indicating that the graph 鳴 (“make a sound”) should be read here in the conjugated honorific form *nashi*. In the first chapter, a gloss of the graph 立 in the name of the deity Amenotokotachi 天之常立 indicates that there it should be read *tachi*.²⁹

References to standing on the heavenly floating bridge appear in two other *Kojiki* passages apart from this one. The first occurs at the beginning of the cession of the land (*kuniyuzuri* 国譲り) episode: “[Amaterasu’s son] Ame no oshihomimi no mikoto 天忍穗耳命, standing on the heavenly floating bridge (*ame no ukihashi ni tatashi* 天浮橋多々志) . . .” Here a gloss specifies that “the last three graphs are [to be read] phonetically.”³⁰ The second reference occurs in the episode of the descent of the Heavenly Grandson, Ninigi no mikoto 邇々芸命, where he is described as “alighting and standing firmly on the heavenly floating bridge” (*ame no ukihashi ni ukijimari soritashite* 於天浮橋宇岐土摩理、蘇理多々斯弓). Here a gloss states that “the eleven graphs from 宇 are [to be read] phonetically.”³¹ Yamaguchi Yoshinori and Kōnoshi Takamitsu hold that the specification of the intransitive form *tatsu* serves to confirm that the phrase should be understood to mean “standing on the heavenly floating bridge,” not “erecting” it.³² That indeed may be the case. This issue may also be connected to the absence of a gloss for the digraph 見立 that occurs in the next passage (on this point, see chapter 4, text note 2).

²⁷ Kojima et al., *Nihon shoki*, SNKBZ 2, pp. 24–25.

²⁸ Hirata Atsutane, *Koshiden*, vol. 1, p. 151.

²⁹ See chapter 1.

³⁰ Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, pp. 98–99.

³¹ Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, pp. 116–17. The precise meaning of *ukijimari* and *sori* remains uncertain, and the translation is tentative. (TN)

³² Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, p. 31n14.

7. “Heavenly floating bridge” (*ame no ukihashi* 天浮橋)

As mentioned in the preceding text note 6, the term “heavenly floating bridge” occurs three times in the *Kojiki*, and in each instance it is presented as a place to stand when descending from Takamanohara to Ashihara no nakatsukuni 葦原中国, the “central land of reed plains.” Apart from Izanaki and Izanami, deities who descend from Takamanohara to Ashihara no nakatsukuni include Susanoo, Amenohohi, Amewakahiko, Takemikazuchi, Amenotorifune, Oshihomimi, and Ninigi. Of these, the only ones who stand on the heavenly floating bridge other than Izanaki and Izanami are the imperial ancestors Oshihomimi and Ninigi. Standing on the heavenly floating bridge might thus be seen as specific to the depiction of the descent of important deities of the imperial lineage. It does not function solely as that, however; the heavenly floating bridge is also a place where something concerning the land below occurs. In the case of Izanaki and Izanami, it is the stirring of the brine with the heavenly jeweled halberd. In the case of Oshihomimi, it is the detection of an unsettling noise emanating from the land.³³ In the case of Ninigi, the precise nature of what happens remains unclear, but the specification through a gloss that the action at issue should be read *ukijimari soritashite* suggests that it was seen as a requisite element of Ninigi’s descent to assume authority over the land below.³⁴

Some hold that the heavenly floating bridge was conceived of as a corridor connecting the heavenly realm with the earthly one, as with *yasohashi* 八十橋, mentioned in the section on Gako 賀古 district in the *Harima no kuni fudoki* 播磨国風土記, or *ama no hashitate* 天梯立, mentioned in the *Tango no kuni fudoki* 丹後国風土記.³⁵ The *Kojiki* text itself, however, does not provide evidence to support such a supposition. There the heavenly floating bridge functions solely as a place to stand when descending to earth; it does not figure in references to ascension to heaven.

Further comment: Overseas scholars who approach the issue from the standpoint of comparative mythology or comparative religious studies have interpreted the heavenly 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*. He remarks that the heavenly floating bridge calls to mind the Bifröst bridge in Germanic mythology.³⁶ The Bifröst (sometimes called Billröst) appears in the mythological poem *Grímnismál* of the Poetic Edda and the book *Gylfaginning* of the Prose Edda (both compiled in the thirteenth century), where it is depicted as an unsteady bridge between the earth (Midgard) and the realm of the gods (Ásgard). It has been identified with the rainbow.³⁷

³³ Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, pp. 98–99.

³⁴ Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, pp. 116–17. See text note 6 and footnote 30 above.

³⁵ Uegaki, *Fudoki*, pp. 26–27, 472–73.

³⁶ Florenz, *Japanische Mythologie*, p. 13.

³⁷ Taniguchi Yukio, *Edda to saga*, pp. 30–33.

Writing in 1905, William G. Aston also argued that “the ‘floating bridge of Heaven’ is no doubt the rainbow.”³⁸ Raffaele Pettazzoni, a scholar of the history of religions, compares the heavenly 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. He sees these depictions as reflecting ancient mythical notions that clearly derive from the rainbow and suggests that the same notion can be found in the substratum of Japanese mythology.³⁹

Ōbayashi Taryō 大林太良 introduces additional legendary and literary examples from different parts of the world and argues that the idea of the rainbow as a bridge can be found as well in Japan, with the heavenly floating bridge being one instance. He also introduces the views of the German ethnologist Paul Ehrenreich, who identifies the descent of a hero from heaven to earth via a bridge or a rainbow as a common element in ancestral foundation legends. Ōbayashi connects this thesis to the myth of the imperial ancestor Ninigi, who descends to earth via the heavenly floating bridge.⁴⁰ Indeed, in addition to Izanaki and Izanami, Oshihomimi and Ninigi use the heavenly floating bridge to descend from heaven. As all may be described as ancestral founders, the tendency in foundation legends described by Ehrenreich may be said to be also present in Japanese mythology.

Hirafuji Kikuko, Comparative Mythology

8. Onogoroshima 淤能碁呂嶋

The Heian commentary *Nihongi shiki* 日本紀私記 indicates that the name Onogoroshima island was understood to mean an island that solidified by itself.⁴¹ 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, the Tomogashima 友が島 islands, located in the Kitan 紀淡 strait between Wakayama 和歌山 and Awaji island, or the tiny island of Eshima 絵島, in the municipality of Awaji-shi 淡路市 in the northern part of Awaji island. It is best regarded, however, as part of the world of the myths. In the *Kojiki* chronicle of Emperor Nintoku, the emperor recites a song in which he mentions seeing Awashima 淡島 island and Onogoroshima island when he rows into Naniwa 難波 bay to view the land.⁴² This song might be held to indicate that one of the islands in today’s Osaka bay was called Onogoroshima. Its form, however, is that of a song of praise

³⁸ Aston, *Shinto*, p. 87.

³⁹ Pettazzoni, *La mitologia giapponese*, p. 42n1.

⁴⁰ Ōbayashi, *Ginga no michi, niji no kakehashi*, pp. 688–89.

⁴¹ *Nihon shoki shiki*, p. 205. *Nihongi shiki* (Private Records of Chronicles of Japan; also known as *Nihon shoki shiki*) 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)

⁴² Yamaguchi and Kōnoshi, *Kojiki*, p. 290.

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 Awashima 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.